

Fuel price hike

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Ahmed Runjib, Chowdhury Redwan-e-Khuda and Showeb Uddin Khan -- challenging the government's decision made on November 10 to increase the prices of fuel by Tk 5 per litre.

Secretary to the power and energy ministry, chairman of Bangladesh Energy Regulatory Commission and Petrobangla have been made respondent to the rule.

The lawyers filed the petition as public interest litigation on November 29 saying that the government increased the fuel price on November 10 violating the rules of Energy Regulatory Commission Act-2003.

As per rules of the act, the price of fuel cannot be increased more than once in a fiscal year, and the government has to issue a notice at least 90 days before increasing fuel prices, the petitioners said.

But the government increased the price of fuel violating the rules, as it had already increased the fuel price earlier on September 18 this year, they added.

The petitioners prayed to the court to issue a rule upon the government to explain why the price hike should not be declared illegal.

After holding hearing on the petition, the HC bench of Justice Mirza Hussain Haider and Justice Md Khurshid Alam Sarker issued the rule.

Hasan Mohammad Reyd appeared for the petitioners.

Rumana

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No injury marks were identified on the body during an autox, said Dr Shafiquzzaman of Dhaka Medical College Hospital. However, there were marks of handcuffs on his wrists.

"We have sent the viscera report to the forensic chemical laboratory in Mohakhali to ascertain the cause of his death," he added.

Police arrested Sumon on June 15 after a case was filed against him on June 6 with Dhamondi Police Station for torturing Rumana, an assistant professor of Department of International Relations at DU.

Rumana, also a post-graduate student at University of British Columbia in Canada, lost her eyesight permanently after Sumon allegedly pushed his fingers into her eyes at her parents' house on June 5.

The victim was taken to India and Canada for treatment, but doctors in both the countries failed to recover her eyesight.

The brutal incident triggered shock and widespread condemnation in the country.

The incident ultimately led her to divorce Sumon.

Holy Ashura

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as a symbol of 'sacrifice and mourning' recalling the martyrdom of Hazrat Imam Hussain Ibn Ali (RA), a grandson of the Prophet Hazrat Muhammad (SM), in the battle of Karbala on Muhamarram 10 around 1331 years ago.

In the historic battle, Hazrat Imam Hussain (RA) along with his family members and 72 followers braced martyrdom at the hands of the soldiers of Yazid in Hijri 61 while fighting for establishing justice in society.

The word Ashura means simply 'tenth' in Arabic, and therefore the name of the remembrance, literally translated, means 'the tenth day'.

In his message, President Zillur Rahman called upon all to resist injustices in our national life and establish truth and justice reflecting the great teachings of Holy Ashura.

Hasina in a similar message also called upon all to raise their voice against injustices and establish truth and justice reflecting the great sacrifice of Karbala.

New ministers

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and sincerity.

They were speaking at separate press conferences at the Jatiya Sangsad Media Centre.

On the other hand, Faruk Khan, till recently commerce minister, said he would be able to efficiently discharge his new assignment as civil aviation minister.

Talking to reporters, he claimed he had run the commerce ministry successfully.

SURANJIT SENGUPTA

Veteran AL leader Suranjan said maintaining the timetable of trains would be his first challenge, with ensuring clean train services being the second.

Asked if a further reshuffle of the cabinet was in the works, he said, "Don't you get any signal from the recent reshuffle in the cabinet? You had better wait if you want to see more surprises."

On his new job, Suranjan said, "People will get huge benefits if we can maintain the train schedule. Besides, people will be attracted if we can offer neat and clean train service."

Replies to a query on the sufferings faced by people in buying tickets, he said he would try to digitise the ticketing system. "Passengers' woes will lessen to a great extent if we can do that."

Turning meter gauze rail line into broad gauze and those of broad gauze into electric line will be another test, Suranjan.

Pointing to the loss in the sector, he said Bangladesh was the only country in the world to have incurred loss. "I want to see where the problem is, where and how the 'black cat' remains hiding in the dark."

The sector got a new life through being separated

from the communications ministry, he added.

Terming the potential in railway "huge", he said the sector gets aid and loan from the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund and the Asian Development Bank.

He, however, said his job would be a challenging one, given that he would get only two years in office.

"Maybe I won't be able to complete all these tasks. The prime minister has assigned me out of her belief in me, and I'll try my best to perform my job with honesty and sincerity."

OBAIDUL QUADER

Obaidul Quader said construction of the Padma bridge would not be completed in the remaining two years of the government, but his main focus is to start the construction.

"I don't want to make big promises. I want to start my task on priority basis."

Asked when he planned to begin the construction, he said, "I don't want to mention a time and date on any matter. I'll prove myself through my work."

On the differences between the government and the World Bank over funding the project, Obaidul said: "Let me start the job. I'll be able to make a comment on the issue after assessing all the related matters."

Also terming his job challenging, he said he would face those challenges with honesty and sincerity.

Replies to another query, he said, "Earlier on many occasions I talked about public issues. But people do not want to hear good words from a minister. They want better performance. We should speak less and work more."

Army officials

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killed. Earlier, seven former and present officers of the border force gave depositions before the court.

Zahid went to Pilkhana from Sylhet to receive an award from the DG for his role in combating smuggling and seizing narcotics.

The witness said armed jawans surrounded the Darbar Hall at 9:35am.

When they opened fire outside the hall, nearly 40-50 officers, including Shakil, took shelter behind the pillars inside the hall.

Shakil made requests for help over his cell phone.

As the BDR officials came out of cover following sepoys Selim Reza's call for them to surrender, nearly 30 armed BDR jawans started firing indiscriminately inside the hall at about 10:15am.

"Lt Col Kaiser and two other officers were hit by bullets," he said.

As Zahid with two other officers tried to carry a wounded Kaiser to hospital, a sepoys halted them, and said none would be allowed to leave.

"We went inside the hall again leaving wounded Kaiser outside, and found two officers lying on the floor. The other officials were being taken out of the hall in a line. I was asked to join the line."

Maj Saleh, who stood in front of him, was hit by a bullet in the abdomen. Apart from Selim Reza, sepoys Rafiqul Islam, Aminul Islam, Ibrahim and Habib pumped bullets into BDR officials inside the hall, said Zahid.

BDR jawans blindfolded him and hit him in the face with rifle butts. They confined him in a toilet next to a guard room. At about 11:25am, he overheard a jawan saying over cell phone that the BDR director general had been killed.

The sepoys told the person that he had used three bullets to kill the DG. Another jawan at about 11:45am told someone that they had dealt with the "DG Madam," said the witness.

Following the deposition, sepoys Selim's counsel Faruq Ahmed cross-examined Zahid.

Judge Mohammad Zahurul Haque of Dhaka Metropolitan Sessions Judge's Court expressed frustration over the irrelevant questions the counsel asked the witness.

"Neither the prosecution nor the defence has come to

the court with enough information," said the judge.

When the defence counsel said the glass-wearing witness was a squint, the court said it would hear the matter after the proceedings resume on December 7.

Earlier, defence counsels completed the cross-examination of the seventh witness, Maj Tareq Mohammad Bhawali.

Tk 28/kg

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"As we go for rice procurement, it will have a trickle down effect on paddy prices," Food Minister Abdur Razzaque told journalists at his office yesterday.

The government is indecisive over Aman procurement this season as it had a food grains stock of 15 lakh tonnes. But the price slum of the staple prompted it to go for local procurement.

Rice prices in the domestic market ranged from Tk 24 to Tk 28 a kg now, while that of Aman paddy is Tk 500 to Tk 650 a maund (40 kgs), according to farmers and traders.

Razzaque said production cost Aman rice this season is estimated at around Tk 25 a kg.

Asked why the procurement price of Aman rice has been set at Tk 28 a kg while that of Boro rice was Tk 29 a kg last season, he said production cost of Aman is less than that of Boro.

Asked why the government does not buy paddy to directly benefit the farmers, the minister said it has a storage capacity of only 15 lakh tonnes of food grains, so buying paddy is not feasible. Besides, farmers often fail to supply properly dried paddy.

At present there are 11.53 lakh tonnes of rice and 2.90 lakh tonnes of wheat are in the government stock. And four lakh tonnes of wheat are in the import pipeline.

The minister also said, "We don't have to go for rice import until June next year unless any major disaster occurs."

It is always good to procure food grains from the domestic market because it saves foreign exchange and ensures incentives to farmers, Razzaque noted. "We may buy even more than 2 lakh tonnes this Aman season, if possible."

He mentioned that the World Bank has committed to provide Tk 2,100 crore for building silos in the next three years.

Neither the prosecution nor the defence has come to

Khmer Rouge

FROM PAGE 20

"Brother Number Two" Nuon Chea, seen as the chief ideologue of the brutal 1970s movement, was the first of three accused to face questioning from judges in the proceedings.

"I don't want the next generations to misunderstand the history. I don't want them to misunderstand that the Khmer Rouge are bad people, are criminals. Nothing is true about that," the bespectacled 85-year-old told the court.

He, however, said his job would be a challenging one, given that he would get only two years in office.

"Maybe I won't be able to complete all these tasks. The prime minister has assigned me out of her belief in me, and I'll try my best to perform my job with honesty and sincerity."

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Carbon emissions

FROM PAGE 20

Research at the University of East Anglia, and an author of the research, said the data showed that little had been achieved in the past two decades in reducing the risks from climate change.

"There have been efforts to use more renewable energy and improve energy efficiency but what this shows is that so far, the effects have been marginal," she said. "We need to do something about the 80 percent of energy that still comes from burning fossil fuels."

She said the problem was urgent, as the chances of holding global temperature rises to less than 2C above pre-industrial levels (which scientists regard as the limit of safety) beyond which climate change becomes catastrophic and irreversible, were dependent on emissions peaking by 2020 at the latest.

Governments meeting in Durban this week are focusing on a new treaty that, if it can be achieved, would not come into force until 2020. "That would be too late, unless strong actions are taken in the meantime," said Le Quéré.

Some governments and policy advisers have been advocating a different approach to the climate negotiations, suggesting

that a system of voluntary reductions in emissions undertaken by national governments and industries could be more effective than a "top-down" global treaty.

But this so-called "bottom up" approach did not appear to be working currently, Le Quéré said, as efforts to cut emissions so far had made little impact outside Europe, where emissions have been successfully reduced.

The study, published in the peer-reviewed journal Nature Climate Change, found that global carbon emissions were likely to carry on increasing at a rate of about 3 percent per year. It was accompanied by another study offering new proof that climate change is linked to human activities, in burning fossil fuel.

She said: "The worst economic crisis in decades was apparently a mere hiccup in terms of carbon emissions: a temporary drop for the richest countries in 2009, and hardly perceived by emerging economies. These findings are truly shocking, and constitute a global wake-up call."

"The economic crisis should have been an opportunity to invest in low-carbon infrastructure for the 21st century. Instead, we fostered a lose-lose situation: carbon emissions rocketing to unprecedented levels, alongside increases in joblessness, energy costs and income disparities. Surely the transition to a green economy has never seemed more appealing."