

Wheat probe finds truth

Sacks with Indian co seals found

REAZ AHMAD, ANWAR ALI & NISHITH RANJAN SHAHA

Six probe committees constituted by the district administrations of Pabna and Bogra have confirmed purchase of a huge volume of imported wheat instead of locally produced grains under the government's four-and-a-half-month wheat procurement drive.

After finding 2,000 sacks of date-expired Indian wheat meant for poultry feed at an abandoned government granary in Bogra, the probe committees also recommended immediate sealing-off of all suspected food silos.

They also said the wheat should be tested for quality assessment. The sacks bore seals of the Punjab Food Corporation of India.

Meanwhile, as the investigation team from Dhaka completed the first leg of its four-district tour and moved from Mymensingh to Pabna, the Food Ministry yesterday suspended Manager Abdul Baset of the Muladuli Central Supply Depot (CSD) in Pabna, and Quamrul Hasan, officer-in-charge of the Bogra Local Supply Depot (LSD).

"We've suspended them for the sake of proper and impartial investigation," Food Minister Abdullah Al Noman told The Daily Star yesterday and said all culprits responsible for the wheat procurement scam would be brought to book.

Noman said the four-member food ministry probe committee would visit Mymensingh, Pabna, Bogra and Satkhira districts to investigate into the alleged corruption in wheat procurement and submit its report to the government by August 14.

Noman did not comment on the allegation of involvement of ruling alliance men in the forced selling of Indian wheat to government silos. He however made it clear that "upon receipt of the probe committee report, actions would be taken."

Food ministry as well as the district administrations concerned were jolted awake following press reports that the government incurred a loss of

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Two underprivileged children, Al-Amin and Sadiqul Islam of Ganoktuli UCEP School in the city, are too poor to pay for boat fare. So, they have to swim to go to school in the flood-affected suburb.

PHOTO: SK ENAMUL HAQ

Unified security for Ctg port

RAFIQ HASAN

The government has decided to bring the operation of the Chittagong port under a single security command to stop piracy on ships and maintain law and order.

The decision came after the home ministry agreed on a proposal by the shipping ministry to streamline the functioning of the country's main seaport.

The port's operation area -- from the Shah Amanat Bridge to the outer anchorage -- will come under the Bandar Police Station. And four investigation centres will be set up on the banks of the Karnaphuli, said sources.

Also, other important establishments in the area on the riverbanks of 50 yards from the high watermark will come under the new security measures.

The shipping ministry proposed to the home ministry setting-up of one police station expanding the jurisdiction of the Bandar Police Station and of four investigation centres.

The proposal said that if the port came under a single command, its activities would gain momentum, contributing more to the economy.

After necessary study and official procedure, the proposal was sent to the Prime Minister's Office for approval.

As the Chittagong port falls under eight stations of the Chittagong Metropolitan Police (CMP) -- Patenga, Bandar, Double Mouring, Kotwali, Baklia, Chandgaon, Rouzan and Karnaphuli, it is all the more difficult for them to ensure law and order and a congenial atmosphere for the export-import business, the shipping ministry said.

An eight-member CMP team visited the port area and recommended that four investigation centres be set up at Chaktai, Gupta Khal, Danger Char and Rangadia.

According to the decision taken at a meeting chaired by Home Secretary Dr Sadat Hossain, the Chittagong Port Authority (CPA) will bear all infrastructural costs and salaries of the employees.

The CPA will also provide five speedboats to each investigation centre and one for the Bandar Police Station to carry out regular patrols on the port channel.

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Officers claim no male cops involved in DU hall raid

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Eight police officials, who testified before the judicial commission yesterday, claimed no constables had entered the Shamsunnahar Hall during the July 24 raid on the women's hall of residence.

Four male officers were, however, inside the compound during the police action with a woman sub-inspector, they said after their deposition before the judicial commission.

The one-member commission yesterday recorded the statements of Assistant Commissioner Monjur Morshed, former officer-in-charge of the Ramna police station Lutfar Rahman, Patrol Inspector Nurul Haq and sub-inspectors Rokeya Begum, Anwar, Alal, Sattar and Tofazzal.

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DCC drops spray gun, opts for awareness

52 more dengue patients admitted to city hospitals

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Another 52 dengue-infected patients with shock syndrome and haemorrhagic fever have been admitted to different hospitals in the city yesterday.

Among them, 20 were admitted to the Dhaka Medical College Hospital, 10 to the Mitford Medical College Hospital, one to the Shishu Hospital, one to the Bangabandhu Medical University Hospital and 18 to different private clinics.

With the latest figures, the total number of dengue patients has reached 1,137 in the country during the current season. Sixteen of them died.

Meantime, the Dhaka City Corporation (DCC) is yet to take any measure to kill Aedes mosquito, the vector of the virus, as it does not have any larvicide.

The DCC is still awaiting permission from the plant protection and public health departments to import 8,000 litres of larvicide to kill mosquito larvae.

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The corporation would now only limit its drive to awareness campaign, leaving zillions of larvae untouched.

Spraying of adulticide was also not done yesterday, residents of different areas reported.

Meantime, a DCC survey last month has found high concentration of Aedes mosquitoes in 82 wards out of a total 90. Twenty-six areas of the capital have been marked as red zones. These include Dhanmondi, Banani, Gulshan, Zigatola, Kalabagan, Kathalbagan, Crescent Road, Green Road, Paribagh, Hatirpool, Bhuter Goli, Hazaribagh, Palashi, Dhaka University area, Laxmibazar, Waiz Ghat, Farashgang, Patuatuli, Nilbarak, Mitford and Lalbagh.

With the recent heavy rainfall and water logging in low-lying areas in the city and the suburbs, experts fear increase in dengue infection unless quick and emergency measures are taken.

High Turag inundates Dhaka even more

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

More low-lying areas in and around the capital went under water yesterday as water levels in Turag river at Mirpur and Tongi Khal at Tongi rose further.

The floodwaters have engulfed more areas in Khilgaon, Goran, Bashaboo, Mugda, Tilpara, Trimohoni, Manda and Rampura in the city.

Many people in Kamrangirchar and Nandipara on the outskirts of the city have taken shelter on rooftops. Many were seen moving to safer places as water levels were rising in Turag and Tangi Khal.

However, the overall flood situation in the country's northern

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Floods up vegetable prices

Over 20pc production shortfall predicted

RAZIUR RAHMAN

Vegetable production might fall more than 20 per cent short of this year's target of 23 lakh tonnes as the floods in vast areas of the country and heavy rainfall have severely affected cultivation of summer vegetables, official sources said.

The supply shortage has caused high prices of vegetables in the markets. Increase of transportation cost due to floods and unscrupulous traders' bid to make windfall profit have also contributed to the unusual price hike of vegetables, according to sources.

Officials of the Department of Agriculture Extension (DAE) fear that supply shortage and price hike of summer vegetables are likely to continue for about two months till the arrival of winter vegetables in the market.

"There is no scope for fresh production of summer vegetables now as it is already the time for starting cultivation of winter vegetables, early varieties of which will be in the market by the end of next month," one official said.

Meanwhile, there is no government plan so far for import of vegetables.

When contacted yesterday, Commerce Secretary Suhel Ahmed Chowdhury said, "Normally we do not

import vegetable. We will discuss all aspects of the issue including supply position and possible deficiency with all concerned and take necessary steps to face the situation."

The commerce ministry has already made a spot survey of retail markets in the city and plans to sit with the communications ministry regarding increase of transportation cost.

According to an estimate by the DAE, floods have inundated about 4.5 lakh hectares of cropland in 214 upazilas in 34 districts. Crops on 1.64 lakh hectares with 24 thousand hectares of those under vegetable cultivation, out of the 4.5 lakh hectares, might be 'totally damaged' due to the floods.

Agriculture experts attributed the present shortage of vegetable production also to heavy showers in May this year. The DAE estimate, however, did not take this into account.

While visiting a number of kitchen markets in the city yesterday, it was found that prices of most of the essentials increased but those of vegetables were too high.

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VAT slapped on ad income of newspapers

RAFIQ HASAN

The government has imposed 15 per cent value-added tax (VAT) on incomes from advertisements in the print media.

The National Board of Revenue (NBR) yesterday issued an order with an effect from June 6 this year that the print media have to pay 15 per cent VAT.

The print media, including the daily newspapers earning more than Tk 20 lakh from advertisements a year, have to be registered with the nearest VAT office for regular payments.

The media earning below Tk 20 lakh need not have VAT registrations, but they have to pay turnover tax after every three months.

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	Sun Rises	Sun Sets
Aug 6		6-39 pm
Aug 7	5-20 am	

Prayer Timings		
August 6		
	Azan	Jamaat
Fajr	4-30	5-00
Zohr	12-45	1-15
Asr	5-00	5-15
Maghrib	6-45	6-50
Esha	8-15	8-45

Source: Islamic Foundation

Cricketers hit a new low

Sri Lanka clinch one-day series

AGENCIES, Colombo

Sri Lanka handed Bangladesh their worst one-day defeat, reaching a victory target of 77 from just 15.4 overs losing just two wickets.

Playing their 52nd limited-overs match, Bangladesh were dismissed for 76 in 30.1 overs.

Their previous lowest one-day total was 87 against Pakistan. Young paceman Hasantha Fernando and spinner Upul Chandana wrought havoc as they shared six wickets after Bangladesh had elected to bat on a slow, turning pitch at the Sinhalese Sports Club ground.

Hasantha took 3-12 in his second match and Chandana 3-2 a day after Bangladesh posted their highest total of 226-8 in the first one-dayer at the same venue.

Dilhara Fernando (2-21), Chaminda Vaas (1-9) and off-spinner Muttiah Muralitharan (1-19) were the other wicket-takers.

Muralitharan surpassed Australian leg-spin wizard Shane Warne to become the fourth-highest wicket-taker in one-day internationals with 279. The star spinner is now behind Pakistani pacemen Wasim Akram (463) and Waqar Younis (377) and Indian leg-spinner Anil Kumble (295).

Extras top-scored with 20, the 23rd time this has happened in the history of the shorter version of the game.

Former captain Naimur Rahman, flown in just for the one-day matches, and Khaled Mahmud were out for ducks with only three players reaching double figures.

Habibul Bashar and Tushar Imran each made 10 and captain Khaled Mashud reached 15, before he was the last man out, caught off leg-break bowler Upul Chandana.

Sri Lanka strolled to victory with Marvan Atapattu and Mahela Jayawardene unbeaten on 31 and 27 respectively.

Wicketkeeper Kumar Sangakkara was out for just four runs, caught by Tapash Baisya off Mohammad Rafique, and captain Sanath Jayasuriya struck 14 before he was caught out off pace bowler Tapash Baisya.

Despite not being given much of a challenge, Jayasuriya was positive

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Drug dealers slay cop to rescue fellow

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Drug peddlers shot dead a police sub-inspector and snatched one arrested gang member yesterday.

The incident took place at Bardeshi in Aminbazar area in the suburb of the city.

SI Motiur Rahman, 45, of Savar thana raided a den of drug peddlers at Bardeshi and arrested alleged drug trader Nazrul Islam.

Soon after, other members of the gang gathered there and asked the SI to release him.

The gang fired several shots on Rahman. He was taken to Dhaka Medical College Hospital (DMCH) where doctors declared him dead.

Sub-inspector Abdul Aziz who took Rahman to the DMCH said he was on duty in Aminbazar area as State Minister for Health Amanullah Aman was scheduled to visit Savar yesterday.

Aziz said he saw five to six people carrying an injured man. He appeared before the injured man and found that the victim was none but his colleague. Aziz rushed Rahman to DMCH.

When contacted last night, the duty officer at Savar thana said a police team went to the spot for investigation.

Savar police with reinforcements were conducting a 'block raid' in Aminbazar area to arrest the killers, he said.