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FREE SEED DISTRIBUTION

Govt raises spending, covers more farmers

Finance ministry sets fresh credit guidelines for banks

REJAU KARIM BYRON

The agriculture ministry yesterday raised the budget from Tk 130 crore to Tk 158 crore for free distribution of seeds and fertilisers among 26.65 lakh flood-affected small and marginal farmers to help them cultivate 10 crops.

The finance ministry in a circular the same day, meanwhile, laid down fresh guidelines for the Bangladesh Bank, the three nationalised commercial banks (NCBs) and two specialised banks in Bangladesh Krishi Bank and Rajshahi Krishi Unnayan Bank to disburse new credit and reschedule outstanding loan to farmers for post-flood rehabilitation.

The ministry forms a high-

powered committee today headed by Deputy Governor of Bangladesh Bank Nazrul Huda to keep a close watch on credit disbursement. It would be asked to report back to the ministry about the operations.

The latest moves are part of a comprehensive agriculture rehabilitation programme the government has taken to help the farmers recover from the flood losses and boost the farm sector's contribution to the GDP, according to the officials at both ministries.

The agriculture ministry at a meeting yesterday presided over Agriculture Minister MK Anwar also decided to bring another 1.65 lakh farmers under the programme, which initially was tailored for 25 lakh flood-affected farmers.

Tk 107 crore of the revised amount would be spent on distribution of fertilisers and the rest on seeds.

The seeds will now be reached to the farmers for 10 crops, instead of six decided earlier, to help them go for cultivation immediately after recession of the floodwaters. The ministry officials said the rehabilitation programme was scheduled for an August 15 start, but seed distribution has already started in the areas where the floodwaters have receded.

The finance ministry circular asked the banks to suspend realisation of farm loan in the flood-affected areas for a year. It directed the banks to reschedule all outstanding loans including classified

loans for a year and relax rules for downpayment by the defaulters. Certificate cases filed against rescheduled loans and those to be filed in the next one year would be put on hold for a year.

The circular also asked the banks to raise the ceiling for individual borrowers based on the reality facing the farmers.

The banks aim to lend about Tk 4,700 crore to farmers in the current fiscal year, which is 27 percent higher than last fiscal year's. High officials at the finance ministry predict a rise in farm output because of the government's post-flood rehabilitation programme.

The government is drawing inspiration from the fact that after

SEE PAGE 11 COL 3



Farmers tend to cauliflower seedlings after the recession of floodwaters at a crop field in Subhashpur village of Munshiganj yesterday.

PHOTO: STAR



Members of the Dhaka University Teachers' Association parade in a mourning procession through the campus yesterday to condole the death of eminent writer and teacher Humayun Azad.

PHOTO: STAR

HUMAYUN AZAD'S DEATH

Doubtful campus for int'l probe

DU CORRESPONDENT

Daughters of the late Humayun Azad yesterday appealed to Dhaka University (DU) students to protest the 'planned killing' of the writer in Germany as the shocked university community demanded an international probe to unravel the mystery surrounding the death.

Sisters Mouli Azad and Smita Azad went to four dormitories with their appeal, saying fundamentalists killed their father and they had nobody to protest the killing except for their students.

"Come and resist the fundamentalists," they cried, but only a few students responded to their call on the campus still doubting his natural death in Munich on Thursday, six months after he suffered life-threatening knife injury that his family blamed on Islamist extremists.

Asked to comment on the autopsy report in Germany that said 'he died of natural causes', Mouli

said: "I don't believe it."

They have killed him, either by poisoning his food or gassing him," she told The Daily Star.

Different student organisations, Dhaka University Teachers' Association (Duta) and Humayun Azad Mancha yesterday joined the torrents of call for an international probe into the death of Azad, also a professor of Bangla at the university.

Duta President Prof AAMS Arefin Siddique demanded the international probe at a campus rally at the end of a mourning procession from the Aparajeyo Bangla to the Central Shaheed Minar, joined by hundreds of black-bagge-wearing teachers.

Sharing his last memories with the author of over 60 books of essays, novels and poems, Siddique said: "The ill-motive of the vested quarter, who had tried to kill him, has become successful."

The fundamentalist forces attacked him several times and now people want to know whether his

SEE PAGE 11 COL 1

AL enforces 6-hour hartal today

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Main opposition Awami League (AL) enforces a six-hour countrywide hartal today demanding restoration of August 15, the day Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman was assassinated, as national mourning day.

The 6:00am to 12:00 noon shutdown is called also in favour of quick execution of the verdict of Bangabandhu murder case.

In the wake of today's strike, police have beefed up checking at different entry and strategic points in the capital since Friday midnight and the lawenforcers carried out search in different passenger vehicles.

Some 6,500 police. Armed Police Battalion (APBn), Paramilitary BDR and Ansars will remain on guard in the city in a bid to thwart any untoward incident during the hartal hours.

AL General Secretary Abdul Jalil and other senior leaders of the party met top leaders of different front organisations yesterday at the AL office to make the hartal and mourning day programme a success.

AL chief and Opposition Leader

SEE PAGE 11 COL 8

Nation mourns Bangabandhu's killing today

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The nation today observes the 29th death anniversary of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, the founder father of Bangladesh, amid a long drawn out uncertainty whether and when the trial of his killers will be completed.

On this day in 1975, Bangabandhu and his family members, excepting two daughters -- Sheikh Hasina and Sheikh Rehana -- who were fortunately abroad at the time, were brutally assassinated by a splinter group of the armed forces.

Sheikh Mujib, born on March 17, 1920 in Tungipara of Gopalganj district, played the pioneering role in the country's struggle for independence. His highly emotive final call on March 7, 1971 -- 'Ebarer songram - amader mukti songram; ebarer songram - swadhinotar songram' -- inspired and united the

entire nation for the Liberation War. The BBC Bangla Service listeners this year adjudged Sheikh Mujib as the greatest ever Bangalee.

Main opposition Awami League (AL) enforces a six-hour hartal today from 6:00am to 12:00noon across

SEE PAGE 11 COL 4



Kishoreganj

As far as you go...
AKTEL is there. Always



Hutu rebels kill 180 Tutsis in Burundi

AP, Bujumbura

Dozens of attackers raided a UN refugee camp in western Burundi, shooting and hacking to death at least 180 people, witnesses and local officials said yesterday.

A Burundian Hutu rebel faction claimed responsibility for the attack late Friday near the Congolese border, saying its fighters were in pursuit of Burundian soldiers who fled to the camp from a nearby army position.

The assailants screamed war cries as they rushed into the camp and set it ablaze, local official Louis Niyonzima told The Associated Press.

The camp sheltered Congolese ethnic Tutsi refugees, known as the Banyamulenge, who fled fighting in Congo's troubled border province of South Kivu, Niyonzima said.

"What we have seen so far are many, many, many bodies of children, women and men," Eliana Nabaa, spokeswoman of the UN mission in Congo said. "People were sleeping when the attack happened. People were killed as they tried to escape."

SEE PAGE 11 COL 4

SYLHET BOMB BLASTS

6 political leaders under secret watch

Kotwali OC transferred; more changes in local police department on the cards

JULEFIKAR ALI MANIK, from Sylhet

Police are keeping secret surveillance on three leaders of the ruling coalition and three of the main opposition in connection to the bomb blasts in two movie houses and the grenade attack near an Awami League (AL) meeting venue within a space of 47 hours in Sylhet last week.

The authorities yesterday transferred Kotwali Police Station Officer-in-Charge (OC) Shafiqur Rahman Mukul, as he failed to check the slide in law and order, and hinted at more

transfers in the local police department.

The decision to watch movements of the six political leaders was taken at a meeting Friday to find clues to the blasts that remain a total mystery to the law enforcers, even after nine days of the first incident, a source involved in the investigations told The Daily Star yesterday.

Refusing to name the six under watch, the source said one is a district-level leader and another a former leader of the BNP. A city-level leader of BNP's key ally Jamaat-e

SEE PAGE 11 COL 1

China strike two golds

AFP, Athens

China's shooters won the first two gold medals of the Athens Olympics on the first full day of competition on Saturday as swimming stars Michael Phelps and Ian Thorpe began what is expected to be one of the great rivalries of the Games.

After a dazzling opening ceremony kicked the Games into action the previous night, the first gold medal came from the shooting range.

China's Du Li scored a near

SEE PAGE 11 COL 1

News Service
Dial* 222

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In remembrance



Our beloved **Abdun Nayeem Khan (Rintu)** embraced myterdom on 15 August, 1975. We are deeply agrieved at his untimely death and pray to Almighty Allah for the salvation of his departed soul.

In observance of his 29th death anniversary a special Doa Mahfil has been arranged today, sunday, 15 August, 2004 after Asr prayer at **Opsonin Bhaban, 30 New Eskaton Road, Dhaka.** All his relatives, friends and well-wishers are requested to attend.



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