

Fare of CNG 3-wheelers to go up from May

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The government has decided to raise the fare for CNG three-wheelers, with effect from May 1.

Communications Adviser Maj Gen (ret'd) MA Matin announced the government decision at a meeting with CNG three-wheeler owners of the capital at his office yesterday.

Under the new fare structure, starting charge was set at Tk 15, which was Tk 12 earlier. Fare for first two kilometres has been hiked to Tk 13.50 from Tk 12 and fare for each extra kilometre would be Tk 5.50.

Meanwhile, the new waiting

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Inflation climbs on food price hike

REJAUL KARIM BYRON

After a steady decline for three consecutive months, inflation rate rose by 1.34 percentage points in February because of continuous hike of food prices.

According to Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics (BBS), the inflation rate was 7.28 percent in February and 5.94 percent in January. The highest inflation rate in recent times was 7.31 percent in last October.

The BBS data also show inflation rate of food items increased by 1.71 percentage points in February while the rate of non-food items rose 0.80 points during the same time.

Food price index soared to 8.36 percent in February, which was 6.65 percent in January. Inflation rate of non-food items was 5.74 percent in February and 4.95 percent in January, according to available data.

A Bangladesh Bank official said demand and supply of essential commodities faced a setback in February due to the joint forces' indiscriminate drives against hoarding, resulting in continuous hike of food prices.

"Such unsystematic drives caused shortage of commodities resulting in commodity price hike," the official said.

A finance ministry official said the law enforcers have been asked

to take assistance from the National Board of Revenue, Anti-Corruption Commission and Bangladesh Bank before going for such drives.

The government also introduced fair price shops, which helped reduce essentials prices, except edible oil, slightly in recent times, he said.

According to a Trading Corporation of Bangladesh (TCB) report prepared last month, the prices of essentials have also seen a constant rise in recent years.

The TCB report showed that prices of all types of rice went up by 2 to 13 percent in February while price of coarse rice, mostly

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Ex-health minister Mosharraf sued for extortion

COURT CORRESPONDENT

Former health minister Khandaker Mosharraf Hossain and six others were sued yesterday for extorting Tk 15,000 and demanding Tk 50,000 more from an activist of Awami League (AL).

Mohammad Abul Hossain of the city's Jatrabari area lodged the case with the Metropolitan Magistrate's Court.

Magistrate ABM Abdul Fattah directed the officer-in-charge (OC) of the Paltan Police Station to register the complaint as an FIR (first information report) on investigation into the matter.

The other accused are Mohsin alias 'Goru Chora' Mohsin, Delwar Hossain alias Dilu, Mostafa, Awal, Abul Kalam alias Chowdhury and Titu.

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Bangladesh party on Protea conquest

SPORTS REPORTER

Incredible and unbelievable were the most used words as the country erupted into frenzied celebration moments after the Tigers stamped a fascinating 67-run win against South Africa on Sunday.

"It was unbelievable. We beat the number one ranked team in the world and that too by a big margin," said Adil Ahmed as he rushed towards the Teachers Student Centre (TSC) of Dhaka University, which has become a rendezvous for Tigers' fans over the years.

"(Mohammad) Ashraful was incredible. His innings showed what he is capable of. We love Ashraful," remarked Shamim, amidst hysterical celebration at the TSC, which turned into a human sea even before dawn broke.

Ashraful plotted the biggest upset in the World Cup with a brilliant 87 as Bangladesh recovered from a jumpy start to post a challenging 251-8.

"We also want to give full credit to our bowlers, especially the spinners. They bowled beautifully. And the fielding was superb. It will live vividly in my memory the way Shakib (Al Hasan) took the return catch of (Justin) Kemp and the direct hit of Tamim (Iqbal)," said Shamim's friend Anif.

It was indeed a stupendous success for the Tigers. The first-ever win against the Proteas also silenced the critics, who after two heavy defeats against world champions Australia and New Zealand started to say that the Tigers' victory over India in the first round was nothing but a fluke.

Country's leading newspapers also hailed the victory of the national cricket team. Despite being up against a pressing deadline, all the dailies ran banner headlines and

printed special editions. "Tigers blow South Africa away", read The Independent while The News Today read: "Teen-powered Tigers thrash Proteas."

"Bangladesh sparkle yet again", read the lead story of the Daily Prothom Alo. The highest circulated

Bangla daily of the country also said, "the world's best beaten and "two more to go" while referring to England and Wets Indies, the two Test teams whom Bangladesh are yet to conquer in

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PHOTO: STAR

Jubilant cricket fans turn up near TSC of Dhaka University to celebrate Bangladesh's victory over South Africa in the World Cup early yesterday.

ALLEGATION OF PATRONISING MILITANTS

Complaint against Rajshahi mayor

Ex-minister Aminul, ex-SP Masud Miah, DC also accused



Mizanur Rahman Minu

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Rajshahi

A complaint was lodged yesterday against four people including Rajshahi City Corporation Mayor Mizanur Rahman Minu and former post and telecommunications minister barrister Aminul Huq accusing them of aiding and abetting militants of the banned Islamist outfit Jama'atul Mujahideen Bangladesh (JMB).

The other two accused in the

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NATIONAL ID, VOTER LIST

EC to launch pilot project in month

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Election Commission (EC) has now decided to launch a pilot project to study the feasibility of its much-talked project for simultaneously preparing a voter list with photographs and national identity cards before holding the next parliamentary election.

The pilot project, to be run on experimental basis, will start within a month in a remote rural and an urban area to assess the time limit and the constraints to implementing

the EC's mega voter list project at an estimated cost of Tk 400 crore in next 18 months, EC sources said.

"The Election Commission decided on Saturday to launch a pilot project, but we did not identify the areas where the pilot projects will be implemented," Election Commissioner Sahul Hossain said yesterday. "Through this pilot project, possible difficulties will also be identified to avert those in implementing the voter list project," he added.

Chief Election Commissioner

(CEC) ATM Shamsul Huda in a press briefing on Thursday said the EC decided to simultaneously prepare a voter list with photographs and national identity cards in next 18 months. He also said no election will be held in next 18 months, which is the 'minimum time' required to implement the voter list project.

The CEC's statement triggered debates regarding the time for preparing the voter list to hold the

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Arrest warrant against Joynal Hazari

UNB, Feni

The Special Judge's Court here yesterday issued warrant of arrest against Joynal Hazari, former lawmaker of Awami League, upon a case filed by the Anti-Corruption Commission (ACC) for failure to submit his statement of wealth.

Deputy Director of Comilla ACC Shafiqur Rahman Bhuiyan who is also in-charge of Feni district, filed the case. After hearing the petitioner, Senior Special Judge Nazrul Islam ordered for issuing warrant of arrest against Hazari.

Hazari is accused under the provisions of ACC Act and Emergency Ordinance that may earn him a maximum of 11 years jail, the prosecutor said.

The ACC notice for submission of statement of wealth of Hazari and his family members was served on February 20 asking for compliance within 72 hours.

Hazari fled the country before

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ACC chief starts countrywide views exchange today

UNB, Dhaka

Anti-Corruption Commission (ACC) Chairman Lt Gen (ret'd) Hasan Mashhud Chowdhury begins today a countrywide visit to exchange views with the people.

On the first day of his planned tour of all the districts, he will visit four northern districts -- Panchagarh, Thakurgaon, Nilphamari and Dinajpur.

"I will go out tomorrow... My aim is to involve people from all walks of life across the country not only for the eradication of corruption but also the prevention of corruption," the ACC chairman told reporters yesterday afternoon.

"I will begin with four districts and if this trip is fruitful, then I will visit other places."

Apart from holding views-exchange meetings with people from all walks of life at the DC offices in the four districts to create mass awareness against corruption and discussing ways to prevent the menace, he will also visit the ACC offices in the districts.

General (ret'd) Mashhud is scheduled to leave Dhaka by a helicopter at 7:45am.



PHOTO: STAR

An infant receives polio vaccine at an immunisation centre on Topkhana Road in the capital on the 15th National Immunisation Day yesterday.

Duta protests Mainul's remarks on teachers

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Dhaka University Teachers' Association (Duta) has strongly protested the recent remarks on the university teachers by Law Adviser Barrister Mainul Hossain, terming those "objectionable."

At an emergency meeting on Saturday night, the Duta also observed that neither the law adviser nor anyone has any right to defame the teachers in general due to some corrupt teachers' offences, a Duta statement said yesterday.

Duta President Prof Sadrul Amin who chaired the meeting called for reviewing the law adviser's comments made at a seminar organised by Bangladesh Philosophy Association at the Teachers Students Centre (TSC) of Dhaka University on April 4.

"In particular, his (law adviser's) remark -- 'we'll make true teachers out of them (teachers), if we are in power' -- is highly objectionable," the Duta statement said adding, "this meeting wants to remind him that it is the duty and responsibility of the present caretaker government and its advisers to hand over

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Dhaka to hand Delhi zero-duty item list

Ifttekhar hails Indian trade concession for Saarc LDCs

UNB, Dhaka

Bangladesh will hand over a list of its products for zero-duty access to the Indian market following the Indian prime minister's assurance in this regard, Foreign Affairs Adviser Ifttekhar Ahmed Chowdhury yesterday said.

Briefing newsmen on the outcome of the 14th Saarc Summit held in New Delhi last week, he said Dhaka considers Prime Minister Manmohan Singh's decision on trade concession to Saarc LDCs as a welcome development.

During the summit, the Indian prime minister announced zero-rated duty on the export products from the LDCs in the Saarc forum before the end of this year. He also said New Delhi would reduce its sensitive list of products.

About the bilateral meeting between Chief Adviser Fakhruddin Ahmed and Manmohan Singh in Delhi, the adviser said, "India has sought a list from us and we will hand over it" to accrue the benefit of India's decision to liberalise trade

with the LDCs.

About the bilateral talks with Saarc leaders, Ifttekhar said among four LDCs -- Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, Nepal and the Maldives -- Bangladesh is the worst affected for non-tariff and para-tariff barriers.

Presently, Dhaka suffers a huge trade deficit of around \$2.5 billion with Delhi. Bangladesh has long been demanding withdrawal of non-tariff and para-tariff barriers to entry of its products to the Indian market to have the trade deficit cut down.

Terming the Fakhruddin-Manmohan meeting productive, Ifttekhar said they raised Bangladesh's three concerns -- undemarcation of over 6.5 km of boundary, sharing the Teesta River waters and India's Tipaimukh dam, and tariffs on Bangladeshi exportable.

He said India has assured that they would not divert common-river water through the Tipaimukh dam while remaining issues would

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