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SPICES, OTHER ESSENTIALS

Runaway prices put consumers in a tight spot

MAHBUBUR RAHMAN KHAN and SHAHEEN MOLLAH

With the consumers already feeling the pinch of the soaring prices of essentials, most of the spices are becoming pricier ahead of the Eid-ul-Azha.

Within just a couple of days, the price of cumin has increased by Tk 120 per kg to Tk 940 per kg at the capital's Karwan Bazar wholesale market.

The spice was sold for Tk 380 per kg ahead of the Eid-ul-Azha last year, according to data from the Trading Corporation of Bangladesh (TCB).

The price of cinnamon has increased by 10.47 percent to Tk 500 per kg on average while the price of clove and coriander has soared by 37.78 percent to Tk 1,600 per kg and 62.96 percent to Tk 240 per kg respectively, showed the TCB's daily market report yesterday.

The prices of garlic and ginger have also gone up. The prices of both local and imported ginger have risen by 177.78 percent to Tk 400 per kg and 281.25 percent to Tk 330 per kg respectively on average compared to last year.

Retailers at Karwan Bazar yesterday sold local garlic for Tk 140 per kg and imported garlic for Tk 180 per kg. A week before the Eid-ul-Azha last year, the figures were Tk 60 and Tk 100 respectively.

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A bull jumps out of a boat in the capital's Postagola. Traders are bringing sacrificial animals for sale at a makeshift cattle market there ahead of the Eid-ul-Azha. They say sale is yet to pick up.

PHOTO: ANISUR RAHMAN

Review rights records before deployment as peacekeepers Amnesty tells UN about Bangladesh security forces

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Amnesty International has urged the United Nations to ensure that rights violators in Bangladesh do not get deployed on peacekeeping missions.

"United Nations Under Secretary General Jean Pierre Lacroix must prioritise a review of human rights violations by the security forces in Bangladesh during his visit to the country....," said a statement of the global rights body ahead of Lacroix's two-day visit that starts tomorrow.

Bangladesh has a three-decade long history of providing forces for UN peacekeeping missions, said the statement issued yesterday, adding,

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Relatives mourn Titanic sub deaths

REUTERS

Relatives and colleagues yesterday mourned the five people who died when their submersible imploded in the North Atlantic during a deep dive to the Titanic wreck, prompting questions about safety rules for such adventures into the ocean depths.

Debris from the Titan submersible, which had been missing since Sunday, was detected on Thursday by a robotic diving vehicle deployed from a Canadian ship as part of an international rescue effort.

Remains of the submersible, which lost contact with a surface ship about 1 hour and 45 minutes into a 2-hour descent, were discovered on the seabed about 1,600 feet (488 meters) from the bow of Titanic wreck, about 2 1/2 miles (4 km) below the surface, US Coast Guard Rear Admiral John Mauer said.

He told reporters on Thursday the debris was consistent with "a catastrophic implosion of the vehicle."

The five who died included Stockton Rush, US founder and chief executive officer of OceanGate Expeditions, which operated the submersible and charged \$250,000 per person to make the Titanic trip. He was piloting the craft.

The others were British billionaire and explorer Hamish Harding, 58; Pakistani-born businessman Shahzada Dawood, 48, and his 19-year-old son, Suleman, both British citizens; and French oceanographer Paul-Henri Nargeolet, 77.

"These men were true explorers who shared a distinct spirit of adventure, and a deep passion for exploring and protecting the world's oceans," OceanGate said.

Guillermo Söhnlein, who co-founded OceanGate with Rush in 2009, said Rush was "keenly aware" of the dangers of exploring the ocean depths.

"Stockton was one of the most astute risk managers I'd ever met," said Söhnlein, who left the company in 2013, retaining a minority stake. "He was very risk-averse."

British Titanic explorer Dik Barton paid tribute to the work of his friend Nargeolet but noted issues raised with the design and maintenance of the craft. "Everyone's wise after the event, but as we're hearing before, unfortunately there were many red flags flying here," he said.

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Ship carrying coal arrives at Payra port Generation at power plant set to resume tomorrow

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Patuakhali

A ship carrying 41,207 tonnes of coal reached Payra port from Indonesia early yesterday.

The ship, MV Athena, anchored around 2:00am at Payra port, 18 days after power generation at Payra Power Plant was suspended due to coal shortage.

Azizur Rahman, deputy director of Payra port's traffic department, confirmed this to the media around noon.

The ship brought coal from Indonesia's Balikpapan city and it is the flag bearer of the Marshall Islands, he said. The MV Athena left Indonesia 10 days ago.

Coal unloading from the ship has already started and if everything goes well, power generation will start at the 1,320MW power plant from Sunday, said AM Khorshedul Alam, managing director of Bangladesh China Power Company Limited (BCPCL) — owner of the coal-fired power plant.

The MD said the two units of the power plant

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Cattle smugglers swing into action ahead of Eid

Apply various techniques to bring sacrificial animals from Myanmar, India

MOHAMMAD JAMIL KHAN with MONG SING HAI MARMA, Bandarban

Amid a ban on cattle import, smuggling from Myanmar and India continues unabated ahead of the Eid.

The smugglers often operate with blessings from local political leaders, bribe the Border Guard Bangladesh members, and, in one instance, they even forged a home ministry order to bring cattle into the country, according to sources in the racket.

The Daily Star has a copy of the "ministry order".

In Naikhongchhari, Bandarban, hundreds of cows, oxen and bulls are brought in from Myanmar every day, and the smugglers pay just Tk 100 to men from the upazila parishad for each animal, the sources said.

They added that BGB men receive a cut from the money.

Mohammad Imran Hossain, president of Bangladesh Dairy Farmers' Association, said, "Indian cattle are entering Bangladesh through the borders in Cumilla, Mymensingh, Chapainawabganj, and Sylhet, while those from Myanmar are brought in through Chakaria of Cox's Bazar and Bandarban."

The cattle from India and Myanmar are rather small in size, he said. "The rural farmers hoping to sell cattle of similar sizes are likely to incur losses because of the smuggling."

Imran added that the association had requested the home ministry to take action.

The home ministry on June 15 issued a statement mentioning that cattle smuggling is strictly prohibited, and it is illegal to set up near the borders a Khatal, which is a place where cattle are kept or maintained for the purpose of trade.

The ministry is aware that certain individuals tried to set up an illegal Khatal by forging a ministry official's signature, and legal action has already been taken against them, it added.

Earlier on June 5, smugglers attempted to set up a Khatal near the border in Chapainawabganj by showing officers a letter signed by a deputy secretary of the home ministry.

The letter said the government gave permission to Abdus

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Asia's tallest known tree found hidden in Tibet



INDEPENDENT.CO.UK

A gigantic cypress tree found in a canyon in Tibet stands as the tallest tree ever discovered in Asia and the second tallest in the world.

The tree, measuring over 335ft in height and nearly 9.2ft in girth was discovered in May in Bome County's Nyingchi city in Tibet, according to researchers, including Wang Zi from the Chinese Academy of Sciences (CAS).

The exact species of the tree remains unclear, but China's state media hinted it could either be a Himalayan cypress (Cupressus torulosa) or a Tibetan cypress (Cupressus gigantea).

Scientists have been revising the record of the tallest tree in Asia several times over the past year.

In April last year, Peking University scientists found a 252ft tree in Medog County in Tibet, which had briefly become China's tallest tree.

This record was then broken the following year when a 274ft tree was found in Zayu County.

The discovery of the 335ft-tall tree last month, however, has refreshed the Asian record for the tallest tree once more.

All these trees share the common feature of being discovered within Nyingchi city — a region under the focus of conservation efforts due to its unique ecosystem.

NADIM MURDER

Prime accused confesses before Jamalpur court

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Jamalpur

The prime accused in the journalist Golam Rabbani Nadim murder case gave confessional statements to a Jamalpur court yesterday.



Nadim

Mahmudul Alam Babu, suspended chairman of Sadhurpara Union Parishad in Bakshiganj upazila, confessed after he was produced before the court on completion of his five-day remand, said Arman Ali, officer-in-charge of the Detective Branch police in Jamalpur.

Judicial Magistrate Hasib Ullah Piyas recorded the statements under Section 164 of the Code of Criminal Procedure, said plaintiff's lawyer Yusuf Ali.

The court later sent Babu, also the expelled general secretary of Sadhurpara union AL, to jail, he said.

"Babu also gave confessional statements during interrogation when he was on remand," said OC Arman.

Nadim, Jamalpur district

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A makeshift workshop and a tea stall set up after occupying a passenger shed, which is in a bad state, near Kamalapur Railway Station. But the authorities concerned are overlooking it. The photo was taken recently.

PHOTO: ANISUR RAHMAN

BOTCHED C-SECTION Directives sought to look into role of the doctors

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The disciplinary committee of Bangladesh Medical and Dental Council has sought directives from its executive body to look into the role of the doctors of the Central Hospital in the alleged botched C-section, which caused the death of a mother and her newborn.

The decision was made at a disciplinary committee meeting yesterday, Anwarul Haque Farazi, assistant registrar at BMDC, told The Daily Star.

The decision comes as the hospital authorities and one of its gynaecologists Sangiukta Saha are playing the blame game over the responsibility for the deaths.

"No one filed any complaint regarding the deaths. But the disciplinary committee asked for the directives from the executive committee to look into it considering the severity of the issue," Anwarul said.

Mahbuba Rahman Akhi was admitted to the hospital with labour pains in the wee hours of June 10. Her newborn baby died hours after an alleged botched C-section. Akhi died eight days later due to excessive bleeding.

On June 14, her husband Yakub Ali

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