

Consumers complain LPG price higher than govt rate in Khulna markets

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Online Desk: Liquefied petroleum gas (LPG) price witnessed a record hike recently amid increase in prices of essentials and fuel. Consumers now say they are not getting LPG at the government-set price in Khulna city either. It has come as another blow to low- and middle-income groups as they have to pay Tk 100 to 150 more than the rate for a 12 kg LPG cylinder set by the government., reports UNB

Bangladesh Energy Regulatory Commission (BERC) increased the LPG price by Tk 22.15 per kg to Tk 124.85 for the month of February. As per the new price, 12 kg LPG cylinder cost has been increased by Tk 266 as a retail consumer will get it at Tk 1498 instead of previous price of Tk 1,232 including VAT. Consumers alleged that there was a supply crunch in the LPG market in the last two weeks.

Apprehending a possible hike in LPG price, the traders stockpiled gas cylinders instead of selling those, leading to shortage of LPG in market and the supply situation became normal after increase in gas price on February 2, they said. A large number of people in Khulna city, municipality and adjacent villages depend on LPG. Sohrab Hossain, a resident of Gobarchaka area of the city, said, “The government has fixed the price at Tk 1,498 for a 12 kg cylinder but the retailers are charging Tk 1700. After arguments, I bought a cylinder at Tk 1650.”

Visiting different areas in the city, this UNB correspondent found that there is no 12 kg gas cylinder below Tk 1600 anywhere. It is being sold either at Tk 1650 or Tk 1700 across the city. Iqbal Hasan, a resident of Sheikhpura area of the city, said that the government set the price by keeping a profit of Tk 40/50 for wholesalers and retailers but they want to make more profit. “The greed for more profit is emptying the pockets of the customers. But there is no one to address this,” Iqbal added.

Birendra Nath, a resident of Sir Iqbal Road, said, “Shopkeepers insult us when we ask about government-fixed prices. We are helpless.” BERC officials said that the prices witnessed such an excessive rise due to huge increase in the prices of Saudi CP (contract price). Last month, as per the Saudi CP, the LPG price was \$599.59 per metric ton while the current month’s CP was set at \$790 per MT with an increase by \$190.25 per MT, he added. Bangladeshi LPG operators normally import their products from the Middle-Eastern market on the basis of Saudi CP.