

PRICE HIKE OF ESSENTIALS

BNP announces fresh country-wide programme

STAR REPORT

BNP yesterday announced a fresh country-wide programme to protest the price hikes of daily essentials and utilities.

The programme will also press home the party's 10-point demand, including an election under a non-partisan interim government.

Party's secretary general Mirza Fakhru Islam Alamgir announced the programme yesterday in an iftar event at the capital's Ladies Club.

Under the programme, the party will observe sit-ins in all cities and district headquarters on April 1 from 2:00pm to 4:00pm and in all upazilas and thanas on April 8 from 3:00pm to 5:00pm.

The party will distribute leaflets and observe sit-ins from April 9 to April 13 in all unions. This programme will be observed division-wise, starting in Rangpur on April 9, Rajshahi and Sylhet on April 10, Khulna and Cumilla on April 11, Dhaka and Barishal on April 12, and Mymensingh and Faridpur on April 13.

From March 28 to April 20, BNP leaders and workers will participate in various mass-campaign programmes including meeting with people of different classes and professions, and providing assistance to the poor and helpless at all unit levels across the country.

The BNP leader, claiming the party was forced to announce programmes during Ramadan, hoped that people would participate and wage a tougher movement against the government.

SEE PAGE 4 COL 3



PHOTO: PALASH KHAN

Devotees perform the first Jumah prayers of the holy month of Ramadan at the premises of Baitul Mukarram National Mosque yesterday.

Fakhru has no freedom in BNP's politics

Says Quader

BSS, Dhaka

Awami League General Secretary Obaidul Quader yesterday said Mirza Fakhru Islam Alamgir has no freedom of expression in BNP's internal politics.

"We understand the pain of Mirza Fakhru Islam Alamgir... Without any question, Fakhru and others [BNP leaders] are compelled to accept the messages coming from faraway London," he said in a statement.

He said BNP never believes in the people's freedom of speech and expression, as the party had been born by capturing the state power keeping "commoners at gun point".

The government has expanded the freedom of expression by giving registration to over 50 private television channels, FM and community radios and more than 100 newspapers, said Quader.

Journalist Zukarnain's brother beaten up, case filed

US embassy wants thorough probe

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The brother of UK-based Bangladeshi journalist Zukarnain Saer Khan Sami, who worked with Al Jazeera's Investigative Unit (I-Unit), was assaulted by a group in the capital's Mirpur area last week.

The victim Mahinur Ahmed Khan, 37, filed a case against the four unidentified men with Mirpur Police Station yesterday, Mohammad Mohsin, officer-in-charge of Mirpur Police Station, told The Daily Star.

In the case statement, Mahinur, an entrepreneur, said four unknown men suddenly surrounded him at 8:00pm on March 17 when he went out for groceries beside his house in West Shewrapara area and started beating him with iron rods and sticks.

He was treated at a city hospital.

A family member of Mahinur said he had no enmity with anyone. They also believe that Mahinur was attacked because of his brother's reports against the government.

Meanwhile in a statement yesterday, the acting US embassy spokesperson Bryan Schiller said the embassy is aware that Mahinur Ahmed was attacked.

"We hope the case is thoroughly investigated and the perpetrators are brought to justice," he said.

Mahinur's brother Zukarnain was one of the journalists who worked with Al Jazeera's Investigative Unit (I-Unit) on "All the Prime Minister's Men".

Besides, he also worked with the Haaretz, an Israeli newspaper and the Organized Crime and Corruption Reporting Project (OCCRP), a global network of investigative journalists.

ANTI-LIBERATION ORGANISATION

Not even one tried till this day

ASHUTOSH SARKAR

Not a single anti-liberation organisation has been brought to book for crimes against humanity and war crimes during the Liberation War, as the relevant law is yet to be amended.

There's no visible move from the government to amend the law for trying organisations that collaborated with the Pakistani occupation forces to commit one of the deadliest genocides in the last century.

However, a total of 135 individuals have been sentenced to death or imprisonment by the two International Crimes Tribunals (ICTs) in last 13 years, after the formation of ICT-1. The other one, ICT-2, has been dissolved.

Besides, Appellate Division of the Supreme Court hasn't been holding hearings of war-crime related appeals for more than three years due to different reasons, including Covid-19 and shortage of judges. Around 28 such appeals are now pending.

The last such appeal hearing took place at the Appellate Division on December 3, 2019. Convicted war criminal Syed Mohammad Qaisar filed it, challenging the death penalty handed to him by a war-crime

tribunal in 2014.

Two separate ICTs have so far delivered 51 verdicts, in which 96 war criminals have been sentenced to death, 26 to imprisonment till death, five to life imprisonment, and eight to imprisonment for different terms. Six of them have been executed, after the Appellate Division affirmed their death penalty, ICT sources said.

The Awami League government brought an amendment to the International Crimes (Tribunals) Act-1973 in February 2013, incorporating

Delivering its verdict in the case against former Jamaat ameer Ghulam Azam on July 15, 2013, ICT-1 observed, "...Jamaat-e-Islami, as a political party under the leadership of accused Prof Ghulam Azam, intentionally functioned as a criminal organisation, especially during the War of Liberation of Bangladesh in 1971."

Eminent writer and war-crime researcher Shahriar Kabir said, "It's quite satisfactory that the individuals who were the big war criminals have been tried. At the same time, it's quite disappointing

increased to gear up the trials of war-crime cases and appeals. Only one ICT is now dealing with war-crime cases," he added. The demand for Jamaat's trial as an organisation got momentum after the Shahbagh movement in February 2013, demanding the highest punishment be handed down to war criminals and a ban on Jamaat and Shibir.

The law minister couldn't be reached for his comments on this issue as he is now abroad.

Contacted, Attorney General AM Amin Uddin, said that ICT



It's quite satisfactory that the individuals who were the big war criminals have been tried. At the same time, it's quite disappointing that no initiative has been taken to try the organisations -- including the then Pakistan army high command, Jamaat-e-Islami, Razakar, Al Badr, and Al Shams -- who were directly involved in crimes against humanity and war crimes in 1971.

Shahriar Kabir, Writer and war-crime researcher

provisions for trying individuals only. The government has been saying necessary amendments would be made to facilitate the trial of anti-liberation organisations.

The law ministry prepared a draft to amend the law in 2014, but over the last nine years, no visible steps have been taken to pass the amendment, leaving the demand for trial unfulfilled.

Law Minister Anisul Huq on many occasions said the government was working to amend the law.

that no initiative has been taken to try the organisations -- including the then Pakistan army high command, Jamaat-e-Islami, Razakar, Al Badr, and Al Shams -- who were directly involved in crimes against humanity and war crimes in 1971."

Shahriar said since 2014, the law minister has been saying that the government would amend the International Crimes Tribunal Act, but no initiative has been taken.

"The number of tribunal and apex court benches must be

has convicted some political organisations for their crimes against humanity and war crimes in 1971. But they cannot be punished, because the required provision needs to be added to do so. The government will take a decision in this regard.

Expressing satisfaction at the progress of trying war crimes so far, the attorney general said the Appellate Division will soon start hearing of war-crime related appeals as the required number of benches are present now.

Corporates hiking prices amid lax monitoring

Claims Bangladesh Poultry Association

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Corporates have bagged Tk 936 crore in profits in the last 52 days by raising poultry prices amid lax government monitoring, alleged Bangladesh Poultry Association (BPA).

The retail price of broiler chicken was Tk 270 per kilo on Thursday, which was Tk 170 on February 1, according to the Trading Corporation of Bangladesh.

BPA, in a press release issued on Thursday, said the total demand for broiler chicken in Bangladesh is 3,500 tonnes.

"The wholesale price of broiler chicken was Tk 230. The corporates have made a profit of at least Tk 60 per kilo," read the release.

The press release, signed by BPA President Sumoon Howlader, said the corporates supply

SEE PAGE 4 COL 1

Rajuk recovers 80 plot files from employees

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Rajdhani Unnayan Karttripakkha (Rajuk), during an internal drive, recovered 80 files related to the plots of a Purbachal project. The files were supposed to be in the record section, but instead, were found in the lockers of Rajuk employees.

The files were recovered amid allegations against Rajuk employees of hiding files related to building designs and harassing the building and plot owners.

Mohammad Nurul Islam, Rajuk member (estate and land), led the drive and found the files inside the lockers.

He told The Daily Star that he primarily recovered 80 files related to the Purbachal plots. The employees have pledged to return 200 more such files within the next three working days.

"I had them open their lockers and found the

SEE PAGE 4 COL 1

Breaking fast with Chawkbazar delicacies

Dhaka dwellers flock to the popular iftar market on first Ramadan

HELEMUL ALAM

Rabin Bhuiyan, a 27-year-old resident of Narayanganj, arrived at the Chawkbazar iftar market around 11:00am to purchase traditional iftar items. However, the shops of the makeshift market were not set up at that time.

He performed juma prayers at the ancient Chawkbazar Shahi Jame Masjid next to the bazaar with his younger brother Miraz Hossain before making their purchases.

"I have come early as I did not want to miss out on the famous Boro Baper Polay Khay. It is now a tradition of our family to purchase iftar items from Chawkbazar on the first day of Ramadan," said Bhuiyan.

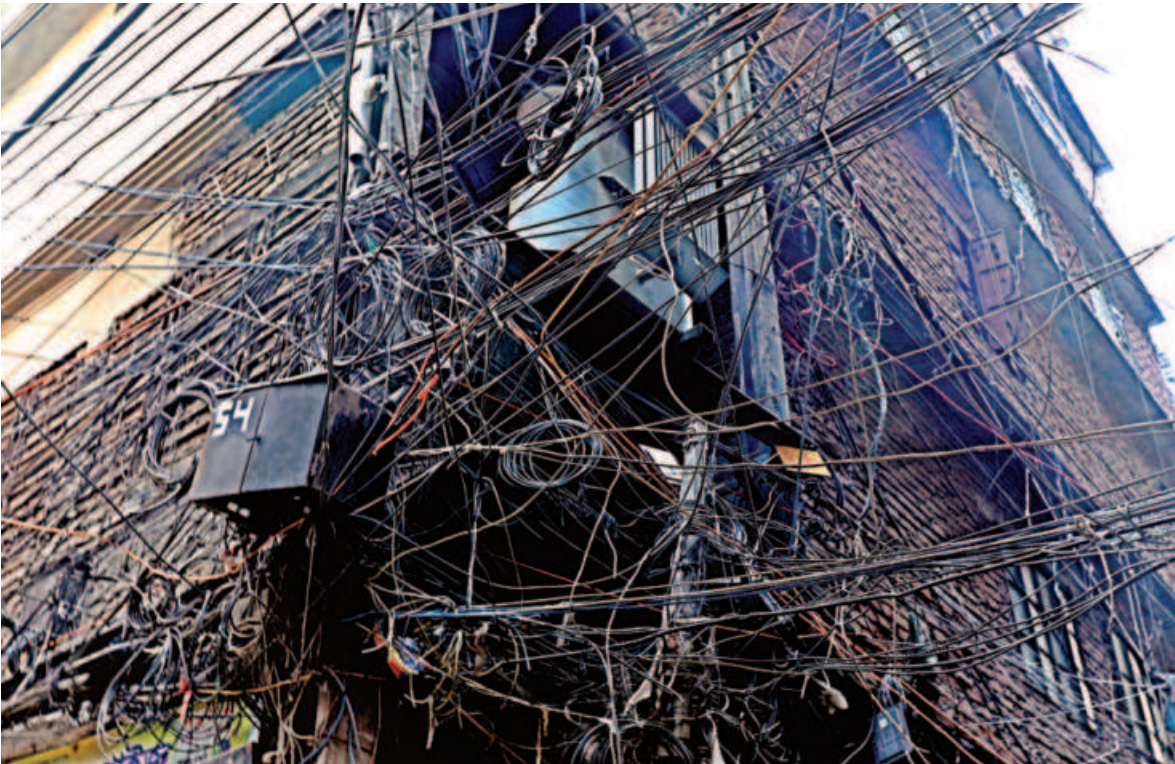
He said they have purchased half kilos of Boro Baper Polay Khay and two pieces of chicken roasts before catching the bus to Narayanganj.

In line with the 400-year-long tradition of Dhaka, over 100 makeshift shops were set up soon after Zohr prayers at the iftar market in Old Dhaka's Chawkbazar with tantalising iftar dishes on the first day of Ramadan.

Like every year, the traditional iftar market was abuzz with thousands of gourmands who came to buy special dishes which are available only here.

"It is a long time desire of mine to come to the market to purchase these traditional iftar items," said Tasnim

SEE PAGE 4 COL 4



Electric wires, all tangled up, hang from a pole on Siddique Bazar road. At any point, a serious accident may occur if there is a short circuit or transformer blast, potentially injuring pedestrians who pass by. This photo was taken recently.

PHOTO: ANISUR RAHMAN

PRAYER TIMING MARCH 25					
Fajr	Zohr	Asr	Maghrib	Esha	
AZAN 4:45	12:45	4:45	6:20	7:45	
JAMAAT 5:20	1:15	5:00	6:25	8:15	
SOURCE: ISLAMIC FOUNDATION					
SEHRI, IFTAR TIMING					
RAMADAN	MARCH	SEHRI	IFTAR		
2	25			6:15	
3	26	4:36		6:15	
4	27	4:35		6:16	