

# Jailers 'force' Hasina

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 justice. "Where should I go to get justice? Who to ask for justice? I do not know how much you will be able to deliver justice. I want justice from the people of the country. The people of the country will deliver the justice in the end," she said, addressing the court.

Hasina said it was said that she was unwilling to appear before the court on an earlier date. But how could she appear before the court as at least four to five tests were carried out on her on that day.

Referring to the ongoing price spiral and sufferings of people, Hasina said the government will not stay in power for a long time.

"People's sufferings are increasing with the spiralling prices of essentials. The government has to step down tomorrow. The people of Bangladesh will obviously take to the streets in protest of their sufferings," she said.

Hasina said she cannot understand on which grounds her relatives, lawyers and physicians are not being allowed to meet her while false cases are being filed against her one after another.

Hasina also described the way she was treated at the Square Hospital after being admitted there on March 11.

She said the doctors who attended her were neither experts nor senior physicians. Only a few junior doctors visited her at the hospital. Her body got swollen once following the treatment she was given to lower her blood pressure.

"My body was swollen due to allergy. Fortunately, I knew some treatment like applying vaseline or olive oil on the skin," Hasina added.

The AL president said the doctor, who referred her to get admitted to the hospital, was not even allowed to visit her for a single day.

Moreover, none of the medical board, formed to examine her physical condition, visited her or conducted any test on her.

Hasina also informed the court of the fact that the eye specialist, who had been attending her, suggested her to avoid exposure to light.

The former premier said she had tried several places for getting proper treatment but she found out that it is available only in the USA. Her treatment is not possible in Bangladesh.

Hasina also told the court that she was scheduled to receive treatment for her ear yesterday. But the jail authorities cancelled it saying that they have to take her to sub-jail.

She said physicians come from

abroad to treat a person now-a-days while she is being denied access to her family physicians, who have been treating her for the last 30 years.

"My doctors know every detail of my illness. It is normal that a person wishes to see his or her personal physician. But the jail authorities did not allow my personal physicians to see me," said Hasina.

"They don't allow me to meet my relatives and lawyers. As a result, I could not have any detail or effective consultation with the lawyers about this case. Then how they will represent me in the court," Hasina said.

After Hasina delivered her speech, prosecution lawyer Syed Ahsan Habib Shamim stood up and told the court they are sympathetic towards Hasina's condition but they want the court proceedings to continue.

Defence lawyer advocate Kamrul Islam stood up and submitted separate petitions before the court.

In one of the petitions, the defence said due to the delay in producing Hasina before the court, their senior lawyers barrister Shafique Ahmed and Yousof Hossain Humayun, who waited until 12:00 noon, had left the court and hearing cannot be held in their absence.

The defence lawyers also appealed before the court for issuing order regarding re-hospitalisation and treatment of Hasina.

The court adjourned the hearing on the ground of absence of the senior lawyers.

The court said that it is failure on the part of the jail authorities that Hasina was not produced before the court at scheduled time at 9:30 am. Besides, the jail authorities failed to produce her before the court on March 24, reviewed the court.

The jail authorities on March 24 informed court that they could not produce Hasina before the court due to her "unwillingness" although she was in "fine physical condition".

Doctors at the Square Hospital on the same day said it would take 10 more days to complete her physical check-up.

The Anti-Corruption Commission filed the case last year.

The prosecution completed their submissions on March 9 after the hearing proceedings had been adjourned on seven occasions.

# Traders hoard rice

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 Sunday have given the importers, wholesalers and traders a pretext for raising the price.

A wholesaler in the city's Babubazar said there is no valid reason for price hike since supply in the market is adequate while new local rice will be available within next 15 to 20 days.

Zarina Bibi, who was queuing up since early morning at the BDR shop on Mohammadpur Ring Road, told The Daily Star that she had rushed here on hearing the price would soon rise beyond Tk 70-80 a kg, and there would not be much left in the market.

For the last two days, people at BDR shops were allowed to buy five kgs of rice instead of four kgs per person.

Abdul Mannan of Hatirpud said, "Thinking of the days to come, I've

bought 20 kg rice and I needed to borrow money for that."

Meanwhile, price of pulses rose by Tk 2 to Tk 3 per kg in the wholesale markets yesterday after it fell by Tk 6-11 over the last two weeks.

Asked, the wholesalers and retailers could not give any reason for the hike when new pulses entered the market only a week ago.

The wholesale price of flour increased by Tk 100 per sack (74 kg) while that of edible oil rose by Tk 60 to Tk 100 per maund (26.22 kg) in last two days.

Sugar sold at Tk 1,800-1,850 per 50-kg sack yesterday while only three days back, it cost Tk 1,700.

In the retail outlets, battery chicken was selling at Tk 95-105 per kg while two days ago it sold at Tk 90-95. The price of egg was Tk 19 to Tk 22 yesterday, rising by Tk 2 per half (four eggs).

# AL demands

**FROM PAGE 1**  
 after the emergency meeting, "The jail authorities took her to the jail by force, without completing her treatment although she [Hasina] wished not to go to the court as she was sick. It is inhuman. People will never tolerate such conduct with the former prime minister and daughter of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman."

AL presidium members Amir Hossain Alam, Abdul Razzak, Tofail Ahmed, Suranjit Sengupta, Motia Chowdhury and Ataur Rahman Khan Kaiser and party leaders Dr Hasan Mahmud, Dr Dipu Moni and Adv Rahmat Ali also attended the meeting.

"She was very sick today, but she was taken to the court and to the sub-jail by force," said Zillur.

The acting AL president categorically said personal specialist physicians of Hasina were not allowed to treat her and the medical board formed by the Square Hospital authorities was not allowed to treat her either.

She has been treated by some unknown doctors instead, added Zillur, a former AL general secretary and close associate of Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman.

Hasina's left ear has been damaged completely and the right one is heading toward the same direction as her hearing has not been updated in time, he said adding that among other ailments, the AL chief has also been suffering from eye and allergy problems and 25 percent of vision in her left eye has been impaired.

Asked whether the AL would declare any programme protesting the incident or demanding her release, Zillur said they would decide on the matter later, following discussion with leaders of the party.

# Reminiscing '71

**FROM PAGE 1**  
 They nostalgic crowd gathered around the Indian war heroes and cheered them.

"Hello my old comrades in arms, very much happy to see you after a long, long time," many of them said to each other.

During a brief ceremony, leader of the delegation Jacob said, "You cannot understand what I feel. My heart bleeds... I am so much touched... the nation has emerged like the phoenix from the flame higher and higher and higher."

"How can I express my gratitude, I can only say God bless you and God bless Bangladesh," he said.

AK Khandker in his welcome address said their [delegation of the Indian Army] visit has taken all of us to the nostalgic days of 1971.

The visit should have taken place much earlier, he said adding that the people of Bangladesh will always welcome them with open arms.

Leaders of SCF, Dr Kamal Hossain, Abdur Razzaq, Tofail Ahmed, Motia Chowdhury, Haider Akbar Khan Rono, Hasanul Haq Inu, Rashid Khan Menon, were present at the reception among others.

# Indian army

**FROM PAGE 1**  
 The army chief recalled their contributions to the liberation war with great honour, said an ISPR press release.

Describing them as goodwill ambassadors, Gen Moen said, "Your visit in Bangladesh will further strengthen the friendship between the two countries."

The 11-member team of the former Indian army officers arrived in Dhaka Tuesday night at the invitation of the government on the occasion of the Independence and National Day.

# DCC finds

**FROM PAGE 1**  
 Technology (Buet), and three engineers—one each from DCC, Housing and Public Works department and the engineering corps of Bangladesh army.

Headed by Prof Sheikh Sekander Ali of Buet, it will start working today and submit report within the next two weeks. In the interim, the mayor said, two engineers including DCC Chief Engineer Colonel Ashfaqul Islam will visit the site twice a day to monitor the cracks.

Earlier on Saturday, the cracks in a side wall on the ground floor of City Centre designed to be an office block-cum-mul-storey car park widened and set off panic in the commercial neighbourhood. They prompted police to evacuate those who live or work in the area.

The mayor yesterday said companies having office in the building have been asked to continue business as usual since "doing so does not involve any risk".

Asked what he thinks had led to the cracks, the DCC chief engineer said, "Something definitely happened, and the probe committee will find that out."

DCC Chief Executive Officer Alauddin Ahmed and some other high officials were present at the press conference.

Meanwhile, the road in front of the building that was closed off as a precaution has been opened again.

# STATEMENT OF BELHASA ACCOM

Belhasa Accom JV, the firm constructing City Centre, in a statement yesterday maintained the cracks are in the temporary brick wall and there is nothing to panic.

The chinks would not do any harm to the main structure, they added.

# Purchase body

**FROM PAGE 1**  
 regard will be signed soon.

Sources said the advisory council meeting was appraised of the decisions. It was also informed that one lakh tonnes of rice would be imported within a month after opening LCs.

During his Bangladesh visit after cyclone Sidr battered the country last year, Indian Foreign Minister Pranab Mukherjee pledged to export five lakh tonnes of rice. The import of one lakh tonnes of rice from West Bengal Essential Commodities Supply Corporation (WBECSC) at \$399 per tonne has already begun.

The price of the remaining four lakh tonnes of rice and the time of delivery have been fixed through negotiations between Bangladesh and representatives of four Indian exporters -- Mineral and Metal Trading Corporation (MMTC), State Trading Corporation (STC), Project Equipment and Commodities Limited (PEC) and National Agricultural Co-operative Marketing Federation -- in Dhaka last week.

The Indian delegation on last Thursday offered the export price of per tonne rice at \$430 and requested Bangladesh authorities to inform it of their decision by April 1, food ministry said yesterday.

Acting on the offer, the advisory committee on purchase held an emergency meeting yesterday and approved import of four lakh tonnes of rice at the offered price. It will inform the Indian side of its decision today.

The finance adviser said the government is importing four lakh tonnes of Indian rice to maintain adequacy of the government food stock. More rice is required for the safety net programmes, he said.

The government was not sure whether it is possible to procure adequate rice from local market after the boro harvest, the adviser added.

# UN medal

**FROM PAGE 1**  
 was proud to participate in the resolution of the conflict in Ivory Coast and expressed their resolve to collectively defend the United Nations mandate for peace in the country.

General Amoussou, on behalf of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General, Y J Choi, thanked Dalao's political and administrative authorities, including its traditional and religious leaders, for their continuing support to the foreign peacekeeping forces. He also thanked the Bangladesh units deployed there.

Bangladesh first entered the family of "Blue Helmets" in 1988, and since then has provided over 60,000 soldiers to various missions.

There are currently more than 9,600 Bangladesh soldiers and police operating in 11 different peacekeeping operations, making Bangladesh one of the top contributors of uniformed personnel to the UN.

Bangladesh provides one third of the troop strength in ONUCL.

# Ashuganj power

**FROM PAGE 1**  
 commission headed by Project Director Abdul Khaleque has been formed to find the cause of the incident, he said adding that the units will resume operation soon.

# CA urges agriculturists

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 workers of the government and private organisations.

The Bari has recently developed 126 new varieties of crops including high yielding, temperature- and salt-tolerant and insect resistant food grains, vegetables and crops, and 55 technologies for production management of the crops.

The Bari has so far developed 281 high-yielding varieties of crops and 293 production friendly technologies.

Bari Director General M Harun-or-Rashid made a presentation at the function on the newly developed technologies to be transferred to the farmers.

Agriculture Adviser CS Karim also spoke at the function, chaired by Agriculture Secretary M Abdul Aziz.

Some 300 participants are taking part in the workshop.

Scientists, researchers, and civil and military officials were present at the function held at Badruddoza Auditorium of the Rice Research Institute.

The chief adviser agreed that prices of essentials rose substantially aggravating the sufferings of the lower, middle and limited income groups, as their income and purchasing capacity have not increased.

He, however, said the government has sincerely deployed all its strength and taken all possible steps to keep the prices of food grains at tolerable level.

Fakhruddin said huge quantities of crops were destroyed due to last year's two successive floods

and Cyclone 'Sidr' as well as adverse weather, increasing the production costs.

He said many developed countries are using food grains to produce bio-fuel, resulting in the gradual shortage of food grains on the world market.

The food exporting countries are now turning into importing countries while prices of food are quickly going up worldwide, he said, adding that the impact of this adverse situation falls on Bangladesh.

The chief adviser called on all to use their strength, merit and skill to face the challenges of agricultural development so that a poverty- and hunger-free Bangladesh could become a reality.

He said not an inch of arable land should lie fallow and urged all to do whatever is necessary to ensure highest production in each unit of the arable land.

Fakhruddin said if agricultural production increases, it would raise the income of the farmers, improving their lifestyle and boosting rural growth.

He asked the media, particularly radio and TV channels, to attach great importance to broadcast agriculture-related news and programmes so that all the relevant information reaches the farmers.

The chief adviser said the government is giving top priority to the modernisation of agriculture in order to materialise the dream of a poverty-free Bangladesh.

The government, he added, has set up an endowment fund of Tk 350 crore in this fiscal year, giving priority to agricultural research.

# 3,510 rail clips

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 GRP investigators said if the key-men, people engaged in patrolling the railway lines, did their duty timely the theft would have been detected earlier while Bangladesh Railway investigators claimed their people did their jobs timely.

However, they both agree that an organised gang stole the clips. Mahbubur Rahman, officer-in-charge (OC) of GRP, told The Daily Star, "It is impossible to remove the clips overnight dodging the eyes of people in an area where there are Bangladesh Navy personnel on one side, Army personnel on the other and Dhaka Metropolitan Police on duty in between."

He suspects that people of Bangladesh Railway and Max Automobiles, a subcontractor of a railway project, were involved in the theft that took at least two to three days to complete.

However, Bangladesh Railway Engineering Chief Abul Kashem told The Daily Star, "We are sure that the thieves took no more than two to three hours to remove the clips using six to seven men."

"Today, on the first day of our investigation, we practically verified whether it was possible to remove the clips within two to three hours," he said.

He said an organised gang committed the theft and the clips were transported by pick-up trucks or other motorised vehicles as the clips should weigh no less than three tonnes.

He said there are 22 Permanent Way Inspectors (PWI) of Bangladesh Railway and every PWI has 12-15 key-men. Every key-man examines about 12 kilometres of trainlines on foot.

Replying to a question, he said, "We must investigate whether

people from Bangladesh Railway and the sub-contractor company Max Automobile were involved in the theft."

GRP personnel arrested Delwar Hossain Saturday night. Security guard of Max Automobiles Saiful Islam, Swapan, Liton, Abul Hossain and Jamal were arrested in this connection earlier and all six were placed on a two-day remand yesterday.

Swapan already confessed to receiving Tk 1,000 for the job from another arrestee, Saiful.

Bangladesh Railway sources said they have installed over 2,700 of the missing clips and the rest would be installed within two days.

# Home ministry

**FROM PAGE 1**  
 now allow only one trade union for the workers and employees employed by each port authority.

Earlier, the advisory council approved the two ordinances in principle.

The national identity ordinance stipulates that people who have more than one national ID cards or provide false information would be given three months' rigorous imprisonment or fined Tk 5,000.

If anybody forges the national ID cards and keeps it with them, they will be sentenced to seven years' rigorous jail along with monetary fines. Such crimes will be dealt with under the Criminal Procedure Code (CrPc).

The new labour ordinance says employees employed by the Chittagong and Mongla port authorities can form only one trade union in their respective domain. Earlier, there was scope for as many trade unions as the employees liked.

# Arsenic

**FROM PAGE 1**  
 alone in Comilla, 2,600 in Chandpur, 2,321 in Chapainawabganj and 903 in Faridpur.

The number of patients is drastically increasing due to lapse in constant vigilance in mitigating contamination and because many abandoned the instruments supplied by the government and donors.

Admitting the rising trend of arsenic contamination, SAM-ILGS Project Director and Deputy Secretary (Water Supply) of Local Government Division M Shafiqul Islam said the users abandon water-purifying devices due to lack of maintenance, thus affecting more people.

"People must use purified water in the contaminated areas. There's no way left to get rid of the diseases as most of the contaminated areas have high level of arsenic existence," he added.

The project consultant suggests community initiative to raise awareness and initiate users community for maintaining purified water devices.

The Department of Public Health and Engineering (DPHE) discovered arsenic contaminated tube-wells for the first time in Chapainawabganj in 1993 and doctors identified arsenicosis patients in the district next year.

The government enacted a national policy for arsenic mitigation passed in 2004 to make government and private programs to mitigate arsenic problem coordinately.

BAMWS identified 1.44 million arsenic contaminated tube-wells out of 4.95 million in 270 upazilas.

# It forces

**FROM PAGE 1**  
 caretaker government to curb the upward spiral of prices.

The joint forces official asked the traders to keep their profit margins reasonable.

The meeting decided that market association leaders would continue to hang price charts of essentials at their respective kitchen markets every day and retailers would be bound to sell their products at those prices.

Col Halim said the joint forces will re-start patrolling the kitchen markets in a couple of days to keep an eye on the prices. The market presidents and secretaries assured him that prices would not increase further.

The BDR official called on the retailers to store cash memos of their sold items and warned that stern action would be taken against those who flout the rule.

Saying that the gap between retail and wholesale prices is not acceptable, he cautioned the retailers against making 'illogical' and 'high' profits. "We'd not allow you (retailers) to sell goods at Tk 20 which you bought for Tk 10."

"If necessary we'll again pitch camps at wholesale markets and launch drives against those responsible for the soaring prices of essentials," he warned.

Some of the retailers called for resuming the market monitoring system in order to tame the "unbearable" increase in the prices of essentials.

President of Hatirpool kitchen market Enamul Haque suggested that wholesalers maintain cash memos for items they sell in order to keep tabs on the retail prices.

Another retailer from Ashkona market suggested setting up BDR camps at the wholesale markets in order to facilitate price monitoring.

About 65 presidents and general secretaries of different market associations attended the meeting.

# Prof Muzaffer

**FROM PAGE 1**  
 that it is hard to find any sector bereft of it.

Anis Rahman, despite being a government official has proved by writing this book that there are still forces within the corrupted systems to prevent corruption, he pointed out.

Among others, The Manabjabin Editor Motiur Rahman Chowdhury, journalist Syed Abul Maksud and publisher Advocate Chowdhury Rawshan Zahan were present at the ceremony.

# Earthquake

**FROM PAGE 1**  
 government retrofits the existing buildings located in key points and builds awareness.

Prof Rokana Hafiz Ahmed of Urban and Regional Planning (URP) of Bangladesh University of Engineering and Technology (Buet) said there has been no urban planning to improve the standard of living in the country.

"We never think of earthquake like floods or cyclones and whenever a jolt occurs in the country we panic and after a while we forget the most disastrous calamity," she said.

She said people's awareness regarding earthquakes is very poor and we have to take awareness building measures in schools and colleges.

Executive Engineer of Public Works Department (PWD) Syed Mahfuz Ahmed said it is necessary to take proper measures first for buildings at risk.

The concerned institutions have lacking in coordination, an obstacle to preparedness of disasters, he said adding that it is yet to be decided who would supervise implementation of the building code. He suggested building expertise and introducing training for architects, engineers and masons.

Engineer Syed Azizul Haq, structural designer and plumbing specialist of Public Works Department (PWD), said, "We have to provide support to professionals in this sector since we could not produce many professionals involved with buildings."

He said it is essential to increase technical institutions where the professionals will have support for disaster preparedness.

Abu Naser Khan of Paribesh Bachao Andolan said institutions concerned like Rajuk and Dhaka City Corporation need to take effective steps and many problems will be solved if these perform their duties on their own.

The speakers suggested inclusion of chapters on disaster awareness and preparedness in school and college textbooks and training of first response units.

Moderated by Mehedi Ahmed Ansari, professor of Civil Engineering Department of Buet, the roundtable was also attended by Kamrul Hasan of Geology Department of Dhaka University, Prof Abul Kalam, chairman of URP Department of Jahangirnagar University, Engineer Shah Alam, civil engineer of Rajuk, Abu Syed Khan, Abu Sayed Khan, managing editor of Somokal, and Abul Haseeb Khan, chairperson of Nirapad.

# Zimbabwe election

**FROM PAGE 1**  
 Despite warnings from authorities against pre-empting the result, the main opposition Movement for Democratic Change (MDC) said it was the certain winner and had secured nearly all parliamentary seats in the two biggest cities.

Mugabe's camp meanwhile said it would treat any announcement by MDC leader Morgan Tsvangirai that he was now the rightful president as tantamount to a coup.

"This far, short of a miracle, we have won this election by any reasonable doubt. We have won this election," MDC secretary-general Tendai Biti told a news conference.

Biti said the party's assessment was based on unofficial returns posted at polling stations where counting had been completed and cast doubt on the Zimbabwe Electoral Commission, a supposedly independent body whose executives are appointed by Mugabe.

Asked why he was not waiting for the commission, Biti said: "We don't trust the ZEC, which is not independent."

"We made a mistake in 2002 by not claiming our victory. We made a mistake in 2005 by not claiming our victory."

"We will not accept the results of any stolen election as a party."

Tsvangirai has always insisted he was the rightful winner of the last presidential election in 2002 while the party also says it was robbed of victory in 2005's parliamentary elections.

Biti said his own research showed that the party had virtually wiped out the ruling ZANU-PF in the capital Harare and the southern city of Bulawayo.

"In Bulawayo we have won all the 12 house of assembly seats and... in Harare we have won 28 out of 29."

He also claimed that, based on results collated by the party from 12 percent of the 9,000 polling stations, Tsvangirai was in the lead with around two-thirds of the vote.

Mugabe's spokesman George Charamba meanwhile fired a warning to Tsvangirai, who has twice been charged with treason, against an early victory claim.

"He announces results, declares himself and the MDC winner and then what? Declare himself president of Zimbabwe? It is called a coup d'etat and we all know how coups are handled," Charamba told the state-run Sunday Mail.

The electoral commission also criticised the opposition for jumping the gun.