



A bus makes it way through big potholes on Lalbagh-Islambagh Road in the city yesterday. The road remains unrepaired for long, but the authorities have turned a blind eye.

Withdraw fuel price hike

Political parties demand

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Different organisations yesterday continued their protests against the fuel price hike by holding different programmes in the capital and demanded cancellation of the decision.

Gono Forum at a meeting demanded of the government to cancel its decision to increase the fuel price.

The meeting presided over by acting general secretary Advocate Subrata Chowdhury expressed anxiety over the decision saying that the price hike would increase the miseries of people.

Communist Party of Bangladesh (CPB) declared a countrywide protest and demonstration programme against the fuel price hike on July 9.

CPB President Majumdar Ahsan Khan at a meeting at the party office in the city said the price hike would increase the production cost of food items.

Leaders of Workers Party of Bangladesh (WPB) asked the government to cancel the decision saying it would add to people's miseries.

They were speaking at a protest meeting organised by the city unit of the party at Shaheed Asad auditorium.

WPB General Secretary Bimal Biswas said the fresh fuel price hike would multiply the miseries of people, as it will increase transportation cost and prices of essentials.

Holding a protest meeting, Left Democratic Alliance (LDA) leaders demanded the withdrawal of the decision to hike fuel price.

They said the price hike would cause immense sufferings to members of the public.

The alliance leaders also demanded of the caretaker government not to make the BTB a company.

Presided over by LDA Coordinator Moshrefa Mishu, the meeting was held at Bangladesh Samajtantrik Dal office at Topkhana Road.

Bangladesh Kalyan Party Chairman Major General (Retd) Syed Muhammad Ibrahim said the decision of fuel price hike would be suicidal for the government.

He asked the government to

reconsider the decision.

He was speaking at a meeting where leaders and activists from different political parties joined the Bangladesh Kalyan Party.

Jatiya Mukti Council President Badaruddin Umar and General Secretary Faijul Hakim in a statement demanded of the government to cancel the decision of fuel price hike.

They urged the government to curtail the expenditures in unproductive sectors and provide fuel subsidy to reduce public suffering.

Sramik Karmochari Oikya Parishad (Skop) leaders in a statement demanded the cancellation of the decision to raise the fuel price.

They also demanded enhancing safety net and allowing 50 percent dearness allowance for the workers.

Skop leaders Abul Bashar, Abdul Matin Master, Mesbah Uddin Ahmed and Abdullah Sarker signed the statement.

Bangladesh Trade Union Centre (BTUC) leaders demanded cancellation of the decision.

In a statement, BTUC President Muhammad Nurul Islam and General Secretary Dr Wajedul Islam Khan said the fuel price hike will increase public sufferings as they are already suffering from skyrocketing of prices of different essential commodities.

Gonosonghati Andolon, protesting the government's decision to hike fuel price, said the decision proves backbonelessness of the government to imperialistic forces.

At a meeting, the leaders of the organisation demanded of the government to 'cancel' the decision.

Bangladesh Chhatra Federation (BCF), a students' forum, brought out a procession on the Dhaka University campus protesting the fuel price hike and demanded cancellation of the decision.

Addressing a rally after the procession BCF leaders said they would forge agitation against the fuel price hike.

The leaders included Probrat Saha, Saikat Mallik and Wahid Pritom.

Cash, mobile phone sets worth Tk 16 lakh looted

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A gang of burglars took away cash money and mobile phone sets worth around Tk 16 lakh after breaking open the shutters of a cellphone shop at Eastern Plaza market in the city on Tuesday night.

Shop owner Shamim Ahmed, filed a case with Dhanmondi Police Station, alleging that the burglars took away 105 pieces of mobile sets worth around Tk 14 lakh and Tk 2.10 lakh in cash breaking the cashbox.

After the burglary at Panasonic Electronics, police and owners' association of the market, however, yesterday watched the looting scene in a video footage recorded in the CCTV inside the market.

Officer-in-Charge (OC) of Dhanmondi Police Station AKM Muhasin-ul-Huq told The Daily Star that "In the video footage, we watched five to six people who had committed the crime. But we have not been able to identify them yet."

The OC said they broke open the shutters at around 9:00pm and took away the mobile phone sets and money.

"Among them, three people, including a boy, entered the shop," OC Muhasin said, adding that "Though we saw the scene of burglary in the video footage, we could not identify the burglars as it is not clear."

He said that the law enforcers would be able to arrest the criminals soon.

According to the sources, there are a total of 40 CCTV cameras at different places of the market while a number of security guards are deployed in the market.

GRAFT CASE AGAINST KADER HC asks trial court to maintain status quo

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The High Court (HC) yesterday directed a trial court to maintain status quo for two months in a corruption case against detained Awami League (AL) leader Obaidul Kader.

The HC bench of Justice Sharif Uddin Chaklader and Justice Md Emdadul Haque Azad also issued a rule on the government to explain why the case should not be quashed.

The order came following a petition filed by Kader on May 29.

The case is now pending with Special Judge's Court 9 located at the Jatiya Sangsad Bhaban Complex.

Making out the case for the quashment plea, the petitioner's counsel advocate M Enayetur Rahim told the court that the charge sheet in the case is illegal as the investigation officer did not complete probe into the corruption allegations in the stipulated 60 days.

On October 30 last year, the Anti-Corruption Commission's (ACC) Assistant Director Ashrafur Islam filed the case with Ramna Police Station against Kader and his wife Isratunnesa, accusing them of accumulating illegal wealth worth about Tk 74 lakh and concealing information on assets in their statement to the watchdog. Isratunnesa is now at large.

The ACC submitted charge sheet on April 17 this year. Charges were framed one month later, on May 22.

Proceedings of graft case against Mosharraf's wife stayed

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The High Court (HC) yesterday stayed for six months the proceedings of a graft case against Bilkis Akhter Hossain, wife of former health minister Khandaker Mosharraf Hossain.

Upon a quashment petition filed by Bilkis, the HC bench of Justice Sharif Uddin Chaklader and Justice Md Emdadul Haque Azad also issued a rule asking the government to explain within four weeks why the proceedings of the case against the petitioner should not be quashed.

On January 10, Shafiqul Alam, assistant director of the Anti-Corruption Commission, filed a case with Ramna police station against Khandaker Mosharraf Hossain and his wife Bilkis on charges of amassing illegal wealth worth Tk 12.51 crore and concealing information about Tk 3.11 crore in their wealth statement submitted to the ACC.

Bilkis recently filed the petition with the HC for quashing proceedings against her in this case.

On June 9, she got anticipatory bail in this case. Barrister Mahbubuddin Khokon appeared for the petitioner while advocate Khurshid Alam Khan stood for the ACC.

US provides \$77m more in cyclone relief assistance

UNB, Dhaka

The US government will provide an additional \$77.5 million for the US Government that includes \$25 million in cyclone recovery and rehabilitation relief for the country for 2008, with an additional \$50 million available for 2009," the US mission here announced yesterday.

"President Bush signed into law a supplemental funding bill for the US Government that includes \$25 million in cyclone recovery and rehabilitation relief for the country for 2008, with an additional \$50 million available for 2009," the US mission here announced yesterday.

In addition, the US Department of Defense will provide \$2.5 million in 2008 to support disaster relief.

With the announcement of this new funding, the US mission will identify projects and partners to continue efforts to help Bangladesh respond to the aftermath of the devastation caused by cyclone Sidr in 2007.

"This assistance will focus on supporting livelihoods and stimulating economic recovery, strengthening local governments in affected areas, and involving local communities in protecting vital habitats while still allowing sustainable use of the forest as an economic asset," the release said.

Funds also will help provide nutrition for children and mothers in the cyclone-affected region and support the planning and construction of cyclone shelters

in areas where they are most needed.

In addition, the Department of Defense funds will be used to construct multipurpose shelters and bridges.

"The United States government remains committed to assisting the Government of Bangladesh and its people," it said.

The release added, "The message of the US government to the people of Bangladesh is a simple one: We were here before the cyclone; we were here during the initial emergency relief phase; and we will be here to help Bangladesh move forward."

The United States government has provided more than \$5 billion in development assistance to Bangladesh since independence. Immediately after Sidr, the United States provided \$ 6.5 million for non-food emergency relief activities.

In 2008, the United States is also providing an additional \$110 million in food aid that is being used for emergency relief, rehabilitation, and sustainable development in poor and vulnerable villages in the char, haor, and Sidr-affected regions.

"This continuing assistance reflects the US commitment to helping build a brighter tomorrow for Bangladesh's most vulnerable citizens."

Quack docs loot valuables after poisoning 6 of a family

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Quack doctors on Tuesday night made away with cash, gold ornaments, cellphone sets and other valuables after poisoning all the six members of a family at Mirpur in the city.

The poisoned members of Mollapara in South Monipur under Mirpur Police Station were admitted to Dhaka Medical College Hospital (DMCH).

They are Abdul Hye, 60, his wife Nilufa Begum, 50, daughter Sathi Akhter, 14, daughter-in-law Selina, 22, son Rubel, 22, and relative Milon, 22.

All of them were undergoing treatment at DMCH at an unconscious condition till filing of this report.

Parpur Alam, brother of Selina, yesterday told reporters at DMCH that two fake quack doctors who were called in the house on Tuesday night poisoned them in the name of medicine and made away with the valuables.

The loss cannot be estimated unless they regain consciousness, he added.

Mirpur police said the family members called in the quack doctors when Rubel's wife left their house after a family feud. The quack doctors gave them some milk and said she would come back if they drink it.



A mobile team of BRTA, led by Magistrate Abdur Rashid, conducts a special drive at Mohakhali Inter-District Bus Terminal yesterday to check bus fare hike.



Communist Party of Bangladesh stages a demonstration in front of the party's central office at Purana Paltan yesterday to protest the fuel price hike.

820 bottles of Phensidyl seized in city

UNB, Dhaka

Rapid Action Battalion (Rab) arrested two drug peddlers along with 820 bottles of Phensidyl in Maghbaraz area in the city yesterday.

Acting on a tip-off, a Rab team intercepted a truck heading towards Tejgaon. During a search, the team members found the bottles of Phensidyl in the truck.

Two alleged drug peddlers -- Mezbahul Islam, 32, and Mohammad Sultan Ali, 37, -- were taken into custody.

In another drive, detective police arrested four alleged frauds from a house at Uttara yesterday afternoon and seized Tk 2.50 lakh and five mobile phone sets from them.

NIKO, POWER PLANT GRAFT CASES

HC to pass order in Hasina's petitions on Sunday

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The High Court (HC) will pass order on Sunday in two petitions filed by former prime minister Sheikh Hasina for quashing the trial proceedings of two corruption cases involving barge-mounted power plants and Canadian company Niko.

After the completion of hearing on the quashment petitions yesterday, the HC bench of Justice Khademul Islam Chowdhury and Justice Mashuque Hosain Ahmed set the date for order.

The two graft cases filed by Anti-

Corruption Commission (ACC) are now pending in two special judge courts set up at the Jatiya Sangsad Bhaban complex.

Barrister Rafique-ul-Huq argued for Sheikh Hasina while Deputy Attorney General (DAG) Abdur Rouf appeared for the ACC in the court yesterday.

Barrister Rafique submitted that the ACC did not follow due process while sanctioning its officials to file the cases.

The cases are false and fabricated, he said, adding that the proceedings of the cases cannot continue as the former prime

minister was not involved in corruption related to the barge-mounted power plants and the Niko deal.

Placing some documents before the court, DAG Abdur Rouf and argued that the ACC has followed the due process of law in giving sanctions to file the cases against the accused, including Sheikh Hasina.

Hasina, the president of Awami League, filed the quashment petitions in June. Upon her petitions, the HC called for the records of the cases to examine them.

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