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ENERGY

Ministry to cut price of CNG by 3 baht

YUTHANA PRAIWAN

The Energy Ministry announced yesterday that it will reduce the retail price of compressed natural gas (CNG) for public transport by three baht per kilogramme for three months, effective April 1.

The measure, passed by the Energy Policy Administration Committee, applies to all public transport, including buses, minibuses, taxis, tuk-tuks, songthaews and interprovincial buses.

This means CNG will cost 10.62 baht per kg, down from 13.62 baht, starting next Wednesday and ending June 30. Private vehicles will be

unaffected by the policy.

Energy Minister Sontirat Sontijirawong said the Covid-19 pandemic is more severe than expected and low-income people will need government assistance to get through the crisis.

The move to discount CNG follows a 3% cut to electric bills, a fixed fuel tariff for monthly power bills and a return of electricity deposits through the state's 40-billion-baht relief package.

Policymakers last week also reduced the price of liquefied petroleum gas (LPG) by 3 baht per kg for all segments of LPG consumers, bringing the retail price of a standard 15kg LPG

cylinder down 45 baht to 318 baht per cylinder, excluding transport costs. The new price of LPG will be available next Tuesday.

Cutting the price of LPG was done through a reduction in levy collection to the Oil Fuel Fund Office.

The price cuts come after several taxi operators called on policymakers a week ago to help reduce their cost-of-living expense to help with the severe drop in riders in recent weeks.

"Public vehicle operators can no longer operate at this price, so we decided to help them," Mr Sontirat said.

In conjunction with aid for the

transport sector, policymakers will conduct a study to determine how to transition the sector to electric vehicles (EVs).

The first step of the EV transition will be putting an end to the Electricity Generating Authority of Thailand, Metropolitan Electricity Authority and Provincial Electricity Authority as the only three buyers of electricity, as the arrangement prevents private entities from selling retail power chargers necessary for EVs.

Mr Sontirat said the EV project will begin as a pilot with the long-term goal of improving air quality in urban areas.