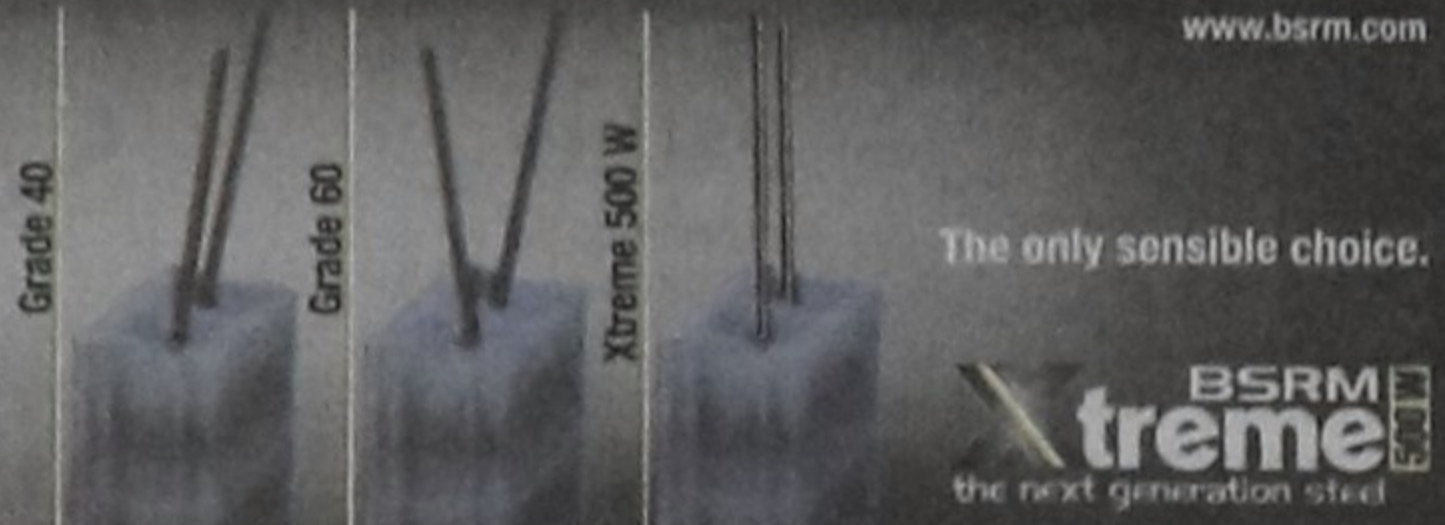


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# Govt's market steps may miss mark

## NBR to count Tk 300cr in lost revenue

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Experts say the delayed government moves including duty exemption on import of some essentials to keep the market stable during Ramadan will have a minimal effect on retail market prices.

The kitchen market witnessed fluctuation in commodity prices only a week before Ramadan despite various government measures.

The government would struggle to keep essentials' prices stable unless state-run Trading Corporation of Bangladesh (TCB) succeeds in improving the supply chain, say experts.

A National Board of Revenue (NBR) statement on Friday said the government had reduced import duty on refined sugar

to Tk 3,000 from Tk 7,000 a tonne and lifted import duty on sugar completely.

Twenty-five percent import and five percent regulatory duties on import of dates have also been withdrawn. The government order issued in the face of price spiral of the three commodities came into effect yesterday.

Some experts say the new duty structure will fail to have any impact, as it will take over two months to import goods under the existing process.

Dr Debapriya Bhattacharya, distinguished fellow of Centre for Policy Dialogue (CPD), said the government decision that came too late will have a very little impact on prices of essentials during Ramadan.

The tariffs on these products had

already been quite low, he said.

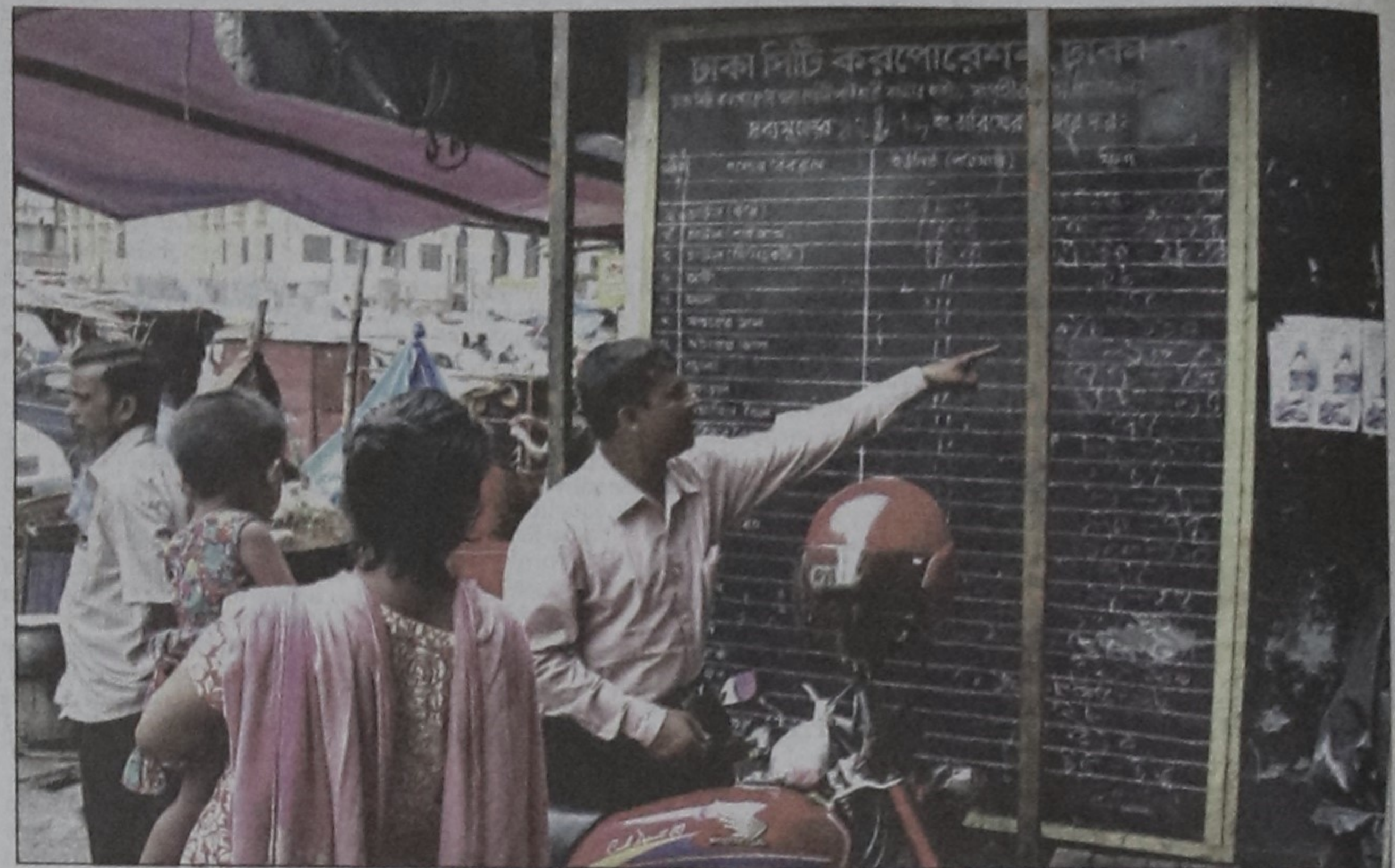
Debapriya said if the tariff cut is not big enough, it ultimately benefits the importers, not the consumers or NBR.

NBR will be deprived of Tk 300 crore in revenue because of the duty exemption, a high official told The Daily Star yesterday.

Zaid Bakht, research director of Bangladesh Institute of Development Studies (BIDS), said even if prices of the commodities fall on international market, its benefit would not reach the consumers as a handful of importers control the whole market.

However, Bangladesh Economic Association President Dr Quazi Kholiquzzaman Ahmad said if the import of products, letters of credit (L/C) for

SEE PAGE 15 COL 2



A consumer shows The Daily Star price list of essentials written on a board at Karwan Bazar kitchen market in the capital and tells how different they are in reality.

PHOTO: ANISUR RAHMAN

## Two more army camps withdrawn

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Khagachhari

Two more army camps were withdrawn from the hill district yesterday as part of the government's measures to implement the CHT peace accord.

District administration sources said Perachhara army camp under Sadar upazila and Baillachhari army camp under

SEE PAGE 15 COL 1

## First Darbar Hall meeting after mutiny Monday

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Bangladesh Rifles (BDR) will hold its first formal meeting at the Darbar Hall of its Pikhana headquarters on Monday after the bloody mutiny on February 25-26 that left 73 people dead including 57 army officers.

SEE PAGE 15 COL 1

Prayer Timing		
August 16		
	Azan	Jamaat
Fajr	5-25	6-00
Zohr	1-45	2-15
Asr	5-45	6-00
Maghrib	7-38	7-41
Esha	9-00	9-30

Source: Islamic Foundation

## Sand traders ravage Bogra farmlands

HASIBUR RAHMAN BILU, Bogra

Sand lifters' unabated extraction of sand from riverbeds and below the surface of prime agricultural land is wreaking havoc on the environment and farmlands in Bogra.

Unscrupulous sand traders using their political influence set up shallow tube wells with special suction devices on farmlands and at various points of the Korotoa river to extract sand from below the surface, locals said.

At least seven hectares of cultivable land at Manikchak in Bogra Sadar sub-district due to continuous underground sand lifting. Villager Shahid Ullah told The Daily Star that earlier the fertile land was used for growing maize, green chillies, paddy, wheat and other crops but now the land has become unproductive.

Talking to The Daily Star, director of the Department of Environment, Rajshahi Division, Nazmul Haque said an official letter was sent to Bogra deputy commissioner over two months ago urging him to abide by The Mine and Minerals Rules, 1968 while leasing out government land for sand, stone and other mineral extraction. But no action has been taken against the unauthorised sand lifters as yet, he said.

Bogra Deputy Commissioner Iftekharul Islam Khan refused to talk about the matter with The Daily Star. However, his private assistant said the DC would look into the matter soon.

"According to rules there is no scope to extract any minerals from underground without the permission of the Department of

SEE PAGE 15 COL 6

## RMG worker gang-raped

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Mymensingh

A female garment worker was gang-raped by a group of miscreants on the Gangina riverbank in Dhara union of Haluaghat, a frontier upazila here yesterday.

The 20-year-old victim is from Hija in Barisal.

According to sources, she boarded on a Haluaghat bound bus from Mohakhali for Bhaluka upazila in Mymensingh in quest of her husband on Friday. But she woke up at Haluaghat bus stand around 11:00pm.

Taking an opportunity of her loneliness, bus helpers took her to Baniakanda area

SEE PAGE 15 COL 6

## Faridpur rapists still at large

STAR REPORT

All the accused of the sensational gang rape case in Faridpur are still at large with the police apparently not making any attempt in last two days to arrest them.

The police busied themselves on Friday and yesterday with the oversight of ministers who went to Gopalganj and returned to the capital via Faridpur after attending a national programme.

Even the Investigation Officer (IO) of the case Inspector Ariful Haque had to look after the ministers' security.

Besides, the police are yet to interrogate the three persons detained four days back on suspicion of their link with the incident as they could not be taken on remand due to closure of court during three days' government holiday.

The three—Shourav, Tohurul Kazi, Masud—now confined to jail will be produced before the court today with a petition for remand, police said.

GUARDIANS' ABJECT FEAR

Panic gripped the guardians of schoolgirls following the gang

SEE PAGE 15 COL 6

## Father now afraid of police

SHARIFUL ISLAM and REZAUL KARIM from Faridpur

The gang-rape victim's father whom the Charbhadrashan police confined to the police station for about 15 hours after picking him up to identify the houses of the accused, is still in torment.

On August 11, the former investigation officer (IO) of the case Abul Kalam picked the victim's father from his house around 10:00pm and released him for an hour at 3:00pm the next day without providing him any food during the whole time.

"Afraid that the police might lock me again, I went

SEE PAGE 15 COL 6



The marks of lashes on Bashira Khatun's back. Tota Mia, one of the accused who executed the lashes on her.



PHOTO: STAR

## Fatwa again

101 lashes for refusing uncle's sexual advances

SHEIKH MD SHAHIDUL ISLAM, Brahmanbaria

Police have arrested a man and are on the lookout for several others in a village in Brahmanbaria after village elders by an edict executed 101 lashes to a woman for an

SEE PAGE 15 COL 4

## Suicide attack on Nato base

Kabul car bomb leaves 7 dead; Afghan, American operations kill 38 Taliban

AFP, Kabul/Kandahar

A suicide car bomb exploded outside the Nato military headquarters in the Afghan capital yesterday and killed seven Afghans, the defence ministry said, in a brazen attack just days before elections.

Earlier Afghan army special forces backed by US-led international troops killed up to 38 Taliban militants in separate operations, they said on Saturday.

The Taliban militia behind a soaring insurgency said it had

SEE PAGE 15 COL 7

## OnlinePoll

Do you believe that reducing import duty on daily essentials will stabilise kitchen market?

☐ Yes (26.1%)  
☐ No (73.2%)  
☐ No Comments (0.7%)

Total votes: 813

TODAY'S POLL

Do you agree with Chief Election Commissioner ATM Shamsul Huda that free and fair elections is possible under the rule of political government too if security is ensured.

Please cast your vote at [www.thedailystar.net](http://www.thedailystar.net)



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