



## ESSENTIAL COMMODITIES There'll be no scarcity during Ramadan: PM

### STAR REPORT

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina yesterday said there will be no shortage of essential commodities during Ramadan. "There'll be no scarcity of anything during Ramadan. All arrangements have already been made," she told a press conference at the Gono Bhaban.



- No global leader raised questions about polls
- A conspiracy was afoot and it's still on
- Dhaka's traffic signal system to be activated

It was organised to brief the media about the outcome of her recent visit to Germany where she attended the Munich Security Conference-2024.

Talking about the supply of essentials during the month of fasting, Hasina said arrangements have been made to import sufficient amounts of items including chickpeas, dates, and sugar. "So, there will be no problem," she said, reports UNB.

Referring to the manipulation of prices of various items including egg, she said, "Don't you think those who want to overthrow the government have played some tricks in increasing the prices?"

She also pointed out that the country suddenly faced a shortage of onions. The onions that had been hoarded rotted away and then thrown into water.

"What should be done with these people? You tell me. They deserve mass beating."

The premier also said that during her visit to Germany, no global leaders raised any concern or questions about Bangladesh's general election.

"No one said anything about the polls. They don't have any concern or question regarding the election," she said in reply to another question.

SEE PAGE 2 COL 2



Mounds of sand piled past the demarcation pillars of the Burgianga river in Narayanganj's Pagla area. The sand is brought by boats and dumped through pipes on the river bank. Even though the river is vital to their business, the sand traders encroach on it, reducing navigability and harming the environment. The photo was taken on Thursday.

PHOTO: ANISUR RAHMAN

## HSIA's terminal-3 to open in Oct

### RASHIDUL HASAN

The much anticipated third terminal of the Dhaka airport is likely to be fully ready for use in October, enhancing the passenger and cargo handling capacity.

The contractor, Aviation Dhaka Consortium, will finish physical work by April 5 and the Civil Aviation Authority of Bangladesh (CAAB) will take charge of the terminal the next day.

"System integration, calibration and testing of equipment are done ... The terminal will be fully ready for use in October," CAAB Chairman Air Vice Marshal M Mafidur Rahman said.

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina opened the third terminal for partial use on October 7 last year. The Tk 21,300 crore project commenced on December 28, 2019.

Covering an area of 542,000



square metres, the third terminal has 230,000 square metres of floor space, 115 check-in counters, and 66 departure, 59 arrival and three VIP immigration desks.

When fully operational, the

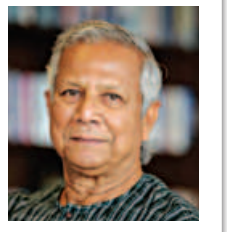
annual passenger handling capacity of the Hazrat Shahjalal International Airport will be 24 million, up from the current 8 million. Cargo handling capacity, now 500,000 tonnes, will also multiply.

According to a primary estimation by consultancy firm Nippon Koei, a workforce of 6,000 skilled people will be required for operations, maintenance and security at the terminal.

SEE PAGE 2 COL 4

## 'We are living in fear'

Prof Yunus tells DW



### STAR REPORT

Nobel Laureate Prof Muhammad Yunus yesterday said he and his colleagues are living in fear because of the "unlawful" takeover of offices at the Grameen Telecom Bhaban by a group of outsiders.

"We are in a difficult situation," Prof Yunus said. "The crisis is deepening."

On February 12, a group of people, claiming to be affiliated with Grameen Bank, barged into the

SEE PAGE 6 COL 4



### ANNOUNCEMENT

The Daily Star brings you a new weekend page - Business Plus - on every Saturday, shedding light on Bangladesh's economic transformation. SEE WR4.



PHOTO: ANISUR RAHMAN

Smoke billowing out of mills in Kadamtali area of the capital. The furnaces of these factories, mostly re-rolling mills, start up every morning and spew black smoke, polluting the environment and creating health hazards for residents. Dhaka regularly ranks among the worst cities in the world in terms of air quality. Photo was taken on Thursday.

## Dhaka air a winter hazard

### AZMIN AZRAN

Almost every morning this past winter, media outlets reported on Dhaka's poor air quality.

Of the first 53 days of the year, Dhaka had the worst air quality in the world on 19 days. In fact, Dhaka's poor air quality means it has been outside of the top five on only five days this year.

A worldwide ranking of cities with the worst air quality based on air quality index (AQI) is available online.

The AQI is a way of measuring air quality in a specific location based on the presence and intensity of pollutants in the air.

The AQI in Bangladesh is based on five pollutants: particulate matter (PM10 and PM2.5), NO2, CO, SO2, and ozone. Scores on the AQI scale get higher the worse the air quality gets in a given area or city. Scores between 51 and 100 signify moderate air quality, 101-150 is said to be unhealthy for sensitive individuals, 151-200 is unhealthy for everyone, 201-300 very unhealthy, and above 300 hazardous.

In the last 30 days, Dhaka's average daily AQI has been above 150 every day, according to iqair.com. It was between 201-300 on 18 occasions, and on January 25, Dhaka's average AQI was

317.

So, Dhaka's air quality is at the very least unhealthy and at times hazardous, but does high AQI lead directly to bad health?

Although most research on this is still inconclusive, and it is currently an open area in the fields of environmental and medical science, recent research conducted in countries like India and Thailand shed some light on the issue.

An article by Indian researchers published in Nature in November, 2023 examined whether AQI and prevalence of lung cancer were correlated. This research showed a "significant positive correlation between high AQI levels and a higher rate of lung cancer", but did not prove causality.

In Thailand, researchers studied over 3,500 hospital emergency room visits for heart and respiratory health issues in the span of a year.

Research was conducted to find a correlation between these emergency room visits and the AQI of the air these individuals were exposed to in the days leading up to the emergency room visits. This research - published in November last year in peer-reviewed journal PLOS ONE - demonstrated "the association between short-term PM2.5

SEE PAGE 2 COL 2

## US team due today in first visit after polls

### DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT

A three-member US delegation is scheduled to arrive in Dhaka today to advance the bilateral relationship, despite some tensions in recent years.

This will be the first visit by US officials since the January 7 election.

The delegation will include US National Security Council's Senior Director for South Asia, Eileen Laubacher, US Deputy Assistant Secretary at the Bureau of South and Central Asian Affairs, Aileen Akhter, and USAID Assistant Administrator for Asia, Michael Schiffer.

During their stay, US officials are likely to hold meetings with Masud Bin Momen, foreign secretary; Salman F Rahman, private industry and investment adviser to the prime minister; and members from the private sector,

SEE PAGE 2 COL 5

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