

Drive against adulteration of food to continue: PM

BSS, Dhaka

Prime Minister Khaleda Zia yesterday told the Jatiya Sangsad that the current drives against food adulteration across the country would continue in future.

Replying to a question from treasury bench member SA Khaleque, she said a massive drive was being carried out through mobile courts against food adulteration, production of low-quality food items and its marketing.

Khaleda said cases were filed against 696 organisations by the BSTI for production and marketing of adulterated and low quality foods.

So far, 22 people were jailed on different terms and a fine of Tk 78 lakh was realised from the adulterators.

She listed various measures, including passage of Bangladesh Standard and Testing Institution (Amendment) Act, 2003 making the BSTI ordinance of 1985 more effective and time befitting, initiative for setting up a National Accreditation Board and formulation of a draft policy for commodity labels.

Besides, she said, the government has enacted a tough bill with provisions for setting up Food Court and awarding severe penalty to stop

unscrupulous practice of food adulteration.

She urged the people to resist food adulteration and assured that the government would take all necessary steps to stop food adulteration at any cost.

Replying to a supplementary, she said the government would provide requisite number of magistrates to BSTI as per requirement.

Meanwhile, Khaleda called upon the peoples' representatives to create public awareness for combating population growth.

Replying to a question from treasury bench member Major (Retd) Manjur Qader, she said the

population of the country was 12 crore 92 lakh in 2001 when the population growth rate was 1.48 percent. According to that growth rate present population of the country is 13 crore 40 lakh.

Family planning programme suffered a negative trend when in 1998 the previous government unified it with the Health Directorate. The present government has again activated the Family Planning Directorate and people are getting its benefit, she added.

Two bodies to probe draining of diesel

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

Bangladesh Petroleum Corporation (BPC) and Chittagong Port Authority (CPA) yesterday formed two separate committees to investigate Tuesday's draining of diesel into the river Karnaphuli.

A huge quantity of diesel reportedly drained away after a reserve tank at the oil terminal of Jamuna Oil Company at Patenga overflowed for several hours from around 3:00am on that day.

Eastern Refinery Limited, the country's lone oil refining centre run by state-owned BPC, was supplying the diesel to Jamuna through a 1-km-long pipeline.

Reports say around 1000 tons of diesel worth around Tk 4 crore was drained out into the adjoining Karnaphuli after overflowing the tank No 6 at the terminal of Jamuna Oil Company.

The negligence of duty as well as lack of coordination between the concerned operators posted at both ends of the pipeline were blamed for the draining out.

General Manager of Jamuna Oil Ahmed Jamal Khan Chowdhury said the quantity of drained out diesel or the extent of damage might be assessed only after the investigation.

He said the BPC had already formed a 4-member probe committee headed by its Senior General Manager (Commercial) Mohammad Ali.

The CPA has also formed a 2-member departmental probe committee headed by Assistant Harbour Master Captain Faridul Alam.

The committee was directed to submit its report within seven days, sources said.

In reply to a question, she said as many as 31 lakh marginal farmers were benefited from a Tk 186 crore post-flood agriculture rehabilitation programme after the memory's worst flood last year.

Replying to a question from treasury bench member Syed Mehedi Ahmed Rumi, she said the government has also been providing 25 percent subsidy on TSP, DAP and MOP to keep these fertilisers within the purchasing capacity of farmers and encouraging them to use balanced fertiliser. Subsidy is also being provided on the urea fertiliser, she said.

She said the government had already waived interest on the agricultural loan up to Tk 5,000 side by side with strengthening research work for evolving high yielding varieties of wheat and maize, including high breed paddy.



New Market area during hartal hours yesterday. Awami League-led 14-party called the dawn-to-dusk hartal protesting price hike of fuel and August 17 serial bomb blasts.



A huge amount of diesel, which drained from a reserve tank of Jamuna Oil Company at Patenga, pollutes the river Karnaphuli.

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