

Prices of essentials continue to spiral in Chittagong

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

Prices of essentials in local markets have continued to spiral beyond the purchasing capacity of common people since the national budget for 2005-06 fiscal was placed on June 9.

Among the essential commodities, powdered milk and sugar markets are most unstable in terms of price changes.

Prices of milk powder of different brands per kilogram spiralled upwards by Tk 10 to 20 in the retail market, sources said, adding that a one kg Dano packet now sells at Tk 292 to 295, up from Tk 272 to 275.

Prices of other brands such as Starship, Fresh, Kwality, Diploma and Marks also increased by Tk 8 to 12.

Although the government has already withdrawn a 25 percent

supplementary duty, imposed in the budget, the traders have not budged from their position, alleged some consumers.

They said such an attitude of the traders is unethical and unacceptable, and they must reduce prices since the government has withdrawn the supplementary duty.

The price of sugar is also moving upward, but at a slower rate, sources said.

Before the announcement of the budget, one kg of sugar sold at Tk 29 to 31, but the price now ranges between Tk 34 and 36.

Some unscrupulous traders had stockpiled sugar prior to the budget to exploit the situation, sources said, adding that they are now selling the item at higher prices.

Also, edible oils are being sold at much higher prices in the port city.

Jagannath Hall Alumni Assoc reunion held

BSS, Dhaka

The reunion of Dhaka University Jagannath Hall Alumni Association was held at the Teachers-Students Centre (TSC) of the university on Friday.

DU Vice-Chancellor Prof SMA Faiz addressed the function as chief guest saying the association members has built a bridge through this reunion between the alumnus and the fresher.

Association President Prof Durgadas Bhattachariya was in the chair. DU Treasurer Prof Syed Rashidul Hasan addressed the reunion as the special guest.

Former residential students of the hall, including Suranjit Sengupta MP, Hiralal Bala, Rangalal Sen, Ajay Dasgupta, DN Bepary, Dr Nim Chandra Bhoumik, Swapan Kumer Saha, JN Bhoumik and Manoj Kanti Roy took part in reminiscence session.

Opsonin raffle draw held

The raffle draw of "Pick & Win" section of the quarterly Opsonin medical newsletter was held at Opsonin Bhawan in the city recently, says a press release.

Prof Latifa Shamsuddin, chairperson of Department of Obstetrics and Gynaecology of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujib Medical University (BSMMU) conducted the draw and announced the names of winners as chief guest.

Managing Director Abdur Rouf Khan, head of Marketing and Sales Operations Arshad-ul-Alam, Chief Financial Officer M Shafiqul Alam, General Manager, Sales Md Ashraf Dawood and Marketing Manager Jahangir Hyder were present.

Prof Latifa lauded the newsletter saying it would help the medical professionals keep updated.

She also emphasised continuing medical education for the doctors to gather in-depth knowledge of recent advancements in medical science.



PHOTO: STAR

Workers' Party President Rashed Khan Menon speaks at a press conference at the party office in the city yesterday.

Budget won't bring any change to people's fate

WP leaders tell press confce

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

It has become an imperative for the nation to oust the alliance government after its proposed budget of black money, corruption and looting, said the leaders of Workers Party of Bangladesh (WPB) yesterday.

Addressing a press conference after a two-day central committee meeting, they said the budget would not bring any change in the fate of the common people, rather it will increase their problems and dilemmas.

"The budget will lead to price hike of essentials increasing the sufferings of the middle and lower class people. There is no apparent proposition in it for employment, rather unemployment will take place due to closure of small and medium industries. The budget also fails to provide subsidies to farmers although the government highly talked about it," said party General Secretary Bimol Biswas while reading out a written statement.

He said the duty over the reconditioned cars and tax over the mobile SIM cards will take them away from the grip of the middle class people.

Party President Rashed Khan Menon said the government is severely detached from the people, and the result of Chittagong City Corporation election is a testimony to this fact.

He said personal adultery is now being used in politics indicating a serious declination in the country's political culture. It also puts a grave indignity upon women, he added.

Referring to a comment of the outgoing US Ambassador to Bangladesh Harry K Thomas that 'either compromise or an alternative force will mount,' the speakers said the alliance government is placing the democratic and constitutional rights of the people under a threat.

They said the government has appointed a disputed man as chief election commissioner, and if it doesn't reform the election commission and caretaker government system as per the demand of the opposition parties, the next general election will not be free and fair.

Polite Bureau Members Haidar Akbar Khan Rano, Nurul Hassan, Anisur Rahman Mallik, Mahmudul Hasan Manik, Azizur Rahman, and Central Committee Members Hazera Sultana, and Kamrul Ahsan were present on the occasion.

EXPLOSIVE CASE

2yr-old accused exempted from appearing before court

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Khulna

A court yesterday exempted two-year-old baby, Rasul Chowdhury, from appearing before it any more as an accused in a bomb attack case.

The infant is one of the 14 accused in a case under explosive substances act filed with Khulna thana on March 8 last year, when he was about one year old.

Judge of the Special Tribunal, Khulna, AKM Ishtiaque Hossain, will decide on exclusion of the baby's name from the case on the next date of its hearing, July 26.

The warrant of arrest against the child however stands cancelled under an order of the court.

Rasul went to the court at 10:30 am yesterday in his father's lap.

Son of local businessman Zunaid Chowdhury, the baby appeared in the court in response to the summons issued on June 6.

Advocate Mominul Islam, Khulna district coordinator of Manabdhikar Sangstha, moved a petition praying to the tribunal to exempt Rasul from any further appearance and exclude his name from the case.

Sub Inspector Shafiqul Alam had lodged the case naming 14 persons including 11 extremists as accused in a bomb attack on the night of March 7 last year on police near Shilpa Bank building in the city.

'Plant trees for ecological balance'

BSS, Dhaka

Information Minister M Shamsul Islam said yesterday there is no alternative to planting trees to maintain ecological balance and prevent environmental degradation.

"Presence of trees on earth is essential for a healthy living," the minister said while he was inaugurating a weeklong tree plantation movement and tree fair-2005 as the chief guest on the Munshiganj District Judge's Court premises, an official handout said here.

Deputy Commissioner of Munshiganj Mohammad Anisuddin Manjur chaired the function. Local political leaders and district officials spoke on the occasion.

Thousands protest against Phulbari coal mine project

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Dinajpur

Thousands of people from Phulbari, Birampur and Parbartipur upazilas staged demonstration in Phulbari under Dinajpur district yesterday in protest against the coal mine project under Asia Energy Corporation (Bangladesh).

At a protest rally held on the Urboshi cinema hall premises, the speakers urged the government and the authorities concerned to stop the "so-called" coal mine project implementation in Phulbari and nearby two upazilas. They also gave 21 days' ultimatum for this.

Md Shajahan Ali Sarker Putu, chairman of Phulbari Pourashava and convenor of Phulbari Protection Committee, presided over the meeting attended by political leaders, businessmen, teachers, NGO representatives, journalists and people from all walks of life.

'Restore normalcy on DU campus'

DU CORRESPONDENT

Samajtantrik Chhatra Front (SCF), a left-leaning student forum, yesterday urged the Dhaka University (DU) authorities to take necessary steps to bring back normalcy on the campus.

They also urged the authorities to meet their seven-point demand including resignation of the proctor.

The SCF made the demands at a rally behind the Swaparjito Swadhinata Sculpture near the Teachers Students Centre (TSC).

Addressing the rally, SCF President Khalequzzaman Lipon said they will resist any move by the government to ban student politics.

DU unit President Janardan Dutta Nantu and General Secretary Hossain Ahmed also spoke.

Sunil Banerjee hospitalised

BSS, Dhaka

Senior journalist Sunil Banerjee, who suffered a heart attack over a week ago, is now recovering at Lab Aid Hospital, family sources said yesterday.

Sunil suffered the heart attack on June 10. He is now under the treatment of Dr Sohrabuzzaman.

The family requested all colleagues and well-wishers to pray for his early recovery.

Later the committee handed the Phulbari upazila nirbahi officer a memorandum addressed to the prime minister.

Asia Energy, engaged in carrying out a feasibility study on Phulbari mine since April 2004, has recently completed its test drilling operations in the five square kilometre area, boring as many as 107 holes in Phulbari upazila.

Under their comprehensive plan, the company will develop and extract coal from the country's largest coal mine with a total reserve of about 470 million tons of coal.

Asia Energy, a subsidiary of the UK-based Carbine Mining Group, is planning to start the physical works on the mine from next year after completion of the present study in September.

Meanwhile, Asia Energy sources said an estimated 6.5 square km area of Phulbari and its nearby two upazilas will be required for extracting coal from the mine through applying the open pit methodology.

The project details will be finalised after environmental and social impact assessment, they added.



Biswapati Barua Ashoke Barua

Buddhist Fed Executives

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Biswapati Barua and Ashoke Barua have been elected president and general secretary of the Bangladesh Buddhist Federation while Prof Dr Sukomal Barua has been elected executive president, says a press release.

The election of the executive committee of the federation was held at the International Buddhist Monastery at Merul Badda in the city on Friday.

Biswapati-Ashoke panel won absolute majority against their rival SK Chowdhury-Jibananando panel.

On June 3, the federation elected 123 councillors who elected the executive committee members. It was the first election of the federation since its inception 22 years ago.

Biman Bihari Chowdhury Barua, aided by Uttam Barua and Shobhan Barua, conducted the election.



Prof Latifa Shamsuddin of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujib Medical University (BSMMU) conducted the raffle draw of "Pick & Win" section of the quarterly Opsonin medical newsletter as chief guest.