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People's Right to Know

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Costly start to Ramadan

Hoarders having field day as govt sleeps; prices of all items jump by Tk 3-20 in a day

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

On the eve of Ramadan, the price of all essential commodities has increased within one day by Tk 3-20 per kilogram, as the government does not have any monitoring over the market.

Traders said unscrupulous wholesale businessmen have stockpiled goods to hike the price. Consumers also opined the same, expressing their dissatisfaction.

"The price has increased Tk 3-20 per kilogram more than it was two days ago for all products," said Md. Lutfar Rahman in Karwan Bazar kitchen market yesterday. "Everyone knew it was supposed to happen but no government body cared about it," he added.

However, the government has taken initiative to sell four kinds of goods - including pulses, onion, sugar and gram - at 40 places throughout the country. Ten mobile teams of the Trading Corporation of Bangladesh

(TCB) started selling four kinds of products at 33 places in the capital.

The prices of aubergine yesterday jumped to Tk 36-40 a kg from Tk 24 in the capital's kitchen markets on the eve of the Ramadan.

Aubergine is used in preparing beguni, a very popular 'iftar' item.

The price of soybean oil has increased by Tk 10 for a five-litre container, up to Tk 265 from Tk 255 yesterday.

"The price of soybean will increase more at the end of the month," said a wholesale trader from the Karwan Bazar market. The price of palm oil also increased to Tk 40 from Tk 30 within just one week.

Prices of cucumber came next to aubergine, selling at Tk 32 to Tk 36 a kg yesterday against around Tk 20 only days ago. The price of off-season tomatoes was around Tk 60-80, depending on the quality.

Two other food items in high

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PRICES OF ESSENTIALS			
Essentials (kg)	Current price (Tk)	Prices month back (Tk)	during Ramadan last year (Tk)
Gram	40-42	26-28	28-30
Aubergine	28-30	16-18	75-80
Puffed rice	32-34	24-28	26-28
Cucumber	34-36	18-20	28-32
Onion	32-36	24-26	26-28
Garlic (local)	56-60	48-50	28-30
Ginger	110-120	75-80	65-68
Green chilli	48-50	24-28	52-55
Date (minimum)	45	35	28
Banana/dozen	34-36	22-24	38-40
Milk/450gm	140-160	125-135	110-120
Sugar	40-42	34-36	30-32
Lentil	52-56	46-48	40-42
Egg /dozen	52-54	45-48	34-36
Broiler chicken	80-82	65-70	60-65

STAR GRAPHICS

PM seeks help to combat terrorism

BSS, Dhaka

Prime Minister Khaleda Zia yesterday reiterated her government's stand against terrorism and urged all to help the government arrest the culprits involved in the recent bomb blasts.

"Terrorism has no room in Islam. Those who indulge in terrorism are nothing but terrorists," she told the newly elected office bearers of the Federation of Bangladesh Chamber of Commerce and Industry (FBCCI).

The prime minister pledged to

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BNP, Jamaat leaders get security

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Khulna

Top BNP and Jamaat-e-Islami leaders of Khulna have been provided with unprecedented security following the October 4 bomb attacks in the courts of three districts.

Similar measures are yet to be taken to provide security to the leaders of other political parties including Awami League (AL).

We are following the orders of the

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Ramadan starts today

UNB, Dhaka

The holy month of Ramadan begins today amidst religious fervour with the devout Muslims observing fasting from dawn to dusk seeking divine blessings.

The month is considered a period of restraint and austerity for the purification of the souls. The Muslim devotees will engage themselves in prayers, including tarabi

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PHOTO: STAR

Riding in a raft, flood victims at Sonarai village of Nilphamari Sadar upazila start for shelter. The photo was taken yesterday.

Flood tightens grip in Dinajpur, Nilphamari

Eight die, over 1 lakh marooned, several thousand homeless

STAR REPORT

Eight people died in wall collapse, electrocution and drowning in Dinajpur as a vast area of the district went under floodwater amid torrential rain for the last four days.

The rain-fed rivers burst their banks causing a late monsoon flood in the region that left more than one lakh

people marooned in Dinajpur and Nilphamari districts.

Thousands of people were forced to leave their homes as the floodwaters engulfed both villages and towns in the two northern districts.

DINAJPUR

Four people, including two women, died from electrocution when an electric tower collapsed at Fakirpara village

under Parbatipur upazila during the heavy rain on Monday morning, reports our correspondent from Dinajpur.

The dead are Marium 26, Mehedi Hasan, 7, Afroza Begum, 48 and her son Farhad.

Meanwhile, Saleha, 28, and Tahmeena, 32, of Bashudevpur

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Bar council asks govt for security in courts

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Bangladesh Bar Council urged the government to take necessary steps to ensure security of the judges, lawyers, legal staff and litigants on the courts' premises.

Expressing concern over the Monday's bomb attacks on the courts, the council vice-chairman Rakanuddin Mahmud and President of the executive committee of the council Eusuf Hossain Humayun in a statement yesterday demanded exemplary punishment of the militants.

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Ctg judges get death threats over phone

Anonymous callers ask them to follow Islamic 'sharia'

STAR REPORT

Three Chittagong judges yesterday received threats of bomb attack from anonymous callers asking them to discharge their duties as per Islamic 'sharia', two days into Monday's bomb attacks in courtrooms in three districts that left two killed and 38 injured.

Moreover, a militant organisation --

Islami Ain Bastabayon Parishad -- yesterday mailed three leaflets to Dhaka Bar Association asking it to cooperate in establishing Islamic rule in the country. The leaflets were similar to those circulated with the August 17 blasts.

The two incidents triggered panic among people in the judicial arena and

they sought security at their houses and offices, and immediate action against those issuing the threats.

The judges who received threats are First Joint District Judge Shamsul Islam, Senior Assistant Judge Kazi Abdul Hannan and Judge Umme Kulsum.

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Bimstec for cross-country power transmission grid

OUR CORRESPONDENT, New Delhi

Seven South and South East Asian countries, including Bangladesh, agreed on Tuesday to explore the possibility of having an electricity transmission network among them.

It could be achieved by developing an inter-connectivity grid between the countries to facilitate the flow of electricity across the region, an official statement of the countries said.

The statement was issued at the end of the daylong conference of energy ministers and officials of the Bay of Bengal Initiative for Multi Sectoral Technical and Economic Cooperation (Bimstec). India,

Bangladesh, Nepal, Bhutan, Myanmar, Thailand and Sri Lanka are in the economic group.

The proposed power grid would run from Thailand to Sri Lanka and Thailand would head a task force to work out the draft memorandum of understanding (MoU) for the inter-country grid connections.

The task force, which will submit its report within a year, would also take into account crucial factors like flow of electricity between the member countries without discrimination.

The conference also reached a consensus on the feasibility of a trans-regional natural gas pipeline. "The conference recognised the need for

detailed feasibility studies and techno-economic agreements between and among participating countries to allow optimal utilisation of natural gas resources in the region," the statement said.

The conference produced an action plan for the cooperation among Bimstec countries to ensure energy security in the region. The plan also covered the tapping of hydrocarbon potential in the region and exchanging unconventional sources of energy as well as building energy security and energy efficiency in the region.

On the gas pipeline, the member countries agreed to form a separate

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JMB planned second attacks soon after Aug 17 blasts

STAR REPORT

The Jama'atul Mujahideen Bangladesh (JMB) planned another countrywide bomb attacks a few days following the August 17 serial blasts but failed due to massive crackdown on militants, an arrested JMB bomb expert told police yesterday.

"As we happened to lag behind schedule, our Chandpur leaders decided to carry out the operation in the district and Monday's attacks at courts were its result," bomb expert Mahfuz Khondoker, arrested at

Barura in Comilla, said.

Police arrested Mahfuz, 22, acting on the confession of his associates Kalam and Sohrab Hossain alias Belal who were caught red-handed during Monday's bombing in Chandpur. Mahfuz had recruited bomber Kalam.

Asked why they fixed October 3 for the attack despite heightened security arrangement, Mahfuz told police that it was an organisational decision of the JMB, said a police source.

"I came to meet JMB activist

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BOGRA BOMB CASES

Hearing on charge framing against Galib not held

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Bogra

The hearing on charge-framing against Dr Asadullah al Galib in bomb and explosive substances cases did not take place yesterday as the court did not receive reports on the execution of arrest warrants and attachment of property of all the accused.

Galib, the ameer of a faction of Ahle Hadith Andolon Bangladesh (Ahab) and a teacher of Rajshahi University, was produced before the Bogra Special Tribunal-3 yesterday morning for hearing on charge-framing in the two cases.

Galib and others are accused of a bomb blast at Laxmikola Shah Rousan Jalal High School in Shajahanpur upazila and in an explosive substances case in Gabtoli upazila.

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