

FAO pulls for Dhaka amid global food crisis

Food price inflation going up by 11pc every month since July; essential prices spiral even up to 116pc in a year

REJAUUL KARIM BYRON and
SHARIF KHAN

The Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO) of the United Nations has put Bangladesh and four other Saarc nations on the list of 37 countries facing food crisis and requiring external assistance.

In the list released Monday, the FAO urged the governments and the international community to take immediate measures to help the poor countries hit hard by dramatic food price increases.

According to Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics (BBS), food price inflation was spiralling up by

over 11 percent every month from July to October this year. In the urban areas, this inflation rate was over 12 percent.

According to the latest data of Trading Corporation of Bangladesh (TCB), prices of most of the essential food items shot up by six percent to 116 percent over the last one year. Of them, price of the main essential item -- rice -- rose by 40 to 50 percent.

In this context, the FAO in a press release said, "FAO is calling for urgent action to provide small farmers in LIFDC (Low Income Food Deficit Countries) that depend heavily on food imports,

with improved access to seeds, fertiliser and other inputs to increase, in particular, local crop production.

"Within countries, improved access to these inputs could be provided by issuing poor farmers with vouchers to buy seeds, fertiliser and other inputs for major staple crops, which should increase local food production. Such steps could help to alleviate the persistent threat of severe undernourishment of millions of people."

The FAO noted that currently 37 countries are facing food crises due

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Jalil finally sued over 6 months into detention

ACC also files graft cases against ex-home minister Altaf, Paban

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

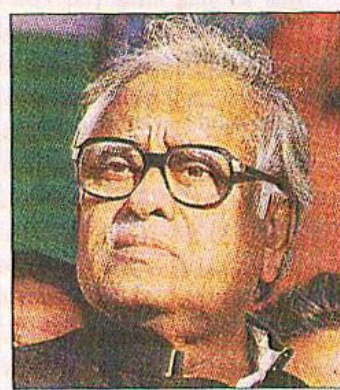
The Anti-Corruption Commission (ACC) yesterday filed separate cases against Awami League (AL) General Secretary Abdul Jalil and former home minister Altaf Hossain Chowdhury for concealing information in their wealth statements and amassing assets beyond known income sources.

The anti-graft body also filed a case against Khandakar Akhtar Hamid Paban, detained son of Chief Whip Khandakar Delwar Hossain, on similar charges.

It filed another case against absconding Divisional Forest Officer (DFO) Tapan Kumar Dey for not submitting his wealth statement in Chittagong.

ACC Deputy Director Enamul

Haque Chowdhury filed the case against Jalil with Ramna Police Station for concealing Tk 65,29,229 in his wealth statement submitted



Abdul Jalil

to the commission and acquiring properties worth Tk 63,82,805 beyond his known sources of income.

The first information report (FIR) of the case said Jalil in his wealth statement concealed information about Tk 21.25 lakh he had spent building a house at Chakdeb in Naogaon, and Tk 33,72,715 he had spent building a hotel and a market in the same area.

The FIR said Jalil also concealed information about his wife's gold ornaments worth Tk 3,29,500 and Tk 7.2 lakh spent for purchasing two cars.

It added that Jalil in his statement said he owns two cars but an investigation later found two more cars in the name of the former minister.

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Niazi's book mocks Jamaat's claim

ZAYADUL AHSAN and
SHAKIYAWAT LITON

An account of events chronicled by the commander of Pakistani occupying forces in 1971 renders rather untrue Jamaat-e-Islami Bangladesh's vehement claim that they were not involved in anti-liberation activities, by categorically saying that the Army of Razakars was formed by the erstwhile Pakistan government itself to fight against the liberation forces of Bangladesh.

Li Gen AAK Niazi, who led the Pakistani occupation forces as the chief of the eastern command of Pakistan Army in 1971, in his book titled 'The Betrayal of East Pakistan' described the formation of the Army of Razakars, their training, procurement of weapons and other logistics, and the deployment of the paramilitary vigilante force.

To train the Razakars, military schools were set up, a separate Razakars Directorate was established, they were provided with machine guns, sten guns, and with intelligence against the Bangalee freedom fighters, and against their supporters and sympathisers.

According to Niazi's book, Jamaat-e-Islami, Nizam-i-Islam Party, and several factions of Muslim League were known as rightist political parties at the time, and the Army of Razakars was formed with men recruited from those parties.

But, Jamaat-e-Islami men were dominating the Razakars annoying other parties. Maj Saddik Salik, who was the public relations officer of the then eastern command of Pakistan Army and worked closely with Niazi in 1971, in his own book titled 'Witness to Surrender', said

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Prices of essentials shoot up

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Prices of daily essentials including onion, fine rice, milk powder and meat have shot up ahead of Eid-ul-Azha due to apparent shortage of supply in the market.

Visiting a number of kitchen markets in the city, this correspondent found that per kg onion (Indian variety) is selling at Tk 28 to 30 while it was being sold at Tk 18 to 20 last week.

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SSC exams now start March 27

UNB, Dhaka

The Secondary School Certificate (SSC) examination 2008 and its equivalent examinations under all educational boards have been deferred to March 27 as Cyclone Sidr caused a setback in an advanced schedule for the exams from next year.

An official announcement yesterday said the exams were deferred "in view of sufferings of the students in the country's cyclone-hit areas".

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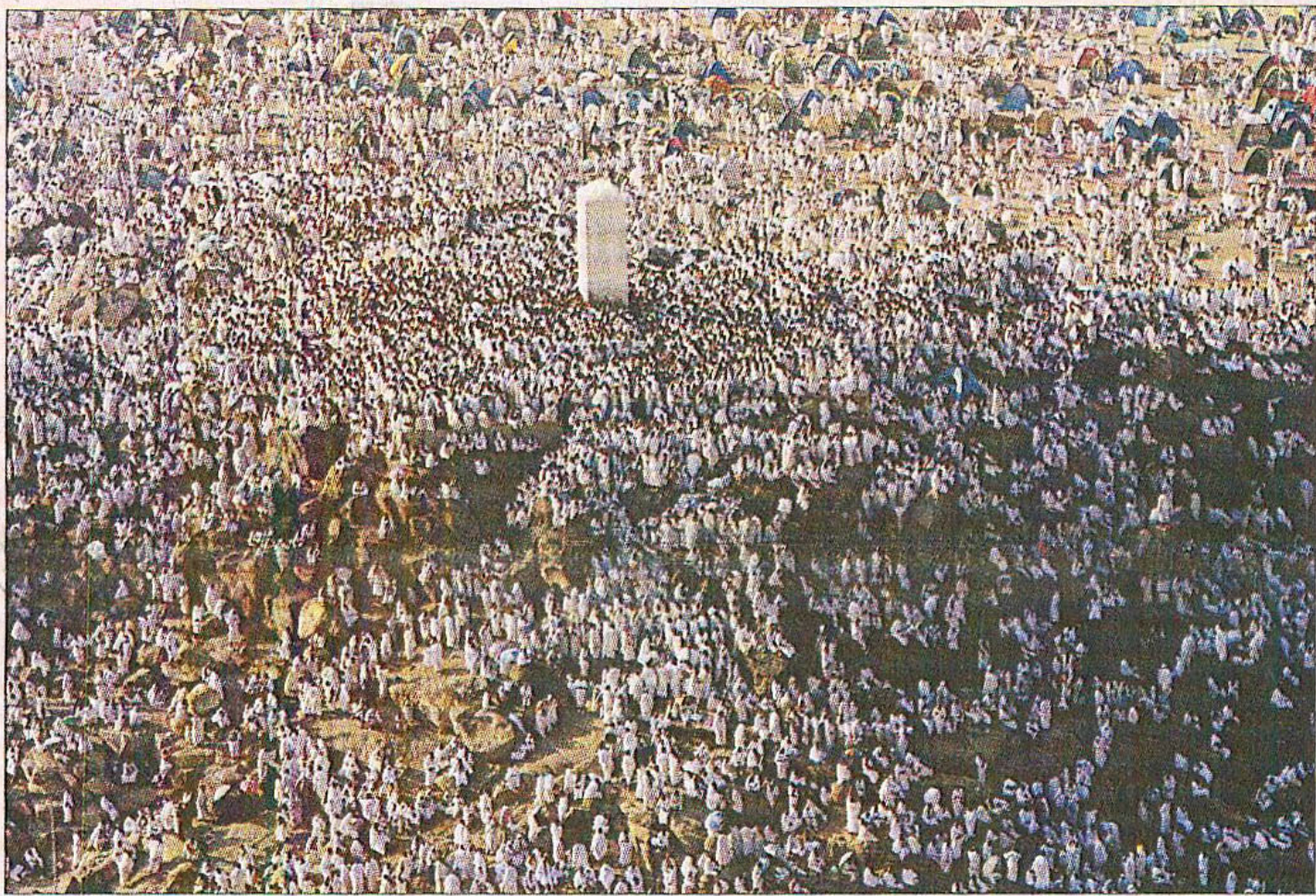


PHOTO: AFP

More than two million Muslim pilgrims from across the globe gather around Mount Arafat, southeast of Makkah, to perform hajj yesterday.

Over 2m hajj pilgrims seek mercy at Arafat

AFP, Arafat, Saudi Arabia

More than two million Muslims from across the globe gathered yesterday around Mount Arafat near Makkah, the birthplace of Islam for the annual hajj.

At Arafat, in western Saudi Arabia, a massive crowd of the faithful spent the day praying and asking for Allah's forgiveness, in a symbolic wait, or "wuquf", for the final judgement.

Among this year's pilgrims is Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad, invited by Saudi King Abdullah to become the first president of the Islamic republic to take part.

Ahmadinejad was due to have joined Iranian pilgrims at Arafat but an announcement at the gathering said that "due to the heavy traffic, the president was not able to make it."

Men wearing two pieces of unstitched white cloth, called the Ihram that Muslim tradition says will serve as their shrouds, and women entirely covered apart from their face and hands tirelessly repeated the formal refrain.

"I am here in response to your call, Lord, I am here," they cried, many of them in heavily-accented Arabic, gathered on a plain dotted with hills.

"This is the first time I am doing the hajj. I registered with the hajj organisation five years ago," said an elderly woman called Fatemeh, accompanied by her husband.

It was on Mount Arafat -- also called Jebel ar-Rahma, or Mount Mercy -- that the Prophet Mohammed gave his final sermon more than 14 centuries ago.

A total of 1,707,814 pilgrims from 181 different countries have

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KERANIGANJ MASS KILLING
9 out of 13
accused were
on the spot
Claims plaintiff

JULFIKAR ALI MANIK

Razakars in Keraniganj killed hundreds of locals including three freedom fighters on orders of four Jamaat-e-Islami leaders including Motiur Rahman Nizami and Ali Ahsan Mohammad Mojaheed, said

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Obituary

With deepest sympathy & heartfelt condolences to Mr. Mohammad Shahidullah & his family of electra group and electra telecom (BD) Ltd., on the demise of his beloved wife.

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Home rush starts 1 killed as 2 launches collide

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A woman was killed and her daughter and son injured yesterday in a two-launch collision in mid river near Sadarghat Launch Terminal as they were trying to board a launch, avoiding the terminal crowded with launches and thousands of Eid vacationers.

The three Bhola-bound passengers were sandwiched between the two launches at around 3:00pm as they were attempting to board one of the launches anchored in the

middle of River Buriganga from a boat, said police and witnesses.

The dead was identified as Ozufa Begum, 40, from Narshingdi. The injured are her daughter Rashida, 20, and son Mian Shah, 16.

Staff members of the launch tried to conceal Ozufa Begum's body after retrieving it from Char Mirerbagh area in South Keraniganj, but police later recovered it, alleged family members of the deceased.

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শীতের আরও ২টি নতুন শাখা খোলা হচ্ছে
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