



The Daily Star



REGD. No. DA 781

VOL. XIII No. 329

DHAKA SATURDAY DECEMBER 20, 2003

COMMITTED TO People's Right to Know

POUSH 6, 1410 BS

SHAWAL 25, 1424 HIJRI

16 PAGES PRICE: Tk 7.00

www.thedailystar.net

Old grains in silos at risk of rotting

Rice, wheat pile up as govt replaces food with cash in FFW, FFE programmes

REAZ AHMAD

A large amount of grains runs the risk of rotting in warehouses, as the government did not take old stocks off the granaries this fiscal year, officials said.

The granaries filled with old stocks as the government replaced cereals with cash in food-for-work (FFW) and food-for-education (FFE) programmes, two major

components of the public food distribution system, on July 1.

The donor-driven government decision came full circle after its partial implementation in fiscal 2002-03 following reports of corruption eating into 20 percent of the grains meant for FFW and FFE.

As a result, at least four lakh tonnes of rice and wheat have piled up in the 500 warehouses over the last six months, and the officials

alerted the government to the risk of rot because of lack of ventilation and pest control measures -- reminiscent of similar decay in 1991.

"The old stockpiles of grains have become a drag on us. A large volume of the stock has already expired its six-month shelf-life in a depot," a high official told The Daily Star, asking not to be named.

The officials said the food ministry received an early warning from

the food directorate that the grains would decay if the government did not go for a quick release of old stocks clearing space for fresh intakes during the aman harvest.

They suggested that the government re-stack the sacks of grains in the depots to let fresh air in as a stopgap measure to save wheat and rice from quick rot.

The officials also recommended

SEE PAGE 11 COL 7

BNP leader shot dead in Bagerhat

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Khulna

A leader of the ruling Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP) was gunned down in Rampal upazila of Bagerhat district yesterday.

According to the officer-in-charge of Rampal Police Station, assailants shot Shahidul Islam Talukder, 40, general secretary of Malli Kerberh Union unit of BNP, at about 11:00am when he came out of Malli Kerberh Madrassah after holding a meeting with the principal.

But witnesses, on the other hand, said gunmen sprayed bullets on the BNP leader when he was on the way to the madrassah at the call of Principal Moulana Abdul Kader to sit with him to resolve a longstanding dispute.

Police arrested Moulana Abdul Kader, also a leader of Rampal upazilla unit of Jamaat-e-Islami, former Jubo Dal president Nasiruddin and local BNP leader Enamul Huq in connection with the killing.

The body of slain BNP leader was handed over to his family after autopsy at Bagerhat Sadar Hospital.

Beirut fire victims hail from Barisal, Jhalakathi

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Barisal

The seven Bangladeshis including three females died in a fire at Kismat Plastic Factory at Beirut, Lebanon on December 14, 2003, were from Barisal and Jhalakathi.

Relatives of the victims alleged that the government failed to provide them with the names of the victims. They learnt those from local reporters of Beirut yesterday.

The victims are Israt Jahan Rabeya, her husband Kabir Howiader, Azizur Rahman and his wife Salma Begum, Liza, Ruma and Kalam Mallick -- all aged between 20 and 30 and employees of the same factory.

Kabir hailed from Rupatali, Rabeya and Ruma from Nandapara and Liza from Boalia of Barisal, while Aziz and Salma hailed from Gouripasha and Kalam from Kasarmahol of Jhalakathi.

Rabeya's father Tofazzal Ali Khan alleged that the foreign affairs, manpower, home and civil aviation ministries are not coming forward with proper help for return of the dead bodies to Bangladesh.

SEE PAGE 11 COL 6

77 with 6 trawlers missing in Bay

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Barisal

Seventy-seven fishermen and six fishing trawlers are missing in the Bay of Bengal for the last three days.

Rescue operations that commenced yesterday morning could trace none of the missing persons or vessels until the time of writing this report at 9pm.

There was a depression in the Bay Wednesday which forced many trawling vessels to pack up and head for safety of land. The trawlers that remain lost were also being returning in fleet from the high sea and all but six could make it to safer waters.

Among the missing trawlers, Tushkhal, with 12 crews, sank on its

way back at Anadhaboa, some 80 kilometres from the shore. The men came from Pirojpur and Bagerhat districts.

Sources said, due to a very rough sea, other boats of the fleet could not save or rescue any of the Tushkhal's crew. But the rest of that fleet could reach shelter at different points of the shore: in Meher Ali, Beyddar Khal, Mandarbaria, Narikelbaria, Mohipur and Haela Patharghata areas.

About the other five trawlers that are still missing with 65 crews on board, Trawler Owners' Association of Patharghata said the (five) missing boats were scheduled to return from fishing that day. So, the association

anticipates that there is a chance those boats might have taken shelter elsewhere facing the rough weather. But they could also be drowned, of course.

"We are not sure whether the trawlers are really missing or not. But, so far, we have not received any information regarding their whereabouts," said Khalilur Rahman, general secretary of the association.

The association sent three trawlers yesterday morning to conduct a search operation for its missing trawlers and crew. But all three of the boats returned without any clue on the missing ones.

The missing trawlers are Sona

SEE PAGE 11 COL 3

Donors won't join health programme

Failure to reach accord on project implementation paper

NAIMUL HAQ

A three-year Health, Nutrition and Population Sector Programme (HNPS) will be launched in January without the participation of donors, official sources said yesterday.

This is for the first time donors are not participating in a health programme in Bangladesh.

"We are launching HNPS in January and we have already asked for Tk 2600 crore from the government exchequer for the three-year programme," said Health Secretary

AFM Sawar Kamal.

The Health, Nutrition and Population (HNP) Donor Consortium informed the External Resources Division (ERD) on November 27 that they would not be participating in HNPS at least before January 2005 as the project implementation paper (PIP) has not been appraised, consulted or agreed upon by the development partners.

The decision might create fund problems for the government, sources pointed out.

The HNPS aims to increase

availability and utilisation of user-centred, efficient and affordable services under an Essential Services Package (ESP). The ESP includes mother and child healthcare, reproductive healthcare and nutrition packages for clients.

It seeks to achieve sustainable improvement of the health, nutrition and family welfare status of the population, especially of the vulnerable groups -- the poor, women, children and the elderly.

Reduction of maternal, infant and under-five mortality, fertility

rate and malnutrition are also among the objectives of the HNPS.

Hospitals, health centres and community clinics will render the services. Non-governmental organisations will also do the job under strict rules.

The current Health and Population Sector Programme (HSP) and the HNPS will operate simultaneously for one year.

The health ministry and the World Bank's soft loan wing International Development

SEE PAGE 11 COL 6



PHOTO: AKM MOHSIN

Life in the line of fire

A K M MOHSIN, back from Tentulia with ASHFAQ WAHED KHAN

30,000 Tentulia quarry workers lose job, hope amid BRD-BSF tension

About 30,000 people on the northernmost tip of Bangladesh are facing hardship as over 150 businesses that quarry in the Mahananda river have hit the rocks amid BRD-BSF tension.

Paramilitary Bangladesh Rifles (BDR) prohibited stone extraction from the Mahananda in the wake of a clash with Indian border guards, the Border Security Force (BSF), in April 2001.

Continued BSF harassment of Bangladeshis after the clash and Indian construction of a barrage in the common river have brought further stress to the workers' lives.

Tension reached a new height after four Bangladeshi quarry workers were killed by the BSF in six months, forcing the locals even into digging trenches

SEE PAGE 11 COL 3

Mild cold wave by month-end

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The temperature across the country will remain almost the same for a couple of more days as the cloudy weather persists.

Weather experts said a light cold wave will blow over the country by the end of this month, while a drop in temperature will befall when the sky gets clear by one or two days next.

"We may experience only a mild cold wave by the end of December. But an intense cold wave may appear in January," said

SEE PAGE 11 COL 7

Black money undermines work of law enforcers

Chief Justice KM Hasan says

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Powerful economic interests at play in Bangladesh are beginning to exact a heavy toll on citizens' rights, Chief Justice KM Hasan said yesterday.

"More unfortunate is the size of black money in the hands of a few

who are undermining the efforts and work of the agencies, including law enforcers," Justice Hasan said at a discussion on "Breaking the chains of impunity: Human rights intervention in South Asia" at BRAC Centre Inn.

The corrupt go unpunished and the country and its citizens pay a

heavy price through increased cost and impaired development, he said in his address as the chief guest to the discussion co-organised by Odhikar, a rights group, and Academy for Educational Development of the USAID.

Justice Hasan described impunity

SEE PAGE 11 COL 4

Our cordial service is now at your doorstep

Grand Opening of

138th Branch
Now at **Khilgaon of the Capital City Dhaka**

Khilgaon Branch
on 20 December 2003, Saturday
at 1419/2, Block-A, Khilgaon, Taltola, Dhaka

Pioneer in welfare Banking
Islami Bank Bangladesh Limited
Based on Islamic Shariah
www.islambankbd.com

বিস্ময়কর রাহমানির রাহিম

REHAB হাউজিং ফেয়ার '০৩

আমিন মোহাম্মদ গ্রুপ -এর প্যাভেলিয়নে স্বাগতম

এ্যাপার্টমেন্ট/অফিস স্পেস/দোকান
উল্লেখ্য সেক্টর
আন্তর্জাতিক মডেল টাউন
স্বাভাবিক সেক্টর
গ্রীন মডেল টাউন

এ্যাপার্টমেন্ট কিনলে আকর্ষণীয় হাড়!
গুট এ্যাপার্টমেন্ট বুকিং দিলেই কিস্তি/ডিলিট ডিপোজিট

প্রতের ক্ষেত্রে কার্টা প্রতি ১০,০০০/- হাড়!
বুকিং গুট ১০,০০০/- এ্যাপার্টমেন্ট (৫০,০০০/-)

স্থান: উইন্টার পার্কে, হোটেল পেরাটন, ঢাকা
তারিখ: ২৪, ২৫, ২৬, ২৭ ডিসেম্বর '০৩
সময়: সকাল ১০টা - রাত ৮টা পর্যন্ত

আমিন মোহাম্মদ গ্রুপ
আমিন মোহাম্মদ গ্রুপ, সাতমহলিলা রোড, ধানমন্ডি, ঢাকা-১২০৫, ফোন: ৯১২৮৫৩৭-৬২, ৯১২৯১১৯, ৯১২৯১২১, ৯১২৯৮৮০, ৯১২৯৮৮১
মহিলা উন্নয়ন কেন্দ্র, রাসুলপুর এলাকা, (বেং গঙ্গা), ফোন: ৯১২৮৫৩৯-৯, সাইট অফিস (আবুলিখান) ০১৭১০০৮০১, সাইট অফিস (আমিন) ৯২০০৮০১
ফ্যাক্স: ৯১২৯১২০, ই-মেইল: amld@bdmail.net, amfi@bdmail.net