Preparation for BCS and all job-exam written tests

Contemporary Essays and Focus 2026

Complete essays on the 36 issues most discussed in the news and editorial pages of Bangladesh's leading newspapers over the past three months (August–November 2026), with data, statistics, charts, tables and famous quotations.

Economy and Development

International Affairs and Diplomacy

Environment and Climate

Society, Education and Health

Data updated: 16 November 2026

Sources: Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics, Bangladesh Bank, Export Promotion Bureau, World Bank, the United Nations and its agencies, Transparency International, RSF, and media including Prothom Alo, The Daily Star, Jugantor, Dhaka Tribune, The Financial Express, bdnews24 and BSS.

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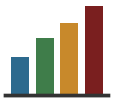
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ESSAY 1

Inflation, the Energy Crisis and the Lives of Ordinary People

Spending more than they earn: low- and middle-income families under the heat of the market



> *"Inflation is taxation without legislation."*
>
> — Milton Friedman, Nobel laureate economist

Introduction

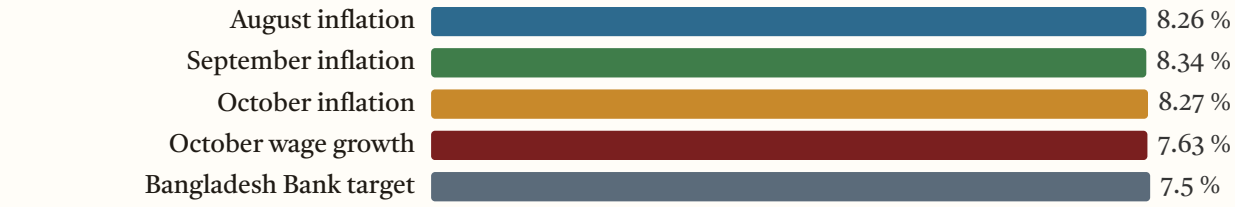
The health of an economy cannot be judged by its growth rate alone. The real test is whether ordinary people can buy the goods and services they need with what they earn at the end of the month. For several years, persistently high inflation has put Bangladesh under heavy pressure on exactly this test. In 2026 the war in the Middle East, turmoil in global energy markets and repeated domestic fuel price increases made the pressure worse. Prices are no longer just an economic debate; they are the daily struggle of every household.

The Current State of Inflation

According to the Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics (BBS), point-to-point general inflation stood at 8.27 percent in October 2026, down marginally from 8.34 percent in September. In August it was 8.26 percent. In other words, inflation has moved up and down slightly but has stayed above 8 percent for a long time. The twelve-month average from November 2025 to October 2026 was 8.66 percent, compared with 9.22 percent a year earlier. Bangladesh Bank's target is 7.5 percent, but it has not been met.

The most worrying fact is that wages are rising more slowly than prices. In October the wage index rose by 7.63 percent while prices rose by 8.27 percent. Nominal incomes are increasing, but real incomes, or purchasing power, are falling. In an editorial, the daily Jugantor wrote that because inflation has outpaced wage growth, people's real purchasing power has shrunk severely.

Chart: Inflation versus wage growth (2026)



Source: Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics; BSS (9 November 2026); Bangladesh Bank

Fuel Price Hikes: A New Driver of Inflation

The Iran-centred war that began in late February 2026 disrupted oil and gas supplies from the Middle East. Obstruction of shipping through the Strait of Hormuz and higher insurance premiums and freight charges pushed up global energy prices. Because Bangladesh imports most of its fuel, the shock hit the domestic economy directly.

From 21 September 2026 the government raised the prices of diesel, petrol, octane and kerosene by Tk 20 per litre. Diesel now costs Tk 135, petrol Tk 160 and octane Tk 165. According to the Dhaka Tribune, refined fuel is now 43 percent more expensive than before the Iran war. The Energy Division said the Bangladesh Petroleum Corporation (BPC) lost about Tk 22,876 crore in the six months from March to August. The government cited reducing these losses, saving foreign currency and curbing smuggling to neighbouring countries as reasons for the increase.

Table: Retail fuel prices (Tk per litre)

Fuel	Before 21 September	From 21 September 2026	Increase
Diesel	115	135	20
Petrol	140	160	20
Octane	145	165	20

Source: Energy and Mineral Resources Division; Dhaka Tribune, 21 September 2026

Higher fuel prices do not affect car owners alone. Transport fares, irrigation costs in agriculture and factory production costs all rise, and eventually so do the prices of rice, lentils and vegetables. The Daily Star warned in an editorial that fuel price hikes cannot become an excuse for a free-for-all on transport fares. Bangladesh Bank's Monetary Policy Committee also cautioned in September that high fuel prices and the new pay scale for government employees could make inflation harder to control.