



B1 Stocks tank on war jitters
Posted steepest fall since April 4



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3 members of theft gang held in Dhaka



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Russia blocks more news outlets



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BCB boss Nazmul Hassan irked

PRICE HIKE OF ESSENTIALS

Is war the real cause?

DWAIPAYAN BARUA and MOHAMMAD SUMAN, Chattogram

A section of traders is cashing in on the ongoing Russia-Ukraine war to hike prices of essentials that were already becoming costlier, market insiders said.

The prices of wheat, peas, lentil, chickpeas and other essentials have been going up at the country's major trade hub of Khatunganj in Chattogram for over a week following the Russian invasion of Ukraine.

This has set off a ripple effect on retail markets in the port city and elsewhere in the country.

Experts argued that the Russian invasion that started on February 24 was not supposed to have an immediate impact as there is around a three-week lag for such events to affect import.

Furthermore, some commodities like lentil and chickpea have not been imported at all from these two countries in the last eight months, but there was a noticeable price hike of these during the period, they said.

Traders, however, said commodity prices, which were



A man takes a pause as he evacuates from Irpin town, near Kyiv. This is the only escape route used by locals after days of heavy shelling as Russian troops advance towards the capital of Ukraine yesterday.

PHOTO: REUTERS

“The prices of essentials have marked a rise not only in Bangladesh but also elsewhere in the world due to the Covid-induced global economic recession.”

Prime Minister **Sheikh Hasina**

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already rising, saw another round of hikes following the conflict that hampered the supply chain.

Trade with Russia and Ukraine has been cut off, resulting in an increase in purchase orders from alternative markets, they claimed.

They also said several shipments to the country were stuck at ports of Russia and Ukraine.

According to data from Chattogram Custom House, in the last eight months of the current fiscal 2021-22 till end of February, the country's total import from Russia stood at 7.83 lakh tonnes worth Tk 3,496 crore.

A total of 179 types of goods are imported from Russia. The major import goods from the country are wheat, peas, mustard seed, fertiliser, chemicals and others.

In the same period, total import from Ukraine stood at 7.96 lakh tonnes worth Tk 3,973 crore till February.

The major imported goods from Ukraine are wheat, peas, powdered milk, sunflower oil and seed, rapeseed, etc. which are among a total of 44 types of goods.

World food prices hit a record high in February, a 20.7 percent increase year-on-year, led by a surge in price of vegetable oils and daily products, said the UN food agency FAO on Friday.

SM Nazar Hossain, Consumers Association of Bangladesh (CAB) Chattogram chapter president, said traders have thousands of excuses for price hikes.

“They are now capitalising on the war illogically to make extra money.

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EDITORS' COUNCIL

Mahfuz, Hanif elected president, secretary



STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Mahfuz Anam, editor and publisher of The Daily Star, has been re-elected as the president of the executive committee of Shampadak Parishad (Editors' Council).

He will lead the new committee for the next two years.

Bonik Barta Editor and Publisher Dewan Hanif Mahmud -- who has been serving as the acting general secretary after Naem Nizam, editor of Bangla daily Bangladesh Pratidin, stepped down in August last year -- has been elected the new general secretary.

The new executive committee was announced

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LEAP OF JOY... Two boys somersault into the Kirtankhola from a cargo vessel in Barishal city's Band Road area. They were having fun while trying to get some relief from the heat yesterday.

PHOTO: TITU DAS

INT'L WOMEN'S DAY

Defying odds

TANIA MARCHES ON

AHMED HUMAYUN KABIR TOPU, Pabna

In 2015, 15-year-old Tania Yeasmin of Pabna was waiting for her SSC results, brimming with hope for her future.

But a dark cloud appeared when she was married off to a neighbour even before her results were published.



Married off at 15 and divorced last year, Tania now works at a Bank Asia outlet in Pabna's Bera municipality area. Her son is seated next to her.

The resolute girl from Haturia village in Bera upazila wanted to pursue education, but her in-laws disagreed and abused her verbally and physically.

Despite every criticism and constraint, she persisted. This time, her parents supported her.

“My family forced me to get married, but when I got admitted to college, they helped me so that I can pursue my dream of becoming somebody,” she told this correspondent.

But her dream came at a cost -- she was being physically and mentally tortured at her in-laws' even though she was pregnant at the time.

Amid such a harsh reality, she passed her HSC exams.

“I was struggling to survive with my new-born baby as my husband had lost his job. At one stage, I started sewing to earn money while also continuing my studies,” said Tania.

By 2018, Tania had enrolled herself at a computer training centre in Bera and got an opportunity to work at Haturia Nakalia Union Parishad's information centre.

But her struggles were yet to be over. Her husband started forcing her to leave the job.

He even went to great lengths to make her quit, including defaming her through a false allegation on Facebook of her being involved in an extra-marital affair, she said.

They eventually divorced in October last year.

Following the divorce, she faced social backlash. She was being shamed and bullied constantly at her locality, and so she left her village home and started living with her three-year-old son in a rented apartment in Bera town.

Tania had to start her life again from scratch and she

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