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PRICES OF ESSENTIALS

# Agri ministry should set them

## Says commerce minister on items like rice, lentil, flour, onion

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

After over two weeks of deliberation, Commerce Minister Tipu Munshi yesterday said the prices of rice, lentil, flour, onion and five other daily essentials should be fixed by the agricultural ministry, not the commerce ministry.

The commerce minister in a meeting on August 30 said Bangladesh Trade and Tariff Commission would fix the prices of nine commodities within 15 days to curb price escalation of several essential goods by a section of traders.

Experts said at the time that price-fixing would be an impractical move and nothing good would come out of it.

However, the minister told a meeting at Jatiya Press Club yesterday that as per



a 2018 rule, the agricultural ministry should fix the prices.

The commerce ministry will fix the prices of imported goods like edible oil and it will send a letter to the agricultural ministry soon for fixing the prices of farm produce.

Munshi said if need be, the commerce ministry will allow import of eggs from India amid "abnormal" rise in prices.

The minister said Bangladesh will be able to export goods worth \$4 billion in the next three or four years and it will help achieve the export target.

He added that the demand for Bangladeshi made garment products was on the rise particularly among western retailers.



A group of children playing in the mud by the side of a river in Sylhet Sadar upazila. As they enjoy their time, they should be under the supervision of an adult. Every year around 14,000 children drown in Bangladesh, according to Unicef. The photo was taken in Chamaurkandi area yesterday.

PHOTO: SHEIKH NASIR

## GAS BALLOON BURST Comedian Rony 'not out of danger' Probe body formed



STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Standup comedian Abu Hena Rony and a policeman, who were injured in a gas balloon explosion, are "not out of danger" as they both have inhalation burns.

Doctors, however, are hopeful about their recovery, said Samanta Lal Sen, coordinator of Sheikh Hasina National Institute of Burn and Plastic Surgery.

Abu Hena Rony, 32, suffered 25 percent burns on his two hands, ears and face and the policeman Zillur Rahman, 32, sustained 19 percent burns.

After dressing in the operation theatre, they have been kept in the High Dependency Unit (HDU).

"They are under close observation and tests are going on. Even if the

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# Counter-offensive won't change Russia's plans

Says Putin as Moscow launches strikes on Ukrainian troops in several regions

AGENCIES

Ukraine's recent counter-offensive will not change Russia's plans in Ukraine, President Vladimir Putin said as Moscow yesterday launched strikes on Ukrainian positions in several parts of the country.

In a rapid counter-attack, Ukrainian forces said they have captured over 8,000 sq km (in six days in the north-eastern Kharkiv region.

But Putin said he was not in a hurry, and the offensive in Ukraine's Donbas region remains on track.

He also noted that Russia had so far not deployed its full forces. "Our offensive operation in the Donbas is not stopping. They're moving forward - not at a very fast pace - but they are gradually taking more and more territory," he said after a summit in Uzbekistan on Friday.

The industrial Donbas region in east Ukraine is the focus of Russia's invasion, which Putin claims is necessary to save Russian-speakers from genocide.

Parts of the Donbas have been occupied by Russian-backed separatists since 2014. The Kharkiv region, where Ukraine's recent counter-attack was launched, is not part of the Donbas.

In Friday's comments, Putin threatened a "more serious"

response if Ukrainian attacks continue.

"I remind you that the Russian army isn't fighting in its entirety... Only the professional army is fighting."

So far, Russia has not officially declared war on Ukraine and only refers to its invasion as a "special military operation".

After Russia's recent losses, some pro-Kremlin commentators

**A recent leaked video which appears to show an attempt to recruit convicts to a private military company suggests Russia is struggling to find enough men willing to fight.**

have called for more forces to be mobilised. A recent leaked video which appears to show an attempt to recruit convicts to a private military company suggests Russia is struggling to find enough men willing to fight.

Later on Friday, US President Joe Biden reiterated his call on Russia to refrain from using chemical or tactical nuclear weapons.

Speaking during an interview with CBS News, Biden said such

action would "change the face of war unlike anything since World War Two".

The Russian leader has rarely left his country since then.

This week's visit to the Shanghai Co-operation Organisation summit in Uzbekistan - where he met the Chinese leader Xi Jinping - highlights his need to foster ties with Asian countries after being sidelined by the West.

But even there, leaders have expressed concern over the invasion.

"Today's time is not a time for war," Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi told Putin.

And on the previous day, Putin hinted that Xi Jinping also disapproved. "We understand your questions and concerns" he told the Chinese leader in reference to the war.

Meanwhile, Russia's defence ministry said that its forces had launched strikes on Ukrainian positions in several parts of Ukraine, and accused Kyiv of carrying out shelling near the Zaporizhzhia nuclear power plant.

Russian forces conducted their strikes in the Kherson, Mykolaiv, Kharkiv and Donetsk regions, according to the ministry, which added that Ukrainian forces had carried out an unsuccessful offensive near Pravdyne in Kherson.

## 1ST, 2ND COVID SHOTS 12 and older won't get them after Oct 3

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The authorities will not provide the first and second doses of Covid-19 vaccines to people aged 12 years and above from October 3, said Health Minister Zahid Maleque yesterday.

The government decided to stop administering the doses as the vaccines in stock will expire after that period, he added.

Anwar Hossain Howladar, secretary of Health Services Division, said children aged 5-11 would start getting the vaccines on October 11 across the country.

Meanwhile, the minister urged everyone to take the vaccine immediately if they have not done it yet.

He made the statements while taking at a workshop on Covid-19 vaccination for children, aged 5-11 years, at a Dhaka hotel.

Around 33 lakh people, aged 18 years and above, are yet to receive their first doses and 94 lakh their second doses.

As of Thursday, 76.91 percent of the total population have received their first jabs while 71.33 percent second jabs, according to the

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# India welcomes back cheetahs, 70 years after local extinction

AFP, New Delhi



Eight Namibian cheetahs arrived in India yesterday, decades after their local extinction, in an ambitious project to reintroduce the spotted big cats.

Officials say the project is the world's first intercontinental relocation of cheetahs, the planet's fastest land animal.

The five females and three males were moved from a game park in Namibia aboard a chartered Boeing 747 dubbed "Cat plane" for an 11-hour flight.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi presided over the release at Kuno National Park, a wildlife sanctuary 320 kilometres (200 miles) south of New Delhi selected for its abundant prey and grasslands.

"Today the cheetah has returned to the soil of India," Modi said in a video address after their arrival, which coincided with the leader's 72nd birthday.

"The nature loving consciousness of India has also awakened with full force," he added. "We must not allow our efforts to fail."

Each of the animals, aged between two and five and a half, have been fitted with a satellite collar to monitor their movements.

They will initially be kept in a quarantine enclosure for about a month before being released in the open forest areas of the park.

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## APBn man stabbed in Rohingya camp

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Cox's Bazar

A member of Armed Police Battalion (APBn) was stabbed yesterday in an attack by Rohingya criminals in a refugee camp of Cox's Bazar's Ukhiya Upazila.

Police claimed that constable Shahidul Haque went to D-Block of Balukhali-7 Rohingya refugee camp in plainclothes to gather information around 4:00pm.

As he was alone, a group of Rohingya criminals attacked him and indiscriminately stabbed him, including in his hands and back, said Syed Harun-Rashid, additional

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PHOTO: RAJIB RAIHAN

Fishermen in Chattogram and its adjacent areas caught a huge quantity of hilsa this season. Besides selling the fish fresh, some of them are also drying their catch with salt so that the fish can be stored and sold as "dried fish" in or after the summer season. The photo was taken in Firingi Bazar area in the port city yesterday.

## FLOODS IN PAKISTAN

# 3.4m children need 'lifesaving support': Unicef

CNN ONLINE

"Super floods" in Pakistan have left 3.4 million children in need of "immediate, lifesaving support," according to UNICEF.

The floods -- caused by record monsoon rains and dubbed by one minister as "the worst humanitarian disaster in a decade" -- have impacted 16 million children in total, UNICEF's Pakistan Representative Abdullah Fadil said following his visit this week to the country's southern Sindh Province.

That estimate came as the country's National Disaster Management Authority updated the death toll from the floods since mid June to 1,545 people, 552 of them children.

Meanwhile, officials in the country warn that toll is likely to rise as deaths are being under reported and diseases like dengue fever are on the rise.

Azra Pechuho, health minister for the southern Sindh Province -- one of the hardest hit areas where many schools and

other facilities remain shut, said there was now a "state of emergency" caused by the vast amount of standing water, which provides the perfect breeding conditions for Aedes mosquitoes to spread the dengue virus.

UNICEF's Fadil said the situation on the ground in Sindh was "beyond bleak" with many malnourished children battling diseases like diarrhea, malaria and dengue fever, as well as painful skin conditions.

"Girls and boys in Pakistan are paying the price for a climate disaster not of their making," Fadil said.

"Young children are living out in the open with their families with no drinking water, no food and no livelihood -- exposed to a wide range of new flood related risks and hazards," Fadil said. Mothers, many exhausted, anemic and malnourished, were also unable to breastfeed their babies.

"Vital infrastructure ... has been destroyed and damaged, including thousands of schools, water systems and health facilities," he added.