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Inflation creating 'new poor' again

Finds PPRC-BIGD survey in May

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The number of 'new poor' in Bangladesh has not dropped off despite the economy reopening due to the runaway inflation between January and May, found a recent study.

At the end of May, the number of 'new poor' in the country stands at 30.9 million, which is 18.54 percent of the population, according to the report styled "Inflation, Coping and Recovery Challenges".

"It is a huge poverty burden," said Hossain Zillur Rahman, executive chairman of the Power and Participation Research Centre (PPRC), which jointly prepared the report with the Brac Institute of Governance and Development (BIGD).

Between May 12 and 23, 3,910 rural and urban slum

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A launch carrying passengers across the Padma yesterday. The vessel travels from Munshiganj's Shimulia to Madaripur's Banglabazar and back. Such trips could become a thing of the past once the Padma Bridge, right behind, opens to the public this month.

PHOTO: SAJJAD HOSSAIN

Govt hikes gas tariff by 22.8pc

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The government yesterday hiked the gas price by 22.8 percent, compounding the woes of the ordinary citizens who are already grappling with the spiralling prices of almost all essentials.

As per the new tariffs announced by the Bangladesh Energy Regulatory Commission (BERC), the use of a single burner will cost Tk 65 more at Tk 990 and a double-burner Tk 105 more at Tk 1,080.

Of the 43 lakh household gas connections, about four lakh have pre-paid meters and the tariff for those will increase 42.9 percent to Tk 18 per cubic meter.

The gas price was last hiked in July 2019. Fertiliser factories have been slapped with the steepest hike: they will now have to pay Tk 16 per cubic meter of gas instead of Tk 4.45.

Asked about the hike, which can add to the inflationary pressure, Mohammad Abu Faruque, the acting chairman of BERC, said: "The government has already decided not to give subsidies for any product at the production level. It would be extended at the consumers' end."

The small and cottage industry users, however, will pay Tk 6.26 less at Tk 10.78 per cubic meter of gas.

The price for compressed natural gas (CNG) was not hiked: consumers will continue to pay Tk 43 per cubic meter of gas.

"We saw earlier that if the CNG price is hiked, ..."

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PADMA BRIDGE OPENING

No legal bar to inviting Khaleda

Says law minister

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

There is no legal bar to inviting BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia to Padma Bridge's inaugural ceremony, Law Minister Anisul Huq said yesterday.

"There are two conditions that Khaleda Zia's release came with -- she will receive treatment inside Bangladesh and she cannot go abroad. There is no legal bar to inviting her at the programme to be held on the occasion of the Padma Bridge opening."

He was talking to reporters after a meeting to inaugurate the 146th refresher course for chief judicial magistrates and chief metropolitan magistrates at the Judicial Administration Training Institute (JATI) in Dhaka.

Quoting Road Transport and Bridges Minister Obaidul Quader, Anisul said the government will be inviting Khaleda to the opening ceremony.

The law minister said he also informed Quader yesterday that there was no legal bar in this regard.

Earlier on Saturday, Quader, also the general secretary of the ruling Awami League, told reporters that BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia would be invited "if the relevant law permits".

Anisul yesterday told reporters that Prime Minister

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Freak accident takes lives of 3 BAEC officials

Bus with no fitness certificate rams parked bus, T-bones a truck, goes into oncoming traffic and hits staff bus

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Savar

Four staffers of the Bangladesh Atomic Energy Commission, including a pregnant woman, were killed in a crash on Dhaka-Aricha highway in Savar yesterday.

The commission's senior scientific officer



Puja Kauser Arifuzzaman

Arifuzzaman, 34, scientific officer Puja Sarkar, 28, and engineer Kauser Ahmed, 29, died at Enam Medical College Hospital soon after they were taken there with critical injuries. Rajib Hossain, driver of the staff bus they were in, died at the scene, police said.

Puja was five-month pregnant, they added.

At least 20 others, including nine employees of the commission, were injured.

Atikur Rahman, officer-in-charge of Savar Highway Police Station, said the accident took place around 9:00am in Boliarpur area.

The driver of a speedy bus of Safe Line Paribahan lost control of the vehicle and caused the accident, he said.

The bus first hit a bus parked by the road and then swerved into a cattle-laden truck, he said.

The bus then hit the road divider, broke it and hit the BAEC bus on the other side of the road, he added.

The injured were rushed to Enam Medical College Hospital in Savar after the crash.

Some of them were in critical condition and got admitted to ICU and NICU.

Savar BRTA Inspector Sazzadur Rahman said the vehicle's fitness certificate was updated the last time in 2014 and taxes were paid the last time in 2015.

Atikur also said they were trying to identify and locate the bus driver who went into hiding right after the accident.

A case would be filed soon and police are trying to collect documents of the bus, he added.

Savar BRTA Inspector Sazzadur Rahman said the vehicle's fitness certificate was updated the last time in 2014 and taxes were paid the last time in 2015.

The vehicle did not even have a route permit, he said, adding that they did not find any number plate on the bus while visiting the spot.

Contacted, Abdus Salam, traffic inspector of Dhaka (North) district police, said they were primarily suspecting the bus had some mechanical faults.

However, it would be difficult to point out the faults as the engine was completely damaged in the accident, he added.

Nadal wins 22nd Grand Slam crown

AFP, Paris



Rafael Nadal won a 14th French Open and record-extending 22nd Grand Slam title on Sunday with a straight-sets rout of Casper Ruud to become the oldest male champion at Roland Garros.

In a disappointing final, 36-year-old Nadal won 6-3, 6-3, 6-0 with victory coming 17 years to the day since he claimed his first French Open as a 19-year-old in 2005.

Nadal won the last 11 games of the final and is now two Slams ahead of old rivals Novak Djokovic and Roger Federer with Sunday's victory coming against all the odds.

Nadal, the oldest winner in Paris since a 34-year-old Andre Gimeno in 1972, had not been certain of taking part after a chronic left foot injury, which has plagued him throughout his career, flared up again.

He also needed the best part of a gruelling 12 hours to see off Felix Auger-Aliassime, Novak Djokovic and Alexander Zverev in the previous three rounds.

His two-hour 18-minute win on Sunday took his record at the tournament to 112 wins against just three losses and also put him halfway to a rare calendar men's Grand Slam last achieved by Rod Laver in 1969.

Nadal, unbeaten in 13 previous finals in Paris and playing in his 30th Grand Slam decider, got off to a flying start against Ruud, the first Norwegian man to feature in a championship match at the majors.



PADMA BRIDGE inauguration
19 DAYS TO GO

WESTERN ARMS FOR UKRAINE

Putin threatens to strike new targets

Kyiv rocked by blasts from Russian missiles as battle rages on in east

AGENCIES

Russian President Vladimir Putin warned yesterday that Moscow will hit new targets if the West supplies Ukraine with long-range missiles, hours after several explosions rocked the Ukrainian capital Kyiv.

If Kyiv is provided with such missiles "we will draw the appropriate conclusions and use our arms... to strike targets we haven't hit before," Putin was quoted by Russian news agencies as saying.

He did not specify which targets he meant. "We understand that this supply (of advance rocket systems) from the United States and some other countries is meant to make up for the losses of this military equipment," Putin said. "This is

nothing new. It doesn't change anything in essence."

Ukrainian officials earlier yesterday said Russian missiles hit railway infrastructure sites in the first such strikes on Kyiv since April 28.

Russia said it had destroyed tanks supplied to Ukraine by eastern European countries during the strikes.

"High-precision, long-range missiles fired by the Russian Aerospace Forces on the outskirts of Kyiv destroyed T-72 tanks supplied by eastern European countries and other armoured vehicles that were in hangars," Russian defence ministry spokesman Igor Konashenkov said.

One person was wounded and AFP reporters saw several buildings with

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The wreckage of a runaway bus that hit a staff bus of the Bangladesh Atomic Energy Commission and killed four of its employees, including the driver, on the Dhaka-Aricha highway in Savar's Boliarpur yesterday morning. It also hit two other vehicles.

PHOTO: COLLECTED

Letters show how doctor treated Hitler

REUTERS, Zurich

The Swiss descendent of one of Adolf Hitler's doctors has released details of letters that show how he treated the Nazi dictator for voice problems, NZZ am Sonntag newspaper reported yesterday.

Hitler was treated several times by Carl Otto von Eicken, a German ear, nose and throat specialist, for 10 years from 1935, the newspaper said.

The letters from the doctor to a cousin were discovered by Robert Doepgen, von Eicken's great-great-grandson, who found them when researching family archives for a school project. Von Eicken died in 1960.

British historian

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