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Wholesale prices of essentials fixed

Potato, onion, garlic and ginger prices set to stabilise the market ahead of Ramadan

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The government yesterday fixed the wholesale prices of potato, onion, garlic and ginger to ensure stability in the essential commodity market during Ramadan.

Commerce Minister Faruk Khan said the wholesale price of potato at cold storage gates would be between Tk 22 and Tk 23 per kg, onion Tk 16-19 per kg, garlic and ginger Tk 55-60 per kg from now on.

Faruk said in retail potato must not be sold at more than Tk 25-26 per kg and the imported onion at not more than Tk 20-21 per kg.

"These are rational retail prices and if anyone sells at more than the mentioned prices, he is a profiteer. The government would not spare the profiteers as they are

making the market unstable," Faruk said.

Faruk held a meeting yesterday with the leaders of Bangladesh Cold Storage Association, onion importers and the leaders of Moulvi Bazar Babosayee Samity to discuss the latest supply situation of essential items.

After the meeting the minister told journalists that the cold storage owners are ready to sell any amount of potato at the fixed price since the stock is more than enough.

He said if the businessmen try to make any artificial crisis of potato in the local market to make easy money, the government would import 50,000 tonnes of potato immediately and make the market stable.

He said there is no reason to panic, as

the stock of basic commodities in the local market is enough to address any kind of crisis.

Faruk said he has allowed three enterprises to import eggs to make the market stable.

"The logic for allowing egg import despite having a local poultry industry is that the egg producers are making the market unstable keeping the consumers under pressure," Faruk said.

The minister said the Trading Corporation of Bangladesh would import 40,000 tonnes of sugar gradually during and after Ramadan so that no businessman can make a brisk profit by creating an artificial crisis.

At the meeting Faruk said he did not

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PHOTO: STAR

A dealer of Trading Corporation of Bangladesh sells fair price edible oil and sugar at an outlet near Khilgaon intersection yesterday.

Studies show rise in child pornography

80pc of girls involved are forced into sex trade

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Child pornography is on rise in Bangladesh as 80 percent of the eighteen-year girls involved in sex trade are forced to do so due to poverty, deception, trapping and torturing, said a seminar yesterday in the capital.

Manusher Jonno Foundation organised the seminar to share their studies titled "Child in sex trade, a situation analysis" and "Child pornography, an exploratory study at Dhaka" at National Press Club.

The findings revealed a major portion of both school going and out-of-school children are exposed to porno pictures in the form of poster and picture card and porn CDs.

They are getting involved in pornography in different means and most of them are influenced by their friends, cousins, pimps, boyfriend and video filmmakers.

The studies show easy accessibility to the modern technology, illiteracy and ignorance of the parents, absence of family cohesiveness, huge amount of money flowing, easy way to earn money, lack of proper implementation of existing Child Rights Act 1974 and 1976 are blamed for child involvement in pornography.

Around 77 percent respondent to one of the study said they get involved in pornography as viewers while a significant number of children have turned into performers and sellers of porn clips.

The finding also indicates that prevalence of child sex is high in southern region compared to northeastern and other part of the country.

In Cox's Bazar and Khulna, street based child sex workers are increasing in number while resident based sex workers are more in Habiganj.

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GP shares to hit bourse after Eid

SARWAR A CHOWDHURY

Subscription to the Grameenphone's initial public offering (IPO), the largest of its kind in the country's capital market, will start within a week after Eid holidays.

Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC) at a meeting yesterday gave consent to the Tk 486.08 crore IPO and set the time frame.

Stock market regulator SEC made the decision based on GP's latest audited financial report as of December 31, 2008, which the GP submitted on July 30 this year.

On July 2, the commission gave its primary approval to GP IPO and asked the company to provide it with the latest audited financial statement within July 31 this year for final approval.

As per the report, per share earnings of the leading mobile phone operator is Tk 4.47, while its net asset value is Tk 22.70 per share.

The market lot has been fixed at 200 shares. Market lot means the minimum number of shares of a company that can be bought or sold on a stock exchange.

A prospective investor has to bid for at least 200 shares in case of GP's IPO.

Each share will have Tk 10 in face value, with an additional Tk 60 as premium.

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JS body for end to unplanned growth

Suggests residential, industrial, diplomatic zoning in Dhaka; Rajuk asked to go tough on building code violators

RASHIDUL HASAN

A parliamentary committee yesterday asked the authorities concerned to divide Dhaka city into separate residential, commercial, industrial and diplomatic zones as part of an initiative to stop further unplanned growth of the capital.

The parliamentary standing committee on housing and public works ministry also asked the ministry to restrict heights of buildings depending on these zones as well as an assessment of the soil quality.

At a meeting of the House body at the Jatiya Sangsad Bhaban it asked Rajdhani Unnayan Karttripakkha (Rajuk) to launch a drive against

violators of its building code and take legal actions against them.

"So many buildings have been constructed in and around the city in an unplanned way. We want to stop it once and for all," State Minister for Housing and Public Works Abdul Mannan Khan told reporters after the meeting chaired by ABM Fazle Karim Chowdhury.

"The committee has asked the housing secretary to divide Dhaka into several zones for residential, commercial, industrial and diplomatic areas," Mannan said, adding that a committee has been assigned to prepare the map for the zones.

"The heights of buildings will be fixed on the

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India can use Ctg port if it has capacity

Says commerce minister

UNB, Akhaura

Commerce Minister Faruk Khan said yesterday that if Chittagong seaport has the capacity to take the load, there should not be any problem with India using it for trade transaction.

Faruk, who came here to inaugurate a function on Bangladesh's brick export to Tripura at Akhaura border check-post complex, told reporters that the issue of transit to India could be resolved through bilateral discussion.

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Tk 38 lakh stolen from Agrani Bank

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Tangail

Around Tk 38 lakh was robbed from the Agrani Bank's Karatia branch in Tangail.

Bank Manager Abdul Aziz told The Daily Star that he had left office around 7:45pm on Wednesday after keeping the amount inside a vault.

He, however, found the window-grills dismantled and door-locks and the vault broken when he came to the bank yesterday. All money was stolen from the vault, he added.

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Prayer Timing		
August 21		
	Azan	Jamaat
Fajr	5-30	6-05
Juma	1-30	2-15
Asr	5-45	6-00
Maghrib	7-33	7-36
Esha	9-00	9-30

Source: Islamic Foundation



PHOTO: ZOBAER HOSSAIN SIKDER

Heavy downpour sends many streets of Chittagong city under knee-deep water. The photo was taken from Murad Nagar yesterday.

BNP reforms marred by internal feud

Dist committees fail to operate

RAKIB HASNET SUMAN

BNP's reorganisation efforts are getting marred due to internecine clashes over establishing supremacy in the district level committees.

Allegations and counter-allegations from district leaders continue to pour in to the party high command every day.

Against this backdrop, BNP Secretary General Khandaker Delwar Hossain is trying to clear the ill-will among field level leaders through discussion but to no avail, party insiders said.

Delwar has recently said that some allegations and proposals will be placed before the chairperson for the final decision after discussion at the standing committee meeting, the

highest policymaking forum of the party.

Party leaders said newly formed district convening committees have not been able to start their work due to intra-party feud in many districts like Barisal, Comilla, Tangail, Sylhet, Pabna, Joypurhat, and Kishoreganj.

Sylhet city committee convened a meeting on Tuesday but it could not proceed due to internal conflict and at one stage the city convenor wanted to resign, party's central office sources said.

At least 30 leaders of Kishoreganj district committee on Monday at a press conference demanded exclusion of district convenor Fazlur Rahman and his supporters and reconstitution of the committee.

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Ramadan starts tomorrow if moon sighted today

UNB, Dhaka

The National Moon Sighting Committee meets today to ascertain the sighting of the Ramadan moon that marks the starting of the Islamic month of fasting.

An official announcement yesterday said the meeting will be held at the Islamic Foundation at 8:10pm with its president and State Minister for Religious Affairs Md Shahjahan Miah in the chair.

The committee has urged people to inform it "if anyone sees the new moon anywhere in the country" on telephone numbers 9556407, 9555951, 9559643, 9558337, 9555947 or fax-9563397.

Violence, low turnout mark Afghan polls

22 militants killed in fighting

AFP, AP, Kabul

Afghans voted yesterday to elect a president for only the second time in history as fears emerged of poor turnout, despite only sporadic violence from Taliban militants bent on sabotaging the ballot.

Insurgents stormed a small northern town, sparking clashes that prevented voting and killed up to 22 militants, and security fears depressed turnout in Taliban strongholds of southern Afghanistan.

Western allies have pumped billions into Afghanistan since the Taliban were overthrown and Nato's chief hailed the polls as "encouraging", although other observers said turnout was worse than for the first presidential vote in 2004.

President Hamid Karzai urged Afghans to exercise their democratic rights in a nation that, despite the presence of 100,000 foreign troops, is still beset by a bloody insurgency eight years on from the 2001 US-led invasion.

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OnlinePoll

Should the hill land recovered from the lessees for violating lease agreements be used for forestry or reallocation among the landless people?

○ Forestry (63.5%)
○ Reallocation (32.7%)
○ No Comments (3.7%)

Total votes: 1023

TODAY'S POLL

Do you think authorities should investigate the deaths of radio collared tigers in the Sunderbans four years ago to find out if reckless research was responsible for their deaths?

Please cast your vote at www.thedailystar.net