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Gas price may double in posh areas

The government may consider doubling household gas price in Dhaka's posh areas, that get uninterrupted supply, to prevent wastage, said the head of energy regulator yesterday.

"Households misuse gas as there is no metre. To save gas, we can straightaway increase the gas prices by 100 percent in the areas where people get round-the-clock supply," said Syed Yusuf Hossain, chairman of Bangladesh Energy Regulatory Commission (Berc).

He said gas prices in areas such as Gulshan, Banani, Dhanmondi, Uttara and DOHS could be increased.

"But we should not increase the price for areas where people get gas supply only at night for five to six hours," Hossain said while speaking at a deal signing ceremony at Ruposhi Bangla Hotel in the city.

Gas Transmission Company Ltd, a company of Petrobangla, struck the agreement with Man Industries (India) Ltd, a line-pipe maker, for supplying pipes worth Tk 600 crore for the Bibiyana-Dhanua gas pipeline project.

A consumer with double burners now pays Tk 450 per month with the assumption that they use the stoves for eight hours a day and burn 86 cubic meter of gas. The price of gas per cubic meter is Tk 5.16.

The home burners waste around 65 percent of gas. In addition, many domestic users keep their burners on to save matchsticks.

The Berc chief said Petrobangla should give emphasis on work-over, maintenance and overhauling of wells and digging new wells near the old ones as short-term measures "to augment production by up to 20 percent".

"We should also replace the less efficient machinery with quality and new ones to ensure proper use of energy. We need to do that even if the initial cost is higher because we will get good result in the future," he observed.

Currently, Bangladesh produces gas of around 2,000 million cubic feet a day (mmcf) against a demand of more than 2,500 mmcf.

Hossain also said the Gas Development Fund, in which Tk 1,200 crore is being deposited every year, can be used in various projects. "The Gas Development Fund Policy awaits approval. It is now at the final stage."

Finance minister AMA Muhith, energy adviser Tawfiq-e-Elahi Chowdhury, state minister for power Muhammad Enamul Huq, Chairman of the parliamentary standing committee on energy ministry Mohammed Shubid Ali Bhuiyan, Petrobangla Chairman Prof Md Hossain Monsur and energy secretary Mohammad Mejbahuddin were present at the meeting.