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"It's vitally important that China and other countries that have been seeking to advance peace hear from the victim, not just the aggressor."

US Secretary of State Antony Blinken on resolving Ukraine war



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Govt plans smaller rise in next ADP



South Korea to support mega projects: Envoy



Sudan truce efforts in tatters



Has Messi played his last game for PSG?

No let-up in price hike



	PRICE A WEEK AGO	CURRENT PRICE
Bottled soybean oil/litre	Tk 187	Tk 199
Sugar (loose) a kg	Tk 120-Tk 130	Tk 130-Tk 140
Potatoes a kg	Tk 30-Tk 35	Tk 35-Tk 40
Onions a kg	Tk 50-Tk 55	Tk 55-Tk 60
Eggs a dozen	Tk 130-Tk 140	Tk 140-Tk 150

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

When people are already struggling to cope with high prices of daily essentials, a fresh hike in the prices of soybean oil, sugar, onions, and potatoes has dealt them a further blow.

This will only force them to dig deeper into their pockets at a time when inflation is close to double digits.

Crude soybean oil refiners on Wednesday raised the price of one litre bottled soybean oil by Tk 12 to Tk 199 while the price of loose soybean oil was increased by Tk 9 to Tk 176 a litre. A consumer has to pay Tk 960 for a five-litre jerrycan, which was Tk 906.

Bangladesh Vegetable Oil Refiners' and Vanaspati Manufacturers' Association hiked the prices after consulting with the

commerce ministry and the Bangladesh Trade and Tariff Commission.

A commerce ministry official said the VAT on edible oil was reduced to 5 percent from 15 last year in the face of soaring prices of the cooking oil. The benefit expired on April 30 and the VAT is back to 15 percent.

As the prices of edible oil are dropping in the international market, the government did not extend the facility, he said.

On the other hand, retail price of sugar rose in the capital over a week. A kg of loose sugar is currently being sold for Tk 130-Tk 140, which was Tk 120-Tk 130.

On April 8, the government set the price of loose sugar to Tk 104 and Tk 109 for a kg of packaged sugar.

Prices of potatoes and onions have

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Relatives of patients at the DMCH sleep inside mosquito nets they have put up in the garden of the hospital. Many patients from outside the capital arrive with multiple attendants and there are restrictions on the number of people staying with patients inside the hospital. The photo was taken early Tuesday.

PHOTO: ANISUR RAHMAN

\$3b from Korea on easy terms over next 5 years

DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT

Bangladesh is set to get \$3 billion in concessional loans from South Korea over the next five years, becoming the second largest recipient of the East Asian nation's official development aid.

The loan is being given under the Economic Development Cooperation Fund (EDCF) for 2023-2027. Korea provided \$700 million under the EDCF for 2021-2025.

With the substantial increase of the concessional loan to Bangladesh, it is expected that Korea will be able to support mega projects in Bangladesh, thus contributing to the continuous socioeconomic development of Bangladesh, said Lee Jang-keun, the Korean ambassador, in a press release after the framework agreement for EDCF was signed yesterday.

Kisun Bang, the first vice-minister for Economy and Finance of Korea, and Sharifa Khan, secretary of the Economic Relations Division, signed the framework arrangement on the sidelines of the 56th annual meeting of the Asian Development Bank taking place in Incheon, South Korea.

"I hope this \$3 billion support serves as a catalyst for

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THE THIRD VIEW

DSA was legislated ignoring journalists

And it is being amended in the same way

MAHFUZ ANAM

In September 2018, the most draconian, most criticised, and most objected to anti-media law was passed in Bangladesh, ignoring journalists. Today, its amendment process is on - according to the law minister - and once again the media professionals are nowhere in the consultation process.

On Wednesday, at a meeting organised by the Transparency International Bangladesh (TIB), Anisul Huq, our law minister, said the DSA would be amended by September this year. Is he buying time till then, when he may say it is

too close to the elections and there are many urgent things to do? This doubt is not based on unfair cynicism, but on the fact that he said the same thing so many times and on so many different occasions, including to the international community. For his credibility's sake, we hope he means it this time.

But the process appears to be the same - ignoring journalists and letting bureaucrats run the show. And we can guess what they will produce, as they are trained to be against freedom of expression, freedom of thought, and freedom of the media.

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1 killed as steel mill furnace explodes

Six suffer life-threatening burn injuries

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Narayanganj

A worker was killed and at least six others suffered life-threatening burns after the furnace of a steel mill exploded in Narayanganj's Rugganj upazila yesterday afternoon.

The deceased was identified as Shankar, 40, said police.

The blast happened around 4:00pm at Rahima Industrial Complex Limited Steel Mill in Gausia Saughat area.

Around 15 workers

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Biman eyeing 10 Airbus planes

RASHIDUL HASAN

Biman directors have accepted in principle a proposal to buy 10 Airbus planes.

The planes include two freighters, the purchase of them will be first for the national flag carrier.

The Biman Board of Directors made the decision at a meeting on Wednesday in the hope that Biman will operate on more international routes than the current 20.

M Mahub Ali, state minister for civil aviation, said the Biman directors accepted an offer from Airbus for two freighters.

"Airbus has given us an approximate price. Now our technical committee members will sit together and discuss," he told The Daily Star.

"We have expressed [to Airbus] our intention to buy 10 planes in phases," he said, adding that Airbus is likely to deliver the first two planes in 2026 or 2027.

Contacted, a Biman director said, "Our main target is to get two freighters from Airbus as we have a huge demand for shipping cargo."

Large amounts of garment products, pharmaceutical

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GCC MAYORAL POLLS

Zahangir's bid dealt a serious blow

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Gazipur

The authorities yesterday rejected suspended Gazipur mayor Mohammad Zahangir's appeal to reinstate his candidature in the Gazipur city polls.

Dhaka Divisional Commissioner Sabirul Islam rejected the appeal and reinstated the decision of the returning officer, who earlier cancelled Zahangir's nomination on grounds of loan default.

Sabirul, who acted as the appellate authority, came up with the verdict after a hearing at his office in the afternoon, said Manjur Hossain Khan, assistant returning officer of Gazipur city polls.

Zahangir, his two lawyers, and representatives of Bangladesh Bank were also present at the hearing.

On April 27, Zahangir's supporters submitted his and his mother Zaida Khatun's nomination papers to contest the mayoral post as independent candidates.

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A farmer quickly harvests his ripe Boro to avoid any risk as accumulated rainwater may ruin the standing crops in the face of prolonged submersion. This year, Boro was cultivated on 63,790 hectares in Khulna, with 77 percent of the crop already harvested as of Wednesday. The photo was taken in Khulna's Dumuria upazila yesterday.

PHOTO: HABIBUR RAHMAN

BCC POLLS 'CAMPAIGN' AL nominee all on his own

SUSHANTA GHOSH

The Awami League mayoral candidate in the Barishal city polls, Abul Khair Abdullah, is meeting city dwellers ahead of the polls but without any support from the party leaders who are loyal to incumbent Mayor Serniabat Sadiq Abdullah and his father Abul Hasanat Abdullah.

During his interaction with the people on Tuesday, no key leaders of the city and district AL units, except for city unit Senior Vice President Afzalul Karim, accompanied the mayor hopeful, said party sources.

The previous day, Khair's supporters and the leaders and activities of the other AL faction held two separate rallies in the city to mark May Day.

Some central AL leaders, including presidium members Abdur Rahman and Jahangir Kabir Nanak, recently visited Barishal, but they could not involve the supporters of the mayor and his father in Khair's "campaign", said sources in the ruling party.

The polls to Barishal City Corporation are scheduled for June 12.

Leaders and activists of the Barishal city and district AL virtually became divided into two after the party picked Khair over Sadiq on April 15.

Party leaders loyal to Sadiq said that the "differences" in the organisation would be resolved through a joint meeting of the district and city AL committees. Hasanat, president of Barishal district AL, will call the meeting soon, they added.

"As the city Awami League General Secretary Serniabat Sadiq Abdullah has been away from Barishal since the first week of April, the city unit leaders and activists could not join the polls campaign of Khair," a city AL leader told The Daily Star, wishing anonymity.

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