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Regulators fix LPG prices

12.5kg cylinder of state-owned company to cost Tk 591 while pvt companies to charge Tk 975

AKANDA MUHAMMAD JAHID

Bangladesh Energy Regulatory Commission, for the first time, fixed the retail prices of liquefied petroleum gas yesterday amid disappointment of consumers.

According to the new rate, the retail prices of a 12.5kg LPG cylinder sold by the state-owned Liquid Petroleum Gas Limited (LPG) will cost Tk 591, while a 12kg LPG cylinder of private companies will cost Tk 975.

The new rate came into effect yesterday, BERC Chairman Abdul Jalil said while announcing the prices via a virtual press conference.

The price of a 12.5kg LPG cylinder sold by the state-owned company was Tk 600. However, this gas could meet only 2 percent of the 12 lakh tonne of LPG consumed in Bangladesh every year.

Currently, a 12kg LPG cylinder is being sold in the retail market between Tk 980 and Tk 1,000, depending on companies, Tk 100 up from December.

In December last year, a 12kg LPG cylinder of Bashundhara was sold at Tk 950, Beximco at Tk 920, Jamuna Tk 940, Total Tk 950 and Petromax Tk 930.

Addressing the virtual press conference, the BERC chairman said they have set the prices based on the price rate set by Saudi Aramco, a Saudi Arabian oil company, in March, and the recommendation made by the stakeholders in a public hearing on January 14.

With the announcement of the new price, the decision to fix or re-fix the retail price of LPG has gone to a single

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Yesterday was Ful Biju celebrations. During this festival, Chakma people get up early, clean their homes and decorate them with flowers. They then release flowers onto rivers, canals and springs to seek blessings from the God of peace and prosperity. In the evening, they fill Buddhist temples with lit candles. The photo was taken yesterday.

PHOTO: ANVIL CHAKMA

Khaleda Zia doing fine

Says her personal physician

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia's physical condition is stable and she is asymptomatic, her doctor said yesterday, following news of her testing positive on Sunday. Her medical team said they were ready to hospitalise her if the situation arises.

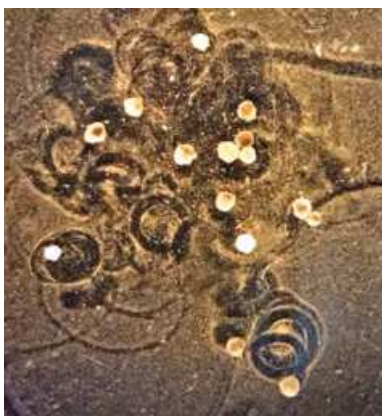
"Still, she is in good condition. We have full preparation. If we see any problem and think she needs to be admitted to a hospital, we will do so immediately," Dr FM Siddique, Khaleda's personal physician, told journalists yesterday.

After examining Khaleda at her house, he said, "She has not lost her sense of smell and taste. She is quite well. She is carrying on with her normal routine."

Quoting the BNP leader, the doctor said, "She was saying if her staffers were not positive and she was not tested, she wouldn't have known that she's Covid-19 positive."

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Scientists create 'living robots'



INDEPENDENT.CO.UK

Scientists have created new living robots that have memory and are able to assemble themselves.

The "xenobots" are an updated version of biological machines that were first unveiled last year.

Those living robots were made out of the cells of frogs by scientists from Tufts University and the University of Vermont. The tiny machines could conduct a host of tasks and actions, including moving themselves and other things around

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CURBS TO CONTROL COVID-19 TRANSMISSION

Engage community to make it more effective

Says discussants at CPD dialogue

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

With the government announcing restrictions on businesses and people's movements to curb the spike in coronavirus cases and deaths, speakers at a discussion yesterday urged for a balance between saving lives and protecting livelihoods.

In a virtual discussion organised by the Centre for Policy Dialogue, speakers also said curbing the spread of the virus would be easier if people of the community were engaged in the efforts.

"Our experience is that maintaining health safety guidelines is not possible by keeping everything open... But the economy is the issue... Keeping everything in mind, we have to set a fiscal policy for everyone," Dr Mustafizur Rahman, distinguish fellow of the CPD, said at the discussion.

He said weaknesses in maintaining health safety guidelines were observed from both the government and the people during more than a year of living amid the pandemic.

"If we can give financial support to people, we could enforce this circuit-breaker [lockdown] strictly. But we have no such fiscal policy."

In the dialogue conducted by CPD Executive Director Dr Fahmida Khatun, epidemiologists, business leaders, workers' representatives and other experts spoke on ways to simultaneously safeguard health and the economy during the pandemic.

Dr Mushtaq Hussain, consultant of the Institute of Epidemiology, Disease Control and Research (IEDCR), said, "If infected people are treated timely, they will not infect others and [that] will reduce deaths."

At the same time, different approach-based initiatives, including community-level supervision, should be taken to check the virus transmission, he said.

"Our objective is to reduce transmission; not shutting down everything."

Saying the latest surge in Covid-19 infection was a consequence of not following health rules in January and February, the epidemiologist said, "The government's current initiatives will have a positive outcome for sure. But there is a need to increase [the number of Covid-19] tests."

He suggested building community isolation centres that can be operated with the help of patients' relatives.

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Rejoinder, our reply

SM Nasif Shams, son of Pabna-1 lawmaker Samsul Haque Tuku, has sent a rejoinder to a report run by The Daily Star on March 15 under the headline "Land grabbing in Pabna: District admin to probe allegation against MP's son".

Nafis, an assistant professor at the Institute of Energy at Dhaka University, in the March 31 rejoinder said the accusations and information mentioned in the report by certain law-breaking individuals are totally false. Their opinion mentioned in the report is biased and out of sheer enmity.

Terming local Awami League leaders and others who lodged complaints against him "criminals", Nafis said they have been involved in narcotics, prostitution, sand lifting and other businesses for years and are against any development activities in the region. He said they obstructed a number of development activities in the past.

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ROAD TO FREEDOM THIS DAY IN BANGLADESH LIBERATION WAR HISTORY

War Cabinet formed

APRIL 13, 1971

SHAMSUDDOZA SAJEN

BANGLADESH WAR CABINET

A six-member war cabinet headed by Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman was formed today. It was announced that Syed Nazrul Islam as vice-president and the Awami League party General Secretary Tajuddin Ahmad as prime minister, would guide and coordinate the war of liberation. According to the announcement, other members of the government are Khandaker Mushtaq Ahmed, Capt Mansoor Ali A. H. M. Kamaruzzaman.

Asked if India would recognise the new government of Bangladesh, Indira Gandhi said today "the matter will receive due consideration".

DINAJPUR, LALMONIRHAT FALL
Two towns -- Dinajpur and Lalmonirhat -- in the northwest of Bangladesh fell today to the Pakistani army as battles with Bangladesh resistance forces were fought in many parts of



the country, the Press Trust of India (PTI) reported.

PTI said Dinajpur had been overrun by an army column. It added that the Bangladesh liberation army inflicted heavy casualties on the column but was forced to withdraw from the town under pressure of artillery fire. The second town, Lalmonirhat, was reportedly recaptured by the Pakistan army after a bitter fight.

The PTI reported earlier today that the annual monsoon rains had broken early in Bangladesh and were hampering the movement of Pakistani troops. It said the rains, which had come about four weeks early, had hit the districts of Comilla, Chittagong and Sylhet.

PTI further reported that a

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Student found dead at Cumilla madrasa

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Cumilla

The body of a madrasa student was recovered from his madrasa in Cumilla city's Sangraish area on Sunday night.

Sabbir Hossain Sajib, 7, was a student of Pak Panjatan Mujibia Sunnia Hafizia Madrasa. He was from Jagannathpur village in Cumilla Sadar upazila.

Victim's mother Fulmoti Begum told journalists, "I went to the madrasa with food for my son in the evening. But Headmaster Jonaid Ahmed informed me that Sajib was on leave. As Sajib did not go home, I suspected that the headmaster lied."

She along with locals later searched the madrasa

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A sand-laden vessel sails through the Buriganga river, which flows past the southwest outskirts of Dhaka city. It is now considered one of the most polluted rivers in the world. Rampant dumping of human and industrial waste for years now has been the primary cause for such pollution. The photo was taken yesterday.

PHOTO: RASHED SHUMON

Pandemic 'a long way from over'

Says WHO chief; India overtakes Brazil as second worst-hit nation after US

AGENCIES

Confusion and complacency in addressing Covid-19 means the pandemic is a long way from over, but it can be brought under control in months with proven public health measures, WHO Director-General Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus said yesterday.

"We too want to see societies and economies reopening, and travel and trade resuming," Tedros told a news briefing. "But right now, intensive care units in many countries are overflowing and people are dying - and it's totally avoidable."

"The Covid19 pandemic is a long way from over. But we have many reasons for optimism. The decline in cases and deaths during the first two months of the year shows that this virus and its variants can be stopped," he added, saying transmission was being driven by "confusion, complacency and inconsistency in public health measures."

WHO team leader on Covid-19 Maria van Kerkove told the news briefing the pandemic was growing exponentially, with a 9% increase in cases last week, the seventh consecutive week of increases, and a 5% rise in deaths.

Tedros said that in some countries, despite continuing transmission, restaurants and nightclubs were full and markets were open and crowded with few people taking precautions.

In India, hundreds of thousands of Hindu devotees yesterday flocked to take a holy bath in Ganges river, even as the nation racked up the world's highest tally of new daily coronavirus infections.

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PRAYER TIMING APRIL 13

Fajr Zohr Asr Maghrib Esha
AZAN 4:35 12:45 4:45 6:24 7:45
JAMAAT 5:10 1:15 5:00 6:28 8:15

SOURCE: ISLAMIC FOUNDATION