

RMG loses edge on no care for local cotton

Lack of research, subsidy, policy lead to import of over 90pc of cotton demand

LITTLE CARE FOR COTTON

Local cotton key to competitive RMG
20 lakh bales imported yearly
1 lakh bale produced locally
Cotton farming profitable, yet neglected
No subsidy for cotton farming
No nat'l policy on cotton



PORIMOL PALMA

Lack of research, subsidy and bio-safety policy marginalised cotton farming, prompting the textile industry to import more than 90 percent of cotton from abroad in a measure that hiked the production cost of readymade garments.

Despite a huge demand for cotton for the textile and garment industries in Bangladesh, the government has apparently taken no significant step to upgrade cotton research and set up a research laboratory to develop better varieties

and technology, experts say.

The government did not shape a bio-safety policy to adopt better varieties and technology from other countries, said an official with the Cotton Development Board (CDB), asking not to be named.

By contrast, India took to the genetically-modified crop technology two years ago and is now adopting Israel's agronomic technology. India has declared Rs 60,000 crore (Tk 75,000 crore) in subsidy this year for cotton development.

Sagar Lohani, editor of the

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NU to turn into Ziaur Rahman Nat'l University

DU CORRESPONDENT

The senate of National University (NU) yesterday decided to rename the university Ziaur Rahman National University.

The senate asked the government to take necessary steps to this end.

NU Vice-Chancellor Professor Aftab Ahmad made the proposal to rename the university at the 10th session of the senate. The meeting was held in Bangladesh Institute of Administration and Management (BIAM) Auditorium in the city yesterday evening. The proposal was passed unanimously.

In his speech, Aftab said the National University was the brainchild of Ziaur Rahman, former president and founder of the

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OMS starts, fails to rein in prices

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Sale of rice at a subsidised price of Tk 13 a kg among the economically hard-pressed started yesterday under the government's open market sale (OMS) programme with little impact on the high price of rice in the capital's kitchen markets.

In the wake of public outcry over the skyrocketing prices of rice, the government launched the OMS operation yesterday through 10,700 dealers across the country. Under the programme, a consumer is entitled to procure a maximum of 3kg coarse rice at Tk 13 per day.

But on the first day in the capital, when poor people queued around makeshift OMS centres-- rice-laden trucks-- to buy rice at lower price, traders at different markets continued to sell rice at high prices. Coarse rice was selling at Tk 17-18 a kg, Najirshail at Tk 19-21 and Minikit at Tk 20-22 yesterday as on the previous days.

All OMS centres in the capital closed by noon as the daily quota of 500kg per dealer were exhausted and hundreds of people returned back empty-handed.

Reports received from many areas said there were no OMS operations in the areas yesterday.

In Dhaka, the government opened 160 OMS centres in 80 kitchen markets and each was supposed to sell 500kg every alternative day.

The food ministry plans to open 30 OMS centres in Chittagong, 25 in Khulna, 20 in Rajshahi, 15 in Barisal, 10 in Sylhet, and 5, 3 and 10 each in each district headquarters, upazila and union.

Official sources said the government has a stock of eight lakh tonnes of rice and one lakh tonnes of wheat. Under the OMS programme, it will sell 5,500 tonnes a day.

No OMS centre was found in the capital's Rajabazar, Monipuripara,

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JAIL KILLING CASE 3 busy lobbying for post soon after acquittal

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Hectic lobbying has already started for 'proper rehabilitation' of three out of five people acquitted of charges in the historic jail killing case yesterday, sources in the ruling BNP said.

The acquittal of BNP Standing Committee member and lawmaker KM Obaidur Rahman has paved the way for his induction in the cabinet and Jatiya Party (JP) leader Shah Moazzem Hossain's joining the BNP, the sources mentioned.

Moreover, foreign posting of major Khairuzaman, now an additional secretary in the foreign ministry, is likely to be confirmed as the court verdict yesterday also acquitted him.

"It is now a matter of time to include one in the cabinet, one in BNP and send another to a Bangladesh mission," said a senior BNP leader on condition of anonymity.

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JAIL KILLING CASE VERDICT IO hits back at criticism

JULFIKAR ALI MANIK

Denying allegations of gross flaws in probing Jail Killing Case, Investigation Officer (IO) Abdul Kahar Akand yesterday put the blame on the state side saying he did not get full co-operation from the prosecution after the change-over in state power in 2001.

A day after the judge delivering the verdict accused him of making a 'farfetched investigation,' Kahar said he had done his job with sincerity. "It is the state counsels who lacked sincerity and were reluctant to take my assistance."

"The public prosecutor did not do what was necessary for a proper prosecution in such a very

special case," he told The Daily Star over phone.

"Since investigation officers play a significant role in a trial, the state side always tries to make their best use during the whole trial process. But unfortunately it did not happen in my case. I was transferred and later sent to forced retirement," Kahar said.

Kahar, an assistant superintendent of police at the Criminal Investigation Department (CID) who was given the charge of IO in the case in August 1996, was transferred to Barisal in October 2001 immediately after the alliance government assumed office.

He was sent to forced retire

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Leaders of the Hindu-Boudha-Christian Welfare Front greet Prime Minister Khaleda Zia with a bouquet at a function organised on the occasion of Durga Puja at the International Conference Centre (ICC) yesterday.

PHOTO: PID

F-28 fails to take off in Sylhet

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Sylhet

An F-28 aircraft of Biman Bangladesh Airlines yesterday failed to take off from Osmani International Airport due to some technical faults.

The captain of the F-28 detected breakdowns in one of the two engines while switching those on at 9:20am, said an official.

The aircraft engineer also tried in vain to fly the aeroplane, which was scheduled to take off at 9:15am for the capital with 13 passengers.

The authorities finally cancelled the flight and moved the passengers to a GMG aircraft and Biman's next flight at 2:00pm.

Engineers coming from Dhaka with some spare parts repaired the F-28, which flew to the capital at 6:15pm.

Mahanabami today

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Hindu devotees celebrate Mahanabami at Puja mandaps today amid great festivity.

Nabami bhog or food and fruits are offered to Devi Durga, the goddess of supreme power. The bhog is later distributed among the devotees visiting Puja mandaps.

Thousands of people gathered to celebrate the Kumari Puja at the Ramakrishna Mission Temple yesterday. During Kumari Puja, a

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Opposition demands independent EC

Leaders at round table call for reform of caretaker system

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Leaders of different political parties including the main opposition Awami League (AL) yesterday demanded an Election Commission (EC) totally free from government influence to ensure holding of the

next general elections in a transparent way.

The functions of a caretaker government also have to be specified clearly to avoid criticisms that followed the last three general elections, the leaders said at a roundtable organised by the Jatiya

Samajtantrik Dal (JSD-Inu).

They suggested the EC should have a separate secretariat so that it could discharge its duties without being influenced by the government.

The leaders also agreed to sit for a

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Stay alert against all evil forces

PM urges Hindus on Durga Puja

UNB, Dhaka

Prime Minister Khaleda Zia yesterday called upon the Hindus to remain alert with the spirit of the key message of Durga Puja against all evil forces in national, social and individual life.

She was addressing a function to convey greetings of Durga Puja to the Hindus at the International Conference Centre (ICC).

This is for the first time that a head of the government formally conveyed puja greetings to the

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Hasina rejects verdict, flies off to US

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Leader of the Opposition Sheikh Hasina yesterday rejected the judgment in the Jail Killing Case describing it as 'dictated by the government high-ups'.

"It doesn't reflect the judge's conscience. It was given due to pressure from the highest authorities (government)," said Hasina, also president of Awami League (AL).

She was talking to the newsmen at the Zia International Airport (ZIA)

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Criminal takes refuge to court for fear of Rab

OUR CORRESPONDENT, N'garj

A cadre of Jubo Dal and listed top criminal of the district yesterday surrendered to a court to avoid death at the hands of the Rapid Action Battalion, according to locals.

On October 11 Rab filed a case against Zamir, also chief of notorious Zamir Bahini, following arms seizure from his accomplices.

They picked up six cadres of Zamir with three home-made

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