

VEGETABLES' PRICE		
Item name	Price Per Kg	
	PRESENT	A WEEK AGO
Green Chilli	Tk 180 - 200	Tk 70 - 90
Ladies' Finger	Tk 50 - 60	Tk 30 - 40
Snake Gourd	Tk 50 - 60	Tk 30 - 40
Bitter Gourd	Tk 60 - 80	Tk 40 - 50
Pointed Gourd	Tk 45 - 55	Tk 35 - 40
Teasle Gourd	Tk 50 - 60	Tk 30 - 40
Luffa	Tk 50 - 70	Tk 40 - 50
Asparagus Bean	Tk 55 - 65	Tk 40 - 45
Eggplant	Tk 60 - 80	Tk 40 - 50
Papaya	Tk 40 - 50	Tk 30 - 35

Vegetables

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justifiable?" he asked.

At Sheorapara kitchen market, Rotna Begum, wife of an auto-rickshaw driver, said, "I wanted to buy two vegetable items. But the prices are so high I could only afford a kg of pointed gourd for Tk 50."

The pictures were similar at kitchen markets in Karwan Bazar, Hatirpool, Moghbazar, Sheorapara and Kazipara areas.

The prices of bitter gourd, pointed gourd, ladies' finger, snake gourd, asparagus bean, papaya and all varieties of spinach also increased significantly.

However, potato, imported tomato and carrot prices remain nearly unchanged.

Ramiz Uddin, a wholesaler of vegetables in Karwan Bazar, said the supplies have reduced significantly due to the flooding.

"I used to bring about six tonnes of vegetables from Manikganj every day. But now I bring only about 1.5 tonnes. The prices are high there too," he said.

He added that the prices may rise further if farmlands continue to remain inundated next week.

According to the Department of Agricultural Extension, the floods have affected a large portion of farmlands in 26 districts until last Friday.

About 39,000 hectares of Aush fields, 11,000 hectares of Aman seedbeds, and 10,000 hectares of vegetable farms have been submerged, it said.

SITUATION IN CHATTOGRAM

Prices of vegetables and meat soared excessively at both wholesale and retail markets in the port city as well.

In the wholesale markets, the average price of all kinds of vegetables rose by Tk 10 last week while a dozen egg now sells for Tk 125, which was Tk 110 a week ago.

Traders said stored vegetables were damaged during the incessant downpour last week, leading to the price hike.

Amir Hasan Shahriar from Chattogram contributed to this report

'Drug dealer' killed in 'gunfight'

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Cox's Bazar

A suspected drug peddler was killed in a "gunfight" with police at Teknaf upazila in Cox's Bazar early yesterday.

The dead Mohammad Hossain, 39, of the upazila's Whaikhyang union, was arrested two hours before the "gunfight", said police.

Prodip Kumar Das, officer-in-charge of Teknaf Police Station, said at least six drug related cases were filed against Mohammad.

On information that a large consignment of yaba was stored in Whaikhyang, a police team, along with Mohammad, raided the area. As soon as they reached there, a group of drug peddlers opened fire, forcing the law enforcers to retaliate, the OC claimed.

During the "gunfight", Mohammad sustained bullet injuries. He was rushed to Teknaf Upazila Health Complex. Later, on duty doctors referred him to Cox's Bazar General Hospital where he died around 3:00am, the OC further claimed.

The body was sent to Cox's Bazar General Hospital morgue.

Police also claimed to have recovered two locally made guns, nine bullets and ,2000 pieces of yaba pills.

The Daily Star, however, could not independently verify the police claims.

Two cases were filed with Teknaf Police Station in this connection.

Scotland

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That is nearly twice the number of homes in Scotland.

"These are amazing figures, Scotland's wind energy revolution is clearly continuing to power ahead. Up and down the country, we are all benefiting from cleaner energy and so is the climate," said Robin Parker, climate and energy policy manager at the WWF.

"These figures show harnessing Scotland's plentiful onshore wind potential can provide clean green electricity for millions of homes across not only Scotland, but England as well."

UK must rein in 'political forces'

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ALL CREW SAFE

In a letter to the UN Security Council, Britain said the Stena Impero was approached by Iranian forces in Omani territorial waters where it was exercising its lawful right of passage, and that the action "constitutes illegal interference."

British warship HMS Montrose radioed an Iranian patrol vessel to warn it against boarding the Stena Impero, according to radio messages provided to Reuters by maritime security firm Dryad Global.

Iran said the seized tanker "risked maritime safety" in the Strait of Hormuz, through which almost a fifth of the world's annual oil consumption passes.

"We are required by regulations to investigate the issue ... the duration of the investigation depends on the level of cooperation by the involved parties," Allahmorad Afifipour, head of Iran's Ports and Maritime Organisation in Hormozgan Province,

told state TV.

He added that all 23 crew members aboard the ship are "safe and in good health in Bandar Abbas port".

The vessel's Sweden-based owner, Stena Bulk, said it hoped to visit the crew, who are from India, Latvia, the Philippines and Russia. India has called on Iran to release the ship's 18 Indian crew members.

Tehran for weeks has vowed to retaliate for the seizure of the Grace 1 tanker by British forces.

"The Revolutionary Guards responded to Britain's hijacking of the Iranian tanker," parliament speaker Ali Larijani told a parliament session aired live on state radio.

Meanwhile, an Iranian tanker held in Saudi Arabia since being forced to seek repairs at Jeddah port has been released and is returning to the Islamic republic, a minister said yesterday.

The Happiness 1 tanker "has been released following negotiations and is now moving toward Persian

Gulf waters," said transport minister Mohammad Esلمي, quoted by state news agency IRNA.

WAIVERS

Iran is feeling the pressure of US sanctions imposed on its banks and oil exports by US President Donald Trump last year after he pulled the United States out of a 2015 international pact with Iran designed to curb Tehran's nuclear program.

US waivers which allowed eight countries to keep buying Iranian oil - China, Greece, India, Italy, Japan, South Korea, Taiwan and Turkey - expired on May 2.

"The export of oil is one of the issues in which we have limitations and the US and its allies have caused restrictions for us and we have to be sensitive," Iran's Oil Minister Bijan Zanganeh said, state media reported yesterday.

He said the country's oil exports had not been impacted so far by the recent tanker incidents in the Gulf.

Masterplans for Dhaka, Ctg rivers unveiled

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were identified in the plans, and measures are underway to prevent release of industrial and domestic waste into the rivers.

According to the plans, the conservation measures include one year of crash programmes, three years of short-term programmes, five years of mid-term programmes, and a decade of long-term programmes. Actions will also be directed at analysing the status of the tributaries and canal networks of the said rivers in adjoining districts.

National River Commission Chairman Muzibur Rahman Howlader said the masterplans, which were prepared on review of the ongoing river projects by different ministers, cite time bound actions and specify the role of each authority.

"It's a good beginning but I think it will require a lot of discussion among the executing authorities and the river commission during implementation."

Contacted for her remarks, Syeda Rizwana Hasan, chief executive of Bangladesh Environmental Lawyers Association (BELA), who has been campaigning for river protection and moved several public interest litigations on the cause over the years, said, "I do not know anything about such masterplans."

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina approved the masterplans on July 12 and asked the ministries and departments concerned to launch their own programmes for implementation of the plans without delay, said high officials at the press conference.

Following an Ecne decision on June

14 in 2016, a committee was formed to prepare the masterplans. The team comprised the Local Government Division minister as chief, director general (administration) of Prime Minister's Office (PMO) as member-secretary, and representatives of river-related ministries as members.

Later, two technical sub-committees -- one led by director general (administration) of the PMO and the other by Chattogram Port Authority chairman -- drafted the masterplans and submitted them to the ministerial committee.

State Minister for Shipping Khalid Mahmud Chowdhury, Local Government Division Secretary Helal Uddin Ahmed, and Water Resources Secretary Kabir Bin Anwar, among others, were present at the press conference.

Water recedes, diseases spread

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However, affected people of nine districts -- Chattogram, Cox's Bazar, Bandarban, Khagrachari, Rangamati, Feni,

Brahmanbaria, Nilphamari and Lalmonirhat -- began returning to their homes as floodwater had started receding in their areas, said an NDRCC report yesterday.

Many flood-affected people have been suffering various diseases due to the flood.

In Bogura, many flood-affected people are suffering from diarrhoea, cholera and various skin diseases. Around 1,000 patients took treatment at Sonatola upazila Medical Camp, said Baizid Bostami, a health assistant of the camp.

"Our tube-well was submerged, so we had to drink water from the river. Now, most of our family members are suffering from diarrhoea," said Nurjahan Begum, 25, a resident of Pakullar char area in Sonatola upazila.

In Sirajganj, over 50 people were

affected with waterborne diseases, mainly diarrhoea, over the last three days, according to officials of district's civil surgeon (CS) office.

"As the water level is receding, patients of waterborne diseases, mostly diarrhoea, are increasing. Flood affected people may also be infected with skin and eye diseases," said Md Saiful Islam, deputy civil surgeon of the district's CS office.

Rokeya Begam, 50, from Kurigram Sadar upazila's Kishamat Malbhanga village, said, "My family and I were living on the Dharla river protection embankment near my house for eight days due to the flood. The floodwater receded from my houses yesterday [Saturday].

"Today [Sunday], we have returned home...But the house is not fit to live in yet as there is still silt from the flood inside my house."

Rubina Begam, 20, of the same village said, "My one-year-old son has skin disease on his feet due to floodwater."

Police services taken to the citizens' doors

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Abu Bakar Siddique, additional deputy commissioner (public relations), told The Daily Star that OC Mohsin's initiative got huge public response. Thus, the CMP commissioner directed all the OCs to implement the initiative.

The CMP commissioner encouraged the OCs to directly talk to locals and take steps learning their problems and sufferings, the ADC added.

Since OC Mohsin launched the programme, several drug peddlers came to the booths and sought help from him to return to normal life.

Absar Uddin Sakil, a drug abuser

in the city's Pologround area, said, "I was a drug addict and served jail terms in connection with a narcotics case. A few days ago, OC Mohsin came to our area and counselled us.

"I am now determined to leave drug for good and return to normal life."

The OC promised me that he would help to do so, Absar added.

Moinul Islam, a resident of Broiler Colony at CRB, said "In the booth, we talked to the OC where we told him about the unruly activity of teenage gangs in our locality."

"After getting complaint, the OC assured us of actions against the gangs," he added.

Shahjalal int'l airport hit by power cut

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Mehboob Khan said two things were to blame for the unwanted incident.

"First of all, Dhaka Electric Supply Company (Desco) mistakenly cut the power line of the airport while disconnecting illegal power lines at the railway slum in Kawla Bazar area on Saturday night," he said.

"As the alternative power system at the airport took over immediately, we didn't suffer any outage," he said. "But when the alternative underground power line was severed during repair of the underground water line, we noticed the total incident."

The airport generators took over immediately after the second power line went down, but they could not support the entire air-conditioning system, causing heating up of many parts including outbound passenger terminal-1 and terminal-2.

Top officials of the Civil Aviation Authority including its chairman Air Vice Marshal M Mafidur Rahman and HSIA Director Mehboob Khan took prompt actions to maintain smooth flight operations of domestic and international airlines.

"Despite interruption in power and

water supply, there was no disruption in flight operations," said Mehboob.

He said the scanners, air traffic control tower, luggage belts and immigration process were kept functional by the generators, so no international flight was affected.

He also said that following prompt and hectic efforts by Dhaka Electric Supply Authority and Dhaka Wasa, power and water supplies were restored at 3:15pm.

Aviation Security Director Wing Commander Obeidur Rahman said travellers had troubles due to the incident.

Several outbound passengers and travellers, especially women and children, suffered immensely due to a high temperature inside the airport as only a few air conditioners were in operation at the vast floor of terminal-1 and terminal-2.

"My son sweated continuously and fell sick due to the heat. At one point, I came out of the terminal to cool him off," said outbound passenger Rashida Begum.

A number of passengers informed The Daily Star that the water supply was kept totally suspended due to the

sudden power outage.

Wishing anonymity, a Singapore-bound passenger said it is unfortunate that such an incident would happen at the country's prime airport and main gateway for foreigners.

"Sufferings at the domestic terminal were unbearable as the air-conditioning system went down," said Anisur Rahman, who was headed for Barishal.

A Barishal-bound Biman Bangladesh Airlines flight, which was scheduled to fly at 11:00am, got delayed by two hours following the outage, he said.

But Obeidur Rahman said the delay occurred because Biman aircraft were not available at that time.

Many domestic and international travellers posted their experience and observations on social media.

"Can you think of a situation like this at an international airport anywhere in the world?" asked one in his Facebook post.

"People of this country have endless patience! Otherwise, would people sweat since 8 in the morning at the main airport of a country?" wrote one Motaheer Hossain Masum.

Development challenges

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PoA is also needed to achieve Sustainable Development Goals by 2030, said participants.

In the 25 years of ICPD, Bangladesh has made progress in many areas, including registering steady economic growth, ensuring gender parity in primary education, and reducing child mortality. The extent of child marriage has reduced since 1994, but still remains high, said Mohammad Mainul Islam, professor and chairperson of population sciences department at Dhaka University.

The rate of early pregnancy reduced by only two percent to 31 percent in 2014, he said, adding that the Contraceptive Prevalence Rate (CPR) has increased to 62 percent in 2014 from 42.6 percent in 1993-94.

"We had a target of increasing CPR to 72 percent by 2015. But it has remained stagnant for the last several years," he said, adding challenges increased further because of growing ageing population and youth unemployment, presence of a large number of idle youths.

The share of youth not in education, employment or training is 29.8 percent of the total youth population.

"There has also been no improvement in income inequality reduction," he said.

Mainul said Bangladesh is passing through the phase of demographic dividend and it does not have enough time to reap the benefits.

Social movement is very important in preventing child marriage, said Shaheen Anam, executive director of Manusher Jonno Foundation.

She said many parents marry off their daughters due to safety and security concerns.

She pointed out that door-to-door campaigns proved to be useful in reducing population growth in the past and suggested that the authorities

to launch similar campaigns again.

"But only providing contraceptives and door-to-door services does not bring down the population growth. It has to be followed up with reproductive health services and education."

She also stressed that women need to have more decision-making power in the family as well as in the society. UNFPA Representative in Bangladesh Asa Torkelsson said investing in access to family planning could yield 14-fold.

However, citing the UN, she mentioned that the cost of preventing women from dying in childbirth is projected to increase six-fold by 2030, requiring billions of dollars to achieve global targets.

Editor and Publisher of The Daily Star Mahfuz Anam said Bangladesh had achieved a remarkable success in population control in the past few decades, but the policymakers became a bit relaxed later. "Overall, there is not that much of emphasis in the national psyche. And the reason for that is the overall feeling that we are doing very well in the population issues," he said.

However, Shamsul Alam, senior secretary and Member of the Planning Commission, said the government has genuine concern regarding population growth control.

Total fertility rate is not declining. So, there is a genuine concern for government on how to address the issue, he said.

Hossain Zillur Rahman, executive chairman of Power and Participation Research Centre (PPRC), said the family planning department is not empowered enough as it does not get adequate budgetary allocation.

Zillur also mentioned that the prevailing environment gives people a feeling that they would not get justice as the "perpetrators are not being punished."

No legal step against

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defend herself. The prime minister directed me not to start any legal proceedings until then," he added.

Sheikh Hasina is now in London.

Liberation War Affairs Minister AKM Mozammel Huq, who was supposed to file a case against her, was asked not to do so, Quader said after participating in a programme at Bangabandhu International Conference Centre (BICC).

Quader said he conveyed the PM's instructions to the home minister to ensure security of Priya's property.

This development came a day after he said Priya would be sued on sedition charges and the process was underway.

Meanwhile, seven cases were filed against Priya in Dhaka, Natore, Kushtia, Sylhet, and Brahmanbaria. Five of them were dismissed by courts.

Priya, one of the organising secretaries of Bangladesh Hindu-Buddha-Christian Oikya Parishad, drew huge criticism after she told US President Donald Trump that 37 million people from religious minorities have "disappeared" from Bangladesh.

Attending a programme at the White House on Thursday, she also told the president that her land had been grabbed by Muslim fundamentalists and sought his help so that religious minorities could live in Bangladesh.

After the video of her making the comments went viral, the foreign ministry on Saturday protested and said what Priya told the president were "all the blatant lies".

Home Minister Asaduzzaman Khan on Saturday said Priya must prove her "allegations", otherwise stern actions would be taken against her for the "baseless, false and fabricated complaints".

The Oikya Parishad said she did not take part in the programme as its representative.

In a YouTube video posted by her rights organisation SHARE yesterday, Priya tried to clarify her comments. "It has been mentioned in the religious minority chapter of 2001 census book that there were 29.7 percent minorities in the country in 1947. Now the total population is 180 million, of which 9.7 percent are minorities."

She said if the population growth had been the same for all communities, the percentage of the minorities would have been the same and that she wanted to say that to the president.

She said she wanted to tell the president that the minority population decreased gradually.

"Bangladesh Hindu Buddhist Christian Unity Council did not send me."

In the video, she also said she would return to the country and would continue her work.

Yesterday, Quader after a programme told reporters that Priya made the comments on a very sensitive issue. "However, I think she should get a chance to defend herself."

Replying to a question that two cases have already been filed against her, Quader said he talked to Law Minister Anisul Huq who told him that the cases were rejected as the government's prior approval is required to file such cases.

In reply to a query whether she will return home or any measures will be taken to bring her back, Quader said, "She has the right to return to the country and we are not creating any obstacles."

"I think she can come back to the country in a spontaneous manner and we do not have to take any measures to bring her back," he added.

Asked about his meeting with US Ambassador to Bangladesh Earl Miller at the secretariat yesterday, Quader said the ambassador was informed of the PM's directives in this regard and he was "very satisfied" with it.

Meanwhile, Law Minister Anisul yesterday said Priya's allegations about oppression of minorities in Bangladesh was absolutely false, but it might not be right to label her comments "seditious".

The minister said Priya made the allegations for personal gains. The government would look into whether any other quarters were involved in this regard, he said.

Due importance should be given to the truth rather than Priya's statement, he added.

Seven cases were filed against Priya in Dhaka, Sylhet, Brahmanbaria, Kushtia, and Natore. However, all but two cases were dismissed.

JOY'S COMMENTS

PM's ICT Affairs Adviser and son Sajeeb Wazed Joy yesterday blasted the US Embassy in Dhaka for selecting Priya to visit the US.

"She was a member of a delegation selected by the US Embassy in Dhaka. After much criticism the US Embassy finally issued a statement today [Sunday]. The Embassy stated they do not restrict participants. Which is fine, but why would they not refute an obviously false and outrageous statement made by one of their selected participants to their own Head of State?" he said in his verified Facebook page yesterday.

"This tells me the US Embassy is the one that had an ulterior motive here. They picked Priya Saha because they knew she would make this outrageous statement. The only logical outcome of making such a claim to the US president is to build demand for a military intervention in the region on humanitarian grounds," he said.

This ties in with another US congressman's recent statement that Bangladesh should take over Rakhine State, he added.

Rab arrests

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confessed that he had a love affair with Rima and he tactfully called the girl out of the house and raped her along with his friends at a nearby place, Shovon Khan, Rab's company commander in Kishoreganj said at a press conference yesterday.

They handed him over to Pakundia Police Station after primary interrogation, he added.

Rima, a ninth grader at Hossainpur Pilot Girls High School came to her maternal uncle's house with her mother on Tuesday afternoon, said SM Shafiqul Islam, officer-in-charge (Investigation) of Pakundia Police Station.

She went out of the house on Wednesday evening but did not return home. Later, neighbours found her body hanging from a tree nearby the house on Thursday morning and informed police, said the OC.

The body was sent to Kishoreganj General Hospital for autopsy, the OC said.

After getting autopsy report, it could be confirmed whether the girl was murdered after rape or she had committed suicide, he added.