

Prices of essentials rise

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from market to market.

Sojib Sheikh, proprietor of M/S Matribandar, a wholesale onion seller at Karwan Bazar, said onion prices increased by Tk 10 per kg within a week.

According to him, local onions are being sold at Tk 53 to Tk 56 per kg at wholesale rates, up from Tk 42 to Tk 46 a week ago.

In retail markets, onions are being sold at Tk 60 to Tk 70 per kg, up from Tk 50 to Tk 60 last week.

Demand for chicken has also increased in kitchen markets, pushing up prices.

Milon Hossain, a resident of East Rajabazar, visited the Farmgate roadside kitchen market yesterday evening. He bought Sonali chicken at Tk 340 per kg, which he had purchased at Tk 300 per kg last week.

Broiler chicken, which he

bought at Tk 180 per kg a week ago, cost him Tk 200 per kg yesterday.

Hanif Miah, a chicken seller at Farmgate, said demand for chicken increases every year during Ramadan, and prices rise accordingly.

"This year is no exception. We are selling at higher prices because we had to buy at higher rates," he said.

Prices of all meats have also increased in kitchen markets across the capital.

Mohammad Jalal, a mutton trader at Karwan Bazar, said mutton is being sold at Tk 1,300 per kg, up from Tk 1,250 a week ago.

He claimed the price rose due to high demand.

Beef prices have also increased by Tk 20 to Tk 50 per kg.

Mohammad Shakil, owner of Shakil Mangsho Bitan at Mohammadpur Geneva

Camp Kitchen Market, said beef prices increased as the price of each cow rose by Tk 5,000 to 7,000 within two weeks due to high demand.

He has been selling beef at Tk 800 per kg, up from Tk 750.

Meanwhile, prices of iftar items such as lemons, green chillies, tomatoes, cucumbers and coriander leaves have also increased.

Four lemons are now being sold at Tk 80 to Tk 120, up from Tk 60 to Tk 100 last week. Green chillies are selling at Tk 180 to Tk 240 per kg, up from Tk 140 to Tk 180.

Tomatoes are being sold at Tk 50 to Tk 80 per kg, up from Tk 30 to Tk 60 last week. Brinjal is selling at Tk 80 to Tk 120 per kg, up from Tk 60 to Tk 80 a week ago.

Prices of cucumbers and coriander leaves have increased by Tk 20 to Tk 40 per kg.

Foreign dignitaries congratulate Tarique

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They also paid a courtesy call on the prime minister after the event.

Indian Lok Sabha Speaker Om Birla handed over a letter from Prime Minister Narendra Modi, who invited Tarique along with his wife and daughter to visit India at a mutually convenient time.

"Your victory is a testimony to the trust and confidence reposed by the people of Bangladesh in your leadership and their mandate for your vision to take the country forward on the path of peace, stability and prosperity," Modi said.

As two close neighbours, India and Bangladesh have a deep-rooted friendship founded on shared history, cultural ties and the aspirations of our peoples for peace and prosperity.

"The strong convergence between our respective developmental priorities shall serve as a guiding principle for our future cooperation."

He said he looks forward to working closely with Tarique to strengthen multifaceted bilateral relations, enhance regional cooperation and advance common goals in wide-ranging areas of connectivity, trade, technology, education, skills development, energy, healthcare as well as cultural and people-to-people exchanges.

"As two fast growing economies and aspiring societies, India and Bangladesh can truly become catalysts for each other's sustainable growth, work for each other's security and enable mutual prosperity."

Tarique conveyed his greetings to Modi.

"Both leaders expressed

optimism to work together for wellbeing of the people of Bangladesh and India pursuing a people-centric menu of cooperation," Riaz Hamidullah, Bangladesh's High Commissioner to India, posted on X.

India stands ready to support Bangladesh's endeavours to build a democratic, progressive and inclusive nation, said Birla's post.

In a post on X, Australian Prime Minister Anthony Albanese said Australia and Bangladesh share a valuable partnership and Australia looks forward to working with the new government to promote a stable, prosperous region.

In a post on X, Pakistan PM Shehbaz Sharif wrote: "Warmest felicitations to Tarique Rahman on having been sworn in as the Prime Minister of the People's Republic of Bangladesh. I look forward to close and meaningful engagements with my brother, to further strengthen our bilateral cooperation across mutually beneficial areas and to deepen the historic ties between our two countries."

In a message, Chinese Premier Li Qiang congratulated Tarique, reaffirming Beijing's commitment to strengthening bilateral ties and expanding cooperation across multiple sectors.

"The Chinese government supports the new Bangladesh government in exercising smooth governance," he said, describing China and Bangladesh as close neighbours bound by a long-standing friendship and a Comprehensive Strategic Cooperative Partnership.

Relations between the two countries have steadily deepened since

the establishment of diplomatic ties 51 years ago and the two nations have consistently respected each other's sovereignty and pursued mutually beneficial cooperation.

The Chinese government supports the new Bangladeshi administration in ensuring stable and effective governance, he said, expressing his readiness to work closely with the new PM to carry forward the traditional friendship and expand high-quality cooperation under the Belt and Road Initiative.

He emphasised the importance of strengthening exchanges across all sectors and elevating the Comprehensive Strategic Cooperative Partnership to a higher level.

UAE President Sheikh Mohamed bin Zayed Al Nahyan also sent his congratulations.

Sheikh Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum, vice-president, prime minister and Ruler of Dubai; and Sheikh Mansour bin Zayed Al Nahyan, vice-president, deputy prime minister, and chairman of the Presidential Court, also dispatched similar congratulatory messages to the President of Bangladesh and to Tarique.

Pakistan President Asif Ali Zardari congratulated Tarique and appreciated the interim government's role in a peaceful, fair election, conveys best wishes for stability, prosperity and hopes for stronger ties and regional peace.

Pakistan's Federal Minister Ahsan Iqbal, who attended the swearing-in ceremony, said he witnessed an inspiring and heartwarming scene on the streets, as Bangladeshi youth celebrated the country's democratic

transition.

The Pakistan-Bangladesh relations lie not in the shadows of the past, but in the hopes, dreams and aspirations of the next generation, he posted on X.

Japan's Prime Minister Takaichi Sanae congratulated Tarique and said she looks forward to working with the new government to strengthen the strategic partnership.

In her letter to the PM, Takaichi welcomed the further promotion of democratic effort in Bangladesh.

In a congratulatory post for securing a strong mandate in the election, Singapore Prime Minister Lawrence Wong said this outcome reflects the confidence of the Bangladeshi people in Tarique's leadership.

"I look forward to working closely with you to further strengthen Singapore-Bangladesh ties," he said.

Switzerland's Ambassador to Bangladesh Reto Renggli, who attended the oath-taking ceremony, congratulated Tarique, his cabinet members, as well as the new MPs.

"We wish the new government and the new Parliament every success in carrying out their duties and responsibilities."

As a longstanding partner, Switzerland stands with Bangladesh in its pursuit of a democratic, just and inclusive society, and remains committed to further strengthening diplomatic, multilateral, economic and people-to-people ties with the country, he added.

It was a great honour and pleasure to witness the oath-taking ceremony of the new Prime Minister and Cabinet of the Government

of Bangladesh, said UNDP Resident Representative Stefan Liller.

"Wishing you all the success in your new roles," he added.

It has been a pleasure to witness the oath-taking ceremony, said Maldives President Mohamed Muizzu.

"I also had a fruitful meeting with Prime Minister Rahman and conveyed my best wishes to him and the new Government. I look forward to further strengthening the close and friendly relations between the Maldives and Bangladesh," he added.

Thai Prime Minister Anutin Charnvirakul in a post on X congratulated Tarique and said Thailand looks forward to closely working with the new administration to further deepen cooperation, especially in the areas of trade, investment and connectivity of the two countries.

Thailand's Ambassador to Bangladesh General Ambassador Sohal Mahmood has conveyed warmest felicitations to Tarique.

"Wishing him all success as he leads the nation to new levels of internal consolidation, economic growth, and international engagement. As a founding member of D-8, Bangladesh remains a valued partner as we work together to promote sustainable development, economic cooperation and solidarity among member states," he posted on X.

There is no doubt that Prime Minister Rahman's commitment to multilateralism and belief in regional cooperation would further reinforce Bangladesh's constructive contributions to the D-8 process, he added.

Khalilur being minister

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complications surrounding constitutional reform" into the public domain.

"If Khalilur Rahman joins the BNP government as a minister, it raises questions about whether he acted on behalf of that party during the interim government's tenure," he said while speaking

to reporters shortly after taking oath as a member of the parliament and as a member of the constitutional reform council.

"Student advisers had stepped down ahead of the election to maintain neutrality, as they had faced accusations at the time of being

aligned with a particular political party," he added.

Nahid added such developments risk undermining public confidence in the electoral process and constitutional reform efforts, as concerns over impartiality and institutional integrity resurface.

New govt to seek 3-year LDC

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had been lobbying the immediate past interim government, led by Prof Muhammad Yunus, for a deferment.

Sixteen major business chambers and trade bodies also sent a letter to the interim government, requesting that graduation be postponed for at least six years, citing high interest rates and the economic challenges faced by various sectors due to the fallout of Covid-19 and the Russia-Ukraine war.

Bangladesh is scheduled to graduate from the LDC category to developing-nation status on November 24 this year, having already met all three UN criteria -- income, human assets, and economic and environmental vulnerability -- twice in previous triennial assessments by the UN Committee for Development Policy (UN CDP). The third triennial assessment is

currently underway ahead of the final graduation.

According to the government's annual report submitted to the CDP in November last year, Bangladesh's progress reflects its resilience and strong policy commitment.

However, an independent UN panel also sought clarification on the country's economic situation, inquiring about its readiness for graduation and progress in implementing the Smooth Transition Strategy (STS), a guideline designed to ensure sustainable graduation. The panel, which is scheduled to submit its report soon, also consulted with local businessmen during its visit.

Different local and international studies suggest that Bangladesh could lose up to 14 percent of its exports, equivalent to \$8 billion annually, after LDC graduation, as the country would lose preferential trade

benefits granted under the LDC category.

Since 1975, Bangladesh has enjoyed preferential market access in various developing and developed countries and trade blocs, helping it to become the world's second-largest garment exporter. Currently, 73 percent of the country's exports benefit from zero-duty access to 38 countries under LDC provisions.

Once the country graduates to developing-nation status, local exporters will face nearly 12.5 percent duty on exports to the European Union (EU), the largest export market. However, the EU has agreed to extend LDC trade benefits for three years, until 2029, providing a preparation period for graduating countries. Similarly, the UK, Australia, and Canada have confirmed they will extend LDC trade benefits for several years beyond graduation.

Early snag for Constitution

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However, they were later sworn in by Chief Election Commissioner AMM Nasir Uddin as both MPs and council members around 12:30pm.

BNP MP-elects took their oath of office at the oath chamber of the Jatiya Sangsad around 10:45am. This marks only the second time in the country's history that the CEC has administered lawmakers' oaths in the absence of the Speaker of parliament.

Under the order, members of the 13th Parliament are to serve a dual role: as MPs performing regular legislative duties and as Council members tasked with reforming 48 constitutional provisions outlined in the July National Charter within 180 working days. They are therefore required to take two separate oaths: one as legislators and another as council members.

Just before the ceremony, BNP Standing Committee Member Salahuddin Ahmed briefed fellow MP-elects.

"We were not elected as members of the Constitution Reform Council, and this has not yet been incorporated into the Constitution... According to the referendum's verdict, if the Commission is to be formed, it must first be incorporated into the Constitution, and provisions must be made regarding who will administer the oath to its members."

He added that constitutionally, provisions for council members to

take oath can only be made after it is adopted in parliament.

"Therefore, constitutionally, this is as far as we have come. We are proceeding in accordance with the Constitution and hope to continue doing so in the days ahead," he said.

After being sworn in, BNP lawmakers signed the oath book as per tradition and held a parliamentary party meeting.

Speaking to reporters afterwards, BNP Secretary General Mirza Fakhrul Islam Alamgir described the occasion as "historic," citing the party's return to Parliament through "a fair election" after "a long fascist government's repression, destruction of democracy, and making the parliament ineffective, and after much bloodshed of the people."

"In this parliament, with a majority of seats, we have elected our leader, Tarique Rahman, as the leader of the House," he said.

Fakhrul also said the parliamentary party had decided that BNP MPs would not accept duty-free cars or government plots.

Salahuddin told reporters, "From today, change begins. Becoming a member of parliament will no longer mean being above everyone else."

Asked about the July National Charter, he said, "We are committed and pledged to fully uphold the July National Charter, which was signed as a document of political consensus."

Meanwhile, Independent MP Rumeen Farhana and BNP's Ishraque Hossain, who arrived late, were

sworn in as MPs with Jamaat members. After taking oath as MPs, both left the chamber before the swearing-in of council members began.

After initially aligning with Jamaat over the oath issue, National Citizen Party Convener Nahid Islam and six of its elected MPs took oath as both MPs and Council members after 1:00pm.

Hasnat Abdullah, a prominent leader of the July uprising, took oath wearing the same jersey he was seen in during the 2024 protests.

After the swearing-in ceremony, NCP Member Secretary Akhter Hossen criticised the BNP, saying an overwhelming majority had voted "yes" in the referendum.

"It is against this popular mandate that BNP has taken its current position. And we know that, in the end, BNP too will be compelled to take oath as members of the Constitution Reform Council. With the people by our side, we reaffirm our stance," he said.

Asked about the new Parliament, Rumeen Farhana, MP from Brahmanbaria-2, said she sees little difference from previous ones.

"In the last three elections, BNP did not participate. That is why those parliaments were often called one-sided. In this election, Awami League is not present. From that perspective, at least 30 percent of the people of Bangladesh have no representation. So honestly, I don't see a huge difference," she said.

6 follow fathers' steps into the cabinet

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In the 50-member council, Afroza Khanam Rita became a minister after winning Manikganj-3. A member of the BNP chairperson's Advisory Council and convener of the district BNP, she is the first woman elected from the seat since independence.

Her father, late industrialist Harunar Rashid Khan, was elected MP four times from Manikganj-2 and Manikganj-3 and also served as a minister.

The new cabinet comprises 26 ministers, including Prime Minister Tarique Rahman. The new government also has 24 state ministers.

Among the state ministers is Ishraque Hossain, elected from Dhaka-6, the son of late BNP leader Sadeque Hossain Khoka. Khoka served as fisheries minister in the BNP-led four-party alliance government and as mayor of Dhaka City Corporation from 2002 to 2011. In the 1991-96 BNP government, he was the state minister for youth and sports.

Shama Obayed, now a state minister and BNP's organising secretary for Faridpur division, entered politics after the death of her father, KM Obaidur Rahman.

Obaidur, a Liberation War organiser, was BNP's secretary general and a minister and state minister. He contested Faridpur-2

the election duties, we collected various video clips from online platforms and identified a suspect who instigated the attack through Facebook Live. But we are yet to arrest him."

The English daily filed the case with Tejgaon Police Station against 350-400 unidentified people under the Penal Code, the Anti-Terrorism Act, the Special Powers Act and the Cyber Security Ordinance.

The total estimated loss stands at about Tk 40 crore, with the figure subject to revision upon further assessment, according to the case statement.

On January 27, the court set March 8 for submitting probe report in the case.

Meanwhile, in the Prothom Alo case, the court on January 26 asked investigators to submit the report by March 5.

Prothom Alo also filed

the case with Tejgaon police against 400-500 unidentified people over the attack at its office in Dhaka's Karwan Bazar, with charges under the Penal Code, the Anti-Terrorism Act, the Special Powers Act and the Cyber Security Ordinance.

The value of Prothom Alo's looted property is estimated at Tk 2.50 crore, while the total damage from vandalism and arson

amounts to approximately Tk 32 crore, said the case statement.

DB SI Tridip Barua, who is investigating the Prothom Alo case, said, "We were busy with the election. Now we have resumed the investigation in full swing. Footage from various CCTV cameras and other sources has been collected. We are analysing those and preparing for operations to arrest the accused."

নির্ভীক অগ্রযাত্রায়
নতুন আগামীর প্রত্যয়ে

অভিনন্দন

মাননীয় প্রধানমন্ত্রী তারেক রহমান

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