



PHOTO: SHAFIQUE ALAM

Queues have disappeared at most BDR-run fair price outlets in the city after the authorities raised the price of rice to Tk 30 a kg. The photo taken at the outlet in Azimpur Colony yesterday shows only two customers buying rice there.

Top outlaw killed in 'shootout'

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Rajshahi

A regional leader of outlawed Purbo Banglar Communist Party (PBCP) was killed during a "shoot-out" between his accomplices and police at Akna Banshabaria village under Raninagar upazila of Naogaon district early yesterday.

The dead was identified as Abdul Majid alias Picchi Majid, son of Nur Mohammad of Bhatkoi village under the upazila.

Acting on a tip-off, a police team from Raninagar Police Station raided an area near Banshabaria Bridge at around 2.45am where Majid and his accomplices were holding a secret meeting.

Sensing the presence of the policemen, the outlaws opened fire, prompting the law enforcers to retaliate.

Police sources said Majid received bullets during the shoot-out and died on way to Raninagar Upazila Health Complex, while his cohorts managed to flee.

The body was sent to Naogaon Sadar Hospital for autopsy.

The officer-in-charge (OC) of Raninagar Police Station said Majid was wanted in five murder cases. Police recovered a revolver, three bullets and a knife from the scene.

KITPLY CUP

India-Pakistan final today

SPORTS REPORTER

India skipper Mahendra Singh Dhoni is all set to add another feather to his cap when his impressive side lock horns with their old foes Pakistan in the Kitply Cup final at the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium today.

The new-look Indian side is definitely going in as a favourite after emphatic victories against Pakistan and Bangladesh in the league matches and a victory in the final would enhance Dhoni's growing reputation as a captain. He led his side's home series victory against the traditional rivals and a triumph in Australia after 23 years.

The day-night match will begin at 3pm with Bangladesh Television (BTV), NEO Cricket and Geo TV providing live coverage from the big bowl.

Shoaib Malik's men, who are under immense pressure following their embarrassing 140-run defeat in the first match at the same venue on Tuesday, would be needing something special if they want to pull off a surprise victory in the final.

But India have held the upper hand in recent matches by winning five of their last seven games which came through their storming top-order firing and as well as some disciplined bowling.

On the other hand, Pakistan desperately felt the absence of their two frontline bowlers Shoaib Akhtar and Mohammad Asif.

Both sides expressed their satisfaction over the condition as it favours the batsmen.

Everybody expects that the weather will not affect the final like the league matches despite the earlier forecast of rain.

BDR outlets to stop rice sale shortly

Price hike of commodities continues

SHAHEEN MOLLAH

Bangladesh Rifles (BDR) is set to suspend selling rice in its fair price outlets in the capital within two or three days, and the suspension will remain in effect until the government's ongoing rice procurement programme across the country wraps up.

A BDR official said the decision to suspend selling rice came fol-

lowing instructions from the government, as the border security force is being forced to procure rice from local markets for Tk 28.5 to Tk 29.5 a kilogram (kg), which is higher than the government-fixed procurement price of Tk 28.

Food Secretary Mollah Waheeduzzaman, however, said he does not know anything about such government instructions.

Asked if the difference between

procurement prices of BDR and the government has any impact on the government's procurement of rice, he said it would definitely give rise to some problems.

Meanwhile, prices of rice, potato, edible oil, fish, chicken and spices continued to rise on both retail and wholesale markets in the city over the last one week.

Talking to The Daily Star, BDR

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People want a democratic govt thru' fair polls: Hasina



PHOTO: NEWS WORLD

Awami League President Sheikh Hasina is received at the Logan International Airport in Boston by her son Sajeeb Wajed Joy, among others.

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Awami League (AL) President Sheikh Hasina reached Boston in the United States early yesterday, some 40 hours after her release on executive orders for treatment abroad.

She was received by her son Sajeeb Wajed Joy and his family. Several hundred AL activists and supporters from different states and Canada gathered at the Logan International Airport to greet her.

Talking to reporters there, she said people want the long-stalled parliamentary polls to be held without delay. They want handover of power to a democratic government after a free and fair election, reports American News Agency (ANA), a US-based Bangla news service.

Hasina, also former prime minister, was freed for eight weeks Wednesday afternoon after about 11 months in detention on corruption

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Gyanendra to face fresh probe into royal massacre

PTI, ANI, Kathmandu

Nepal's Maoists said their new government will go for a fresh probe into the 2001 palace massacre and also investigate whether deposed king Gyanendra had any foreign bank account, a day after he quit the palace.

"After the formation of the Maoist-led government a probe commission will be formed to investigate the palace massacre as the Nepalese people want an independent body to enquire about the incident," Communist Party of Nepal - Maoist (CPN-M) deputy leader Baburam Bhattarai said on Thursday.

The entire family of former King Birendra was killed in mysterious circumstances in the massacre after which Gyanendra became the monarch.

"The former king said in his statement Wednesday that he had no role in the massacre and if it was true, the probe commission will help him clear the accusation," the Maoist second-in-command told reporters on Thursday.

The controversial report submitted by the official probe commission has held Crown Prince Dipendra responsible for the massacre on June 1, 2001, though its credibility has been questioned by many.

Bhattarai also said the new government will probe whether the deposed king has any foreign bank account.

Gyanendra has rejected the allegation that he has deposited money in foreign bank account while addressing a press conference before leaving the palace Wednesday.

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PRE-POLL ACTIVITIES 18 teams of AL leaders to tour country

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

At least 18 teams of Awami League (AL) leaders will begin a 10-day tour across the country on June 20 to organise AL units, boost its activities ahead of the parliamentary elections and to press home its six-point demand.

AL's demands include permanent unconditional release of AL chief Sheikh Hasina, lifting of the state of emergency and announcement of a schedule for the parliamentary elections.

Sheikh Hasina was temporarily released Wednesday.

AL Presidium members, acting general secretary, joint secretary, organising secretaries, central leaders and other sub-committee members will hold extended meetings in districts, upazilas and thanas to boost the party's organisational activities and activities for the parliamentary elections.

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Police SI held while taking bribe from accused

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

How a corrupt policeman can harass people and compel them to bribe by misusing power came to light late Thursday night when the Anti-corruption Commission (ACC) arrested a sub-inspector (SI) of Cantonment Police Station.

ACC Deputy Director Mir Zainul Abedin Shebly said they arrested SI Moinul Ahsan, at Hotel Bonbhojan in East Nakhla para as he was taking Tk 5,000 bribe from Mozammel Haque, a businessman of Banani in the capital.

Mozammel alleged that his business partner Zakir Hossain filed a false case on May 27 against him and a number of others accusing them of confining him to a house and forcing him to sign a stamped paper. In the case the complainant also accused them of demanding Tk 1 lakh from him.

SI Moinul, the investigation officer (IO) of the case, arrested Mozammel but he was released on bail by a Dhaka court the same day.

Later, Moinul called Mozammel to the police station and threatened to submit the charge sheet against him or implicate his 108-year-old father in the case if he did not pay him Tk 50,000. The IO also said if Mozammel gave the bribe he would file a case against Zakir for filing the "false" case, Mozammel alleged.

"As the SI frequently demanded the bribe, Mozammel filed an application with a director of the

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Tk 1009cr DCC budget tomorrow

HELEMU ALAM

Dhaka City Corporation (DCC) is to announce a Tk 1009.41 crore budget tomorrow for the fiscal year 2008-2009 with provisions for the lion's share of the money coming from revenue.

The DCC expects Tk 527.51 crore of the budget to come from revenue.

The budget is Tk 392.47 crore less than the budget of 2007-08 fiscal year and Tk 291.84 crore higher than the revised budget of that year.

This will be the seventh budget of DCC Mayor Sadeque Hossain Khoka who is likely to repeat previous years' pledge of not raising holding taxes or imposing any new taxes on city dwellers, said an official of the DCC.

Sources said the revenue collection mechanism would be strengthened for financing development programmes aimed at making city life comfortable.

A general meeting with ward commissioners will be held at 11:00am tomorrow, two hours before the budget announcement, seeking their suggestions, said a ward commissioner.

A number of commissioners, however, said the meeting is nothing but a formality as it will be held just before the budget announcement after completion of all the due processes.

The corporation earns tax and rent revenues from holdings, illuminations and conservancy, trade

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Govt must not go soft on corruptionists: Dr Kamal

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Gono Forum President Dr Kamal Hossain yesterday asked the caretaker government not to bow down to any pressure for weakening the rule of law, while demanding investigations of government personnel who are associated with corruptionists.

After 1/11, massive reforms were started in the country which should see a successful conclusion, Dr Kamal stressed.

"Questions are being raised about the government's ability to manage," he said, urging officials of the military backed caretaker government, "You have taken up a responsibility. Your patience, competence and honesty are being tested. Don't let the corrupt people browbeat you."

The eminent jurist made the remarks at a time when the govern-



ment had released Awami League chief Sheikh Hasina from detention allowing her to leave the country 'for better treatment abroad', initiated a process of amending the Emergency Power Rules (EPR), and is mulling release of BNP chief Khaleda Zia from detention too.

Speaking as the chief guest at an

extended meeting of Jubo Gono Forum, the youth wing of Gono Forum, in its central office in Arambagh of the capital, Dr Kamal said, "We want to know who within the government have gone soft on the corrupt people, and have become weak."

"On whose dikats you are doing these? Let us know who are the people pressuring you to work for the corruptionists. We shall face those evil forces," he said.

Dr Kamal Hossain also demanded that the government duly completes the trials of those corruption suspects against whom charge sheets have already been submitted, while also demanding that the charge sheets be made public within a couple of weeks. He also demanded publication of 'white papers' on the corruption suspects.

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GRENAD, BOMB ATTACKS SINCE '99

No breakthrough yet in probe into 16 cases

SHARIFUL ISLAM

Investigators are yet to make any breakthrough in 16 of at least 43 grenade and bomb attacks that have taken place in the country since 1999.

Twenty-six such attacks, investigations into which have been successful, were carried out by the banned Islamist militant outfits Jama'atul Mujahideen Bangladesh (JMB) and Harkat-ul-Jihad al-Islami (Huji). The JMB is responsible for 17 of these attacks and Huji for the rest, the investigators said.

A number of officials in the agencies investigating the bomb blasts - Rapid Action Battalion

(Rab) and Criminal Investigation Department (CID) - said political influence has been a major reason behind the failure to apprehend the real culprits and find out the motives of the attacks.

Political blame game and implicating of political rivals in the cases after many such grenade or bomb attacks have also led to flawed probes and escape of the perpetrators.

The investigators also said the BNP and Jamaat-led alliance government in carrying out its vigilante activities in the country's northern region.

A minister of the alliance gov-

ernment even recommended clearing Huji top leader Mufti Abdul Hannan, who master-minded many of the outfit's grisly attacks, of charges for attempting to assassinate Awami League (AL) chief Sheikh Hasina.

The major attacks that still remain unsolved are the bomb attacks on the Ahmadiyya mosque in Khulna on October 8, 1999, on a rally of the Communist Party of Bangladesh (CPB) on January 20, 2001, on a church at Baniarchang, Gopalganj on June 3, 2001, on an AL office in Narayanganj on June 15, 2001, on an AL public meeting at Mollahat, Bagerhat on September

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Khaleda's release still hinges on Tarique issue

RAKIB HASNET SUMAN

Detained BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia might be released anytime by next week if the issue of her detained elder son Tarique Rahman's release is settled soon, since she does not want to submit her petition until then, highly placed sources said.

According to the sources, a process to release Arafat Rahman Koko, younger son of Khaleda, is already at the final stage following an application submitted by his wife.

Koko, detained on charges of corruption, is suffering from a plethora of health complications.

There are, however, strong reservations within and outside the military backed caretaker govern-



ment about allowing Tarique to go abroad 'for treatment', who is also detained on charges of corruption. It is widely believed that Tarique was personally involved and also

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Young woman's body found in mango basket

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Police recovered the body of an unidentified young woman from Satrasta Truck Stand in Tejgaon Industrial Area in the city early yesterday.

Locals found the body of the woman, aged around 22, in an abandoned mango basket in front of Essential Drug Company at around 1.45am and informed the police.

Police said the body was kept in straws inside the basket covered with a gunnysack. Hands of the victim, in salwar and kamiz, were tied with ropes, they added.

Sub-Inspector Bikash Chandra Sarkar quoted witnesses as saying that the basket was kept abandoned at the truck stand for hours.

Police sent the body to Dhaka Medical College morgue for autopsy. Morgue sources said the girl was strangled.

A murder case was filed with Tejgaon Industrial Area Police Station.



PHOTO: STAR

The Padma appears to be a "river of sand" with water receding fast since September last. Experts blame the drying up of the river on the Farakka Barrage upstream in India. The photo was taken yesterday at Srirampur, Rajshahi.