

## Ramadan begins

**FROM PAGE 1**  
The limited income group, expressed their resentments over yet another hike in prices of essentials.

They held the government responsible for failing to ensure market monitoring.  
Price of green chilli climbed up to Tk 80 to Tk 100 a kilogram (kg) yesterday although it had been selling for Tk 60 to Tk 70 just two days ago. Most of the traders however sold green chilli for Tk 100 a kg yesterday.

Price of aubergine, fried slices of which is a popular *iftar* item, fluctuated immensely yesterday as traders sold a kg of aubergine for Tk 35 to Tk 70, two days ago which had been Tk 30 to Tk 40.

A trader in Karwan Bazar was seen selling aubergine for Tk 45 a kg yesterday while another trader in a nearby shop in the same market was seen selling the same quality aubergine for Tk 50 while some others were selling it for Tk 60 even.

The same quality aubergine was selling for Tk 32 to Tk 38 a kg in a nearby wholesale market just 30 yards away in earlier hours of the day.

Prices of both local and imported varieties of onion jumped up by Tk 2 a kg in the last two days.

The imported variety was selling for Tk 25 to Tk 29 a kg yesterday while the local variety was selling for Tk 32 to Tk 37 a kg compared to the local onion prices of Tk 30 to Tk 35 a kg and imported onion prices of Tk 23 to Tk 27 a kg two days ago.

Prices of different qualities of cucumbers rose by Tk 5 to Tk 10 a kg in the last two days, which were selling for Tk 20 to Tk 30 a kg yesterday while prices of lemons increased by Tk 1 to Tk 3 for four pieces, selling for Tk 8 to Tk 15.

Prices of different qualities of puffed rice jumped by Tk 4 to Tk 5 a kg, selling for Tk 52 to Tk 55 a kg.

Although prices of chickpeas had come down by Tk 2 to Tk 3 in wholesale markets over the last week, some retailers were seen selling those for prices which are higher by Tk 2 to Tk 3 compared to the prices of two days ago. A kg of different qualities of chickpeas was selling for Tk 52 to Tk 60 yesterday.

Price of sugar rose by Tk 1 to Tk 2 a kg, and was selling for Tk 37 to Tk 40 a kg yesterday while the price of molasses rose by Tk 5.

Demand for molasses increase during Ramadan as sherbets prepared with molasses are very popular among the Muslims who fast.

Molasses were selling for Tk 45 to Tk 50 a kg yesterday.

The prices of almost all kinds of fruits, demand for which also increases during Ramadan, have doubled this year compared to last year's.

## 68 killed

**FROM PAGE 16**  
The island's north and east. Tens of thousands have died on both sides in more than three decades of bloodshed.

Fighting is now concentrated around the north as security forces move into rebel-held territory to dismantle the LTTE's northern stronghold. They ejected the guerrillas from the east of the island in July 2007.

## Hasina

**FROM PAGE 16**  
Earlier on August 28, an HC bench issued a ruling upon the government, asking it to explain within two weeks why initiation and continuation of the case filed by businessman Azam J Chowdhury should not be declared illegal. The ruling followed a writ petition by Hasina's counsels.

The defence counsels yesterday submitted a petition to the special court seeking adjournment of the case proceedings until hearing of the HC ruling.

Advocates Syed Rezaur Rahman and Sahara Khatun were on the defence while Syed Shamim Ahsan Habib was on the prosecution side.

## Transfer order

**FROM PAGE 1**  
Questions have been raised regarding the transfer order as there were no specific reasons or allegations against her to that end. She has rather disposed off quickly many cases including those against many high-profile graft suspects.

She was even dealing at least a dozen cases where many bigwigs, including ex-prime minister Khaleda Zia's adviser Salahuddin Quader Chowdhury, are accused.

Shamsunnahar is to be replaced by Judge Jesmin Anwar, who is learned to be a relative of Law Adviser AF Hassan Arif.

Sources say Shamsunnahar was transferred to the special court last year from a Narayanjan court and, according to rules, was supposed to serve there for three years.

Some law ministry officials however told The Daily Star it is not necessary to have any reason to transfer any judge at any moment, even if the three-year term is not completed.

Some officials of the ministry say there is nothing wrong with the transfer decision. But some sources in the judiciary allege the move is an attempt to accommodate the law adviser's relative.

The law ministry first took the initiative and issued an order to transfer Shamsunnahar to the Tangail district court and Jesmin Anwar to the special court-4 in April. The decision was taken as per an advice of the Supreme Court, it reasoned.

The sources add before April, Judge Shamsunnahar in some of her judgments asked the Anti-Corruption Commission (ACC) chairman to take effective action against the complainants and investigation officers, which

The price of date, an essential *iftar* item, rose by Tk 20-50 per kg. Low quality dates, sold for Tk 50 per kg last year, were sold for Tk 80-100 per kg yesterday.

The price of medium quality dates, sold for Tk 80-90 per kg last year, jumped to Tk 120 to Tk 160 per kg.

The price of a papaya rose to Tk 50-120 from Tk 30-80. The price of banana also increased by Tk 5-10 a dozen, sold for Tk 30-60 yesterday.

The prices of apple, mango and grape increased by Tk 20-100 per kg in the last week.

Apple was sold for Tk 120-160 a kg while the price of mango was Tk 90-180 per kg yesterday. Grape was sold for Tk 400-500 per kg.

The price of a watermelon was between Tk 120 and 200.

The prices of battery chicken increased by Tk 5 per kg, sold for Tk 120-130 while the price of free-range chicken went up by Tk 5-10.

The prices of beef and buffalo meat rose by Tk 10 per kg, which were sold for Tk 200-210 and Tk 170-180 respectively.

The price of mutton also increased by Tk 10-20 per kg, sold for Tk 240-320 a kg yesterday.

Although the prices of non-brand edible oil went down by Tk 12-20 in retail markets in the last 15 days, the prices of brand edible oil remained stable after its price went down by Tk 4-6 per litre.

Many consumers said although the price of edible oil decreased by Tk 30 on the international market, its price went down slightly in the city markets.

Meantime, the BDR-run fair price outlets remained open yesterday, a weekly holiday.

Under the TCB programme, sugar will be sold at Tk 30 per kg, chickpea at Tk 50 a kg, and onion at Tk 20 a kg. Each 2-litre container of soyabean oil will be sold for Tk 216, 5-litre container for Tk 540 and 8-litre container for Tk 864, said a TCB press release.

## AL demands

**FROM PAGE 1**  
Briefing newsmen, Ashraf said all the cases against Sheikh Hasina will have to be withdrawn before the elections.

He said the ALWC thought that the parliamentary polls would not be acceptable to the people as well as the international community under the state of emergency. "So, we ask the government to fully lift the state of emergency before the election," Ashraf said.

As per the constitution and the roadmap, he said, the government and the Election Commission are bound to hold the national election first. "No election before the national election will be acceptable," he said.

Asked about the Election Commission's performance ahead of the national elections, he said, "The Election Commission's recent activities are making the country's people confused about the general election."

The AL acting general secretary also demanded immediate release of all AL leaders and withdrawal of the cases filed against them, including its General Secretary Abdul Jalil, president-member Tofail Ahmed and Sheikh Selim.

Ashraf also demanded the government take immediate steps to keep the prices of essentials within the buying capacity of the common people and smooth electricity supply during Ramadan.

He said they will form a human chain soon to press for the party's demands.

## Mohammedan

**FROM PAGE 16**  
Emmanuel, Maruf and Komol converted for Mohammedan to give them the season's first trophy and a cheque of Tk 3 lakh.

Runners-up and 7-time champions Abahani pocketed Tk one lakh.

BNP Secretary General Khandaker Delwar Hossain also placed floral wreaths at Zia's grave at around 10:45am.

A special prayer was offered, seeking salvation of the departed soul of the late BNP leader and peace and progress of the country.

BNP standing committee members RA Gani, Chowdhury Tanvir Ahmed Siddique, M Shamsul Islam, vice-presidents MK Anwar and Sarwan Rahman and senior party leaders Selima Rahman, and Nazrul Islam Khan, among others, were present.

BNP leaders Hannan Shah and Goyeshwar Chandra Roy also placed wreaths at Zia's grave.

BNP also hoisted the national and party flags atop all party offices in the morning.

A large number of BNP activists thronged the Zia Uddin to pay tribute to the party's founder.

Khandaker Delwar told reporters that his party will take part in the dialogue and contest the national elections if Khaleda Zia is released.

Additional policemen were deployed there to avert any untoward incident.

This is the first time BNP is observing its founding anniversary without its chairperson.

## Khaleda

**FROM PAGE 1**  
Responding to another question, he urged the political leaders to show their responsibility in creating a congenial atmosphere in the country for the sake of economic stability.

"They (political leaders) have to leave the hostile mentality," Zillur said when his attention was drawn to Awami League's opposition to the release of BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia and its Senior Joint Secretary General Tarique Rahman.

About a question on the neutrality of the caretaker government, the commerce advisor, also a spokesman, said, "We want to prove ourselves through our activities if we are neutral or not. People will judge."

"We want to move ahead on the basis of a comforted situation," the commerce adviser said.

## BNP to contest

**FROM PAGE 1**  
caretaking government about making delays in holding the elections. They said it would be tough to control people once they lose their patience.

The four party leaders cautioned the government against taking over or transferring power through the backdoor without holding elections which are scheduled for December.

They said this during a discussion, styled "Three decades of BNP: Shaheed Zia and Khaleda Zia", held as part of the three-day programme being observed by the BNP to mark its 30th founding anniversary.

The alliance leaders vowed to continue movement till their demands, including release of BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia and her son Tarique Rahman, are met.

"Trial of alleged corrupt political leaders under state of emergency and under special tribunal is farcical, we do not accept this trial but we will have nothing to say if the trials are held under the existing laws," the BNP Secretary General Khandaker Delwar Hossain said during a discussion held at Engineers Institute at the city's Ramna.

Jamaat-e-Islami Secretary General Ali Ahsan Muhammad Mojahid, Secretary General of a faction of Islami Oikya Jote (IO) Abdul Latif Nazami, Bangladesh Jatiya Party (BJP) Secretary General Shamim Al Mamun, Khelafat Majlish Secretary General Abdul Kader, BNP standing committee members RA Gani, Tanvir Ahmed Siddique, M Shamsul Islam and BNP Vice-president MK Anwar also spoke among others.

"Do not make delays in holding the national elections, it would be impossible for you to control the people once they lose their patience," Delwar said.

"Holding of the national elections is the only way to save the country as well as the way to save yourselves (the caretaker government)," he added.

"You (the caretaker government) have taken the country 20 years back through your 18 months' rule," Delwar said.

Hinting at the caretaker government he said, "Do not plot any more conspiracies... hold a free and fair election."

"We will accept those who will win in that free and fair election and they will run the country," he said.

Delwar reiterated that they BNP-led four party will take part in the elections if Khaleda Zia is freed.

"We want to take part in the elections and the government sponsored dialogue under the leadership of free Khaleda Zia," he said.

Delwar accused the government of maintaining "double standards" with BNP.

"The government has allowed different political leaders to have better treatment abroad but the government is barring Tarique from getting the same opportunity," Delwar added.

Jamaat Secretary General Mojahid vowed to continue movement until their demands are fulfilled.

"We will make the government free Khaleda Zia and her son Tarique Rahman," he added.

Jubo Dal, a BNP front organisation, yesterday boycotted the discussion protesting against the "autocratic activities" of a number of BNP leaders, a Jubo Dal leader told The Daily Star.

**BNP ANNIVERSARY OBSERVED**  
Leaders and activists of BNP and its front organisations paid tribute to party's founder and late president Ziaur Rahman yesterday marking the 30th founding anniversary of the party.

Speaker barrister Jamiruddin Sircar and deputy speaker Akhter Hamid placed wreaths at the grave of Ziaur Rahman at Zia Uddin in the capital's Sher-e-Bangla Nagar at about 9:40am.

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**Mobile court**  
**FROM PAGE 1**  
Representatives of Rupantarita Praktik Gas Company Ltd (RPGCL) and CNG Filling Station and Conversion Owners' Association assisted.

Yesterday the mobile court conducted the drive against human hauliers that ply on Gulistan-Judge Court and Gulistan-Newmarket routes.

Officials of the directorate found improper conversion kits and substandard cylinders being used in four human hauliers that could have caused cylinder explosions. The cylinders seemed to be cylinders for containing oxygen.

Officials of the directorate also said a vested quarter is active in making and selling low-cost substandard cylinders in the city. They make the cylinders with iron or deep tube-well pipes.

A good quality CNG cylinder costs Tk 40,000 but the substandard ones sell between Tk 10,000 and Tk 12,000.

## Tarique's bail

**FROM PAGE 1**  
principles earlier set by the Appellate Division regarding bail prayers.

During hearing, Salauddin said the HC orders should be put off to allow them enough time to file regular leave-to-appeal petitions.

The defence argued that the Appellate Division and the HC have ruled for bail after examining recommendations of a medical board and this court should not stay the orders.

Tarique was arrested by the joint forces on March 7 last year in an anti-graft drive by the military-backed caretaker government.

Of the 13 cases against him, nine were filed by police and individuals on various charges including extortion, three by the ACC on charges of graft, and one by the National Board of Revenue (NBR) for tax evasion.

The charge sheet to the Chief Metropolitan Magistrate's Court, Dhaka, showing 30 people as prosecution witnesses.

The IO prayed for issuance of arrest warrant against Nazimullah and the court order to attach his properties, as he has been absconding since filing of the case.

In the charge sheet, the IO mentioned that Nazimullah had caused a loss of Tk 13,47,120 to the state exchequer through misuse of power and deception.

The charge sheet was prepared under sections 409 of the Penal Code and 5 (2) of the Corruption Prevention Act, 1947.

On May 14 this year, ACC Deputy Director Abdullah Al Zahid filed the case with Shahbagh Police Station.

The complainant accused Nazimullah of irregularities in renting the ambassador's house, corruption in purchasing furniture for the abode and appointing gardeners.

"Irregularities and corruption by Nazimullah caused a loss of Tk 21 lakh to the state exchequer," the complainant said, adding that the ambassador on different occasions purchased different items for personal use in Abu Dhabi drawing money from government funds through illegal means.

It was also mentioned in the FIR that Nazimullah shifted his residence in Abu Dhabi through misuse of power for his own benefit, causing loss to the state exchequer. He also appointed two gardeners at his residence resorting to corruption and irregularities.

The ACC on Sunday filed a graft case against the former ambassador on charges of embezzling Tk 65 lakh of government funds.

In the FIR, it was mentioned that Nazimullah was supposed to retire on February 9, 2003. But he remained in service for two more years until February 2005, giving false information and tampering with his SSC certificate.



A gang of vegetable "thieves" gathers on the garbage lorry, top right, kept at the Karwan Bazar kitchen market in the early hours. Vegetables traders capture a number of them, top left, while they were stealing from a moving truck at Karwan Bazar around 3:00am. A child is beaten up after capture, bottom right. A number of the children buying *chanachur* with the money they got selling the stolen vegetables.



PHOTO: ANISUR RAHMAN

## Karwan Bazar's midnight children

**FROM PAGE 1**  
around, she claimed. Just the scavengers. Not like the other children - one would pause a minute before calling them 'thieves' -- who prowl the market by night, slash open sacks and take whatever they can grab -- vegetables, onions, garlic -- you name it.

Shakil is not one of these 'thieves' -- their number might be 400 or even higher. But Nasima (not real name) is one for real. On Wednesday night, her luck was not that good -- she got caught while slashing open a gunnysack.

She did not receive any beating. But that did not mean she did not have to pay for her 'sins'. Several male hands groped for her body, molesting her. She did not protest. She just bore it. The faces of rickshaw-van-pullers and coolies looked grotesque in the shadows.

"Beasts! How happy they are to catch a girl thief!" she spat on the ground in disgust as they let her go.

From a rickety room atop a vegetable depot, a thin screaming voice came. A child was squealing in terror. A 10-year-old boy was being punished there for stealing vegetables from a truck, the coolies said.

"The vegetables trader is molesting the kid," one of them commented, pulling a blank look.

Though Shakil, Nasima and the unnamed 10-year-old boy are well aware of the hazards of life at Karwan Bazar, they won't quit this 'occupation'.

Of the 400 thieves, 80 percent are under 12 and 40 percent are girls. Most of them live on footpaths and slums in Mirpur, Kafur, Tejgaon Railway Station, Begunbari and Tongi. Some of them are drug addicts and homeless people from different parts of Dhaka.

Most of the women and children were abandoned by their husbands and fathers.

"My mother first sent us to pick up vegetables three months ago after my father stopped looking after us," Shakil, a class IV student, said, adding he had to drop out from school as well.

His mother Nazma Begum, a part-time domestic help, also picks up vegetables in between her duties. The father, Abul Hashem, who drives a school van, lives somewhere else.

Two groups of vegetables thieves are active during transporting vegetables to the market in trucks from across the country, unloading those on rickshaw-vans and taking those to the depots in between 10:00pm and 7:00am. One group cuts open the sacks and

steal, while the other steals vegetables from those sacks later.

About 150 thieves involved in cutting sacks can take one to one and a half kilograms of vegetables at a time when the trucks wait in queue for unloading and rickshaw-van-pullers remain busy with their vans.

"If caught, those who cut sacks receive severe beating," Parul, a female coolie who lives on the footpath of Kazi Nazrul Islam Avenue, said, adding drug addicts from different parts of Dhaka and some sex workers are also involved in it.

While each of such thieves earns Tk 200-800 every night, members of the other category, who are more than 250 in number, earn Tk 50-200 each by selling their vegetables later on the footpath or to the vegetable traders.

Mostly kids aged between 6-12 years and some aged drug addicts are involved in poking the cut sacks to steal vegetables.

Most of such thieves are beaten several times a week and sexually assaulted sometimes.

"They assault us on any minor excuse. This bazaar is full of lechers," said an 11-year-old fair-complexioned girl from Pirebargh in Mirpur who was forced to stealing, as her mother can't work for

her waist problem. Losing her father about three years back, she has to run the family of her mother and younger brother.

"Apart from the traders, the coolies, rickshaw-van-pullers and some adult male thieves mainly sexually abuse the girls after catching them during the theft," Liton, a 40-year-old leader of thieves who is known as "Khukir Baap" (Khuki's father), told The Daily Star.

There is another group like Shakil who pick up vegetables that fell from vans while being carried to and from the depots.

Apart from young kids, poor women aged above 25 and kids of 5-10 years are mostly involved in such picking.

Many of them pick up half-rotten vegetables from the dustbin, cut off the rotten parts and sell those to restaurants.

Aklima Khatun, 30, of Begunbari engaged three of her six offspring in stealing after her truck driver husband Emdad Mirzha died two years ago.

"I have no alternative to engaging my kids to stealing. They are too young for other kind of jobs," she said, waiting near the Janata Tower Tuesday night when her sons Shaquif, 12, Deen Islam, 11, and Shawon, 10 were depositing the stolen vegetables to her.

## Rivers continue

**FROM PAGE 1**  
submerged due to heavy rain coupled with onrush of water from upstream.

A few thousand char dwellers of 35 chaws have taken shelter on higher grounds and in schools and colleges as their homes have been washed away by the surging floodwater.

Our Sirajganj correspondent, citing Sirajganj District Flood Control room and Water Development Board sources, reports: About 1 lakh people in Kazipur, Sirajganj Sadar, Belkuchi, Shahzadpur and Chowhali upazilas are flood affected. They have taken shelter at different embankments and educational institutions.

Fish in around 400 ponds in Chalobee area were washed away causing a loss of about Tk 60 lakh, official sources said.

Our Gaibandha correspondent reports: Nearly 15 unions have been flood affected while Katlamari-Uria flood control embankment has become weak.

Our correspondent in Sylhet reports: Erosion at the dyke of the Surma in Kanaighat upazila has taken a serious turn. Erosion on the Kushiara in Zakiganj and

Beanibazar upazilas has already caused significant damage.

Our Faridpur correspondent reports: Around 15,000 people in Bhajandanga, Sadipur, Gadadhardangi, Bilgaria of Alabiad union became marooned by the swelling Padma.

Charvadrangan union is also flood affected. Faridpur-Charvadrangan road link has snapped as it went under knee-deep water at several places. A bridge at Mandertolakh of Sadipur also went under water.

Our Tangail correspondent reports: Over 30,000 people in 40 villages under Bhuapur, Kalihati, Nagarpur, Delduar and Sadar upazilas have been marooned due to the swelling Jamuna and the Dhaleswari.

Several cracks appeared on the 47km Bhuapur-Tarakandi Flood Control Embankment.

Our Netrakona correspondent reports: The overall flood situation of the district was improving yesterday.

## 3 DEPZ

**FROM PAGE 16**  
following an understanding with the owners.

Around 20 garments factories at the DEPZ were closed for various periods following unrest among workers at different times in the last one year.

Meanwhile, 151 garments factories and related units out of 7,500 across the country witnessed labour unrest over the first eight months of this year.

Asked about closure of three factories now, Bangladesh Export Processing Zone Authority (BEPZA) General Manager AZM Azizur Rahman said, "Owners have closed the factories to keep those safe and avert any untoward incidents. Before doing so, they had informed us."