



Chicken culling on

Jirani declared bird flu infected area for 3 months

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Over 3,000 more chickens were culled yesterday at poultry farms in Gazipur while some 5,000 fowls died of undetected reasons at a farm in Narayanganj in the last two days.

A total of 3,212 chickens, including 962 chicks, of a poultry farm at Jirani in Gazipur were culled and 31,000 eggs destroyed. With this, the number of culled poultry birds rose to about 36,000.

The Jirani area has been declared an "infected area" for three months under the Bangladesh Animal Diseases Law 2005, official sources said.

District Livestock Officer Dr Kafiluddin Bhuiyan received a letter in this regard from the acting DG of Livestock Directorate.

The incidents have created panic about bird flu at many poultry farms across the country.

Different poultry farms started culling chickens following

Thursday's government acknowledgement of detecting avian influenza virus, popularly known as bird flu, at the state-run Biman Poultry Complex in Savar.

Our Narayanganj correspondent reports: District Livestock Officer (DLO) Dr Abu Taher meanwhile inspected the Shonakanda Poultry Farm yesterday after 5,000 chickens died there mysteriously.

Taher asked everyone not to be panicked saying they are not yet sure whether the poultry birds died

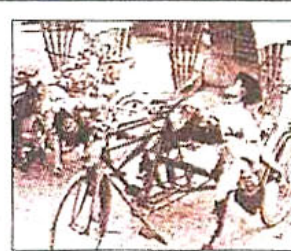
of bird flu or fowl cholera.

Earlier, 5,000 fowls died at the same farm between Monday and Friday. Farm officials said they fed the chickens medicine at the suggestion of veterinary doctors but there has been no improvement.

They said they collected the 10,000 chicks from Phoenix Poultry Farm in Savar.

The officials sent two dead chickens to laboratories in Dhaka and Savar to examine the cause of

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Remembering the dark night

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The 'black night' of March 25 arrives once again evoking the painful memories of a night of murder and mayhem, the beginning of massacre of hundreds of thousands of

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Bird flu takes heavy toll on them

RASHIDUL HASAN

Employees of Bibi Ayesha (R) Women Training and Production Programme (BAWTP) in Jirani Bazar in Gazipur burst into tears when they heard that 3,212 chickens and 30,702 eggs of the poultry farm would have to be killed and destroyed since those were bird flu infected.

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2 BDR men killed, 21 hurt in road crash

UNB, Comilla

Two BDR personnel died and 21 others were injured in a road accident on the Dhaka-Chittagong highway at Matiaria in Sadar upazila early yesterday.

Police said the accident occurred in front of Taj Filling

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NBR wants cancellation of duty-free car import by MPs

STAR REPORT

The National Board of Revenue (NBR) seeks cancellation of parliamentarians' privilege of importing duty-free cars as most members of parliament (MPs) in the past misused it.

The MPs of the now-dissolved eighth parliament dodged taxes of around Tk 250 crore in the last five years by importing cars under this privilege and then selling them out to others. Except for a few high-profile ex-MPs, most imported very costly cars.

The NBR has recently sent a proposal to the finance ministry to withdraw this privilege, sources said, adding that it is also investigating who purchased these cars imported by the ex-MPs.

The law under which the cars were imported bars the MPs from selling them within a certain period of time from the purchase.

The NBR will examine if the buyers purchased the vehicles in accordance with the legal provisions and take action against those who violated the law.

The caretaker government's

recent drive against corruption has compelled many such buyers to abandon their expensive cars in the city streets without any documents.

These luxurious cars and sport utility vehicles (SUV) purchased by the former MPs belong to prestigious brands like Mercedes Benz, BMW, Hummer, and Porsche.

According to information received in 2006, 54 of the 275 cars imported by MPs were BMWs, the cost of which is upwards of Tk 20 lakh to Tk 84 lakh without tax.

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Workers of Bibi Ayesha Poultry Farm at Jirani Bazar in Gazipur break down in tears yesterday as they were asked to destroy all chickens at the farm fearing they might be infected with the H5N1 strain of bird flu.

Dhaka to ratify UN convention on cultural expression

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The government yesterday decided to ratify the United Nations Convention on Protection and Promotion of Cultural Expression, to enshrine the primacy of cultural diversity within nations and to enhance cooperation and dialogue between cultures.

The decision was taken at the weekly meeting of the council of advisers presided over by Chief Adviser (CA) Fakhruddin Ahmed at the CA's office, Syed Fahim Munaim, press secretary to the CA, said at a press briefing.

The UN convention on cultural expression stresses the need to protect cultural diversity, emphasises the need to incorporate culture in national policy and recognise the importance of traditional knowledge, especially

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SMGs, explosives seized from JMB men, outlaws

STAR REPORT

Rapid Action Battalion (Rab) seized eight SMGs with ammunition and a huge cache of explosives and bomb making materials busting the dens of the PBCP and JMB operatives in Pabna and Jamalpur

in the last two days.

The law enforcers also held an outlaw and two militants during these raids.

Our Pabna correspondent reports: Tipped off, a team of Rab-12 raided Malanchi union under Pabna Sadar upazila yesterday and

captured Faruq Ahmed Paban, regional chief of Purbanga Communist Party (PBCP-Red Flag).

Following the information extracted from him during interrogation, Rab members took Faruq

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FROM LEFT... Rapid Action Battalion (Rab) personnel recover eight sub machine guns (SMGs) and around 1,500 bullets at Atakula in Pabna yesterday. Another Rab team busts several dens of Jama'atul Mujahideen Bangladesh (JMB) and recovers huge quantity of bomb-making materials and arrest four people in Jamalpur.



PHOTO STAR

INDEPENDENCE DAY Cops raid 38 city hotels fearing attack: 205 held

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Fearing a bomb attack on Independence Day prompted the police to raid 38 hotels in the capital and pick up 125 women and 80 men yesterday.

The Detective Branch (DB) of police went into action following a tip-off that militants are preparing

to attack parts of the capital on March 26 - Independence Day.

Sources said more women were arrested than men as the DB received information that the attackers were most likely to be female.

Six DB teams raided the 38 hotels mainly in Mirpur, Gulshan,

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Diesel, kerosene prices may go up by 10pc in April

SHARIER KHAN and REJAUUL KARIM BYRON

As cumulative losses of Bangladesh Petroleum Corporation (BPC) have reached a colossal Tk 11,721 crore, the government is considering an increase of diesel and kerosene prices by an average of 10 percent by late April and may take some unique measures.

Side by side with the price increase, the government is considering introduction of card system for kerosene and expansion of social safety net programmes for the poor with budgetary funds. Under these, the poor will be directly given subsidy for kerosene and diesel so that the price hike does not affect them.

Once a profit-making entity, the BPC is now incurring a loss of Tk 200 crore a month. It is now unable to pay back various local banks

loans along with interest amounting to Tk 10,000 crore. The BPC owes another Tk 4,000 crore to some international financiers.

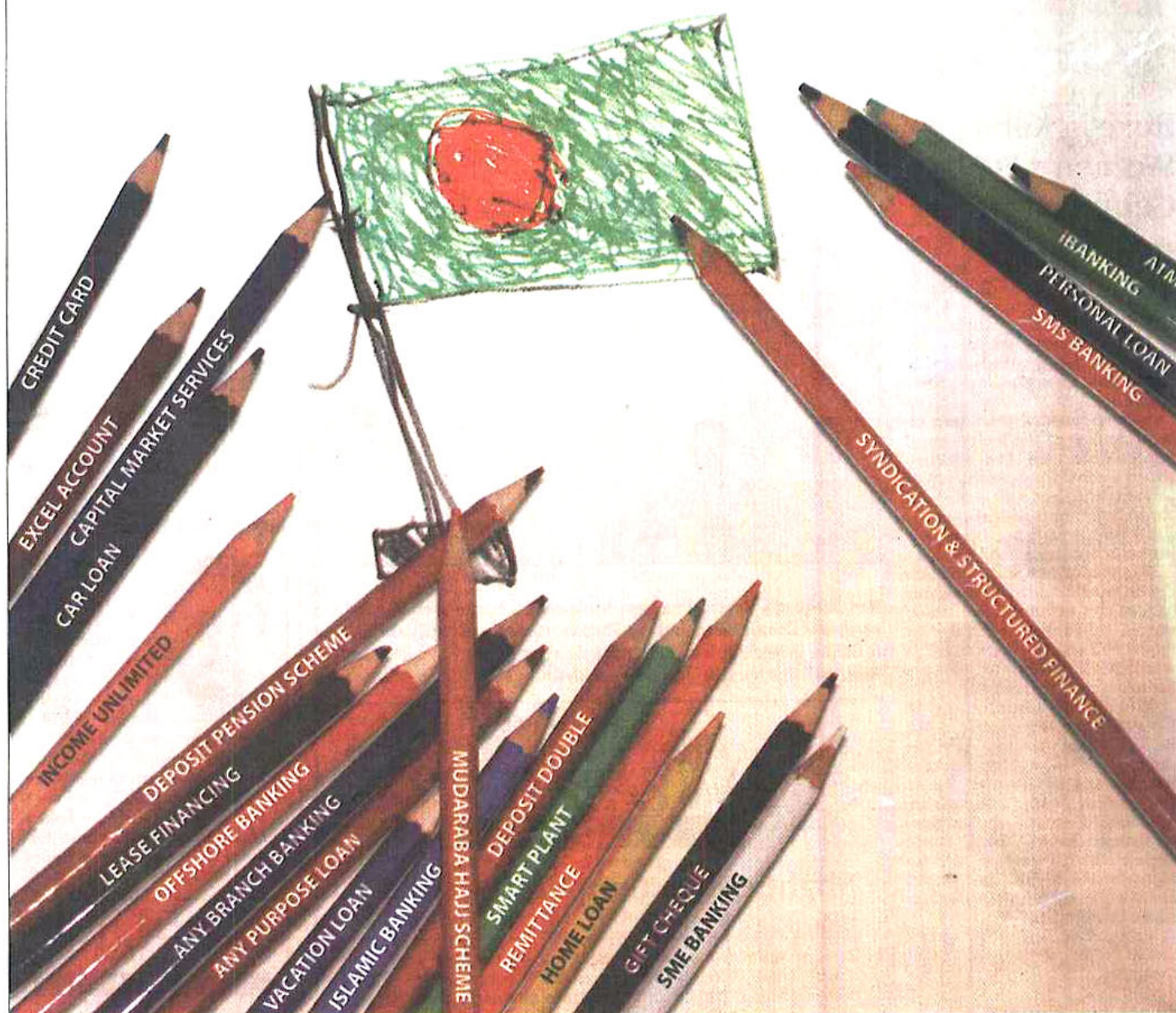
A highly placed energy ministry source pointed out that as the BPC's losses will be ultimately handled by the government, the finance ministry is considering a proposal to issue treasury bonds of different maturities amounting to Tk 10,000 crore in favour of four nationalised commercial banks (NCBs) to finance BPC's liabilities to these banks.

The finance ministry is also considering an energy ministry proposal to waive interests on the BPC's loans from the NCBs.

From the next fiscal year beginning on July 1, a new petroleum pricing formula may be introduced. A petroleum price review committee may be formed with the

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