



Govt sincere in developing telecom, IT sectors: CA

**BSS, Dhaka**

Chief Adviser Professor Muhammad Yunus yesterday said the interim government is sincere in developing country's telecommunication and information technology (IT) sectors and it has ensured transparency and accountability in all the activities of these sectors.

The chief adviser made the comments in his message given on the eve of World Telecommunication and Information Society Day, which is to be celebrated in the country

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Students take position in front of the Shahbagh Police Station yesterday, demanding immediate arrest of all those involved in the murder of Dhaka University student Shahriar Alam Shammo, a fair trial, and a safe campus.

PHOTO: PALASH KHAN

Prices of rice, veggies drop in Dhaka markets

**STAFF CORRESPONDENT**

Prices of several rice varieties, summer vegetables, and broiler chicken have fallen over the past week in kitchen markets across the capital, while onion prices remained steady and potatoes saw a slight increase.

During visits to wholesale and retail markets in Karwan Bazar, Farmgate, Ibrahimpur, Shewrapara, Kazipara and Mirpur-11 yesterday, traders and consumers confirmed the downward trend in prices.

Kamal Hossain, proprietor of Mokbul Rice Agency in Mirpur-11, said the fall in rice prices is due to the arrival of new harvests. "Last week, miniket rice of different brands was sold at Tk 75-90 per kg. Yesterday, I sold them at Tk 72-85," he said.

He said BR-28 and BR-29 varieties dropped to Tk 58-60 per kg from Tk 62-64 last week. However, the price of Nazirshail and coarse rice remained unchanged, retailing at Tk 75-92 and Tk 54-56 per kg respectively.

Summer vegetables, including eggplants, gourds, pointed gourds, okra, long beans, tomatoes, bitter gourds, and ridge gourds, are now selling at Tk 30-70 per kg.

Mozammel Hossain, a vegetable trader at Karwan Bazar, said prices dropped by up to Tk 10 per kg in a week, largely due to an abundant supply.

Sazzad Hossain, a shopper at the same market, said he bought a small-sized gourd at Tk 30, down from Tk 40 the previous week. "I also bought other vegetables and a 2kg broiler chicken. Prices seemed slightly lower overall," he added.

Traders said broiler chicken was being sold at Tk 150-170 per kg yesterday, down by Tk 10 from last week. The price of Sonali chicken, however, remained unchanged at Tk 240-280 per kg.

Meanwhile, onion prices held steady, with local varieties selling at Tk 55-60 per kg at retail and Tk 48-52

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Illegal CCC building on Chaktai Canal demolished

**SIFAYET ULLAH, Ctg**

A four-storey building illegally constructed by the Chattogram City Corporation (CCC) on occupied land of the Chaktai Canal in Bahaddarhat has been demolished, marking a significant step towards restoring the port city's natural waterways.

The move is expected to help ease long-standing waterlogging in the area and aid in returning the canal to its original state.

As part of the ongoing waterlogging mitigation project being implemented by the Chattogram Development Authority (CDA), the building was recently demolished, project officials confirmed.

The CCC had built the 793 square-foot structure - used as the revenue office of circle-2 - right in the middle of Chaktai Canal, one of the key drainage channels of the port city for over two decades, without obtaining clearance from the CDA.

A 2016 report by the Chattogram District Administration identified the CCC as one of the entities encroaching on the canal.

The report, obtained by The Daily Star, stated that around 48 illegal structures, including residential flats, tin-shed houses, business establishments, and warehouses, were constructed on approximately 20,000 square feet of canal land, severely choking the waterway.

The 6.9km-long Chaktai, starting from the Bahaddarhat point of the city and spanning to the Karnaphuli river, has shrivelled up noticeably due to rampant encroachment over the years.

According to the RS survey, the width of the canal used to be about 65 feet, while the BS survey mentioned it to be 61 feet. But only 10 to 30 feet can be seen now, according to the DC office report.

During a recent visit to Bahaddarhat, this correspondent observed that debris from the demolished building, including concrete and bricks, still remains at the site.

Meanwhile, the contractor of the

Kamrul Islam Chowdhury, estate officer of the CCC, confirmed that the CDA carried out the demolition. "But we did not receive any compensation for this building as it was built on canal land," he added.

The construction work for the waterlogging mitigation project is being implemented by the 34th Engineer Construction Brigade of the Bangladesh Army.

Lieutenant Colonel Md Ferdous Ahmed, the project director, said,



waterlogging mitigation project, titled "Re-excavation, Expansion, Renovation, and Development of Canals to Alleviate Waterlogging in the City," has installed steel pilings along the canal bank to construct a protective retaining wall.

"Due to the construction of the building, the canal had turned into a narrow drain, and for years, even light rainfall would cause waterlogging in the area as proper drainage through the canal was obstructed," said local businessman Abir Ahmed.

"We have already removed the structure from the canal. Since it was built on illegally encroached land, we were not required to provide any compensation to the CCC."

The other structures built on the canal will be demolished also as part of the drive to free up the waterbody, said officials.

The CDA is implementing the project to address the city's waterlogging, involving the re-excavation and renovation of 36 canals.

DEATH IN RAB CUSTODY

2 years on, no justice for Sultana Jasmine

**ASHUTOSH SARKAR**

Justice continues to evade the family of Sultana Jasmine, a 41-year-old land office employee from Naogaon, who died in the custody of Rapid Action Battalion (Rab) over two years ago.

No criminal case has been filed over her death, and a High Court rule questioning the legality of Jasmine's detention by Rab remains unresolved.

The delay in settling the legality of the detention stems from the reconstitution of the hearing jurisdiction of the HC bench that issued the rule, followed by the refusal of two other benches to proceed with the hearing.

Jasmine was picked up and detained by Rab on March 22, 2023, and died two days later at Rajshahi Medical College Hospital while still in Rab's custody. Rab officials told doctors she had sustained injuries from a fall.

However, her son, Shahed Hossain Saikat, a student at Chittagong University, rejected the claim, saying his mother was healthy before her detention and had a visible head injury. "She died

due to torture in Rab custody," he alleged.

Jasmine had no criminal cases against her at the time of her detention. However, she was sued under the controversial Digital Security Act a day after being

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picked up allegedly for "siphoning off money from job seekers through a Facebook account".

On April 5, 2023, following a petition filed by Supreme Court lawyer Manoj Kumar Bhowmick, the HC bench of Justice Farah

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Verdict in Magura rape case today

**STAFF CORRESPONDENT**

The verdict in a case filed over the rape and murder of an eight-year-old girl from Magura is set to be delivered today.

Judge M Zahid Hasan of the Women and Children Repression Prevention Tribunal in Magura is scheduled to announce the judgement around 9:30am, said Public Prosecutor Monirul Islam Mukul.

The court set the date on May 13 after hearing arguments from the prosecution and the defence, he added.

The four accused are Hitu Sheikh, the father-in-law of the victim's sister; his wife, Jaheda Begum; their son, Sajib Sheikh, who is the victim's brother-in-law; and Sajib's brother, Ratul Sheikh.

Hitu was charged with rape and murder, Sajib and Ratul were charged with criminal

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Those opposing polls by Dec must explain why

Says BNP leader Nazrul Islam

**STAFF CORRESPONDENT**

Those who want to delay the next parliamentary polls must explain the rationale behind their decision, said BNP Standing Committee Member Nazrul Islam Khan yesterday.

"Why postpone the people's right to vote? If some parties need time to organise or build alliances, that should not hinder the election," he said at a discussion organised by the Bangladesh Labour Party at Jatiya Press Club.

Citing the Labour Party's call for a December election, Nazrul said BNP supported the same timeline. "Those opposing this must clearly explain why the election cannot be held by December. The

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200 held in joint operations

Says ISPR

**STAFF CORRESPONDENT**

A total of 200 people were arrested across the country during joint force operations over seven days between May 8 and May 14, the Inter Services Public Relations (ISPR) said in a statement yesterday.

In coordination with other law enforcement agencies, Bangladesh Army carried out operations in Dhaka and other parts of the country as part of efforts to maintain law and order situation.

Among those arrested were murder suspects, illegal arms holders, listed criminals, smugglers, members of juvenile gangs, illegal sand extractors, tree cutters, drug dealers and addicts, and brokers involved in illicit activities, the release said.

Ten illegal firearms, 87 rounds of ammunition, 11 bombs, narcotics, locally made weapons,

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Election likely between Dec and June

Says CA's press secretary

**UNB, Dhaka**

Chief Adviser's Press Secretary Shafiqul Alam yesterday said the next general election is likely to be held between December and June.

"All advisers, including the chief adviser, are working towards that goal," he said.

While speaking to journalists during a visit to the Magura Press Club, the press secretary also said the people of the country have expressed satisfaction in the decision related to Awami League, noting that the public's expectations regarding the party have been met.

"The country is on the right track. Law and order has improved... it's better than before," Shafiqul added.

He said reform efforts are underway in sectors where necessary. "Major reforms have already been introduced in the economy, with more to come," he noted.

Regarding political reforms, Shafiqul said the consensus commission held several meetings, concluding its work on May 15.

"Some are becoming impatient, but we believe our work remains focused and is progressing at the right pace in the right direction," the press secretary added.

Regarding media freedom, Shafiqul said the government is not only advocating for freedom of speech but also working to ensure a dignified life for those working to uphold press freedom.



Women take part in a performance art to raise awareness about the various challenges and injustices girls and women face in the country. This was part of the 'Narir Dake Moitree Jatra' programme that took place on Manik Mia Avenue yesterday.

PHOTO: PRABIR DAS