

Inflation, war eating away food gains

PINAKI ROY and SOHEL PARVEZ

Bangladesh made gains in food production and ensured the availability of rice in recent years. But surging inflation, erratic weather, and the Russia-Ukraine war affected the availability of cereals and reduced low-income people's access to food this year.

Today, rice is being sold at near-record high prices. Wheat, the second most consumed cereal in the country, sold for a record price in September amid slumping imports, according to the Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO).

Prices of most vegetables also remain higher this year while eggs, the usual low-cost source of protein, also went out of reach for many.

"My two daughters love eggs. Their father used to buy four eggs every day. We can no longer afford that now because of the rising prices of essentials," said Tania Akhter, who works at a spinning mill in Taanbazar, Narayanganj. She added that she and her husband, who drives a battery-run three-wheeler, are finding it increasingly hard to make ends meet these days.

Food inflation reached 9.08 percent in September after hitting 9.94 percent in August, highest since fiscal year 2012-13, according to Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics (BBS).

Prices of non-food items rose by 9.13 percent in September.

"Inflation affects the purchasing capacity of people," said Hossain Zillur Rahman, executive chairman of Power and Participation Research Centre (PPRC).

The low-income people's recovery from loss of earning during the pandemic has been slow, he said, citing a study by the PPRC and Brac.

People are being forced to spend less for food because they can't cut the spending on rent, utilities, and healthcare, he said, adding that people were cutting protein off their shopping list and risking malnutrition.

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WORLD FOOD DAY TODAY



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An unusual scene in the Shambhuganj area of Mymensingh yesterday as buses didn't operate between the city and the surrounding districts reportedly to prevent BNP supporters from attending a rally on the Mymensingh Polytechnic Institute premises.

PHOTO: AMINUL ISLAM

Make reforms to get \$4.5b loan: IMF

REJAUL KARIM BYRON

The International Monetary Fund has outlined wider reform measures, including bringing discipline to the financial sector and boosting revenue collection, for Bangladesh to avail the \$4.5 billion loan.

The measures were discussed during a series of meetings between a visiting Bangladesh delegation, led by Bangladesh Bank Governor Abdur Rouf Talukder, and officials of the multilateral lender in Washington DC last week.

This was the first discussion between the two sides since Bangladesh made a formal request to the IMF for the loan in July.

Talks were held on the measures Bangladesh needs to take in the

next three years to get the loan. The conditions of the loan will be discussed in detail and finalised later this month when an IMF team would be visiting Dhaka, said a Bangladeshi official who attended the meetings.

"The IMF has verbally agreed to grant the loan. They even told us that Bangladesh could have more than the amount it has asked for," the official told The Daily Star, preferring not to be named.

He said the IMF officials observed that Bangladesh's economy was not in the worst shape like those of some of its South Asian neighbours.

But the lender observed that Bangladesh has to overcome a myriad of challenges for smooth graduation

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Man run over after 'being pushed off bus'

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A man died after he was allegedly pushed off a moving bus by the driver's assistant in the capital's Jatrabari yesterday evening.

Abdul Sayem Murad, 35, was an employee of an apparel sourcing company.

"Several locals said Murad was pushed off the bus, some others said he was run over when he tried to get off the bus... We are investigating the matter," said Inspector Sikder Mohitul Alam of Jatrabari Police Station.

The incident happened around 6:00pm on Shaheed Faruk Sarak.

Murad was taken to Dhaka Medical College Hospital where doctors

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BNP men brave hurdles to join rally

They ignore unofficial transport strike, stick-wielding AL men in Mymensingh

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Activists of the BNP and its affiliated organisations faced numerous obstacles, including an undeclared transport strike and assault on their men, when they headed out to join a rally in Mymensingh yesterday.

Meanwhile, locals too suffered due to the lack of public transport in districts around Mymensingh – Jamalpur, Sherpur, Netrakona, Kishoreganj and Tangail.

As part of BNP's planned divisional rallies, the party's Mymensingh unit organised one on the Polytechnic Institute ground yesterday.

The BNP alleged that a transportation strike, which was not declared earlier, was enforced in Mymensingh division ahead of the rally in order to prevent BNP men joining the rally.

Sensing that such obstructions might come, BNP leaders and activists took up various strategies, including being at the venue well before the rally began at 2:00pm, party insiders said.

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BANGLADESH CABLE INDUSTRY OUTLOOK



Sri Lankan captain Dasun Shanaka (L) and his Namibia counterpart Gerhard Erasmus pose for a mock fight during an ICC official photo session in Melbourne on Saturday. The two sides will battle it out on the pitch today in the opening fixture of the T20 World Cup.

PHOTO: ICC

T20 WC kicks off today

ICC

Namibia will be looking to continue their rise in world cricket when they lock horns with Sri Lanka in the opening match of the ICC Men's T20 World Cup 2022 in Geelong today. The match gets underway at 10:00am Bangladesh time.

The first of 45 matches at the tournament will see Round 1 get underway in style, with Group A favourites Sri Lanka taking on a Namibia side who have high hopes of progressing to the Super 12 stage.

This won't be the first time that the two sides are going to face off against each other at a major tournament. Namibia and Sri Lanka were placed in the same group in the last T20 World Cup where they also played their opening match of the campaign against each other. The contest didn't give Gerhard Erasmus and his men happy memories

as Sri Lanka completely outclassed them – Namibia were bowled out for 96 and the Lankans chased the target down with seven wickets and more than six overs to spare.

But Namibia put on a spirited show in their remaining matches as they won against Ireland and Netherlands to qualify for the Super 12 and also went on to beat Scotland in that phase. The team has grown in confidence and experience since then and it was visible when they put on a clinical show to beat Ireland in the warm-up match ahead of the mega event earlier this week.

Sri Lanka, on the other hand, are coming into this tournament with a big reputation to protect as they emerged as the Champions of Asia recently by beating teams like India, Pakistan, Afghanistan and Bangladesh on their way to the Asia Cup title.

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