

VEGETABLES' PRICE

Item name	Price Per Kg
PRESENT	A WEEK AGO
Green Chilli	Tk 180 - 200
Ladies' Finger	Tk 50 - 60
Snake Gourd	Tk 50 - 60
Bitter Gourd	Tk 60 - 80
Pointed Gourd	Tk 45 - 55
Teasle Gourd	Tk 50 - 60
Luffa	Tk 50 - 70
Asparagus Bean	Tk 55 - 65
Eggplant	Tk 60 - 80
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 2,000 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 benefitting 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."

"Despite interruption in power and

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 Eslami, 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.

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 Torkelson 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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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.

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 SHAREE 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."

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.

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

(Our Pabna, Bogura and Manikganj correspondents contributed to the story.)

Kurigram's Civil Surgeon Dr Aminul Islam said, "We are giving treatment to the flood victims for post-flood diseases in every flood centre and flood shelters. But some skin diseases have been found among some people who were living in their flooded homes."

"With the floodwater receding, members of our medical teams can now go to the flood-affected homes. We are giving tablets, with necessary instructions, to purify the floodwater."

In Manikganj, ferry services on the Paturia-Daulatdia route have been disrupted for the last seven days due to strong currents in the Padma river and a shortage of ferries, creating long tailbacks at the Paturia Ghat of Manikganj.

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