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Plan to set up fair-price shops in Ramadan

UNB, Dhaka

Considering the high commodity prices on the domestic market, the government has decided to open fair-price shops (FPS) across the country for poor people in the month of Ramadan.

Commerce Adviser Hossain Zillur Rahman announced the plan after a meeting with traders and government agencies at his ministry yesterday.

The proposed FPSs will be set up under the supervision of government agencies like the Bangladesh Rifles (BDR), the Trading Corporation of Bangladesh (TCB) and the food ministry. Open-market sale (OMS) of rice would continue as usual.

Business bodies like the FBCCI

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On-arrival visa in Malaysia for Bangladeshis

UNB, Dhaka

From now on Bangladeshi nationals will be able to obtain Malaysian visa on arrival, a foreign ministry press release said.

The Malaysian authorities have drawn up a list of 27 countries whose citizens will be required to obtain visa prior to their departure for Malaysia.

"Bangladesh has been excluded from this list, whereas it includes

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HC bench drops from docket bail petitions of Hasina, Selim

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The High Court (HC) yesterday dropped two separate petitions filed by Awami League (AL) President Sheikh Hasina and former minister Sheikh Fazlul Karim Selim from its docket on request of their counsels who sought bail for the two in the extortion case filed by Azam J Chowdhury.

Meanwhile, a special court rejected bail petition of detained

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CORRUPTION CASE 2 wives, son of ex-MP Giasuddin sent to jail

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A special court yesterday rejected the bail petitions of detained former BNP lawmaker Mohammad Giasuddin's two wives and son and sent them to jail after they surrendered to the court in connection with a corruption case.

Giasuddin's wives Reshma Begum and Tahfiza Begum, and son Golam Mohammad Faisal surrendered before the Special Court-10

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Saarc meeting begins, crackdown on stray dogs

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE, Colombo

A meeting of officials of South Asian countries began here yesterday, after an unprecedented crackdown on stray dogs ahead of the Saarc summit early next month.

A foreign ministry official said that the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (Saarc) commenced its meeting, with Sri Lanka taking the chair from India.

Grace Asirwatham, director general of Saarc and the foreign ministry's South Asia wing, took charge of the 33rd session of the

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Prayer Timing		
July 28		
	Azan	Jamaat
Fajr	4-20	4-55
Zohr	12-45	1-15
Asr	5-00	5-15
Maghrib	6-50	6-55
Esha	8-15	8-45

Source: Islamic Foundation

India urges for calm, army called out

Blasts toll climbs to 45, little-known group claims responsibility, raid in Mumbai to net suspects

AFP, Ahmedabad

Indian leaders issued appeals for calm yesterday as the army was called out after a wave of bombings killed 45 people in Ahmedabad, a city rocked by deadly Hindu-Muslim riots six years ago.

The string of 16 bombings, which left more than 160 people injured, ripped through crowded places in the tinnerbox western city -- markets, buses and then hospitals struggling to treat the scores of victims.

Indian television channels said a little-known Islamist group calling itself the "Indian Mujahadeen" had claimed responsibility for the attacks, which came a day after a similar wave of bombings in the southern high-tech hub Bangalore.

Bomb squads defused at least three unexploded devices in Ahmedabad on Sunday, Indian news channels reported, while soldiers staged a 'flag march' -- or show of authority -- in sensitive parts of the city.

Police said a number of people had been detained in overnight raids, according to the Press Trust

of India news agency. Ahmedabad was calm Sunday, with police, soldiers and paramilitary forces fanning out across the city.

On the outskirts of India's financial hub Mumbai, police raided a house from which the email claiming responsibility for the attacks may have been sent.

Police have raided a Mumbai house as part of a probe into a series of bomb attacks in the western city of Ahmedabad, reports said Sunday.

The police seized a computer they say was the source of an email claiming responsibility for Saturday's attacks on behalf of a little-known Islamist group calling itself the "Indian Mujahadeen," the reports said.

A similar email was sent to news channels by the same group after a series of blasts in May in the western Indian city of Jaipur that killed more than 60 people.

The NDTV news channel said the property raided was rented to a US national. No arrests or detentions were made but authorities confiscated the computer's hard drive, the Times Now channel

reported.

Indian President Pratibha Patil expressed her "grief and sorrow" and also "appealed to the people of Ahmedabad to maintain peace and harmony."

Many of the victims had been peppered with red-hot nuts, bolts and ball bearings packed into bombs that were clearly designed to cause maximum casualties, doctors said.

At Ahmedabad's Civil Hospital, one of two medical facilities that were hit, victims could be seen writhing in corridors after the attack, their bodies punctured by flying pellets, and crying for treatment from overstretched and panicked staff.

"I had come here with other injured people who needed help. I was getting out of the ambulance when I saw a blue light and then I fell down," said one of the wounded, 52-year-old Laxman Dev.

"When I looked around, many people had died. I got saved because I fell."

The hospital was hit by a car

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SMS to know your polling centre

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Voters in four city corporations and nine municipalities where polls are scheduled for August 4 can know locations of their designated polling stations by using short message service (SMS).

Tele Talk Bangladesh Ltd, the state-run mobile phone company, is providing this facility for around 13 lakh voters in polls to these local government bodies.

An agreement to this effect was signed yesterday between the Election Commission (EC) and Tele Talk authorities.

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Draft voter list of Dhaka put on display

UNB, Dhaka

The draft voter list for Dhaka City is on display at ward commissioners' and election offices for public view so voters can correct information, Election Commissioner Brig Gen (ret'd) M Sakhawat Hossain yesterday said.

He said people who have been left out of the list can apply in prescribed forms to get registered as voters.

The forms for corrections to

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Children work at a Jamdani factory in Rupganj of Narayanganj as poor parents send them to work as weavers to help support their families.

Jamdani industry thrives on child labour

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Children from very poor families are falling victim to slave labour in the thriving Jamdani industry of the country as weavers are exploiting poor children as young as five years old.

Poverty and hunger is pushing many parents to send away their children to work in the industry -- a handicraft legacy we are proud of as our heritage -- in return for little or no wages.

While many in the world scream out for fair trade, refusing to buy 'cheaper' products that come out of a third world production unit akin to slavery, many children are losing their childhood here in our own country to weave the fine Jamdani material that is sold as

higher end products in the clothes markets.

A recent visit to a Jamdani production village, Noapara, under Rupganj upazila found that most Jamdani weavers are children between the ages of five and 10. These children work from dawn till 8:00 in the night, mostly in return for extremely low wages, if not for food alone.

The employers claim that a very young and tender age is the proper time for training for this industry as the youngsters can pick up lessons very quickly.

Badrul Alam, an employer, said, "The prime criterion behind selecting such young children is that they abide their employers in this difficult training without a protest."

According to UN convention, all forms of child labour is prohibited below 18 years of age. The Children Act 1974 of Bangladesh declares child labour illegal under 14 years of age. The project coordinator of Street Children Programme of Aparajeyo-Bangladesh, Altaf Hossain Salim, however points out that few pay heed to this law in our country.

Most of the children working in Rupganj are from nearby districts of Kishoreganj, Mymensingh, Barisal and Chandpur. The dire poverty in those areas compels the parents to make their children work and Jamdani weavers exploit the child labourers in this process.

In typical practice, employers take on children, sometimes as

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Subject-based training needed to qualify as primary teachers

TIB suggests in study report

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Prospective teachers should be provided with subject-based training to qualify as primary school teachers to improve the quality of education in the country, a Transparency International Bangladesh (TIB) report has said.

"As many as 73 per cent of government primary teachers and 70 per cent of other registered primary school teachers are yet to receive such subject-based training," the report said.

Besides, a single teacher has to teach several different subjects due to shortage of teachers," the TIB report stated in pointing out the

main obstacles to quality education.

TIB organised a roundtable meeting on 'The Problems of Primary Education: The Way of Prevention' at Cirdap auditorium in the capital yesterday to launch the report on 'Primary Education Administration and Management: Problems and Way of Prevention'.

Speakers at the meeting pointed out the obstacles to the quality of service rendered by primary teachers. A primary teacher has to carry out 73 different tasks alongside teaching, according to TIB. These include work for birth registrations, census, polling duties during

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Rahul Gandhi due Aug 1

PALLAB BHATTACHARYA, New Delhi

Indian Member of Parliament Rahul Gandhi, son of Congress Party leader Sonia Gandhi, will visit Bangladesh on August 1 on a five-day trip to get a first-hand experience of rural development projects run by Grameen Bank and Brac, an NGO.

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Back to where he belongs

SHAHEEN MOLLAH

Nasima, a teenage mother, had no clue about the ill motive of the two aayas at the Dhaka Medical College Hospital (DMCH) while handing over her 24-day-old sick son Rimon to them for medical treatment.

The two aayas, who work at the DMCH on temporary basis, tricked Nasima and took her fingerprint on a paper, which reads that Nasima sold her son to them for Tk 6000.

Nasima said she took her son

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Nasima holding her 24-day-old baby at Shahbagh Police Station yesterday while the two DMCH aayas try to hide their faces.

More low-lying areas inundated as flood situation worsens

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The flood situation of the country deteriorated yesterday as several rivers were flowing above their danger marks and a number of them continued to swell and burst their banks.

More low-lying areas of the country were flooded yesterday and the situation may worsen during the next few days.

The Flood Forecasting and Warning Centre (FFWC) yesterday said six rivers were flowing above their danger marks at seven points and 39 other points saw rise in water levels.

Recently transplanted Aman on a vast tract of land in char areas of Gaibandha Sadar, Sunderganj, Shaghata and Fulchhari upazilas went under floodwater.

A 6km stretch of road between Kalkakanda and Barkapon and a 4km stretch between Kalkakanda and Rangchati Bazar in Netrakona were also submerged under water disrupting communications.

Land erosion by the

Someshwari took a serious turn for the worse yesterday as 32 houses at Dakumara and Khamarkhali in Durgapur upazila of Netrakona went into the gorge of the river.


According to the bulletin of FFWC, gradual worsening of the situation in Munshiganj, Manikganj, Faridpur, Madaripur, Shariatpur, Dohar and Nawabganj of Dhaka is likely.

The Brahmaputra-Jamuna has started a fresh surge at points upstream and is likely to continue this trend for the next two or three days. The water level of the Padma continued rising at a slower rate yesterday, the bulletin said.

The water level of the Padma at Goalunda and Bhagyakul is likely to register a moderate rise during the next three to four days, yesterday's FFWC bulletin said.

The Padma was flowing 36cm above the danger level at Goalunda and 39cm above at Bhagyakul. The Kabadak was flowing 5cm above the danger mark at Jhikargachha and the Karotoa was flowing 18cm

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The Daily Star
EID FASHION ALBUM 2008
ATTENTION
Designers, Boutique and Fashion Houses

As Eid approaches, The Daily Star prepares itself for the big occasion. This year The Daily Star Fashion Catalogue 2008 will feature dresses, sari, punjabi, kids wear, footwear, jewellery, etc plus write-ups describing the creative thinking behind the fashion wears and their creators. The designers, boutique and fashion houses are invited to participate in this fashion extravaganza. For information regarding participation and placing advertisement, please contact:

Sher Ali,
Advertisement Manager, The Daily Star, Phone: 9144332 (direct)
For design or dress submission please contact:
Syed Ahmed Chowdhury, Phone: 01711-623905

Participation Criteria:

1. The dresses, sari, punjabi, kids wear, footwear, jewellery or any other apparel items should express the mood of the festival.
2. Materials used for the dresses or other items should be locally produced.
3. Design should be original and fabrics should suit the weather and environment.
4. The dresses and other items sent for the album are returnable.
5. The dresses and other items must be handed over to The Daily Star by 04/08/08 (4th August).
6. Per entry fee TK 200/- (minimum 3 entry for each participating house).