

Fuel price hike

FROM PAGE 1
the price hike of rice would be evident in a day or two.

Soya bean was sold at Tk 116-120 per litre while super palm oil at Tk 108-112 and palm oil at Tk 103-108 at retail markets.

The price of eggs shot up by Tk 7-10 a dozen, selling at Tk 72-75 yesterday.

"We were already in trouble as the prices of essentials increased after the budget," said a consumer at Karwan Bazar, adding, "How will I run my family if the price of each item goes up by Tk 6 in a day when the income remains the same?"

Besides the fuel price hike, the ongoing inclement weather has affected especially the prices of vegetables that shot up by Tk 2-5 a kg at different kitchen markets.

The price of crude edible oil rose to \$1,500 per tonne on the international market from \$1,450 while the price of palm oil rose to \$1,275 from \$1,250 within a week, said to Fakhruddin Alam, country manager of Malaysian Palm Oil Council.

"The rise in the prices of petroleum products in the international market is the reason behind the increase," he told The Daily Star yesterday.

Wholesalers at Moulovibazar market in Old Dhaka, meanwhile, alleged that a section of traders were making money by increasing the edible oil prices unusually in the name of fuel price hike.

Our Chittagong correspondent reported that the prices of different essentials including rice, edible oil and pulses marked a sharp rise in both wholesale and kitchen markets on Tuesday morning.

"The announcement of fuel price hike at the end of the month came as a double blow for us because we were virtually empty-handed," said Zahirul Islam, assistant professor of Chittagong City College.

Azizul Haque, a retail trader at city's Chawk Bazar, said the price of edible oil of all brands have increased by Tk 10 per litre while the price of Chingiru rice jumped to Tk 95 from Tk 72 per kg.

The prices of Miniket, Pijam and Jirashail rice also increased by up to Tk 4 a kg, he said, fearing the increase may continue over the next few days as the transport cost increased by Tk 2,500-3,500.

The prices of different vari-

ties of pulses had already gone up by Tk 5-10 a kg at the retail markets.

Pulses imported from Nepal was selling at Tk 90-94; the price was Tk 85 last week.

Our correspondent in Mymensingh reports: Coarse rice was selling at Tk 32-34 per kg; the price was Tk 30-32 a few days ago.

The prices of soya bean and mastered oil increased by Tk 7 and Tk 10 reaching Tk 120 and Tk 130 per kg.

The price of sugar also rose by Tk 3 per kg.

"People in the low-income group are finding it increasingly difficult to manage household expenditures in the wake of the never-ending price spirals of daily essentials," said a consumer at the town.

Our Sylhet correspondent also reported sudden rise in the prices of essentials at city markets, especially the price of rice that shot up by Tk 50-100 per 50kg sack on the wholesale market.

Our correspondent in Rajshahi reports: Bus fares in all routes from Rajshahi increased from yesterday as petroleum products were being sold at exorbitant prices instead of the government-fixed rates.

Kerosene was selling at local markets at Tk 60 a liter although the government-fixed rate is Tk 55.

The price of a LPG cylinder-fixed at Tk 1,000 on Monday--rose to Tk 1,350.

The prices of different commodities also shot up in Bogra.

VULNERABLE INDUSTRIES

There are 50 big industries in the southwestern region that may go on the verge of closure because of the price hike of furnace oil, said Akbar Ali, chairman of Shamim Metal Industries in Khulna.

All these big, medium and small industries running as losing enterprises would shut down if the government does not give subsidy or re-fix the price of furnace oil, he told our correspondent in Khulna.

The special court was expected to dispose of the two petitions, filed on June 19, yesterday.

The date for cross-examination of the prosecution witness and complainant would be fixed after disposal of the petitions.

Making out the case for Selim's bail, his counsels said the Appellate Division of the Supreme Court relaxed the provisions for bail in cases filed under the Emergency Power Rules.

Saying the former health minister made his confessional statements under duress, Advocate Sahara said Selim appealed for withdrawing the statement when he was first produced before the court.

Advocate Rezaur Rahman said the case was filed against Selim on malafide intention as his confessional statement was made available on CD in the market.

"How come was it possible and what was it done?" he asked, adding that the case was nothing but a bid to destroy the two cousins politically.

Selim had no involvement in the alleged corruption, he said, adding that his client needs proper treatment and that he would comply with the conditions if granted bail.

Prosecution lawyer Syed Shamim Ahsan opposed the bail prayer saying the matter has already been disposed of by the higher court.

He also said they have enough evidence to prove the allegations against the accused.

Gas, power

FROM PAGE 1

The meeting was told that the number of CNG filling stations has risen to 229 from only 18 in last four years, which helps in preventing rise in the price of fuel oils.

The CA asked for identifying the bottlenecks in solving the gas and electricity problems, round-the-clock monitoring by a team and strong coordination between power and energy divisions.

He also emphasised immediate solution to power problem in Chittagong through installing rental power plants and non-gas-based power plants as well.

As an austerity measure, the CA called for steps to limit energy consumption and that should start first from government offices.

Tapping alternative sources of energy, like coal and solar energy, for a long-term solution also came up for discussion at the meeting.

CA's Press Secretary Syed Fahim Munam briefed newsmen about the meeting.

Members of the Council of Advisers attended the meeting at the CA's office. Cabinet secretary and secretaries concerned were also present.

PSI company

FROM PAGE 16

involved in various sorts of irregularities.

A payment of over Tk 52 crore was given to Bureau Veritas by the government for pre-shipment inspection in 2006-2007 fiscal year, sources said.

The five companies together received an amount of Tk 174.9 crore from the government for the task in the same fiscal year.

Hasina's petition

FROM PAGE 16

Special Court-5 at Jatiya Sangsad Bhaban complex will also rule on the same day on the bail petition filed by co-accused and former health minister Sheikh Fazlul Karim Selim.

On June 13 last year, Managing Director of Eastcoast Trading Pvt Ltd Azam J Chowdhury charged Hasina and Selim with extorting Tk 2.99 crore from him in exchange for awarding the contract for setting up the Siddhinganj Power Plant in Narayanganj.

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Major party leaders

FROM PAGE 16

Other BNP leaders who collected application forms are former district general secretary Enamul Haque, former organising secretary Ehsan Ali Isa, former woman lawmaker Jahan Panna, local Jubo Dal President Mosaddek Hossain Bulbul, and District Mohila Dal General Secretary Shahidun Nahar Kazi.

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