

Unrest for price hike

FROM PAGE 1 ultra-poor households. There is a serious food situation that we need to monitor, he said, however stressing, 'We are not in a famine situation.'

Broderick said they have received indications that the upcoming Boro crop would be 'good' and he is hopeful the crisis will not spiral out of control because the markets are operating 'well'.

The government is currently in a process of importing rice from India, but negotiations have hit a snag due to high prices.

Finance Adviser Mirza Azizul Islam said the government is also trying to import rice from Southeast Asian countries and they are trying to negotiate with India for a lower price.

According to the Trading Corporation of Bangladesh, prices of rice have gone up by 25-30 percent in the country over the last few months and 67 percent over the last year.

According to WFP figures, internationally the price has gone up around 50 percent over the past year. WFP officials say global food prices have been driven up, in part, by the astronomical rise in the price of oil which has pushed up a whole set of agricultural costs such as fertiliser and transport.

The price of coarse rice, which is largely consumed by poorer households, has been much higher, exacerbating the problem. Moreover, costs of imports from India have also risen due to...

Rice price

FROM PAGE 1 I purchased Minikate rice at Tk 42 two days ago, but today the price of same rice has jumped to Tk 44," he added.

The prices of edible oil and sugar continued to drop on both retail and wholesale markets during the last week after witnessing skyrocketing prices a week ago.

A kg of non-brand soybean oil sold at Tk 106 to Tk 108 at retail markets yesterday. It was sold at Tk 120 to Tk 130 a week ago.

Wholesalers at Moulvibazar and Karwan Bazar said the prices of soybean and palm oil plummeted to Tk 350 to Tk 400 per maund within a week.

They said price fall of edible oil on the international market resulted in the price decline in the country.

AL, allies

FROM PAGE 16 offices across the country. Demanding immediate release of Hasina, Zillur Rahman said none can resolve the present crises in the country except her.

AL Presidium Member Amir Hossain Amu said Hasina's party will arrange her treatment if the government releases her.

JSD President Hasanul Haque Inu emphasised on formulating strategies for maintaining unity among pro-liberation war forces and the 14-party coalition, to face the current challenges before the nation in the aftermath of January 11, 2007.

AL Acting General Secretary Syed Ashraful Islam said Bangabandhu is not a property of AL, as he is the father of the nation.

Dhaka University Teachers Association General Secretary Prof Anwar Hossain said the entire nation is waiting for a direction to get out of the present situation.

Tigers win

FROM PAGE 16 South Africa, who whitewashed the Tigers in both forms of the game, last week.

Back in the day's match, Bangladesh showed signs of a similar top-order collapse after Tamim Iqbal and fit-again Afab Ahmed departed playing rash shots.

But skipper Mohammad Ashraful, who hit the headlines only the other day for slapping a jeering fan, and left-handed Nafes not only stopped the slide for a change but also made sure that the victory was achieved with an approach that always should be followed.

Ashraful, who scored 45 runs in his last five matches and was under tremendous pressure following his side's miserable performance in the last few series, took 13 balls to get off the mark. He also rotated the strikes with his left-handed partner to steady the ship.

On his way to an unbeaten 64 off 90 balls, his 13th half-century in 111 ODIs, Ashraful struck eight boundaries.

Fakhruddin-Brown

FROM PAGE 1 Downing Street, the British PM's official residence in London, yesterday afternoon.

A release received from Bangladesh High Commission here last night said Ahmed and Brown noted that in present times both the countries 'needed each other'.

Brown said the British people hold Bangladesh and Bangladeshis with 'great affection'.

The CA noted that Bangladesh too considered the UK as a 'dependable friend and partner' and attaches great importance to the intellectual, trade and investment links between the two Commonwealth nations.

The meeting covered a wide range of bilateral and multilateral issues, including bilateral trade and investment, development cooperation for attaining Millennium Development Goals, climate change, counter-terrorism, and contribution of the Bangladeshi Diaspora towards strengthening the vibrant relations between the two countries.

AKBAR ALI

FROM PAGE 1 In section 85 of the budgetary announcement, it promised to feed 50 lakh people, citing effects of inflation. But instead it has taken measures to feed only 40 lakh. By this time, the situation has reached a point where now it must feed 1.5 crore people, said Akbar, also a former adviser to caretaker government.

He made the observations after a weekly meeting of the reforms commission. He said when the finance adviser announced the decision back on June 7 last year, Cyclone Sidr did not yet hit the country while the price of rice was around Tk 18 to Tk 20.

Since then, things have got much worse and the government should make arrangements for more people to be fed under the Vulnerable Group Feeding programme, he observed.

'The finance minister had said that it takes 4 lakh tonnes of rice to feed 50 lakh people for eight months. That means you'd need another 4 lakh tonnes to feed 50 lakh more. If the government wants, resources should not be a problem.'

Explaining his recent comment that the people are experiencing a 'silent famine', Akbar said, 'People do not die of starvation in these famines, but they suffer from various diseases stemming from malnutrition.'

Sector commanders

FROM PAGE 16 Both the Detective Branch (DB) and CID suspect Emon had involvement in the murder of former National University vice-chancellor Prof Afab Ahmad. A DB team went to the CID interrogation cell to talk to Emon in this regard.

DB sources said they would pray before the court for showing Emon arrested in Afab murder case. Emon said he passed the SSC and the HSC examinations in 1986 and 1988 from Chittagong where his physician parents were posted at that time. He also said he obtained star marks in both the exams.

He was his parents' obedient son. But everything went wrong after he enrolled at Dhaka College failing to take BA honours course. As he got enough money from his parents during student life, he had no dearth of friends.

He was involved in Jatiyatabadi Chhatra Dal politics and got acquainted with many youths, many of who were engaged in crime.

Emon

FROM PAGE 16 He said the country is passing through a very critical time due to price hikes of essentials and a fertilizer crisis, among other things.

Workers Party President Rahed Khan Menon said politicians will have to take a decision as to whether the army will decide the direction of politics.

'If we don't speak against controlled democracy and politics, the people of the country will not forgive us,' said Menon, a key leader in the AL-led 14-party coalition.

He said, 'If Sheikh Hasina is deducted from politics as part of the so called minus two theory, it is not only she, but the politics of democracy will also be deducted.'

BMMU corruption

FROM PAGE 16 The report said a large number of the new recruits, including at least 51 teaching staff, did not have the qualifications mentioned in the advertisement. Besides, standard procedure of giving preference to seniors was not followed during promoting employees, it said.

The university syndicate, however, did not take action against the corrupt on the basis of the probe report. It instead formed a review committee that also submitted its report on November 27 last year.

Senior teachers complained that the review committee was formed in a bid to sidestep the probe committee report, adding that if the report's recommendations were implemented, many high-ups of the university administration would have found themselves at fault.

The probe committee report also revealed gross anomalies in procurement process, saying it caused a loss of Tk 8 crore to the university.

Extortion case

FROM PAGE 16 Salahuddin Ahmed continued his submission yesterday. The Supreme Court on February 26 granted government's leave to appeal against the HC verdict that delivered on February 6 and also stayed proceedings of the case until disposal of the appeal.

Hearing on the appeal started on March 16. On June 13 last year, Azam J Chowdhury, managing director of Eastcost Trading Pvt Ltd, filed the extortion case with Gulshan Police Station against Hasina and her cousin and former minister Sheikh Fazul Karim Selim.

On July 16, the home ministry directed the police to bring the case under the EPR.

On July 24, Obaidul Haque, investigation officer of the case, indicted Hasina along with her sister Sheikh Rehana and cousin Sheikh Selim, but did not include the relevant sections of the EPR.

EC may ask army

FROM PAGE 1 The run up to holding the parliamentary election, sources said.

In defence of depending on the army, senior officials of the EC Secretariat said if the army does the job, the expenditure will not exceed Tk 10 crore, whereas Tk 22 crore was spent for printing the voter list in 2000, and over Tk 22 crore was spent for the purpose in 2006.

Besides, the army is also interested in doing the job since it does not want to take any risk regarding printing of the final national voter list, senior officials involved in the project said.

ACC plans

FROM PAGE 1 Although the unprecedented anti-graft drive has succeeded in creating an impression that no-one is above the law questions were raised about discrimination in targeting corruption suspects.

Different sections of people expressed their surprise why public offices, which are always blamed for huge corruption, are not coming under the purview of the present drive.

Sources say fearing an adverse reaction in the bureaucratic machinery the bodies responsible for combating corruption could not take any initiative to dig out corruption of government officials and prosecute them.

Ctg port

FROM PAGE 1 Chittagong Port and in fact India had already made formal approach to the Bangladesh government in this regard, he said.

India is now waiting for a reply from the Bangladesh government on the issue. 'The trade and economic relation of both the neighbouring countries would be strengthened to a great extent if Bangladesh allows us the transit and port facilities,' he said.

Replying to a question, Chakravarty said India wants a free, fair and credible general election in Bangladesh provided all political parties participate in it.

'We hope the election in Bangladesh will be held in due time as per the roadmap,' he said.

Rice import

FROM PAGE 1 not be inked yesterday despite several rounds of discussions between authorities of the two countries in the last two days.

The decision to allow export of the rice was taken after two rounds of meeting between India's central Commerce Minister Kamal Nath and the Organisation of Export Import Association on Monday-Tuesday.

Earlier on Monday, India's Federation of Export Import Association threatened to stop export-import through borders of the two countries indefinitely from Wednesday. Trade through the borders between Bangladesh and India is supported by 375 Indian exporters' associations.

The lorries had been stranded at Petrapiore since March 6 after India imposed restrictions on exporting rice to Bangladesh at prices below \$650 per tonne on March 5.

Niko graft case

FROM PAGE 16 Major Shamsul Haider Siddiqui said, 'We arranged a meeting between Sheikh Hasina and her lawyers on March 16, the day after she had refused to accept the ACC notice without consulting the lawyers.'

'But she did not agree to meet them anywhere other than her room. Since we have some rules, we cannot allow a visitor where an accused is kept.'

The jail authorities have hung the ACC notice on her room's wall as rules, say if anyone refuses to accept, the notice should be put in a place from where it can be viewed by the addressee, explained the DIG prisons.

Barrister Sheikh Fazle Noor Taposh, who along with two others went to meet Hasina, said, 'We were kept waiting for about two and a half hours and at the end not allowed to meet her. We wonder how they expect her to receive the letter without consulting us.'

ACC forms team

FROM PAGE 16 seeking assistance for the ACC investigators. The assistance sought includes allocation of rooms for the investigators, providing them with necessary files and documents, and appointing a liaison for them.

Hani also expressed hope that the investigation will produce a list of suspects.

The ACC also filed a case against Khaleda Zia, another former premier now detained on corruption charges, for causing a loss of Tk 10,000 crore to the government coffers by awarding the deal to Niko.

The ACC in different briefings since last year announced launching of a drive against institutional corruption and building up of a database based on a research work by the commission on varieties of institutional corruption.

producing skilled chefs from Bangladesh. He informed about the caretaker government's unequivocal commitment to hold a free, fair and credible election by December 2008.

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