



# The Daily Star

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DIESEL PRICE HIKE FALLOUT IN NORTH

## Farmers stare at huge losses

ANWAR ALI, Rajshahi

The new diesel price is driving up crop production cost by at least 30 percent in Rajshahi region and the farmers are fearing huge losses.

They said harvesting of Aman, now ongoing, and winter vegetables and Boro production would be affected as the farmers mostly depend on diesel-run machines to cultivate, irrigate, and harvest.

To explain the blow they have been dealt, they said if a farmer, for instance, used to spend Tk 100 for an hour of irrigation, he or she would now need to spend Tk 130. If they had spent Tk 300 for cultivating, now they would have to spend Tk 450. If they had spent Tk 150 to transport produce of one bigha of land, now they would need to spend Tk 200, said farmers.

It does not end there.

The farmers used to pay paddy threshers with 10kg of paddy for every bigha's harvest they processed. Now the threshers are asking for 20kg.

They said that the additional burden of production cost would make them poorer.

"I'm afraid I will not be able to meet the production cost of boro this year. I will try another crop next season."

ABDUL JALIL  
A FARMER OF SINGRA UPAZILA, NATORE

Farmers in Chapainawabganj, Naogaon, Natore and Rajshahi districts depend mostly on groundwater for irrigation. About 48% of the region's 6,91,437 hectares of irrigated land relies on diesel-run pumps.



### FARMERS' DEEPENING PLIGHT

Irrigation cost rose from Tk 100 to Tk 130 (per hour), fuel cost for tilling land from Tk 300 to Tk 450, transportation cost from Tk 150 to Tk 200 per bigha.



There are 305 combined harvesters, 181 reapers, 27 planters, 42,771 power tillers, 1,541 tractors, and 33,518 thresher machines in the region. All are run on diesel.

Power tiller owners and transport service providers in Rajshahi region have already started charging higher.

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## Dhaka, Paris strike deal on defence cooperation



DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT

Bangladesh and France have signed a letter of intent on defence cooperation, while also sharing the common vision for a free, open, peaceful, secure and inclusive Indo-Pacific region.

At a meeting on Tuesday, the two countries agreed to further develop the defence and security component of their partnership based on the needs expressed and each party's ability to respond to them using different methods, including through capacity building and potential technology transfer.

A statement issued by the office of French President Emmanuel Macron early yesterday said, "To that end, both countries agreed to strengthen dialogue and continue their cooperation, particularly in the area of training, which was launched during this visit."

Foreign Minister AK Abdul Momen yesterday said, "Yes, we signed it [letter of intent]. It relates to training and technology transfer."

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina arrived in Paris on Tuesday after joining the COP26 in Glasgow. She was accorded a warm reception at Elysee Palace on the first day of her five-day visit.

The Presidential Guard gave the prime minister a salute on her arrival at the Presidential Palace. Hasina and Macron had a luncheon meeting, followed by a tête-à-tête.

Later, Hasina had a bilateral meeting with French Prime Minister Jean Castex at his official residence the Matignon.

In March last year, Florence Parly, the French armed force minister, during a meeting with PM Hasina in Dhaka had proposed to sell Rafales manufactured by Dassault Aviation.

Asked about the letter of intent (LoI) on defence cooperation, former election commissioner and security analyst Brig Gen (Retd) Dr M Shakhawat Hussain said signing the LoI does not mean that Bangladesh will buy the defence equipment.

French defence equipment, especially the Rafale, is very

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### CPD ON FUEL PRICE HIKE

## 'It's not a politically enlightened decision'

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

There was a lack of political foresight behind the government move to hike the prices of diesel and kerosene that has set off a domino effect on the economy, said the Centre for Policy Dialogue yesterday.

"This is neither logical from the economic point of view nor is it in line with government policy. We are saving money from one place but its impact will be everywhere," said Mustafizur Rahman, distinguished fellow of the CPD, at a media briefing styled "Fuel price hike: how necessary was it?" yesterday.

With the view to arresting the losses of the state-run Bangladesh Petroleum Corporation (BPC) from the surging global energy prices, the government last week decided to hike the prices of diesel and kerosene by 23 percent, the biggest jump in a decade.

The move prompted the mass transport operators to call in a strike on

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## Now jet fuel price hiked

Finance minister says fuel price rise 'logical'

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Air travellers will have to pay more as Padma Oil Company, a subsidiary of the Bangladesh Petroleum Corporation, has increased the jet fuel prices for the 11th time in the last 13 months.

Jet fuel now costs Tk 77 per litre, meaning the government agency has hiked the price by 67 percent since October last year, according to airline officials.

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## Leaks earned them Tk 60 crore

Syndicate which sold question papers of 4 recruitment tests comprised of bankers, staffer of a private univ

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The question paper of Saturday's recruitment test for hiring 1,511 cash officers in five state-owned banks was leaked from Ahsanullah University of Science and Technology (AUST), which was tasked with preparing the questions.

An ICT technician of the private university leaked the paper and handed it to a syndicate, which later sold it to thousands of jobseekers.

Ahead of the test, the syndicate members also set up 11 temporary booths at different places of Dhaka. At the booths, their "clients" were given the questions and they memorised the answers there.

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New Zealand's Daryl Mitchell upper cuts one during his side's semifinal fixture of the T20 World Cup against England at the Sheikh Zayed Cricket Stadium in Abu Dhabi yesterday. The opener hit an unbeaten 72 off 47 deliveries as the Kiwis beat England by five wickets.

PHOTO: AFP

## Mitchell powers Kiwis into final

AFP, Dubai

Opener Daryl Mitchell smashed an unbeaten 72 to lead New Zealand into their first ever Twenty20 World Cup final with a thrilling five-wicket victory over England on Wednesday.

Chasing 166 for victory, New Zealand were in trouble at 13-2 and 107-4 when Jimmy Neesham turned the semi-final on its head with an 11-ball 27 to help achieve the target with one over to spare in Abu Dhabi.

With 20 needed off the final 12 balls, Mitchell smashed Chris Woakes for two sixes and a four before his 47-ball blitz triggered wild celebrations in the New Zealand dug out.

New Zealand will face either Australia or Pakistan in Sunday's final.

They suffered early blows after Woakes struck on the third ball to send Martin Guptill trudging back to the pavilion for four.

The fast bowler then got skipper Kane

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## UNION PARISHAD ELECTIONS 2021

SECOND PHASE  
835 UPs  
go to polls  
today

MOHIUDDIN ALAMGIR

Elections to 835 union parishads of the lowest tier of local governments will take place today, amid fears of violence.

This will be the second phase of the staggered UP polls.

The numbers of violent clashes across the country, which left at least 18 killed and several hundred injured, during the election campaign of today's election have already made people wary.

Six people were killed during the first phase of the UP polls in June and September.

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## BNP sees gain from boycott

MOHAMMAD AL-MASUM MOLLA

The BNP believes it has gained a lot by not taking part in the ongoing UP polls. It says the incompetence of the Election Commission has been further exposed, its activists have been spared being accused in false cases, and the ruling party's grassroots have weakened because of bitter infighting.

The opposition party has boycotted the ongoing union parishad elections but many of its leaders are contesting the polls as independents.

Top BNP leaders said it has been proved again that "this Election Commission and government cannot hold a free and fair election."

"The biggest thing proved is that there is no existence of the Election Commission. People have been deprived of their right to cast votes. The total electoral system has been destroyed and the government did it intentionally," BNP Secretary General Mirza Fakhrul Islam Alamgir told The Daily Star.

After boycotting the 2014 parliamentary polls, the party contested the last general election and continued taking part in elections to local government bodies with its electoral symbol "sheaf of paddy".

After holding a standing committee meeting in February this year, the BNP announced that it decided not to contest the UP elections.

Party leaders said they contested local government elections thinking

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## Only Tk 50 shy of life?

Parents allege hospital staffer led their son to death for not getting a 'good tip'

MOSTAFA SHABUI, Bogura

Bogura Shaheed Ziaur Rahman Medical College Hospital authorities yesterday formed a four-member committee to investigate the death of a boy allegedly due to removal of his oxygen mask by a hospital employee for not getting a "satisfactory tip".

The victim, Bikash Chandra Biswas, 17, was the son of Bishu Chandra Biswas of Putimari village in Gaibandha's Saghata.

The hospital authorities said Asadul Islam Mir Dholu, 40, is not their permanent staffer. He was working as a cleaner at the hospital's corona unit on daily wages.

Victim's uncle Sachin Chandra Biswas told The Daily Star that Bikash, alongside studying, used to work part-time at a metal workshop at Kachua Bazar to support his family.

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