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People's Right to Know

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2 lakh child labourers to get training

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Two hundred thousand child labourers would be given training and rehabilitated soon under a Tk 206 crore project.

The project along with another ten with an outlay of Tk 863 crore included Tk 288 crore in foreign aid were approved by the Executive Committee of the National Economic Council (Ecnec) yesterday.

Prime Minister Khaleda Zia chaired the Ecnec meet at the planning commission.

The child labourers aged between 10 and 14 years would be given vocational training through 8,000 centres in six divisional cities. Sixty percent of the children will be girls.

The Ecnec also okayed a condom factory in Khulna at a cost of Tk 33 crore, as the demand for male contraceptives has risen in the last few years due to a growing fear of AIDS and other sexually transmitted diseases.

The planning commission

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Essentials prices hit sky-high

PINAKI ROY

The poor and middle class people's plight has reached its peak due to the spiralling prices of essentials a couple of days before the month of Ramadan.

In absence of government control on the market, the prices of essential commodities, especially rice, vegetables and groceries, have already shot up to go beyond the purchasing capacity of the low-income people.

The recent floods and heavy downpour largely contributed to the unusual price hike as a vast tract of vegetable fields have been damaged across the country.

The market may not be stable before December as farmers have just taken fresh initiative to cultivate vegetables despite facing a seed crisis.

"Rice prices have shot up by Tk 3 to 4 a kg in the last 15 days. And vegetable prices are so high that fish and meat are comparatively cheaper," said Shakhawat Hossain, a government official, at Kathalbagan kitchen market in Dhaka yesterday.

"Living cost is going up constantly but income remains the same for years," he said pointing at the increasing gas, water and electricity bills, fuel price and transport fare.

Natural calamity does not always play major role in high commodity prices, unabated toll collection on the highways also makes the transportation costs of agricultural products higher that leaves an adverse impact on the market.

While visiting different kitchen markets in the capital this correspondent found an unusual price situation that forced the people in

the middle class bracket to consume less as their income and budget are limited.

A kilogram of aubergine is now selling at Tk 40, tomato Tk 60, ladies finger Tk 32, cabbage Tk 60, cucumber Tk 20, bean Tk 60 and a medium size pumpkin Tk 50. The price of green chilli has shot up to as high as Tk 120 and ginger to Tk 90 a kg.

Potato and papaya are comparatively cheaper -- selling at Tk 14 and Tk 10 a kg in the capital's kitchen markets. The potato price was Tk 10 a kg hardly 10 days ago.

But the prices of vegetables would not fall in the next two months as new vegetables would hit the market in the first week of December, officials concerned said.

"After the floods, weather is now gradually improving. So we can expect normal price when the new

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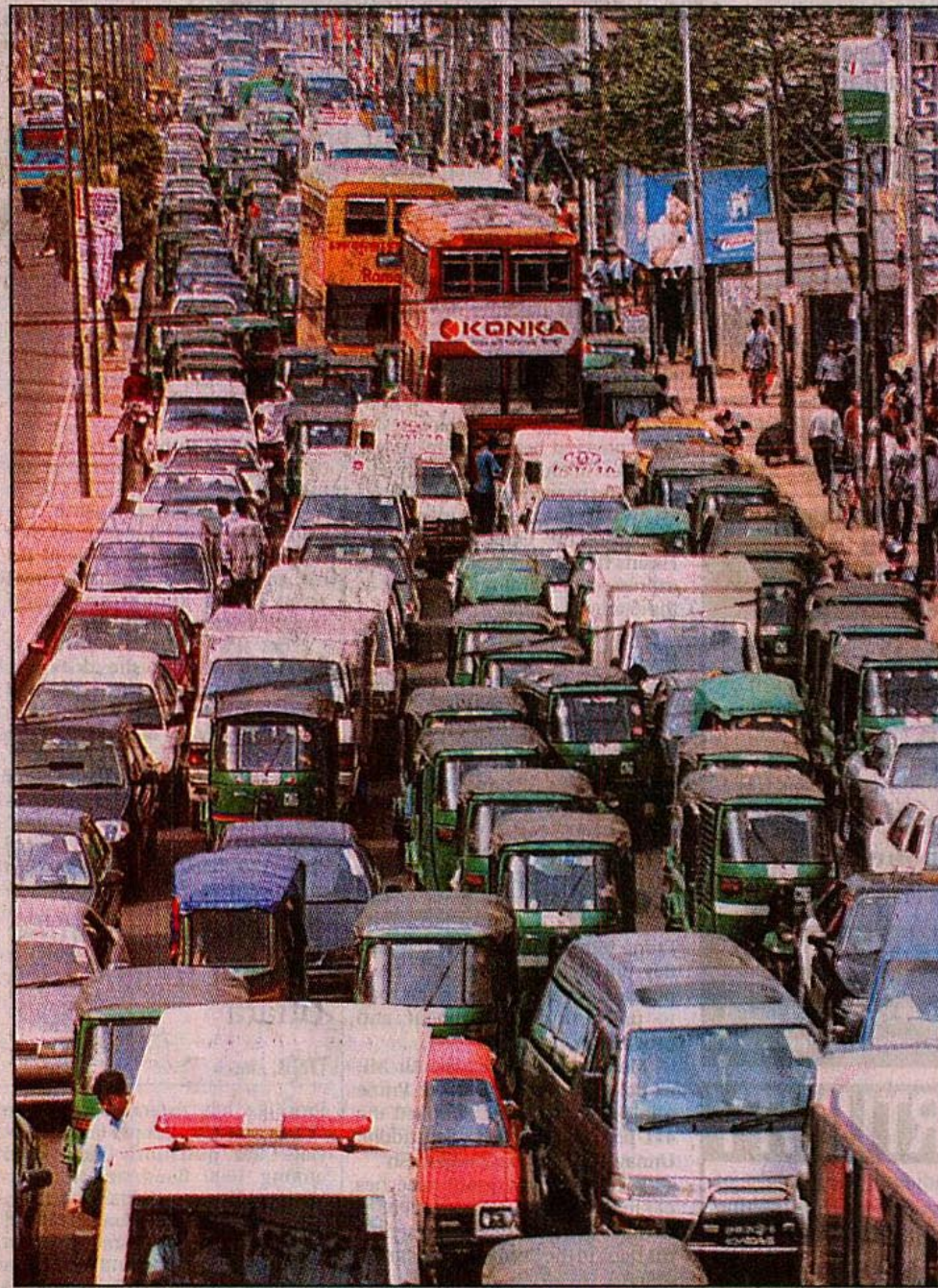


PHOTO: AMRAN HOSSAIN

Even during the Traffic Week, the capital's roads are getting clogged up because of poor management as this photo of Moghbazar road taken yesterday shows.

Gen Mustafiz accuses army HQ of acting like a party mouthpiece

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A former army chief yesterday accused the army headquarters of acting like a 'mouthpiece' of a political party and labelled the detonation of four grenades seized from the spot of the August 21 carnage as a "state sponsored crime."

"The army headquarters being a national institution has issued a statement as a mouthpiece of a political party," General (ret'd) Mustafizur Rahman told reporters at his residence reacting to the statement and the discussions of a parliamentary body about his comments in a statement published recently in national dailies.

The former general in his

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Key accused of Rabbani killing surrenders

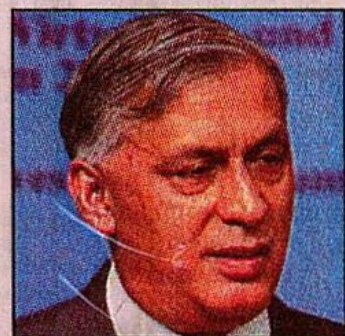
STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

The prime accused in Commodore Golam Rabbani murder case surrendered to the Divisional Speedy Trial Tribunal, Chittagong, yesterday.

Engineer Abu Naser Chowdhury, former general manager of Korean Export Processing Zone (KEPZ) and the chargesheeted accused in the case, went into hiding since the gun attack on Commodore Rabbani, managing director of KEPZ, on April 11.

Rabbani, also the former chairman of Chittagong Port Authority

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Pakistan PM due Nov 3

BSS, Dhaka

Pakistan Prime Minister Shaukat Aziz will arrive in Dhaka on a day's visit on November 3 as the current chairman of South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (Saarc).

The visit, according to diplomatic sources, is a customary one preceding the Saarc summit.

Bangladesh is hosting the next summit to be held in Dhaka in January next.

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Ex-CJ, German envoy cross swords over religious militancy

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Former chief justice Mustafa Kamal yesterday said France and Germany have 'no moral right' to discuss religious militancy in this region, prompting a war of words with German Ambassador in Dhaka Dietrich Andreas at a seminar on the day.

Kamal made the remarks as the chair at a session of the seminar on "Religious Militancy and Security in South Asia" at Bangladesh Institute of International and Strategic Studies (Bliss) auditorium. Andreas who was a participant in the session replied to a series of accusations against Germany and France made by the former chief justice.

The four-day seminar is organised by Bliss in collaboration with the German and French embassies in Dhaka.

"I am not worried about inter-state relations in South Asia. I am more worried about the western perception of a rise in religious militancy in militarily weak countries like Bangladesh but not in big countries like India," Kamal said at the session on "Religious Militancy and Inter-State Relations in South Asia".

Questioning the focus on religious militancy, Kamal asked, "Why are we not discussing secular militancy that is doing as much damage to our society? I am worried about the west looking for another Afghanistan or Iraq to drop their bombs in. Are they looking for another opportunity?"

The former chief justice went on, "We cannot ask about the Turkish minority in Germany because we are a weak country. We cannot ask

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JS goes into session on Oct 28

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Jatiya Sangsad goes into its 14th session on October 28 coinciding with the third anniversary of the 8th parliament.

President Prof Tajuddin Ahmed yesterday convened the sessions in line with his constitutional power. The session is likely to be a brief one as it is convened to meet the constitutional obligation ahead of the Eid-ul-Fitr.

Some important bills including the system of election to the reserved seats of the Jatiya Sangsad for women are likely to be passed in the session.

The Business Advisory Committee will sit before parliament goes into session at 1:30 pm on that day to finalise the schedule of the upcoming session.

The main opposition Awami League (AL), however, has not yet decided whether it would join the upcoming session.

The AL started boycotting the

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WOMEN'S SOCCER Zealots blast govt for failure to protect Islamic values

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The four-party alliance government has failed to protect Islamic values, alleged the Islamic Constitution Movement (ICM) leaders yesterday.

The ruling parties claim to be the followers of Islam, but instead, they are involved in anti-Islamic activities like arranging women sports and supporting the Ahmadiyya community, the ICM leaders said at a press conference in Purana Paltan in the city.

"The ongoing women's football tournament cannot be called sports; this is a vulgar display of women's physique," said Nur Hossain Nurani,

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Norwegian, American share Nobel for economics

AFP, Stockholm

Finn Kydland of Norway and Edward Prescott of the United States yesterday won the 2004 Nobel Economics Prize for their contributions to dynamic macroeconomics, the Nobel jury said.

"Their awarded work established the foundations for an extensive research program on the credibility and political feasibility of economic policy," it said.

"Their research revealed how 'economies become trapped in high inflation even though price stability is the stated objective of monetary policy'."

When households expect higher taxation, they tend to save less, while companies tend to set higher

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Biman flights go haywire on plane dearth

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Biman has been facing frequent flight disruptions on domestic and regional routes after one of its F28 aircraft crashed in Sylhet.

Biman usually uses five of its F28s for domestic and regional operations. But a few months back a newly-bought F28 went out of order

at Chittagong Airport and has since been lying at Biman's hangar at Zia International Airport (ZIA).

These two incidents have reduced Biman's F28 fleet to only three creating a crisis of planes flying short distances, sources said.

The crisis worsened yesterday as another F28 plane was reserved for

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18 Indians nabbed with guns, bullets

Picked from relative's house of Bogra arms haul truck owner

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Sylhet

Paramilitary Bangladesh Rifles (BDR) yesterday caught 18 Indians from the Satchhari border area in Habiganj's Chunarughat upazila with two guns, six bullets, three daggers and some military uniforms.

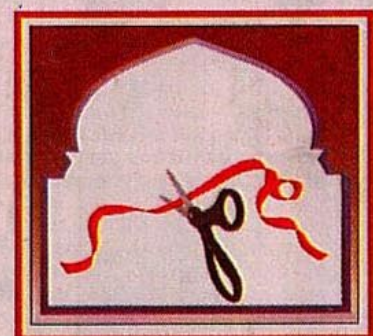
The man who sheltered the

trespassers is an uncle of Ashish Dev Barman, the absconding owner of the seized truck loaded with ammunition and explosives in Bogra in June last year.

Tipped off, the BDR personnel posted at Satchhari border outpost cordoned off the house of former Union Parishad (UP) member

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