

People who live on a shoestring budget - members of the middle class - are finding it increasingly difficult to keep the body and soul together. Taslima Akhtar lives in Mirpur and with the meager income of her schoolteacher husband runs a family of four. "Najir Shai used to be sold at Tk 19 a kilogram a year ago, now its Tk 28 per kg," she says. Not only the price of rice, prices of pulses, sugar and milk have increased by 20 percent within a week. Even baby-food has not been spared: "One of the popular powered-milk brand has raised its price by almost 200 Taka," Taslima says.

Traders blame it on the increasing fuel-price, "Earlier I would spend around Tk 10,000 to bring a truckload of onions from Pabna to Dhaka. It has now jumped to Tk 12,000," a trader in Karwan Bazaar says.



Price hike of essentials, it seems, has become a taboo subject for our politicians. The Finance Ministry claims to have tightly-gripped the wild-horse of inflation, the Finance Minister (FM) thinks the country's economy is in full employment, but along with witnessing these bombast - characteristic of BNP Ministers - we come across abject poverty and sheer unemployment.