

And with Ramadan in the offing, one is not sure when this helical trend on the market will relent. Speculations are ripe among grocers that prices will roll on further. This reasoning, driven by a pervasive consumerism, has resulted in mass hoarding.

Vegetable traders across the city, sensing a bullish trend in the market, have hiked the prices of goods they sell. So, though like their demand, the supply of vegetables has remained constant, common vegetables like aubergine (Begun), okra (Dharosh), turnip (Mula), bitter root (Ol Kochu), bottle gourd (Jali Kumra), green bean (Borboti) or radish (Shal Gom) sting if one ventures into buying them.

Price hike of essentials, it seems, has become a taboo subject for our politicians. 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. One, who has a shred of intelligence left in the brain, would not make such irresponsible comments, not one who happens to be in charge of the exchequer. Full employment, in economic terms, is a situation where only 4 percent of the total workforce are unemployed. If what M Saifur Rahman says is true then we have to believe that, as far as full employment is concerned, we live in a country where everyone seeking work readily finds it.

As a student of Economics Rahman should know that full employment is a utopia that most of the developed countries have not been able to achieved. It is no surprise then, when prices of essentials are going up, the FM would claim normalcy. With an FM like him we hardly need anyone else to botch things up.

As part from the ruling BNP, the main opposition Awami League (AL) and its Left partners have remained indifferent to the ever-ascending market. Last Sunday Communist Party of Bangladesh (CPB) has called a countrywide dawn to dusk strike to protest, among other things, the price-hike of oil. The strike, besides falling flat to shut down the country, has failed to

make the point. The only case, if there is any, that has been proven is how the CPB's strength has dwindled from a burgeoning 'second force' to an object of pity. It is sad that the party could not enforce a strike it had so stubbornly called.

The AL, on the other hand, is acting like an old pet that does not want to learn new tricks. Whenever it is in the opposition, the party faces, what it looks like, an age-old paradox: What to do with the parliament. So, instead of using the parliament as a platform to shed light on the BNP's corruption and misrule, the AL, time and again, has resorted to Martial-law-era tools like street-agitation and strike.

It is indeed true that the AL, in most of the times, is not given a proper chance to speak in the floor. But

over the years as the main opposition the AL has developed a strange relationship with the parliament, where the party does not want to go to in the first place.

As an opposition, it can be fairly said that, the AL has been a failure. So does the BNP as the ruling party. It has lately declared two days of weekly holiday; the reason given for this is rising price of oil on the international market. The irony does not escape us: Instead of reigning in the price spiral, the government wants citizens to stay home. What they will eat, it does not care.

-Star File Photo

