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Delay in payment alleged

Farmers getting reluctant to grow crop seeds for BADC

Star Report

Farmers are increasingly getting reluctant to grow crop seeds for Bangladesh Agricultural Development Corporation (BADC) due to 'delay in payments'.

Many farmers told The Daily Star on the sidelines of a seminar on seed industry in the city yesterday that BADC cleared their dues only on September 5, four months after they had produced paddy seeds for the Corporation to market those in the coming IRRI-Boro season.

Over a hundred 'contract growers' who grow seeds in their respective plots on con-

tract with the BADC — aired their dissatisfaction over the delay in payment.

Md Mokbul Hossain, one such 'contract grower' from Bogra, said he had to write to the agriculture minister and the BADC chairman last month for immediately arranging payments of the farmers' dues.

"I got the payment on Sunday for seeds that I had grown for and handed over to the BADC four months back," said Hossain, who won Bangabandhu Agriculture Award for his farming.

Ashfaqur Hamid Chowdhury of Thakurgaon and Md. Mojibur Rahman of Rangpur also echoed the same complaint. Chowdhury provided the Corporation with 133 sacks full of

paddy seeds (each weighing 65 kg) in May last and was paid in cheque only this week.

Rahman too gave 150 sacks of seeds to the BADC in May. "There is no advance payment. Yet, payment after four months is unacceptable. No farmer would grow seeds for the BADC in future," he warned.

A BADC official who was attending the seminar at BARC Auditorium was asked for his comment on the alleged delay in payment. GM Mohiuddin, acting member director (Seed) of BADC, however refused to say anything about the farmers' complaint. "See me at my office later. I will introduce you to our public relations officer to answer your questions," the BADC official said.

7 killed in Gazipur road accident

By Staff Correspondent

At least ten people were killed and 50 others injured in two separate road accidents in Gazipur and Rajshahi yesterday.

Of them, seven were killed in Gazipur and three in Rajshahi. In Gazipur, at least seven people were killed and 45 others injured when a Dhaka bound night coach from Pabna fell into a roadside ditch at

Chakraborty near Kashimpur on Dhaka-Tangail Highway in the early hours yesterday.

Police and witnesses said, the accident took place as the driver of the coach lost control over the vehicle and fell into 30 feet deep water, killing seven on the spot.

Of the dead, four were identified as Ziaur Rahman, 45, Nazrul Islam, 25, Saidur Rahman, 27, and Ibrahim Hossain, 30. The identity of three others could not be known.

The injured were admitted to Gazipur Sadar Hospital and Dhaka Medical College Hospital.

PM's directive Remove all hurdles to ADP implementation

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina yesterday directed officials to remove all hurdles to ADP implementation and monitor the projects closely for expediting their execution, reports UNB. She gave the instructions when the National Economic Council (NEC) reviewed the ADP performance of last fiscal year. The project-implementation rate was 89 per cent under the revised Annual Development Programme. The achievement level is 92 per cent of the original ADP. The original ADP was Tk 13,600 crore which increased to Tk 14,000 crore in the revised. See Page 11 Col 7

BSF camps Khaleda slates govt's silence

By Staff Correspondent

BNP Chairperson Begum Khaleda Zia has expressed 'deep concern' at the reported withdrawal of eight army camps from Dhukoukhhara and setting up of two temporary camps by Indian BSF in Khagrachhari border areas inside Bangladesh.

In a statement yesterday, the Leader of the Opposition in Parliament strongly criticised the government for its 'mysterious silence' in this regard.

She said the real objectives of the CHT 'black' agreement are now being materialised and "our apprehension and suspicion which we have expressed since the signing of the black agreement are now coming true."

Quoting press report that appeared yesterday, Begum Zia said Indian secret service personnel were frequently moving in the areas since the withdrawal of eight army camps. Moreover, BSF set up two temporary camps inside Bangladesh territory and hoisted red flags a few days back, but the government 'mysteriously kept silent'.

The former prime minister asked the government to take immediate steps to 'free Bangladesh's land from foreign occupation force' and lodge strong protest against 'crossing of borders' by different forces of India as well as 'setting up of camps'.

2 DU students temporarily expelled

By DU Correspondent

Two students of Dhaka University were temporarily expelled from the university yesterday for stabbing a student and beating another at Ziaur Rahman Hall on Monday and Tuesday nights.

The two are Akhteruzzaman Panir of economics department and Joiful Abedin Liton of management department. Panir was expelled for stabbing a student.

Rubel's father cross-examined

By Court Correspondent

Father of Rubel was cross-examined by three defence lawyers for about two hours in the Third Additional Metropolitan Sessions Judge's Court yesterday.

The ten of 14 chargesheeted accused including AC Akram and Mukul Begum, were produced before the court yesterday at about 2 pm. Four other accused, Sh. Nurul Alam, constable - Mong Sheen, Abdul Kalam Azad and Zakir Hossain — have been absconding since the killing of Rubel.

During yesterday's proceedings, lawyers for Mukul Begum, Inspector Aminul Islam and constable Mir Faruk cross-examined complainant Abdur Rob.

The lawyers of other accused are likely to interrogate Abdur Rob today.

Moin Khan to lead Pak cricket team

ISLAMABAD, Sept 8: Pakistan captain Wasim Akram and fellow Test players Ijaz Ahmad and Salim Malik were missing from the squad announced today for next week's one-day series against West Indies in Toronto, reports Reuters.

The Pakistan Cricket Board said the suspended trio would not be considered until cleared of match-fixing and betting allegations by an inquiry expected to deliver its final report next week. All three deny the accusations.

Wicketkeeper Moin Khan will lead the team. Saqlain Mushtaq, whose spin bowling played a major role in Surrey's English county championship success, was made vice-captain.

Controversial former captain. See page 11 Col 6



A children's procession was brought out in the city marking the World Literacy Day yesterday. — Star photo

AL presidium shrugs off opposition movement

By Staff Correspondent

The ruling party policy makers believe that the current anti-government movement has no public support and will not gain momentum.

They, however, resolved yesterday that the Awami League needed to launch counter-offensive against the opposition's political propaganda immediately.

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina chaired a meeting of the AL presidium last evening when these observations and decisions were made. Several non-presidium members of the Cabinet, including Home Minister Mohammad Nasim, were present at the meeting, sources said.

The meeting was held in view of the opposition programme to lay siege to the Secretariat, slated for September 12 and the PM's scheduled trip abroad starting September 13, a senior AL leader told the Daily Star.

Regional action plan against tobacco, HIV/AIDS adopted

By Staff Correspondent

The technical discussion on tobacco control and intensification of HIV/AIDS surveillance, held under the aegis of the World Health Organisation recommended urgent action by the member countries.

This was disclosed at a press briefing jointly organised by the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare and the WHO at Sheraton Hotel yesterday.

The current 52nd session of the Regional Committee (RC), being held in the capital from September 6, adopted a number of recommendations during discussions. The recommendations will be finalised today, concluding day of the conference.

In adopting regional policy framework for tobacco control and the regional action plan for 2000-2004, the RC adopted some key recommendations that include:

Member countries should constitute national councils for tobacco control and develop country specific strategies for tobacco control.

Countries should enact strong legislation and regulate, increase taxation on tobacco and educate people on the ill effects of tobacco.

Nicotine that is not used for

therapeutic purposes should be regulated as a controlled drug and mechanisms evolved to monitor the tar and nicotine levels of tobacco products in the region.

In view of the more acute problem of HIV/AIDS in the region, technical discussion focused on intensification of HIV/AIDS surveillance in the region.

Some of the important resolutions adopted by the RC include: See page 11 Col 5

Tank lorry workers on strike in 16 northern dists

From Our Correspondent

SIRAJGANJ, Sept 8: Tank lorry workers began an indefinite strike in 16 districts of the northern region yesterday evening.

The tank lorry workers began strike following a conflict between Bagladesh Tank Lorry Workers' Union and Bogra Tank Lorry Owners' Association.

The strike has caused price hike of petrol and diesel in the region.

Some of the important resolutions adopted by the RC include: See page 11 Col 5

Jakarta's 'no' to peacekeepers UN to pull out of East Timor today

JAKARTA, Sept 8: The United Nations said it will pull out of strife-torn East Timor tomorrow because its besieged mission was running out of food and water, and martial law had done little to stop gangs of rampaging militia who had killed hundreds in the last week, reports Reuters.

Earlier today, Indonesia rejected world demands for the immediate deployment of international peacekeepers in the bloodied territory as anti-foreign anger fanned protests in Jakarta.

President BJ Habibie cancelled his planned trip to the summit of Asia-Pacific leaders in Auckland to deal with the Timor crisis, which the government insists it can handle alone.

Graphic reports of machete murders and mass killings emerged from refugees arriving in Australia. The United Nations said it was investigating reports 100 people had been massacred in a church at Suai on the south coast of East Timor.

As diplomatic pressure mounted on Indonesia to stop the violence, in which hundreds of people are reported to have died, armed forces spokesman Major-General Sudrajat said a UN-set 48-hour deadline to restore order in East Timor was unrealistic.

This is not like flushing the toilet," he told Reuters. In Canberra, United Nations Mission in East Timor (UNAMET) spokesman David Wimhurst confirmed the planned withdrawal from the former Portuguese territory, saying: "The situation is considered now to be untenable."

Leaflets: Resist commercialisation of Dhanmondi RA

By Staff Correspondent

Leaflets are being distributed during Friday congregations at different mosques in city's Dhanmondi area urging the residents to resist rapid commercialisation of the area and preserve its residential status.

The three-fold leaflet in crisp English only names 'Keep Dhanmondi Residential Committee' as its publisher without mentioning any name or address.

"If all of us want to keep Dhanmondi residential, don't you think that time is running out on you?" asks the leaflet.

The unique appeal comes in the backdrop of rapid commercialisation of the residential area. Sprouting shops, clinics, hospitals, medical diagnostic centres, schools, private colleges and universities, restaurants, car showrooms, community centres, offices and even manufacturing units have badly undermined the residential status of the neighbourhood.

During peak hours the narrow streets of Dhanmondi get choked with traffic and valuable working hours are wasted. The population of the area is also rising at an alarming rate as most of the large plots are being turned into multi-storey apartment blocks without giving any consideration to the surrounding nature and existing civic amenities.

"Imagine what Dhanmondi will look like if another half a dozen such shops, offices, schools and other business houses are established on each road over the next few months," the leaflet says.

Lockwood clarifies I didn't intend to question sagacity of Opposition

By Staff Correspondent

UN Resident Coordinator in Bangladesh David E Lockwood yesterday in a statement said he had not intended to question the sagacity of any opposition party leaders in his remarks at the inauguration of the Asian Parliamentarians Conference on September 1.

Lockwood met former finance minister and BNP leader M Saifur Rahman at the latter's office at Mohakhali in the city to clarify his position regarding his comments on the opposition party's absence from the Asian parliamentarians' conference in the city last week, a UNDP press release said.

He, however, reiterated his disappointment that the opposition parties had not attended the conference and said the conference "would have been enriched by their participation."

Lockwood's controversial comment sparked off Opposition criticism. See Page 11 Col 7

Two ministers ridicule BNP for protesting Lockwood's remarks

By Staff Correspondent

Two influential ministers yesterday ridiculed the BNP for protesting the controversial statement by UN Resident Coordinator in Bangladesh David E Lockwood about the opposition party's boycotting the conference of the Asian parliamentarians recently.

They spoke on the issue in the Jatiya Sangsad during a discussion on Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina's being elected president of the newly launched Association of Asian Parliamentarians for Peace last week.

In the opening session of the conference on September 1, Lockwood said the opposition's

protest was "unproductive" and "unhelpful". He said the opposition's protest was "unproductive" and "unhelpful".

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Sunday's sit-in near Sectt BNP meets today to finalise strategy

By Staff Correspondent

The BNP Standing Committee will sit this evening to finalise strategy for its Sunday's sit-in demonstration in front of the Secretariat and the next course of action.

Sources said the party's highest decision-making body will discuss all aspects of the "major agitation programme" since the Awami League came to power about 38 months back.

Three other components of the four-party opposition alliance — Jatiya Party, Jamaat-e-Islami and Islami Oikya Jote — will also hold separate simultaneous sit-in demonstrations around the Secretariat to protest "government's decision to provide corridor facility to India in the name of transshipment."

Action programmes may be announced at the "peaceful" sit-in. "There may be a series of tougher programmes if the government tries to foil the demonstration," a senior BNP leader said.

Meanwhile, BNP Chairperson and Leader of the Opposition in Parliament Begum Khaleda Zia yesterday held a lengthy meeting with leaders of Dhaka city BNP, all its thana units and DCC ward commissioners from her party at her Minto Road official residence.

She instructed them to make all out efforts to ensure a massive gathering at the demonstration, the sources said.

She told them that the demonstration programme

from 9am to 2pm would be peaceful and disciplined.

The party chief urged them to remain alert and not to react to any provocation. There may be provocation from the government to foil the programme, but all BNP leaders and workers will have to remain "highly cautious" to avoid any untoward incident, she told them.

She also advised them to ensure participation of the commonman. "BNP want's to show people's no-confidence in the government through this peaceful demonstration," she added.

Begum Zia also hinted that BNP would start massive agitation programmes to dislodge the government.

The party leaders from all units expressed their determination to make the programme a complete success at any cost. Leaders from Mirpur, Pallabi, Kafrul, Uttara, Shayampur, Demra and other outlying thanas informed the meeting that they would bring people by trucks.

BNP Secretary General Abdul Mannan Bhuiyan, Joint Secretary General Mirza Abbas BNP Convenor Sadek Hossain Khoka, Joint Convenor Kazi Abul Bashar, Chowdhury Alam and other leaders also addressed the meeting.

The BNP Chairperson also held meetings with party leaders from Dhaka and adjoining districts and asked them to join the sit-in programme.

Dacoity at Transcom showroom

By Staff Correspondent

Dacoits looted electronic goods worth about Tk 3.3 lakh from the showroom of Transcom Ltd at DIT Road in the city's Mouchak area in the early hours of yesterday.

Police and Transcom officials said the dacoits numbering 12 broke into the showroom at around 3.30am yesterday. They loaded three colour TV sets, one washing machine, two refrigerators, six micro-ovens and two air conditioners onto a truck and sped away.

The robbers also fired two rounds of blank shots when the guard cried out for help, police added.

Later in the morning, being informed of the incident by the guard, the manager of the showroom. See Page 11 Col 4

Comilla Congress on environment begins Sept 14

A five-day Asia-Pacific and Commonwealth environmental journalists conference will begin on September 14 at BARD in Comilla, reports BSS.

The theme of the conference is "Water and Environment; Role of the Media." The Asia-Pacific Forum of Environmental Journalists (AFJ) and the Commonwealth Environmental Journalists Association (CEJA) will jointly organise the conference.

Bangladesh for the first time is going to host such a high-profile international conference in which environmental watchdogs and experts from 42 countries will participate.

Environment and Forest Minister Syeda Sajeda Chowdhury will inaugurate the Comilla. See Page 11 Col 8

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