

Desa metre reader held while taking bribe from woman

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Rapid Action Battalion (Rab) yesterday arrested a metre reader of Dhaka Electric Supply Authority (Desa) from its South Jatrabari office while he was taking bribe from a woman for illegally reducing electric bill of her residence.

Rab had prior information that metre reader Mamun Mahmud of Desa's sales and distribution department had long been taking bribes from Desa subscribers for reducing electric bills by tampering with electric metres and made a fortune, said Rab sources.

Undercover Rab personnel arrested Mamun in the act of taking bribe from the woman in the Desa office at 11:00am.

Mamun was taken to Rab 10 office for quizzing. He is likely to be handed over to police today, Rab sources added.



PHOTO: STAR

A mobile court in a drive seizes huge fake cosmetics at Lubna Cosmetics at Lalbagh in the city yesterday.

23 Ctg houses gutted Properties worth Tk 31 lakh damaged

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

A total of 23 houses were gutted damaging properties worth over Tk 31 lakh in three separate fires in the district on Saturday night and Sunday morning.

According to sources, a devastating fire broke out at the house of one Khokon Nath at Banikpara under Boalkhali upazila at around 10:30am yesterday.

The fire that reportedly originated from an earthen oven continued for three hours reducing fourteen houses to ashes, said the local people and police.

The approximate loss was estimated at over Tk 20 lakh.

Another fire broke out at the house of one Kala Mia at Bahankata village under Banshkhali upazila at around 11:30am.

This fire was also originated from an earthen oven and gutted seven houses before the firefighters could reach the remote area at around 1:30am.

Damage of properties was estimated at around Tk 9 lakh.

The other fire occurred at the house of one Yunus at Syed Noor Village under Boalkhali upazila at around 10:30pm on Saturday.

Three houses were gutted damaging properties worth around Tk 2 lakh before the firefighters brought it under control at around 11:30pm, sources added.

25 more open markets from Friday

BSS, Dhaka

Bangladesh Rifles (BDR) is to organise 25 makeshift "open markets" from Friday after launching 17 marketing centres of their own in the first phase to check price hike of essentials facilitating supply lines and price competitiveness.

"Marginal agricultural growers from outskirts of Dhaka are welcome to these 25 market places at different city corners to sell produces without any tax or subscription to anybody," BDR's Dhaka sector commander Colonel Mohammad Mojibul Haque told newsmen at the headquarters of the paramilitary troops.

He said the markets would be set up in collaboration with Dhaka City Corporation (DCC) where the farmers and small traders would be encouraged to sit in these free markets on three days - Friday, Monday and Wednesday - from 6:00am to 12:00noon.

The small farmers are expected to sell their products like fried and flattened rice, eggs, vegetables and milk under BDR supervision at the 25 makeshift markets at Eidgahs and other open fields in the city, he said.

The BDR announcement coincided with the food ministry decision yesterday to launch Open Market Sale (OMS) of essentials, including rice and lentils, also with the assistance of the paramilitary force to monitor dishonest practices.

BDR troops on their own installed 17 open markets last week under a campaign they called "operation dal bhat" as part of the government efforts to arrest price spiral attracting huge crowd of consumers with fair price of essentials.

"We have started selling products like pulses, potatoes, onions, garlic and ginger, turmeric and sweet

pumpkin while we will begin selling rice in the next two days," Colonel Mojib said.

He said the directly BDR-run open markets and BDR supervised open markets would be operated until market price becomes stable.

Mojib said on the first day of the open market operation on March 13, BDR sold products worth Tk 5.5 lakh while the amount went up to Tk 7 lakh in subsequent days and the "we expect sales to be as high as Tk 15 lakh in the next several days."

In the BDR-run markets each kilogram of potato is selling at Tk 14, onion at Tk 21, garlic at Tk 40, ginger at Tk 22, local lentils at Tk 63 and imported

one at Tk 46 or 48.

"We don't sell products incurring any loss for ourselves giving subsidies but we sell them at a fair price to leave an impact on the traditional markets to stabilise the prices of essentials," Mojib said.

Director operations and training of BDR Lieutenant Colonel Mohammad Abdul Halim also spoke at the press briefing.

BDR officials earlier said exorbitant profits by several intermediaries depriving producers and consumers and heightened price of several essentials at international market were fuelling the price hike.

Congratulations to Tigers

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Political parties, social and sports organisations congratulated Bangladesh Cricket Team for its victory against former world champion India in the World Cup Cricket Tournament in the West Indies on Saturday.

Adviser to Youth and Sports Ministry Tapan Chowdhury in a message yesterday congratulated Bangladesh cricket team, coaches and concerned members for their remarkable performances and expressed hope that the victory will help Bangladesh to proceed to the next round.

Information Adviser Barrister Mainul Hossain and Foreign Affairs Adviser Dr Iftekhar Ahmed Chowdhury also felicitated Bangladesh Cricket Team in separate messages.

Former prime minister and Bangladesh Awami League (AL) President Sheikh Hasina in a statement said the victory has brought immense joy and the players have proved that despite many adversities com-

bination of patriotism, resolution and professionalism helped Bangladesh Cricket Team earn respect by established cricket teams.

AL General Secretary Abdul Jalil, former chairman of Bangladesh Cricket Board Saber Hossain Chowdhury, AL Youth and Sports Secretary Dewan Safiul Arefin Tutul also congratulated Bangladesh team in a separate message.

Former Youth and Sports minister and Jatiya Party General Secretary Sheikh Shahidul Islam in a statement yesterday congratulated Bangladesh team for victory and Mashrafi Bin Mortuza for being Man of the Match.

Bangladesh Awami Jubo League, Communist Party of Bangladesh, Jatiya Samajtantrik Dal, Bangladesh Olympic Association, Brothers Union, Abahani Samorthok Gosthi, National Press Club and Dhaka University Alumni Association also congratulated Bangladesh Cricket Team.

PLA team meets chiefs of 3 services

UNB, Dhaka

Deputy Chief of Chinese PLA Military Science Academy Maj Gen HU Guangzheng met the Chiefs of three services at their offices in the city yesterday.

Gen Guangzheng met Army Chief Lt Gen Moeen U Ahmed at the Army Headquarters in the morning and discussed various matters relating to military training and education, said an ISPR release.

It said Gen Guangzheng also called on Navy Chief Rear Admiral Sarwar Jahan Nizam at the Naval Headquarters at Banani.

Earlier, he met Air Chief Air Vice Marshal Fakhurul Azam at the Airforce Headquarters and discussed professional matters.

He also met Principal Staff Officer of Armed Forces Division Maj Gen M Jahangir Alam Chowdhury.



PHOTO: STAR

Embassy of Japan and Japan Bangladesh Cultural Forum organise an Ikebana exhibition at National Museum yesterday, marking the 35th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic ties between the two countries.

Sex workers to get life insurance support

UNB, Dhaka

CARE Bangladesh's partner Durjoy Nari Sangha and Pragati Life Insurance Company have signed a memorandum of understanding (MoU) to provide group life and health insurance support to street-based sex workers.

Durjoy President Shahnaz Begum and Managing Director of Pragati Life Insurance Company M Shefaque Ahmed signed the agreement on behalf of respective sides at CARE Bangladesh Headquarters at Karwan Bazar yesterday, said a press release.

Under the MoU, members of Durjoy Nari Sangha, a self-help group of street-based sex workers, will enjoy group life insurance benefit and health coverage from Pragati Life Insurance Company.

At present, Durjoy has over 2,500 members.