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"It is better if the expatriates don't come home now."
HEALTH MINISTER
ZAHID MALEQUE



"Thousands of people will come down to the streets, if Khaleda is not sent to abroad for treatment."
BNP SECRETARY GENERAL MIRZA FAKHRUL ISLAM ALAMGIR



"I don't want to speculate, but certainly ... it looks a lot like rehearsals."
US DEFENSE SECRETARY LLOYD AUSTIN ON CHINESE MILITARY FLIGHTS NEAR TAIWAN



Crushed by rising inflation

Low- and middle-income people struggle to cope as commodity prices soar; recent fuel price hike partly to blame

MD SHAHNAWAZ KHAN
CHANDAN

"I simply cannot describe what I'm going through," Tashdiq Hasan says, summing up his current financial pressure.

The junior executive at a private bank in Dhaka has been struggling to keep his family above water amid the coronavirus pandemic and rising living costs.

He has a fixed monthly income of Tk 36,000. Nearly half -- Tk 16,000 -- goes to house rent and utility bills. With the rest, he meets all the expenses for his family of five, including baby food and other essentials for his newborn daughter and medical bills for his ailing mother.

Prices of daily essentials were already

"The government's decision to increase fuel price has made a chain reaction of price hike in the market. Prices of all types of food and non-food commodities have increased... This is completely arbitrary."

DR FAHMIDA KHATUN
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, CPD

high for Hasan, and his hardship intensified after another spell of price hikes of almost every essential amid the pandemic. The pandemic has also meant additional expenses of buying face masks and hand sanitisers to keep the family safe.

The recent fuel price hike and its cascading effects have compounded the situation further, upsetting his family budget and making daily life more expensive. Due to the increase in bus fare, Tashdiq will need an additional TK 1,000 a month to travel to and from work.

For people like Tashdiq, the amount could buy at least two weeks' baby food.

"It's another dent in my wallet. I don't

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The sculpture of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman called Bajrakantha was officially unveiled yesterday at Mujib Chatter in Sylhet cantonment. Army chief General SM Shafiuddin Ahmed inaugurated the sculpture.

PHOTO:
SHEIKH NASIR

WORLD PEACE CONFERENCE Use resources for dev, not arms: PM

UNB, Dhaka

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina yesterday urged the global community to use resources for universal and sustainable development, not for arms, in this critical juncture of the Covid-19 pandemic.

"Let's go down in action, commit to universal peace," she said.

The PM was addressing the closing ceremony of the World Peace Conference at Hotel InterContinental, joining it virtually from the Gono Bhaban.

Dhaka hosted the two-day international conference on the occasion of the birth centenary of Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman and the golden jubilee of the country's independence as part of promoting a culture of peace and tolerance.

Hasina said the coronavirus pandemic has plunged the entire world into a new crisis. "This crisis has proved that no one of us is isolated. There's no alternative to building an accountable-world order based on the partnership to live peacefully

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BOTCHED AMBUSH IN NAGALAND Violence rages as troops kill 13

Another civilian killed during protest against security forces' blunder

AGENCIES

Protesters threw stones and set fire to areas around a camp belonging to Indian forces in the remote northeast in renewed violence a day after 13 people were killed by defence forces, officials said.

One civilian was shot dead yesterday.

At least 13 civilians and one member of the security forces were killed in Nagaland state on Saturday night, after Indian forces mistook a group of labourers for militants and opened fire.

More than a dozen civilians and some members of the security forces were also wounded in the incident and violence that followed, said a federal defence ministry official based in New Delhi.

Indian Home Minister Amit Shah said he was "anguished" at the news of civilians, who were members of a local tribal group, being killed.

Nagaland's chief minister Neiphiu Rio told Reuters an investigation would be conducted and the guilty punished. He said the incident was the result of an intelligence failure.

India's northeast is home to a complex web of tribal groups, many of which have launched insurgencies, accusing New Delhi of plundering resources and doing little to improve their lives.

People in Nagaland have frequently accused security forces of wrongly targeting innocent locals in their counterinsurgency operations against rebel groups.

Yesterday, civilians launched protests against the government in the Mon district of Nagaland, where the 13 tribal people were killed.

"There is a mob outside which is pelting stones," a security official who did not want to be named told Reuters from the camp, which was surrounded by protesters.

"One civilian was shot dead and two more injured in firing by Assam

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BANGLADESH, INDIA Celebrating 50 years of friendship

PORIMOL PALMA

Today marks the 50th year of diplomatic relations between Bangladesh and India, which gave Bangladesh formal recognition -- something that the Mujib Nagar Government had been seeking urgently from the international community to be independent from the misrule of West Pakistan.

The recognition was declared on December 6, only ten days before victory after a nine-month war that began with Pakistan military's crackdown against civilians on March 25, 1971.

About three million Bangladeshis were killed, while ten million refugees escaped systematic mass killings, rapes, lootings and arsons, and took shelter in India.

Many of the Bangalee soldiers formed the Mukti Bahini, who bolstered their weaponry to launch operations against the Pakistan Army.

Following Pakistan's India pre-emptive air strikes on northern India, India formally entered the war on 3 December 1971. The allied forces of India and Mukti Bahini forced the

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ROAD TO FREEDOM
THIS DAY IN BANGLADESH LIBERATION WAR HISTORY

India recognises Bangladesh



DECEMBER 6, 1971

SHAMSUDDOZA SAJEN

Amidst tumultuous cheers and jubilation at Lok Sabha, Indian Prime Minister Indira Gandhi announced today that India has recognised the government of Bangladesh.

"I am glad to inform the House that in the light of the existing situation and in response to the repeated requests of the Government of Bangladesh, the Government of India has, after most careful consideration, decided to grant recognition to the Gana Prajatantri Bangladesh," said Indira Gandhi.

The members of the Lok Sabha jumped with joy to greet the announcement, and the cries of Joy Bangla reverberated the packed chambers of both the houses of the Indian parliament.

The Indian prime minister expressed hope that in due course, more nations would grant recognition to the Bangladesh government, and the country would soon be a part of the family of nations.

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2 Alim tests deferred

Board moves them to Dec 21, 23 after sealed questions were opened

MOHIUDDIN ALAMGIR

The government yesterday postponed two Alim examinations of the madrasa board after an official allegedly opened a package containing the question papers in Rupganj of Narayanganj.

The postponed exams slated for today and Thursday will now be held on December 21 and December 23 respectively, Madrasa Education Board Chairman Prof Kaiser Ahmed told The Daily Star yesterday.

New questions will be prepared and printed in the meantime.

Upazila Nirbahi Officer Shah Nusrat Jahan and board officials said the secretary of the exam centre at Kaladi Shahbajuddin Jamia Islamia Fazil Madrasa on Thursday opened the package containing the question

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Student activists marching through the capital's Shahbagh amid a large presence of police with a coffin symbolising frequent deaths in road crashes. Fifty-four students were among the 413 people who got killed on the roads last month.

PHOTO:
AMRAN HOSSAIN

Students want half fare everywhere

Demand gazette on discounted fare; protest for safe roads continues

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Hours after transport owners announced that students travelling in buses in cities would pay half the fare, the agitating students yesterday said they want it for all modes of public transport and across the country.

They said they would continue their demonstration until the government issued a gazette accepting their demands.

At a press briefing at Chattogram Press Club yesterday, Khandaker Enayet Ullah, secretary general of Bangladesh Road Transport Owners Association, said they accepted students' demand that half the fare be taken from them in public buses.

It will be effective in cities -- not in upazilas or on long routes -- from December 11 and students will pay half the fare between 7:00am and 8:00pm every day, he said.

Enayet Ullah said the discounted fare, however, would not be effective during public holidays and when educational institutions are on vacation. Besides, students would have to carry their ID card and be in uniform.

He hoped students would call off their agitation following the announcement, reported our staff correspondent in Chattogram.

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