



The World On Time

## PACKAGES, DOCUMENTS AND FREIGHT WORLDWIDE

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## Sidewalks sport winterwear

By A Maher

Winter clothes have once again flooded popular markets of the capital. As the season brings in its first chilly tang, people especially the younger generation are looking forward to more varieties of winter clothing. This year though variety is not the motto of the markets, at least not the ones that used to give the most diversity. Many frequented spots are the areas around the General Post Office (GPO). Elephant Road, Farmgate and areas adjacent to Dhaka College, New Market and Gausia shopping centres.

This year though it seems vendors are getting more into light winter-wear instead of the usual cardigans and sweaters. Blazers are found in almost every 'shop' on the sidewalk. Many customers initially get confused then suspicious at these smart chic outfits that have the air of designer apparel.

"At first I was surprised, rather taken aback at finding clothes of such standards and almost shocking prices on the sidewalks. The shirts were of good quality and they might well have been from a shop in Eastern Plaza or Elephant Road," said Salahuddin Ahmed, a second-year student of Dhaka University.

"We sell almost identical garments with those of (adjacent) Elephant Road, but customers buy both from there and at our prices. It is like we are actually competing with those flashy and air-conditioned arcades," said Mokhless, 'salesman' of one side-walk shop near the filling station opposite Dhaka College.

Prices range from 140-250 taka depending on the size



and look of the garment -- a brand name would inch the price up by a few tens.

The ladies' cardigan sections were truly 'street' priced, a mushy green sweater costing 100 taka.

Women customers in larger numbers crowded these shops and many, according to the shopkeepers, are from the affluent section of the society.

"Nowadays all sorts of people buy from us. It is not demeaning to buy from the footpaths because you can get the same in an arcade at higher

prices. We only don't have permanent shops," said Shaheen. He owns a shop on the terrace along Gausia market.

Many, though, plan to rent spaces in regular shops and by the looks of sales they could be successful within a short time. Daily sales go up to 5000 taka for some while the unlucky ones still have something around 500-700.

The origin of these "Levis", "Hilfiger" and "Reebok" shirts is quite interesting. Most of the market supply for the side-

walks around the Dhaka College area is from Narayanganj, Sadar Ghat and Bangabazaar and others from the garments factories. "Rejected" garments are the order of the day with no one thinking twice about the nature of rejection.

"You see the defects in these clothes are so unnoticeable that it really doesn't matter. And many of the rejected flaws that are picked up only trained garment inspectors and invisible to the naked eye," said one buyer in his teens.

Prices of onions, dry fruits and gram flour, however, marked notable rise. Other items like spices and various types of flavouring items became dearer.

Prices of locally produced onion increased from Tk 24 to Tk 36 per kilogram (kg) and dry gram flour cost from Tk 35 to Tk 40 a kg, gram flour made from kheshari cost Tk 26 per kg, a jump by at least Tk 8.

Dry fruits, like dates, marked slight increases. Date fruit of various qualities cost between Tk 60 and Tk 120 per kg. Price of dried sultana rose to Tk 60 per kg from its previous price of Tk 55.

Puffed rice is priced at 35 per kg, while the price of widely consumed best quality pressed rice remained at Tk 20 a kg.

Prices of green vegetables also remained stable. Prices of brinjal of both categories, round and long, cost Tk 26 and 15 per kg.

Prices of green peas fell from Tk 90 to Tk 80 per kg. A medium size cauliflower cost Tk 12 while a large sized one cost Tk 20.

Pulses of various categories marked slight rise. Kheshari cost Tk 38 from previous price of Tk 36 per kg. Masur cost Tk 45 from previous price of Tk 43

a kg.

Price of sugar remained at Tk 33 but some traders said it may rise by taka one or two by next week.

Price of banana, widely consumed fruit during Ramadan, increased from Tk 30 to Tk 35 a dozen.

Prices of other fruits like orange and apple marked slight increase by at least five taka per kg. Orange imported from India cost Tk 80 a dozen, while local category cost between 45 and 50 taka a dozen.

Prices of grains of all categories marked slight fall by at least two taka.

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