

POOR, MIDDLE CLASS Soaring rice price deepens their plight

PINAKI ROY

Azmat Ali is a daily wage earner in the northern district of Lalmonirhat. Just a week ago, he bought coarse rice for Tk 44-45 a kg. But yesterday he found the price of the staple rose to Tk 52.

"Now it has become more difficult to run my family with the money I earn as my daily wage has not increased. It's still Tk 300," he said.

Shahed Ali of Sylhet's Baluchar area is in almost similar situation. A carpenter by profession, he could feed his family with the earnings from woodworking even a

Tk 5-15 rise per kg in one week

Stockpiling creates artificial crisis

Retailers blame wholesalers

Wholesalers blame big millers

Govt's rice stock normal



few months ago.

"But now," he says, "the way prices of rice and other commodities are increasing, I cannot make ends meet. I had no alternative but to turn to my small savings which are also drying up fast."

Over the last one week, the prices of both coarse and fine rice varieties rose by Tk 5 to Tk 10 per kg in retail markets, worsening things for the poor and fixed-income groups, already struggling with the rising cost of living.

A kilogram of coarse rice like Swarna was being sold at Tk 52 to Tk 54 at different markets in the capital and other parts of the country yesterday. Just a week ago, the price was Tk 40 to Tk 42.

The situation is almost the same for the fine rice varieties. A kg of miniket rice is sold for Tk 70, which was Tk 62 to Tk 65 a week ago. Nazirshail, another premium rice variety, now costs Tk 90 to Tk 95 per kg. The price was hovering between Tk 80 and Tk 85 last week.

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1 People aged 60 and above in Bangladesh will be around 22% of the total population in 2050, says UNFPA.

2 Country has over 1.53 crore people aged 60 years and above, which is around 9.28% of the total population.

3 Continued increase of life expectancy is one of the reasons behind the ageing population.

AGEING POPULATION

AGE	2001	2011	2022
60-64	2.29	2.73	3.39
65-69	1.18	1.47	2.38
70-74	1.34	1.55	1.71
75-79	0.52	0.61	0.74
80-84	0.49	0.61	0.56
85-89	0.15	0.18	0.2
90-94	0.14	0.17	0.16
95-99	0.12	0.15	0.07

Number of people aged 60 and above in Bangladesh rose **1.8** percentage points in the last **11** years

"It is an issue of concern. Both home-care and healthcare facilities are inadequate for the ageing population."

Prof Selim Raihan
DU economics department

4 Out-of-pocket expenditure for healthcare is gradually increasing and will put pressure on the elderly population with little or no savings.

AGEING POPULATION

Are we ready to ensure their proper care?

MOHAMMAD AL-MASUM MOLLA

The country's population is still predominantly young, but a sharp increase in the proportion of those over 60 years of age could leave it ill-prepared to provide them with care.

The number of people in the age group in the latest census was over 1.53 crore, which is around 9.28 percent of the total population of 16.51 crore. In the 2011 census, this group constituted 7.48 percent of the population.

The 1.8 rise in percentage points between the two censuses is the sharpest

increase between consecutive censuses in the country's history.

According to the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), by 2050, people aged 60 and above in Bangladesh will number 3.6 crore and constitute 22 percent of the total population.

This is consistent with global trends. According to the World Health Organization, by 2030, one in six people in the world will be aged 60 years or over.

Demographers and economists said the healthcare system and existing facilities are not sufficient at all for care and support of a growing number of

elderly citizens.

Under the social welfare ministry, there are currently six old-age homes. Several shelters and traditional old-age homes are also run by charities.

Contacted yesterday, Ashraf Ali Khan Khasru, state minister for social welfare, said, "There are all kinds of arrangements for senior citizens. Elderly allowance is being given. Ten percent of seats at all government orphanages are reserved for senior citizens. But if people do not go there, we cannot do anything."

Continued rise in life expectancy
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Landslide kills four female tea workers

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Moulvibazar

Four women tea estate workers were killed and two others were injured as a chunk of a hill fell on them at Finlay Tea's Lakkhaichara estate in Sreemangal, Moulvibazar yesterday.

Sukantala Bhumij, 40, Hira Bhumij, 30, Radha Mahali, 25, and Puni Bhumij, 25, died after they got buried under the earthen chunk, said Shamim ur Rashid Talukdar, officer-in-charge of Sreemangal Police Station.

Locals said a large part of the hill was cut earlier and a small tunnel cut at the bottom. The women were collecting mud to coat their earthen huts, without realising the risks.

Quoting locals, Upazila Nirbahi Officer

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'Asked India to help maintain stability here'

Momen clarifies

STAR REPORT

Foreign Minister AK Abdul Momen yesterday said he told the Indian government that Bangladesh would be happy if New Delhi helped Dhaka maintain stability.

Explaining to reporters the remarks he made in Chattogram on Thursday night, the minister said, "Stability is most important. We want stability in this region too. We don't want any instability. If we can do this, it will be meaningful in the 'Golden Chapter' of our relations."

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Alarming trend of rising dengue cases!

New cases of dengue are on the rise once again all over Bangladesh, with the first death of 2022 from dengue recorded in June. With more than 1000 patients already, dengue is rising at an alarming rate this year.

Officials say Dhaka is at risk of a major dengue outbreak this year compared to the last couple of years, as clear,

stagnant water is abundant around – the breeding ground for Aedes mosquitoes.

The scenario came to light after the DGHS conducted a pre-monsoon survey between March 23 and April 4. The survey found three Dhaka South City Corporation (DSCC) wards to be at 'high risk' and ten at 'medium risk' of an outbreak. Nine wards in Dhaka North City Corporation (DNCC) are at medium risk.

Experts have asked authorities concerned to take immediate steps to address the matter.

And not just dengue, mosquitoes can spread other deadly diseases like malaria and chikungunya. The entire nation is trying to protect themselves from the attacks of these deadly mosquitoes at home, workplaces and outdoors. Not just Dhaka, mosquitoes have become a major concern for everyone all over the country.

If the global pandemic Coronavirus were not enough, now these mosquito-related diseases have added more anxiety among people. Many specialists are saying the situation had never been this bad before. And it's getting worse over time. Never before have

people suffered so much due to mosquitoes.

Scattered constructions and crowded localities are often blamed for creating the breeding grounds for mosquitoes. The water bodies used for drainage for these sites have become extremely polluted, producing thousands of mosquitoes from the stagnant water.

As there are no vaccines to such mosquito borne diseases, experts suggest that prevention is the best way to tackle this problem. Some of the best ways to protect oneself and loved ones are to make sure that there is no stagnant water or clogged drainage near our homes and to take preventative measures such as using coils, aerosols and mosquito nets when sleeping.

The nation is asking for viable solutions to this problem. We need to keep our localities clean and hygienic from dirt, garbage and stagnant water. But such actions require time, money and joint effort of many people. For the time being, people need instant safe solutions like mosquito repellents that don't have any harmful side effects on health or skin.

The fight against mosquitoes and deadly diseases is not an easy one.

But we believe that like always, we shall overcome this crisis too, protecting ourselves and our loved ones.

Introducing a new way of protection against mosquitoes!

Vaseline Mosquito Defence Mosquito Repellent Lotion

This new lotion protects you and your family from mosquitoes that carry diseases like dengue, chikungunya and malaria. It is infused with Vaseline Jelly that protects your skin from dryness. The lotion is safe and the light formulation makes it easy to apply on skin.

- Safe even for pregnant women and babies*
- Up to 8 hours^ of protection
- Dermatologically tested
- New non-sticky formulation
- Can be used throughout the year

*Applicable for babies aged 2 months & above

^Based on lab studies

*Creative visualization