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Five children burned to death in Ctg

CU Correspondent

All five children of a family were burnt alive in South Gohira village under Anwara upazila in Chittagong on Tuesday night when the hut they lived in caught fire from a lamp.

The dead children were identified as Rozina Akter, 13, Ali Akbar, 11, Ali Asgar, 9, Nizam Uddin, 7, and Abdul Karim, 3.

The tragic accident occurred at around 9.30pm when the flame from a kerosene-lit lamp spread and burnt down the hut made of straw and plastic.

Ilias, a fish-trader, and his wife Rahima Khatun had gone to Rahima's parents place in the same

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Govt aims at big food stock: Chief adviser

Higher outlay on agriculture, employment in next budget

UNB, Dhaka

Chief Adviser (CA) Fakhruddin Ahmed yesterday said the government will build up a bigger food stock through import and local procurement in order to ensure food security and keep food prices, especially of rice, at tolerable levels.

Unveiling a package of contingency measures, he said increased allocation for agriculture and

employment generation would be high on the list of priorities in next budget to overcome the wayward market situation.

He said there is no food shortages in the country as import of rice has increased at government and private levels in comparison with the previous year. Moreover, the country has had a good harvest of potato and wheat this year.

The chief adviser was talking to reporters at Kalyanpur BRTC bus

depot in the city after paying surprise visits to a number of BDR-run fair price outlets.

Fakhruddin told the newsmen that allocation of rice has been increased from government warehouses for the Open Market Sale (OMS) programme in order to keep its prices stable by increasing supply.

"The main objective of the Open Market Sale is to increase supply

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MIG-29 CASE

Trial to start at makeshift court in JS complex on April 20

COURT CORRESPONDENT

The trial of the MiG-29 corruption case against detained former premier Sheikh Hasina and six others will be held at a makeshift Sessions Judge's Court at the Jatiya Sangsad (JS) Bhaban complex instead of the court in old Dhaka on security grounds.

The trial of the case will begin on April 20.

Meanwhile, the trial of the case against detained Lt Col (dismissed) Syed Faruk Rahman, Lt Maj (ret'd) Bazul Huda and 14 others for

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DIALOGUE WITH POLITICAL PARTIES Govt readies agenda talking with big ones

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The caretaker government wants to finalise the nature and agenda of the proposed dialogue, including whether to sit with political parties together or separately, through discussions at "unofficial" pre-dialogue meetings with major parties.

The Awami League (AL) and Jatiyo Party (JP) have already told the government that they would not sit in the dialogue if Jamaat-e-Islami and parties alleged for war crimes and anti-Liberation War roles are invited to the dialogue.

The JP conveyed its decision to

the government at an "unofficial" pre-dialogue talk with four advisers at the city's Railway Bhaban last night while the AL had informed five advisers of the party decision on Monday.

The advisers, who are holding regular talks among themselves and with political parties to finalise the nature and agenda of the dialogue, will also sit with parties including the BNP and Jamaat-e-Islami within a day or two. They will also sit with top leaders of the AL for the second time.

"We are yet to decide the format of the final dialogue,"

SEE PAGE 15 COL 1

EC's LETTER TO BNP HC delivers verdict today

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The High Court (HC) delivers its judgment today on the BNP chairperson's writ petition challenging the legality of inviting Maj (ret'd) Hafiz Uddin Ahmed as BNP representative for the Election Commission (EC) dialogue on electoral reforms.

On March 24, an HC division bench comprising Justice Mirza Hussain Haider and Justice Mamnoon Rahman fixed the day for pronouncing its verdict after hearing both sides.

Earlier on November 18 last year, the HC stayed operation of the EC letter that had invited BNP acting Secretary General Hafiz

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Diesel subsidy slashed to one-third

Tk 545 for each acre of Boro irrigation

REIAUL KARIM BYRON

The finance ministry has allocated Tk 250 crore for diesel subsidy although the government allocated Tk 750 crore for it in the budget of the current fiscal year.

According to the subsidy plan, the government will provide Tk 545 for irrigation in each acre of Boro cultivation this season to encourage around 66 lakh farmers and minimise their irrigation cost.

The agriculture ministry yesterday finalised the subsidy amount on the basis of the finance ministry's allocation.

The farmers will now get Tk 180

for per .33 acres of land against their diesel cost of about Tk 1,500 for the same land.

"The amount has been allocated for the time being and may increase in future. We're giving subsidies for irrigation for the first time despite pressures for subsidy from various sectors," Agriculture Adviser CS Karim told The Daily Star yesterday.

Finance ministry officials, however, say it is unlikely that the allocation for irrigation subsidy will exceed Tk 250 crore.

The government is now subsidising Tk 23 to Tk 27 against each

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Swans frolic in a Boro field with rice plants bowing down by the weight of grains in Trimohoni under Demra near the capital. The nation awaits the much talked about bumper Boro harvest as the government struggles to rein in sky-rocketing prices of the staple.

Bangladesh, British terrors have links

Says UK home secy

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Visiting British Home Secretary Jacqui Smith yesterday said there are links between British and Bangladeshi terror networks.

She said the two countries will form a high level joint working group that will meet in June to thrash out details of 'practical programmes' on counter-terrorism, which might include sharing of information and counter-terror training.

Smith also said during her meetings with Chief Adviser Fakhruddin Ahmed and Army Chief Gen Moeen U Ahmed yesterday, she received 'strong reassurances' from them that the stalled



Jacqui Smith

ninth parliamentary election will be held by the year's end.

The UK home secretary made

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Working groups formed to make action plan to tackle Monga

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

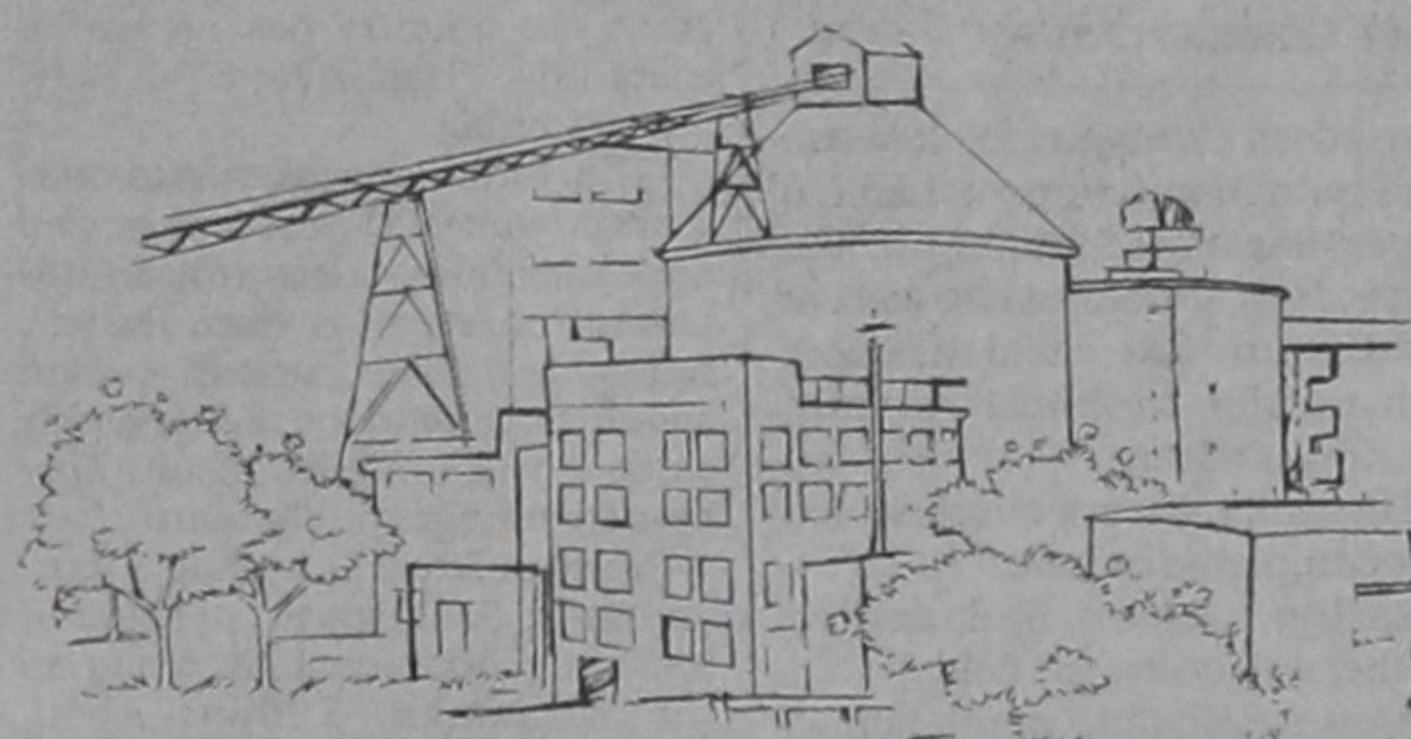
The government has formed five working groups to make a national action plan by 2008 to combat Monga, a near-famine situation, in the country's northern region.

The decision was made at the first meeting of the national committee on Monga at the conference room of the commerce ministry yesterday with Commerce and Education Adviser Dr Hossain Zillur Rahman in the chair.

The five groups, formed on livelihood, infrastructure development, human resources, information and energy, power and irrigation will work through coordination.

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