



Covid, war in Ukraine behind price hike: PM



UNB, Dhaka

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina yesterday blamed the pandemic fallout and the Russia-Ukraine war for the soaring prices of basic commodities.

"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. That's why the prices have gone up in every country of the world," she said.

Hasina was addressing a discussion marking the Historic March 7 Speech of Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman.

The Awami League

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PHOTO: AMRAN HOSSAIN

A baby carried by a woman wails out of fright as people jostle and rush to get their hands on essentials being sold on a TCB truck in the capital's Lalbagh. With the prices of daily necessities skyrocketing, the crowds near TCB trucks keep swelling every day.

'This is Shobha speaking'

Trans woman ignores discrimination; sells own book on foot

DIPAN NANDY

Born in Khulna's Khalishpur in 1988, Shobha, earlier known as Shubho, began feeling out of place during her adolescence.

She was born a boy and treated like one until then.

"I began to find my inner self. In my life, neglect and discriminations [faced as a transwoman] began with my own family when I spoke out for myself. One by one, my father and brothers became strangers to me."

"My father would not even talk to me."

I don't know anything more painful than that. My elder brother and brother-in-law

were almost always on the verge of beating me," she told The Daily Star yesterday.

Weathering many a storm and breaking her shackles one after another, Shobha is now one of the first published trans woman poets in Bangladesh.

Her first book of poetry "Sraban Sandhya" was published in 2018. However, only 50 copies were printed, which were sold as "courtesy copies". Her second "Ami Shobha Bolchhi" was published this year and is being sold at the ongoing Amar Ekushey Boi Mela.

However, even publishing her own poems was no walk in the park for Shobha as even here, due to social stigma and the financial burden that comes with discrimination against trans people, no publisher wanted to represent her.

Her poetry was not welcome in the most coveted book fair in the country.

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PEOPLE'S LEASING HC summons 64 loan defaulters

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The High Court yesterday summoned 64 defaulters of People's Leasing and Financial Services (PLFSL) for their failure to reschedule their loans despite its directive.

If they don't appear before the court, the law enforcers will be directed to arrest them and produce before the court, said the HC bench of Justice Muhammad Khurshid Alam Sarkar in the order.

One defaulter has been asked to appear before the bench on April 11 and the remaining 63 on April 12 and 19.

The directive comes following an application filed by PLFSL seeking necessary directives.

The HC on July 12 last year constituted a 10-member board to run the troubled non-bank financial institution and issued several directives,

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Star HEALTHLINE

Why understanding inflammation is IMPORTANT FOR HEALTH

STAR HEALTH DESK

Inflammation happens to everyone whether they notice it or not. It is a normal immune response of the body to harmful stimuli, damage or infection.

Our bodies activate the immune system by sending out inflammatory cells. The cells then attack the bacteria or heal the damaged tissue.

Inflammation is classified into two types: acute inflammation and chronic inflammation.

Acute inflammation ordinarily happens for a brief time and usually settles in two weeks or less. The purpose of this type of inflammation is to restore the body to its state prior to injury or illness.

Heat, pain, redness, swelling, and loss of functions are some signs that you have inflammation.

On the other hand, chronic inflammation lasts longer and may occur even without any injury

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CETP AT SAVAR TANNERY INDUSTRIAL ESTATE

Colossal failure, misuse of public funds

Says Saber Chowdhury in an interview with Star

RASHIDUL HASAN

The central effluent treatment plant (CETP) at the Savar Tannery Industrial Estate with fundamental flaws and jaw-dropping inadequacies, reflects extremely negatively on how this project was planned, designed and implemented, said Saber Hossain Chowdhury, chairman of the parliamentary standing committee on the environment, forest and climate change ministry.

In an interview with The Daily Star, Saber, also the ruling Awami League MP from Dhaka-9, expressed optimism that the ministries concerned would look into all aspects of the faults, identify those responsible and take actions in this regard.

"This is a must to ensure accountability and transparency and avoid similar colossal failures and misuse of public funds in future," he said.

As the CETP it is not fully functional, the tannery estate is causing massive

pollution to the area and the Dhaleshwari river.

Asked how it was possible to run the estate without having a fully functional CETP and a solid waste treatment facility, Saber said running a tannery estate without ensuring these basic facilities is illegal and the tanners are responsible for causing massive pollution over the last 10 years.

"Other than virtually killing rivers, huge damages have been done to the ecology and environment and there are of course some major public health issues to be taken into consideration."

The rivers around the capital are now polluted to such an extent that even bacteria do not survive in some areas of the water bodies, the MP said.

"As a part of the Balu river is in my electoral constituency, I have known first-hand how my constituents suffer from the pollution and the high incidence of



BJP predicted to win in UP

AFP, New Delhi

Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi's Hindu nationalist party was set for a resounding victory but a reduced majority at elections in the country's most populous state Uttar Pradesh, exit polls forecast yesterday.

Exit polls are not always reliable in India, but an average of four indicated that the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), led in the state by firebrand monk Yogi Adityanath, would win 240 seats -- more than enough for a majority in the 403-seat assembly.

The official results for the bellwether state, which is home to more than 200 million people, will be announced on Thursday. Voting took place over several weeks in different rounds, the last of which was yesterday.

The BJP won by a landslide in the previous state election in 2017, sweeping 312 seats in the state, which sends more lawmakers to the national parliament than any other.

The BJP's main rival Samajwadi (Socialist) Party, which has been seeking to tap into discontent over job losses and rising prices, was predicted to finish second with 150 seats.

Experts say the result in Uttar Pradesh will be viewed as a referendum on Modi, who was re-elected in 2019 and could seek a third term in 2024.

Results are also due in four other states that have voted. Yesterday's exit polls also projected a landmark win for the upstart Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) in Punjab, on the border with Pakistan and home to the Sikh community.

The anti-corruption AAP was predicted to take the state from the Gandhi dynasty's Congress party, which it is looking to displace as the main opposition to the BJP.



Women day labourers have had their skins blackened from the hazardous work of breaking coal at a brick kiln in the capital's Amin Bazar. Without safety gear, such work can cause serious health damage, including to the skin and lungs. Despite the dangers, the women take on the risky job to provide for their families.

PHOTO: PALASH KHAN