



### B1 Bangladesh's power purchase boosts Adani revenue



### P3 From Ganga to Meghna, microplastics everywhere



### P5 When the hills cry for help



### P7 Pakistan, Iran agree to expand security co-op

## Who's to blame for vegetable price spiral?

### From farmers to end-consumers, everyone frustrated with prices

SHAHEEN MOLLAH and MD ABBAS

Day labourer Azizul Haque was upset to see the price of papaya when he went to do grocery shopping yesterday: it has doubled in a space of a few days.

"Due to the rise in vegetable prices, papaya was the only one I could afford. At this rate, we won't be able to afford any vegetables soon," said a crestfallen Azizul, who lives in Dhaka's Mirpur-14 with his family.

Despite being the peak season, the papaya now costs Tk 30-50 a kg in Dhaka's kitchen markets.

Yet, the farmers in Manikganj who grow the papaya are getting barely half that price, putting the spotlight on the dysfunctional supply chain that is compounding the cost of living crisis the low-income group is grappling with for more than a year now.

One such farmer is Monir Hossain, who cultivated carrots, papayas, coriander and radishes on his 185 decimal land in Manikganj.

He sold the carrots for Tk 13 per kg, papayas for Tk 17 a kg, coriander for Tk 25 a kg and radishes for Tk 12 kg to a middleman at Chiding Char in Manikganj's Singair upazila. Monir made a profit of Tk 1.38 lakh against his investment of Tk 3 lakh for harvesting the winter crops.



Illegal encroachment and the accumulation of silt have reduced the Belai river in Bagerhat's Rampal upazila into a narrow channel. Locals said the river once used to be wide enough for trawlers and even larger water transport to pass through. However, now due to its shrinking and the Khulna-Mongla rail bridge (not in picture) hanging too low, no such transport can take to the water anymore. The photo was taken from the Belai bridge in the upazila recently.

PHOTO: HABIBUR RAHMAN

## 12th JS starts its journey today

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

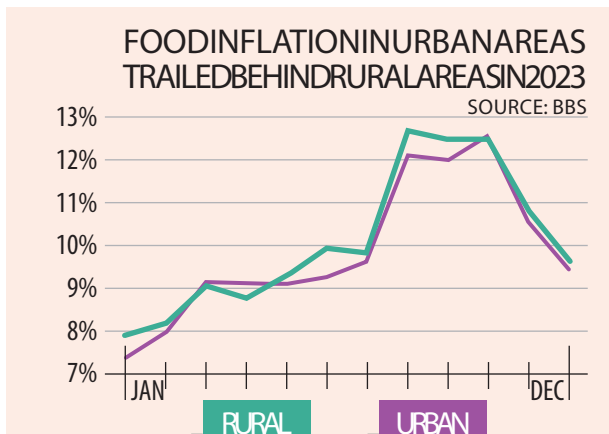
The 12th parliament will hold its maiden session this afternoon, amid concerns from various quarters about whether the House of the Nation will truly represent the public's interests in the absence of a genuine opposition.

The session will begin at 3:00pm.

After much confusion about who will sit on the opposition bench -- the Jatiyo Party or the alliance of independent MPs -- the parliament secretariat in gazette notification on Sunday made it clear that JP Chairman GM Quader will be the opposition leader, meaning JP officially becomes the main opposition in parliament.

According to political

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"With this profit, I am still struggling to run my family. If anyone in my family falls ill, I have to take a loan."

And if he factors in the labour put in by himself, his wife and son, his profit of Tk 1.38 lakh seems "very little", said Monir, who sold his produce to Abdur Razzak.

Razzak brought Monir's fresh produce to Dhaka's Karwan Bazar wholesale market, where he sold the carrots for an average of Tk 18 per kg, the papayas for Tk 22 a kg, the coriander for Tk 30 a kg and the radishes for Tk 16 a kg to wholesalers.

The wholesalers sell the produce to vegetable sellers, who then sell it to the end customers.

Carrots, on average, were sold for Tk 22 per kg, papayas for Tk 24 a kg, coriander for Tk 40 a kg and radishes for Tk 17 a kg to the vegetable sellers in Dhaka's kitchen markets.

In Dhaka's kitchen markets, where as much as 50 percent of the fresh produce sold is grown in adjoining areas such as Munshiganj, Hemayetpur, Jhawchar, Jadhurchar, Boilapur and Ashulia, each kg of carrot is

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## PM orders import duty cuts on 4 commodities

### Govt aims to keep prices of rice, oil, sugar, dates stable during Ramadan

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina yesterday directed the authorities concerned to cut import duties on rice, edible oil, sugar and dates ahead of the upcoming Ramadan.

At a cabinet meeting at her office, the premier gave the directive to rein in inflation, which has stayed above 9 percent since March, and ease the inflationary pressure on people during the month of fasting.

Briefing reporters at the secretariat after the meeting, Cabinet Secretary Md Mahub Hossain said: "The prime minister has emphasised the need for controlling inflation. She has also instructed the ministers concerned to work together on it. The ministers briefed the prime minister about what they have done and their experiences regarding the matter."

The National Board of Revenue is working on how much duty cuts on the four commodities can be allowed to bring down their prices.

"The prime minister has asked all the authorities concerned to monitor the market so there is no shortage of supply of goods."

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### Her first day at school was her last day on earth

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Shariatpur

Just four days ago, five-year-old Adiba got her new uniform to start her pre-primary school in Shariatpur's Gosairhat upazila.

With a heartful of excitement, she set out with her mother to attend her very first class yesterday morning.

While mother and

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## Let int'l lawyer review Prof Yunus' cases

### 242 global leaders, including 125 Nobel laureates, urge Hasina; ACC okays charge sheet against Prof Yunus

STAR REPORT

Expressing concern over the continuous judicial harassment and potential jailing of Nobel laureate Prof Muhammad Yunus, 242 global leaders, including 125 Nobel laureates, yesterday proposed that a small team of independent legal experts, led by a senior international lawyer, reviews the cases against him.

On January 1, Prof Yunus and three of his Grameen Telecom colleagues were sentenced to six months in jail in a case over labour law violations and were granted bail.

In an open letter to Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina, the leaders noted with concern the rushed legal process and lack of consistency with regards to how Bangladesh's

laws are applied. The criminal verdict included time in prison for four board members of Grameen Telecom, a nonprofit organisation, including 83-year-old Prof Yunus, who serves the organisation in an uncompensated non-executive chairman role, they said.

"It is evident that, at most, only a small civil or administrative fine against Grameen Telecom was warranted under the relevant laws. We would like to begin immediately [the review] and request that any jail sentences for Professor Yunus and his colleagues be suspended pending the review," read the letter published on the website "protectyunus".

The letter was published as a full-page advertisement in the Washington Post on January 29. It

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A special delicacy for those with an acquired taste, Shutki, or dried fish, is made mainly during winter. Sent across the country and also exported abroad, shutki has become a popular source of income for those living near river banks in Chattogram. The photos were taken from Diamond Ghat area on the southern bank of the Karnaphuli recently.

PHOTO: RAJIB RAIHAN

# DTG

The 18<sup>th</sup> Dhaka Int'l Textile & Garment Machinery Exhibition

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# 2 DAYS TO GO!

Pre-registration

\*Children under 16 are not admitted to entry.

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