

## Toxic fertiliser to be recycled 12 yrs after import

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Bangladesh will recycle 2,754 tonnes of toxic fertiliser, the remaining portion of a 1991 import by state-run Bangladesh Agriculture Development Corporation (BADC), state Minister for Agriculture Mirza Fakhru Islam Alamgir said yesterday.

Replying to a call attention notice by BNP lawmaker Md Nurul Islam Moni in the Jatiya Sangsad, he said the BADC imported 6,300 tonnes of zinc oxisulfate fertiliser, of which 3,446 tonnes were marketed before the government found it poisonous. He said the government would recycle the fertiliser, imported from US firm Stollar Chemical Company with an Asian Development Bank credit, under a contract signed with

a Dutch company. Alamgir also told the House that a US court fined the producer of the toxic fertiliser US\$1 billion. He said the BADC got Tk 3.77 crore in damages and the rest was unpaid yet. In his notice, Moni also alleged that 30,000 tonnes of toxic triple super phosphate (TSP) and murate

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## Pharmacy: Part Two

### No control over drug price

PINAKI ROY

Planned government changes in drugs policy do not include the imposition of price controls, according to Dr Abdul Gani, Director of Drug Administration.

He told The Daily Star that the department did not have the manpower or expertise to fix prices of the 700 drugs that are not on the essential drugs list. "The pharmaceutical companies give us an invoice showing the product costing. We just

permit them to produce and sell those drugs. There's nothing we can do if they provide us with fictitious figures," he said.

Companies charge what they think the market will bear. Prices come down only when a manufacturer faces competition.

For instance, Square Pharmaceutical recently reduced the price of one of its drugs from Tk 85 to Tk 50 -- because another

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## KM Hasan new CJ

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Justice KM Hasan was made the 13th chief justice yesterday in an appointment that superseded two judges of the Appellate Division of the Supreme Court.

Conversely, justices M Ruhul Amin and Mohammad Fazlul Karim were earlier appointed to the Appellate Division, superseding Justice Hasan.

Yesterday was the last workday for outgoing Chief Justice Mainur Reza Chowdhury. President Iajuddin Ahmed will administer oath of office to Justice Hasan at the Bangabhaban at 10:00am today.

But the Supreme Court Bar Association disapproved the appointment and decided to boycott his swearing-in ceremony.

Justices Amin and Karim were appointed to the Appellate Division on January 11, 2001 and May 15, 2001, and Justice Hasan was appointed to the same division on January 20, 2002. Justice Hasan retires on January 27 next year.

Justice Hasan was appointed as a judge to the High Court Division on July 13, 1991, while Justice Amin on February 18, 1992 and Justice Karim on November 1, 1992 to the same division.

Defending the appointment, Law Minister Moudud Ahmed told journalists yesterday that Justice Hasan was a "victim of past injustice". "We have undone a wrong by doing the right," he said pointing to the time when Justice Hasan was superseded.

On the other hand, Bar

Association President Rokanuddin Mahmud told The Daily Star that since independence of Bangladesh, the most senior judges of the Appellate Division had been appointed chief justices.

"Even the autocratic regime did not go beyond the tradition. For the first time, such a breach has taken place. We disapprove it," he said. "We would request the government not to make such an appointment in future," said Rokanuddin after a Bar association executive committee meeting that opposed the appointment.

However, Rokanuddin said, "In the interest of the bench and Bar,

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## Bill to amend flag rule placed in JS

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Amidst objections by the main opposition Awami League, the Bangladesh Flag Vessels (Amendment) Bill, 2003 was placed in the Jatiya Sangsad yesterday, proposing inclusion of a general waiver clause in the original law.

Minister for Shipping Akbar Hossain introduced the bill seeking two amendments to the Bangladesh Flag Vessels (Protection) Ordinance, 1982.

Once passed, the amendment would empower the shipping directorate to allow major foreign flag vessel operators to load and unload

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## Khaleda goes tough on opposition

BSS, Dhaka

Prime Minister Khaleda Zia said yesterday her government had given a lot of concessions to the opposition during its past tenure and warned that this time the government would be tough on criminals and anarchists.

"No concession will be given to those indulging in chaos and crime," said Khaleda Zia while speaking at a huge gathering of businessmen at Islampur in old Dhaka.

Blaming the major opposition

(Awami League) for resorting to terrorism, killing, frequent hartals and a smear campaign abroad, the Prime Minister asked the opposition not to compel the government to take stern actions against it for its misdeeds.

Vowing to keep up a peaceful atmosphere in people's interest and to carry out development activities for their wellbeing, Khaleda Zia said the government would not allow any quarters to resort to criminal activities.

She said her alliance govern-

ment, which had inherited a crippled economy, carried out massive development works in all sectors during the last 19 months.

Khaleda Zia said the government had earned people's confidence through implementation of various socio-economic development programmes for their welfare.

She said the major opposition

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## HC asks govt to explain refusal of ETV licence

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The High Court yesterday asked the government to explain in a week why refusing licence to the Ekushey Television (ETV) for operating a satellite television channel should not be declared illegal.

A Division Bench comprising Justice M Awlad Ali and Justice Tanque-ul-Hakim, issued a rule in this regard upon a writ petition filed by ETV Ltd. In the writ, the ETV challenged the order of refusal on June 7 by Bangladesh Telecommunication Regulatory Commission (BTRC).

The ETV suspended operation in August last year following a Supreme

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## Siamese twins to be separated in Dhaka

QUAZI AMANULLAH, Khulna

Doctors yesterday gave up a surgical operation to separate conjoined twins at the Khulna branch of Islami Bank Hospital (IBH), as one of the boys was running temperature.

Dr Ruhul Amin and Dr Didarul Islam, paediatric surgeons of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujib Medical University, who came to Khulna to carry out the surgery, left for Dhaka with the twins and their parents.

The twins will now be operated.

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PHOTO: STAR

Newly appointed Chief Justice KM Hasan, right, shakes hands with outgoing Chief Justice Mainur Reza Chowdhury yesterday.

## JS debates quorum crisis after yet another late start

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Jatiya Sangsad yesterday ran itself into a heated debate on quorum crisis that has plagued the eighth parliament.

Treasury and opposition lawmakers accused each other for the crisis that also delayed yesterday's session by at least 40 minutes in various sittings.

During the debate, questions were also raised about the frequent absence of the leader of the house and leader of the opposition in sessions.

However, Deputy Speaker Akhter Hamid Siddiqui, who pre-

sided over the session, urged lawmakers to attend the house in time to avoid quorum crisis during the important budget session.

He also criticised the lawmakers for not attending the House in time on Saturday, when the delay in starting the session clocked a new record of one hour and 45 minutes.

Law Minister Moudud Ahmed, Chief Whip Khandokar Delwar Hossain, AL legislators Abdus Samad Azad, Abdur Razzak and opposition Chief Whip Abdus Shahid participated in the debate.

Razzak first raised the issue of quorum crisis and blasted the trea-

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## Jewellery shop at Mouchak market burgled

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Burglars took away gold ornaments weighing 350 tola from a jewellery shop at Mouchak market sometime between Friday night and Sunday morning.

Owner of New Monimala Jewellers, Tajul Islam, while reporting it to the police, claimed that the price of the stolen gold ornaments is about Tk 29.7 lakh.

Police, quoting the owner, said he entered his shop at the ground floor of Anarkali Super Market at around 10:00am yesterday and found the ornaments missing.

Tajul told police that he closed the shop on Friday night and did not

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## Rampant robberies make cops go for night search

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Stung by a string of robberies in recent times, the Dhaka Metropolitan Police (DMP) held a meeting of the deputy commissioners (DCs) from all zones yesterday to hammer out a plan to improve the situation.

The meeting decided that all vehicles including rickshaws will be thoroughly checked from 2:00am till dawn.

DMP Commissioner Ashraf Huda chaired the meeting.

Police patrol teams will be put on 16-hour duty instead of 12-hour, Huda told The Daily Star.

It has been found that criminals are using cellular phones for contacts and these phones are mostly procured using false addresses. Police will ask the cellular phone service providers to verify customers' address prior to selling phones.

Robberies have increased in recent times with the police failing to arrest any of the organised gang members.

Police records show 26 robbery and 51 theft cases were filed during the first 20 days of this month.

But the number of robberies might be much higher than recorded with the police as people

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