



Chokehold on the poor tightens

For millions, the cost of living has been rising for three years. A record fuel price hike made everything worse overnight



Sacks of Boro paddy being transported by tractor past farmers' homes in Bakulia Haor in Itna upazila of Kishoreganj. The grain harvested from the haor not only meets local demand but is also supplied to other parts of the country. The photo was taken recently. PHOTO: TAFSILUL AZIZ

Workers are under pressure from both sides: prices are rising while wage growth is losing momentum.



Zahid Hussain, former lead economist, World Bank's Dhaka office

SUKANTA HALDER and SHAHEEN MOLLAH

On a Friday midday in West Agargaon, Shahnaz Akhter stood at a vegetable stall in the summer heat, bargaining over the price of eggplants. Sweat traced lines down her forehead. The colours of her sari had faded.

Four hundred taka used to be enough for daily groceries she needed for her family of six. That was weeks ago. Now she comes home without cooking oil.

When she spoke, her voice was low, barely rising above the noise of the market. "Without oil, it's simply not possible to cook," said Shahnaz, 35.

Her husband drives an auto-rickshaw. Weeks ago, the family could cover groceries without going into debt. Now they buy on credit at the local store, or deliberately buy less than they need.

Shahnaz is searching for work as a domestic worker but hasn't found anything yet. If she can't, she says she'll have no choice but to take her children and her mother-in-law back to the village.

Her situation is not unusual. Across Bangladesh, low-income families have spent most of the past three years absorbing wave after wave of price increases, each one arriving before the last had fully settled. Wages, for the most part, have not kept up, and the distance between what people earn and what it costs to live has been widening.

The numbers tell the story plainly. Inflation stayed close to 9 percent

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Fuel price hike unlikely to stoke inflation

Commerce minister tells parliament

STAFF CORRESPONDENT



Commerce Minister Khandakar Abdul Mukhtar yesterday said it was unlikely that the recent fuel price hike would exacerbate inflation, terming Saturday night's mid-month adjustment "moderate".

The minister made the remark in parliament while replying to

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Talks still uncertain

Iran says 'positively reviewing' participation in negotiations as US delegation set to depart for Pakistan

World powers push for deal as truce nears end

Iran says US not serious about diplomacy

Trump denies he is under pressure to make a deal

Oil jumps, stocks retreat

AGENCIES

Iran is considering attending peace talks with the United States in Pakistan, a senior Iranian official told Reuters yesterday, following moves by Islamabad to end a US blockade of Iran's ports, a major hurdle for Tehran to rejoin peace efforts.

However, the official stressed that

no decision had been made.

Adding to the uncertainty, a source told Reuters that Vice President JD Vance was still in the US, denying reports that he was already on his way to Pakistan's capital Islamabad for talks.

With a two-week ceasefire set to expire this week, the senior Iranian official said Tehran was "positively

reviewing" its participation, but no final decision had been made. The comments conveyed a clear change of tone from earlier statements, ruling out attendance and pledging to retaliate for US aggression.

The Iranian official said mediator Pakistan was making positive efforts to end the US blockade and ensure

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Prime Minister Tarique Rahman observes as a child gets vaccinated for measles at Bagbari in Bogura's Gabtoli upazila yesterday. The government has targeted to jab around 1.8 crore children during a campaign, which began yesterday, in response to rising measles cases. Story on page 3. PHOTO: PTD

BNP unveils list of 36 women set to enter JS

Nominees span old and new faces; ex-AL member's inclusion draws flak

SAJJAD HOSSAIN

The BNP yesterday announced its final list of 36 nominees for the 50 reserved seats for women in the 13th Jatiya Sangsad, putting forward a mix of seasoned politicians, young organisers, and family-linked figures.

Of them, 10 are former lawmakers and senior party leaders, while eight come from established political families, according to the list. Three were defeated in the 2026 general election, six have roots in student politics, and the rest are new faces. Meanwhile, one inclusion has stirred discontent among some party members.

Prime Minister's Adviser and BNP Senior Joint Secretary General Ruhul Kabir Rizvi announced the

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OPPOSITION PICKS ON PAGE 3

Some groups out to confuse people about reforms

Says PM, upgrades Bogura to city corporation, launches canal excavation

STAR REPORT

Prime Minister Tarique Rahman yesterday alleged that certain political groups are attempting to mislead the public regarding the reforms and accused them of ignoring pressing issues.

"Some political parties, both in and outside parliament, have started to confuse the public. The interim government had formed 11 commissions covering the constitution, judiciary, administration, health, and women's affairs. Today, we sense a conspiracy afoot," he told a rally organised by Bogura district BNP at Altafunnessa playground.

The premier described such groups as "covert manipulators" who, he said, have repeatedly sought to mislead the nation at critical moments, including during the Liberation War, the 1986 election, and the 1/11 period in 2008, reports our district correspondent.

He went on to say that those trying to mislead the public in the name of reforms and misrepresent the July charter say nothing about women's freedom or development.

Tarique, also the BNP chairman, said these groups remain silent about the health reform commission's report in ensuring people's access to medicine and healthcare. "They don't talk about how to fix the administration or how to stabilise law and order. They only talk about the constitution."

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