

Textiles, ceramics may suffer a blow

FROM PAGE 12
The latest hike in gas price may dent that competitiveness, said businesses expressing concern.

The energy regulatory authority on Sunday hiked tariff for gas uses by different sectors and households. This time the prices for captive power, used by factories and industries, have been increased by 43.97 percent and 37.89 percent respectively. The increase was 34.98 percent for commercial users (commercial buildings, offices and restaurants).

of fabrics will go up to 8 percent from 5 percent, he said.

The gas price hike will affect the industry in two ways – the investors will feel discouraged from fresh investment and the millers will face difficulty in maintaining their inventory of unsold yarn, Khokon said.

"We have been running our primary textile sector at a very low profitability rate over the last few years mainly due to invasion of cheap Chinese and Indian yarn into the local market," said A Matin Chowdhury, managing director of Malek Spinning Mills.

He said if the local millers cannot sell their yarn at competitive prices, the foreign buyers would shift their focus to other countries like China, India and Pakistan.

now because of the government's policy to use more gas for power production instead of diesel and furnace oil so that the consumers do not feel the pinch of the gas price hike.

Bangladesh Energy Regulatory Commission has increased the gas price for power plants by nearly 41 percent to Tk 4.45 a unit.

India reduces price of LPG gas cylinders

IBTIMES ONLINE

In a major relief to households across the nation, the Indian Oil Corporation (IOC) has declared that the price of non-subsidised cooking gas cylinders (LPG) will be cheaper by Rs 100.50 per cylinder from July 1.

With this, the non-subsidised LPG gas cylinder will be available for Rs 637 instead of Rs 737.50.

The decision to cut rates was taken in view of softening LPG prices in the international market and a favourable dollar-rupee exchange rate, according to a press release by IOC.

"Price of Non-Subsidised LPG in Delhi will decrease by Rs 100.50 per cylinder from 1st July. Upfront cash payment by consumer of domestic LPG will reduce by Rs 100.50 per cylinder," said IOC in a statement.

The release further stated: "As domestic LPG prices are subsidised by the government, the effective price has come down to Rs 494.35 per cylinder with this rate revision. The balance amount of Rs 142.65 per cylinder would be borne as subsidy by the central government and transferred to the consumer's bank account after the purchase of a refill."

Cops yet to trace key accused

FROM PAGE 12
suspicion of being involved in the killing.

The district's senior judicial magistrate Md Sirajul Islam Gazi recorded the statement, said Md Humayun Kabir, investigation officer (IO) of the case.

After recording the statement, the court sent the duo to jail.

The court also granted a 5-day remand to Najmul Ahsan, Sagor and Saimun, three other suspects who had been arrested. Of them, Nazmul was earlier taken on a three-day remand that ended on Sunday.

The district's Superintendent of Police (SP) Md Maruf Hossain said they were trying their best to arrest the key accused.

Earlier yesterday, Road Transport and Bridges Minister Obaidul Quader told journalists in Dhaka that Rifat's killers would not be spared no matter which political party they belonged to.

Shah Newaj Rifat Sharif was hacked to death in broad daylight in front of his wife near Barguna Government College on June 26. Later that night, his father filed a murder case against 12 people with Barguna Sadar Police Station.

Police have so far arrested eight people in the case. Of them, Chandan, Hasan, Oli and Ridoy are accused in the First Information Report. Four others -- Najmul, Saimun, Tanvir, and

Sagor -- were arrested on suspicion of being involved in the killing.

Two of the key accused -- Nayan and Rifat -- are listed criminals and accused in several cases, said police.

Nayan is an accused in eight cases, including weapon possession, drug and mugging. He had earlier been arrested in these cases, but was released on bail, said Abir Hasan Mohammad, OC of Barguna police station.

Rifat Farazi, another key accused in the case, is facing four separate cases and has been out on bail.

Police submitted a charge sheet to the court against Nayan and Rifat after investigating the different cases in the past, said the OC.

Locals said Nayan was close to Advocate Sunam Devnath, son of local lawmaker Dharendra Debnath Shambhu who is also president of the district unit AL.

On the other hand, the two siblings -- Rifat and Risan -- are nephews of Md Delwar Hossain, vice-president of the district unit AL and chairman of Barguna District Council.

They were engaged in different criminal activities, but remained unpunished because of the political clout they derived from their connections to Shambhu and Delwar, locals claimed.

Meanwhile, the Bangladesh Chhatra League (BCL) in the area yesterday

declared a reward for those who would help to trace and arrest the accused.

Jubayer Adnan Anik, president of the unit BCL, declared the bounty on the assailants at a human chain programme in front of Barguna Press Club yesterday noon.

He, however, did not mention the amount of the bounty, instead saying a "proper award" will be given.

KILLERS WILL NOT BE SPARED

Rifat's killers, regardless of their political affiliation, will not be spared, Road Transport and Bridges Minister Obaidul Quader said yesterday.

"Whoever is involved in the killing, even if they belong to the ruling party, will not be spared," he said, while responding to a reporter's query at his secretariat office.

"Law enforcement agencies were made aware of the government's attitude in this regard."

Quader, also the general secretary of the ruling Awami League, said Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina had instructed that the culprits be arrested, "proving the zero tolerance policy" taken in this regard.

Asked about alleged patronisation by local Awami League leaders of the suspects of the murder, Quader said both the killers and those who instigated the murder would face the same fate.

(Our Patuakhali correspondent contributed to the report.)

Under the new tariff structure, households using a single burner will have to pay Tk 925 instead of Tk 750 a month. Those using a double burner will pay Tk 975, up from Tk 800.

IMPACT ON DIFFERENT SECTORS

The latest spell of gas price hike will have a negative impact on the spinning and textiles sectors because of the rise in production cost, said Mohammad Ali Khokon, president of Bangladesh Textile Mills Association (BTMA).

Millers would have to spend Tk 7 as gas bill for producing each kg of yarn, he said, adding that the cost would increase to 10 percent from 7 percent of the production cost.

Although the gas price has gone up, the buyers are not ready to pay high prices for yarn, Khokon said.

According to millers, many sectors, especially the primary textile sector, were facing different challenges due to rising production costs.

The BTMA leader said the textile millers and spinners would have to go through a difficult time due to the latest hike in gas price.

Similarly, the gas price hike will impact the dyeing industry as it consumes gas. The dyeing cost of production for 1 kg

These three countries also have the benefit of currency devaluation against the US dollar, said Matin.

Readymade garments, which accounts for about 80 percent of the country's total exports, use less gas than the textile mills. Yet, the exporters are concerned as they are already under strain, industry insiders said.

Rubana Huq, president of Bangladesh Garment Manufacturers and Exporters Association, said gas bill would take up around 1.5 percent of their manufacturing cost.

"So, a 38 percent increase in gas price means almost 1 percent rise in the production cost. This may not sound much in terms of percentage, but it will be another blow to an industry struggling for every penny," she said.

Household consumers, especially members from the low-income group, said they would also be under pressure.

"I will have to spend nearly 8 percent of my income for paying the monthly gas bill. It is too much for people like me," said Elahi Munshi, a low level employee at a factory.

A resident of the capital's Jurain area, he breathed a sigh of relief knowing that the price of electricity would not go up

who were either stranded in the civil-war torn North African country or jailed or fell prey to human traffickers, were repatriated in 2018 and until June this year, Ashraful Islam said.

"We have asked the Bangladeshis in Libya not to make any sea voyage to Europe because it has become very risky," he added.

Those in Libya and are willing to return home are also being provided assistance to return home, he added.

Around 800 Bangladeshi migrants, who were either stranded in the civil-war torn North African country or jailed or fell prey to human traffickers, were repatriated in 2018 and until June this year, Ashraful Islam said.

"We have asked the Bangladeshis in Libya not to make any sea voyage to Europe because it has become very risky," he added.

Those in Libya and are willing to return home are also being provided assistance to return home, he added.

Children were targeted in particular because they could resist the least and could be intimidated easily, they said and urged parents to make their children aware of the danger.

Besides rape, incidents of extrajudicial killing, enforced disappearance, border killing, woman and child killing and torture, and attack on minority communities were persistent throughout the last six months, ASK said in its half yearly report.

At least 204 people fell victim to extrajudicial killings during the time. Of them, 193 were killed in so-called

shootouts, mostly involving police and Rab.

Nine people became victims of abduction and enforced disappearances. They were picked up by people who identified themselves as law enforcers, the rights body said in a press statement yesterday.

Two of them later returned home while one was shown arrested in a case. The rest remain traceless.

Some 127 women were the victims of sexual harassment and eight of them died by suicide. Three women and two men were killed while protesting sexual harassment, the ASK

report said.

Thirty prisoners died. At least 30 people were killed and 1,530 others injured in political violence.

Around 895 children were tortured or murdered during the time. Of them, 104 were killed, 40 died by suicide and 41 others died in mysterious circumstances, the report added.

In the bordering areas, 18 Bangladeshis were shot dead and two others tortured to death by the Indian Border Security Force, it added.

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No hiccup in hajj

FROM PAGE 12
"This year, we have taken some extra measures to operate the hajj flights so we are not scared of hajj flights cancellation like previous years", he added.

"We have already sold 99 percent of tickets, so we are confident that we will be able to operate hajj flight operations smoothly", Mahbub said.

Biman Bangladesh Airlines has already issued nearly 62,500 tickets out of 63,599 pilgrims and is expected to issue tickets for rest within three days, Biman sources said.

Biman will not have to cancel any flight this year in the face of passenger

shortage as the airline will not refund the ticket money if any pilgrim fails to board his or her scheduled flight.

Besides, the airline will charge \$200 per ticket in case of changing the travel date.

The cost per ticket will rise to \$300 if any pilgrim changes the travel date less than 24 hours of his or her scheduled flight.

A total of 1,27,198 Bangladeshis are about to perform hajj this year. Of them, Biman will carry 63,599 passengers, while Saudi Arabian Airlines will carry the rest.

Biman Managing Director and CEO Farhat Hassan Jamil and Director

Administration Ziauddin Ahmed also spoke at the briefing, among others.

The first hajj flight BG-3001 will leave Hazrat Shahjalal International Airport with 419 pilgrims at 7:15am on July 4, Jamil said.

This year, for the first time, immigration formalities of nearly half of the Bangladeshi pilgrims will be completed in Dhaka.

The airline will operate 18 flights to Madina from Dhaka and 15 flights from Dhaka to Madina for the first time this year.

Apart from Dhaka, 19 hajj flights will be operated from Chattogram and three from Sylhet.

Left parties call hartal for July 7

FROM PAGE 12
The decision to increase the price of gas was also criticised by other political parties including the Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP), Workers Party of Bangladesh (WPB) and Gonoforum.

Meanwhile, Awami League General Secretary and Road Transport and Bridges Minister Obaidul Quader also said the government was uneasy about the hike but it was done only for "adjustment".

Quader said the government was currently incurring a loss of about Tk 1,860 crore monthly. "And even after this adjustment, the government has to give subsidies (in this sector)," the minister told reporters at his office in the secretariat.

Asked about illegal gas connections and corruption in the sector, he said the government was able to reduce these through different initiatives.

According to the new tariff, households using a single burner will pay Tk 925 instead of Tk 750 a month. Those using a double burner will pay Tk 975 instead of Tk 800.

The energy regulator yesterday raised tariff for all users, saying the move would help the government bear the expenses of importing liquefied natural gas.

With this, gas tariff for households has more than doubled in the last decade.

Gas price was last hiked in June 2017.

BNP Senior Joint Secretary General Rizvi Ahmed said the government increased gas price "to allow relatives of the ruling party members to continue looting".

In a press conference at the BNP's Nayapaltan office, Rizvi said the AL had increased gas prices six times in the last 10 years.

"All kinds of industries will incur losses and investment will be hampered," he said, adding that the hike would increase inflation as it would impact transport fares and price of daily commodities.

"The decision is completely anti-people," he added.

Terming the gas price increase illegal, WPB yesterday held a protest rally in front of the

Jatiya Press Club.

The increase of gas price would not only impact households, but also the transport, industry and power sectors, reads a press release.

"It will create extreme pressure on poor and middle income people," it added.

In a statement, Gonoforum termed the price hike illogical and demanded its withdrawal.

"The government has failed to run the country. By increasing the gas price, a new burden is imposed upon people," it said.

Noted economist Prof Anu Muhammad said the government's decision to hike gas price was "illogical, unjust and unsystematic".

"The government has illogically imposed its arbitrary decision on people," he said at a protest rally by the National Committee to Protect Oil, Gas and Port in front of the Jatiya Press Club.

If gas price goes up, price of industrial products and their production cost will also go up. As a result, locally-produced goods cannot compete against imports and this would lead many industries to face shut downs, he added.

30 Bangladeshis

FROM PAGE 12
he told The Daily Star yesterday.

Repatriation of 42 others will be arranged by this week, he said, adding that altogether 107 are being repatriated home this week, he said.

The situation turned worse after the Libyan National Army, led by Khalifa Haftar, started an offensive against the internationally recognised Government of National Accord in April.

Soon after, Bangladesh embassy

630 women raped in last 6 months

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report said.

Thirty prisoners died. At least 30 people were killed and 1,530 others injured in political violence.

Around 895 children were tortured or murdered during the time. Of them, 104 were killed, 40 died by suicide and 41 others died in mysterious circumstances, the report added.

In the bordering areas, 18 Bangladeshis were shot dead and two others tortured to death by the Indian Border Security Force, it added.

Twenty-nine people suffered injuries when attacks were carried out on minority communities.

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