



A truck, left, not only makes an illegal turn on a street in Nayabazar, it also violates the day-time ban on trucks on city streets. This and mindless driving by pickups in the area, right, creates traffic jams near the Second Buriganga Bridge all day long.

PHOTO: ANISUR RAHMAN

Prices of essentials

FROM PAGE 16

The Trading Corporation of Bangladesh (TCB) has been selling essentials in 50 districts on 174 trucks at subsidised rates to keep the prices stable during Ramadan, said the minister.

The state-run agency supplies sugar, lentils and edible oil to its 3,032 appointed dealers.

The commerce ministry, added Tofail, has engaged 14 vigilance teams to monitor prices of essentials at the kitchen markets.

The ministry has requested Bangladesh Bank to ease the opening of letters of credit (LCs) for importing essentials.

Import of essentials has increased in Ramadan as their prices in the world market are sliding, said Abdur Razzaque, president of Moulvibazar Wholesale Market Association.

The supply has beat demand this

year due to hefty import, he added.

The price of gram has declined gradually. It was selling at Tk 50 per kg at retail markets, noted Razzaque.

However, the prices of some vegetables such as green chilli and tomato saw a hike. Price of green chilli rose by 20 percent to Tk 90 a kg, compared to last week's rates, while the price of tomato rose by 30 percent to Tk 130 a kg.

The supply of green chilli was affected due to heavy rainfall, said Md Saidul Islam, a trader at Karwan Bazar Kitchen Market.

Price of tomatoes was high as this was not its season, he pointed out.

The price of vermicelli was also stable. Abul Kashem, a trader at Palash Kitchen Market, was selling a 200-gramme packet of vermicelli at Tk 30, a 400-gram packet of powdered milk at Tk 230, and one litre of branded edible oil at Tk 114.

FROM PAGE 1

But moments later, her forehead creased in wrinkles. She left for her second-floor flat in the four-storey government quarters, requesting this correspondent to wait downstairs.

She came back 20 minutes later with a photograph, taken a year and a half before adulterated drugs had killed her son Mohammad Rajib.

"You understand what it means to me, don't you? This is all I have left of my son. Please don't forget to bring it back to me," pleaded Laily, the mother of one among 2,700 children who perished between 1980 and 1992, for taking paracetamol syrup poisoned with the toxic chemical diethylene glycol.

Laily took a trip down memory lane to the day when the photo was taken. All the family members had lined up that day in front of the camera her expatriate brother-in-law had brought.

The pair of hands in bangles, clapping, seen in a corner of the photo, was Laily's, encouraging her baby boy to smile as he crawled holding a feeder on a floor mat.

"He was looking so cute that his uncle could not help taking a snap of him," recollects Laily.

Kawsar Islam Rakib, 17, was standing by his mother Laily as she was talking to The Daily Star.

Breaking the silence he said, "I could not but vent my hatred when I learned about the horrific act. Only the state is to blame for this."

At this point, 31-year-old Mohammad Mohiuddin joined the discussion.

Mohiuddin's younger brother Masud was among 10 children who had died at the same time after being given the paracetamol syrup distributed at the health facility set up for

employees working at Bangabhaban, the President's office.

Masud had just learned to walk then.

Their father Mohammad Hadis was the house laskar of the president, while Rajib's father Abdul Qader was the president's cook.

It was more painful for their neighbour. Their baby daughter Saima was given the syrup after Masud was hospitalised. They did not know that the syrup meant for curing them was actually poisoned.

When Masud died, they had to go through the agonising wait for their daughter's turn.

Saima began having urine-related difficulties soon after having the paracetamol syrup. She was admitted to Dhaka Shishu Hospital where she died of kidney failure like the other victims.

"What a pretty girl she was! The

disease for which these unfortunate babies had to take that medicine was nothing but seasonal fever," Mohiuddin said.

Another family left the Bangabhaban staff quarters for some unknown place after the retirement of its bread earner. That family had lost a boy and a girl in one week.

Soon after the interviews of the parents were taken, the father of another one-and-a-half-year old victim rang up this correspondent.

"My dear son, please don't cause the father, who has endured such an irreparable loss, more trouble. Please don't disclose my identity. I am just a servant of the president.

"Don't you think I would have seen justice long ago had the state's guardian [the President] cared for us at all?"

Connecting with the Creator

FROM PAGE 1

but through a recalling of the original principles upon which the Holy Prophet of Islam informed us of the links between Allah and His Creation. It is through a recapitulation of the humility and simplicity which underlined the life of Prophet Hazrat Muhammad (peace be upon him) that we understand the significance of belief.

And belief is, again, to remember what humanity is all about, what the essence of living is all about. In fasting, therefore, it is the meaning of endurance coupled with our faith in Allah that matters. Ramadan is not a promise of heaven. Neither is it a pledge of heavenly delights that impels us into abstinence from dawn to dusk. It is more a moral affair, an ethical question if you will.

pens to be -- to lead men and women back to belief, to the ways of Allah

In this season of renewed faith in the Creator, of reassertive devotion to the Prophet of Islam, it becomes the task of the faithful to abjure that which militates against the purity of the soul and the largeness of spirit embedded in the heart. It is that time of year when we care especially well for those who have little or nothing, for those whose lives could be made a trifle better than they were last year.

Ramadan, in the end, connects us to the Almighty. When that happens, we remember mortality. All beauty is fleeting. Every path leads to the grave.

And yet, when twilight sets in, there is the Other World, beyond ours. We answer for our deeds there. Ramadan prepares us for that test of religiosity.

FROM PAGE 16

The second marriage ceremony was this time held at the home of the blushing bride in Ximhungwe in Mpumalanga, South Africa, in front of around 100 guests.

Wide-eyed residents looked on as the married mother-of-five shared a piece of cake, a toast and even a kiss with her young groom Sanele - and long-term husband Alfred Shabangu, 66.

Last year the boy, from nearby Tshwane, tied the knot with bride Helen after claiming he had been told by his dead ancestors to wed.

Shockingly his family took the message from the heavens seriously and hurriedly forked out £500 for the bride and a further £1,000 for the big day.

But little Sanele -- the youngest of five children -- wouldn't rest until the couple followed through with South African traditions insisting they have the second ceremony to make

their marriage official.

Despite stunned villagers branding the act 'sickening' the boy's family defended the union saying it was just a ritual and not legally binding.

Sanele's 47-year-old mum, Patience Masilela said: "Sanele was fine and he was happy about the ceremony last year and it what he wanted - he was not shy."

"He was just happy to get married, very excited and was not embarrassed about it. So much so he wanted to do it again."

"After the wedding last year people keep asking them question like will they live together, sleep together, have babies but I keep telling them that after the wedding everything went back to normal nothing changed."

"Sanele moved to Venda not long after the wedding because he wanted to learn a new language, but they are very close."

Our families are very close. It was nice to celebrate with a wedding once more, it was after all a calling from the ancestors.

"By doing this we made the ancestors happy. If we hadn't done what my son had asked then something bad would have happened in the family."

The widow, who works at a recycling centre, added: "I didn't have a problem with it because I know it's what the ancestors wanted and it would make them happy."

Young groom Sanele said he hoped he would have a proper wedding to a woman his own age when he was older.

"I told my mother that I wanted to get married because I really did want to," he said.

"I'm happy that I married Helen - but I will go to school and study hard. When I'm older I will marry a lady my own age."

Spirit of Ramadan

www.bdspiritoframadan.com

www.singerbd.com

BEKO | SINGER | Dawlance | Gony | VIDEOCON

Up to 100% discount on refrigerators

Up to 12 months easy installments

0% interest up to 120 days



SINGER MEGA

SINGER Plus

UGC official

FROM PAGE 1

the universities to inform the commission about irregularities in those, the statement added.

Ferdous took the money promising help in getting permission from the UGC to introduce a new subject, sources said.

The commission has also formed a three-member body headed by Prof Atful Hye Shibly to investigate the allegation and asked the committee to

submit a report within 10 workdays.

The suspension comes about three weeks after the Transparency International Bangladesh published a report in which it claimed a section of officials of the education ministry, UGC and private universities were involved in corruption at different stages.

The TIB conducted a research on 22 private universities in Dhaka, Chittagong and Sylhet between June

2012 and May this year for the report.

On a number of occasions, the education ministry and the UGC trashed the TIB report as "baseless" and asked the graft watchdog to produce proof to substantiate its survey report.

Earlier in 2003, Ferdous was suspended on charges of corruption but he managed to return to his work with the help of some UGC officials, sources said.

Gaza death toll hits 572

FROM PAGE 1

southern city of Rafah and another three in Deir al-Balah in central Gaza.

Of the 55 people killed yesterday, around a third of them were children, Qudra said.

Seven children were among nine dead in an air raid on a house in Rafah, and another four children were killed in another strike on a house in Gaza City that killed nine people.

A nighttime air strike on a residential tower block in Gaza City killed 11 people, including five children, Qudra said, and a simultaneous strike in the central Strip killed another.

And Israeli tank shells slammed into a hospital in Deir al-Balah, killing four people, among them doctors, Qudra said, indicating at least 70 people were wounded.

Another 32 people were killed in a series of air strikes and tank shelling across the strip.

Of the 68 bodies recovered on Monday, 13 were from Shejaiya, hiking the death toll from a blistering Sunday attack to 74. Qudra said the vast majority were women, children and the elderly.

Another 23 of the bodies were pulled from a three-storey house belonging to

the Abu Jamaa family in the southern city of Khan Yunis which was hit on Sunday, raising the overall death toll from a single strike to 28, Qudra said.

So far, Palestinian figures show 572 Gazans have been killed and more than 3,350 wounded since the start of the Israeli campaign to stamp out cross-border rocket fire on July 8.

On the Israeli side, 27 people have died, including two civilians killed by rocket fire and 25 soldiers all of whom were killed since the start of a ground operation late on July 17.

SOLDIERS WOUNDED

Army figures indicate another 30 soldiers were wounded in Gaza since Sunday, three of whom were in serious condition. Military radio put the overall injury toll at more than 90 soldiers since the ground assault began.

Since the Israeli military started Operation Protective Edge on July 8 in a bid to stamp out rocket fire, Palestinian militants have fired 1,488 mortars and rockets that hit Israel, with air defences intercepting another 392, the army said.

Approximately 84 stuck Israel on Monday, one of them in the greater Tel Aviv area, while another 16 were shot down, the army said.