

GREEN CHILLIES

Traders fined in 4 dists for price gouging

STAR REPORT

Several wholesalers and individual businessmen in Manikganj, Faridpur, Pabna and Narayanganj were fined yesterday for selling green chillies at inflated prices.

The fines were imposed by the Directorate of National Consumers' Right Protection, which conducted raids at the districts' different markets.

The raids came as Commerce Minister Tipu Munshi yesterday told journalists in Rangpur that the price of green chillies shot up suddenly due to opportunist businessmen. However, the price has already dropped after its import began, he added.

In Manikganj, five businesses were fined Tk 7,000 each for selling green chillies at high prices and failing to provide cash memos.

The businesses were selling green chillies, which they bought for Tk 160 per kilogram, at Tk 350-400 per kilogram, said Assaduzzaman Rumel, assistant director of Manikganj district DPCR.

In Faridpur, DPCR fined five business entities Tk 16,000 each for selling green chillies and sugar at inflated prices, according to Md Sohel Sheikh, assistant director of the district's DPCR.

In Pabna, the DPCR raided various markets in the district for selling chillies at excessive prices and fined

Four wholesalers were fined Tk 5,000 each for selling chillies at excessive prices, said Mahamud Hasan Rony, assistant director of Pabna district DPCR.

Meanwhile, the price of green chillies has started to come down in the district with the addition of imported Indian chillies.

The local variety is selling at Tk 200-250 per kg and the other varieties at less than Tk 200.

In Narayanganj, DPCR conducted a raid at Dighubabur Bazar and fined a wholesaler Tk 1,000 for selling green chillies at high prices.

"I fixed the price of green chillies at Tk 100 per kg and the green chillies were subsequently sold at that rate," said Md Selimuzzaman, assistant director of Narayanganj district DPCR.

However, after the DPCR team left the market, consumers reported that wholesalers and retailers resumed selling green chillies at Tk 200-280 a kg.



A view shows a residential building hit by a suicide drone, which local authorities consider to be Iranian made unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs) Shahed-131/136, amid Russia's attack on Ukraine, in Sumy, Ukraine yesterday.

PHOTO: REUTERS

Black Sea grain deal renewal unlikely: Kremlin

Russian standoff with West to last decades, says Dmitry Medvedev; Kyiv claims limited gains in slow counteroffensive

REUTERS

Russia is pessimistic about the prospects of renewing the Black Sea grain deal because no progress has been made in implementing accompanying agreements that pertain to Russian exports, the Kremlin said yesterday.

The deal, under which Russia has guaranteed the safety of grain ships heading to and from Ukrainian ports through waters it controls, is set to expire on July 18 and Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov told a briefing there were "not too many hopes" it would be extended.

Elsewhere, Dmitry Medvedev, Russia's former president, has warned that Moscow's confrontation with the West will last decades and that its conflict with Ukraine could become permanent.

In an article for the government's Rossiiskaya Gazeta newspaper, he said tensions between Russia and the West were "much worse" than during the 1962 Cuban missile crisis when the world teetered on the edge of a nuclear conflagration.

Meanwhile, Ukraine yesterday said its troops had regained more ground along

eastern and southern fronts in what President Volodymyr Zelenskiy described as progress in a "difficult" week for Kyiv's slow counteroffensive against Russian forces.

The Ukrainian military took back 37.4 square kilometres (14.4 square miles) of territory in heavy fighting in the past week, Deputy Defence Minister Hanna Maliar said.

Dmitry Medvedev said tensions between Russia and the West were "much worse" than during the 1962 Cuban missile crisis when the world teetered on the edge of a nuclear conflagration.

She said Kyiv's troops were advancing in the Bakhmut direction of eastern Ukraine and that Russian forces were attacking in the Lyman, Avdiivka and Mariinka directions in the Donetsk region in the east.

"Last week was difficult on the front line. But we are making progress," Zelenskiy wrote on the Telegram messaging app.

"We are moving forward, step by step! I thank everyone who is defending Ukraine, everyone who is leading this war to Ukraine's victory!"

In July 2022, when the Black Sea grain deal was signed, the United Nations and Russia also signed a memorandum of understanding committing the UN to facilitate unimpeded access of Russian fertiliser and other products to global markets.

To fulfil the memorandum, Russia says several conditions must be met, including the readmission of the Russian Agricultural Bank (Rosselkhozbank) to the Belgian-based international banking payment system, SWIFT.

The Financial Times reported yesterday that the European Union was considering a proposal for the Russian Agricultural Bank to set up a subsidiary to reconnect to the global financial network, as an incentive for Moscow to extend the deal.

Asked to comment on the FT report, Peskov said: "So far we have nothing to report on the implementation of that part of the agreement that concerned the Russian side."

BNP leader Mosharraf 'has brain tumour'

UNB, Dhaka

BNP standing committee member Khandaker Mosharraf Hossain has been diagnosed with a brain tumour.

Mosharraf underwent different medical tests at the National University Hospital in Singapore, his younger son Khandaker Maruf Hossain said yesterday.

"We got the test reports that indicated a brain tumour," Maruf said.

Considering the patient's age, doctors have decided to use radiotherapy, he added.

The 76-year-old former minister went to Singapore on June 27 for treatment.

He was admitted to Evercare Hospital in Dhaka on June 18 after he suffered a stroke. He received treatment there for eight days.

Lightning strikes kill 4

STAR REPORT

Lightning strikes killed at least four people and injured several others in three districts yesterday.

In Naogaon, a farmer and a fisherman died while working and two others were injured in two separate incidents.

The deceased are fisherman Abdul Jabbar, 30, of Paschim Duarpal village under Porsha upazila, and farmer Muminul Islam, 22, of Moisor village under Dhamoirhat upazila.

The injured are Mehdi Hasan and Jahirul Islam. In Chapainawabganj, a man died after he was struck by lightning inside his home in Prosadpur village of Gomostapur upazila around 7:30am.

The deceased is Shariful Islam, 35. In Netrakona, a youth died on the spot after getting struck by lightning as he was cutting grass near a local water body in Kendua upazila.

8-year-old raped, killed

UNB, Rajshahi

The body of an eight-year-old girl was recovered from a pond in Chotobon Gram area yesterday with signs of rape after she was kidnapped from her house in Rajshahi city, said police.

Police recovered her body and arrested a suspect named Palash after the girl's father filed a GD.

He admitted to killing the girl for ransom.

The deceased, Anika, daughter of Azim Uddin, was kidnapped from her house on Saturday, said Noor Alam, officer-in-charge of Rajshahi Metropolitan Police Station.

Two children drown

UNB, Jashore

The bodies of two children, who were cousins, were recovered from a pond at Navaran Dakshinpara field in Jhikargachha, Jashore on Sunday afternoon.

The deceased identified as Parash Hossain, 13, son of Mahasin Hossain of Navaran Belermhat village, was a fifth-grader and Saikat Hossain, 13, son of Sagar Hossain of the same area, was a madrasa student.

Jhikargachha Police Station Officer-in-Charge (OC) Sumon Bhakta said the bodies were handed over to families without autopsy upon request.

A case of unnatural death has been registered in this regard.

BNP thinks they'll mount pressure

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European Union are also scheduled to be in Dhaka around that time.

A senior BNP leader wishing not to be named said it was clear that the US sanctions on Rab and visa restrictions had influenced politics in the country.

Explaining the situation, he said that due to sanctions on Rab officials, the opposition parties are now able to hold meetings without fear and the number of enforced disappearances and killings decreased.

The leader said after the announcement of the new US visa policy, Bangladesh Jamaat-e-Islami managed to hold a rally in the capital and the top leadership of the ruling Awami League is now consistently assuring people that the next election will be free and fair.

Abdul Moyeen Khan, a standing committee member of the party, said, "The situation in Bangladesh with regards to democracy, good governance, human rights, and the economy speaks for itself... this has also become a cause for concern for those who care about the democratic process and liberal society around the world."

He told this newspaper that if Bangladesh is destabilised and moves towards uncertainty, it would affect trade and commerce with world-leading countries.

"This is only natural that democracies like the USA, UK, EU, and Japan would be worried about the overall regional imbalance."

The BNP has been demanding that the next election be held under a non-partisan neutral administration.

The ruling Awami League said

that there is no scope of restoring the caretaker government system.

The BNP has been preparing the outlines for the final phase of its movement.

Party leaders hinted that the movement may gain pace in the coming days, especially after the visits of the delegates.

The party had decided to go for a one-point anti-government movement this month.

The party is planning to hold a rally in the second week in Dhaka to make the announcement of one-point demand but the programmes may start at the end of this month, said sources.

Sources said the meeting of a liaison committee -- formed to coordinate with like-minded political parties -- is scheduled for this week.

Saudi executes 5 for terrorism

AFP, Riyadh

Saudi Arabia yesterday put to death five people convicted of carrying out a deadly attack on a house of worship, state media said, the biggest group execution this year.

The five men -- four Saudis and one Egyptian national -- were tried for an attack that killed five people and injured an untold number of others in the kingdom's east, home to most Saudi oil and most members of its Shiite minority.

An interior ministry statement published by the official Saudi Press Agency did not specify when the

attack took place or what type of house of worship was targeted.

It also did not specify the method of execution used, but the kingdom has carried out beheadings in the past.

This brought to 68 the total number of people put to death so far by Saudi Arabia, a frequent target for criticism by rights groups who object to its prolific use of capital punishment.

More than 20 executions have been carried out since early May for terrorism-related offences, the vast majority in the eastern province.

Exports bring home record \$55.56b in FY23

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destinations like the Asian markets and better prices, according to Hassan.

The steep depreciation of the taka against the US dollar also helped the exporters offer more competitive pricing amid the inflationary pressure around the world, said MA Razzaque, research director of the Policy Research Institute.

Taka depreciated by about 16.4 percent against the dollar between July last year and June this year, according to data from the Bangladesh Bank.

"Bangladesh's export earnings in the last fiscal year is definitely a positive sign considering the volatile global economic situation," Razzaque said.

Apart from garments, only two products could cross the one-billion-dollar mark: leather and home textile.

Leather and leather goods export fetched \$1.22 billion, down 1.74 percent year-on-year. Home textiles fetched \$1.09 billion, down 32.47 percent from a year earlier.

The traditional jute sector could not cross the one billion mark last fiscal year: its receipts shrunk 19.1 percent to \$912.25 million.

Promising export sectors like frozen and live fish, terry towels and agricultural products saw their receipts come crashing down by more than 20 percent.

However, the export of footwear, headgear and plastic products saw positive growth in fiscal 2022-23.

The government is likely to set a \$70 billion export target for this fiscal year.

"As inflation is decreasing in the West and our performance is excellent in new markets, we will see higher export growth this year," Ghosh said.

Razzaque, however, remained cautious: garment shipments to the US, Bangladesh's single largest export destination, have been declining in recent months.

Martinez's brief stopover leaves

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made an 11-hour stopover in Dhaka en route to Kolkata, where he will take part in a number of activities and public gatherings over two days. But his Dhaka visit featured only two visits, those too of a private nature.

Having arrived in the early hours of Monday following a 36-hour journey from Amsterdam, the 30-year-old was whisked to a five-star hotel in Gulshan under heavy security. The tinted car that he was driven in went straight into the parking area to avoid the gathering of fans and media and that was how the rest of his visit went.

Following a couple hours of rest, Martinez and his entourage went to the office of NEXT Ventures, a digital business company which sponsored his visit to Dhaka, and spent close to an hour there, meeting selected guests including former Bangladesh cricket captain Mashrafe Bin Mortaza and State Minister for ICT, Zunaid Ahmed Palak.

The Argentine was gifted a replica of a hawk, the bird that Bangladeshi fans call him by for his agility and reflexes, and a miniature boat, a symbol of Bangladesh's rural life and also of the ruling Awami League.

The Aston Villa goalkeeper, who is being targeted by a few top clubs in the Premier League, then paid a courtesy call on Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina at her office, presenting her with an Argentina shirt and exchanging views about football, Argentina and Bangladesh.

Both Palak and Mashrafe, the latter being a self-proclaimed diehard Argentina fan, later expressed their elation at being able to meet and spend some time with the Argentine icon, posting pictures and sharing stories of their experience on social media.

While Mashrafe was one of the lucky few to have had the opportunity to meet his idol, many more were left disheartened at not being able to catch a glimpse

of the Argentine since he did not make a public appearance, as was announced prior to his visit.

Bangladesh football team captain Jamal Bhuiyan, who had arrived at the Hazrat Shahjalal International Airport along with the rest of the team following their SAFF Championship campaign in India, waited at the VIP gate to have a talk with Martinez, but to no avail.

Despite the message being relayed to Martinez's security and the organisers that the Bangladesh captain was waiting to meet Martinez, the goalkeeper was whisked into the airport before leaving for Kolkata, where he gave interviews to the media on his arrival to begin an elaborate visit to the City of Joy.

Although Martinez later wrote on Instagram that he was moved by the hospitality of the Bangladeshi people, he had perhaps missed out on the real hospitality and craze of the Bangladeshis regarding football and Argentina.