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Govt okays purchase of wheat, fertiliser

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The government yesterday approved three proposals for purchasing wheat and fertiliser at a cost of Tk 956 crore.

The proposals were approved at a meeting of the advisers' committee on public purchase at the planning ministry with Finance Adviser Dr Mirza Azizul Islam in the chair.

A total of 100,000 tonnes of wheat will be purchased at a cost of \$419 per tonne through international tender. It would require about Tk 290 crore to purchase the wheat, cabinet division sources said.

"The price of wheat on the international market has been low for the last six to seven months," Azizul told reporters after the meeting.

He said the meeting approved the purchase proposal after reviewing the previous and current prices of wheat on the international market and also considering the risk of price fluctuation in future.

Besides, the government will import 55,000 tonnes of MoP fertiliser for Tk 217 crore and 50,000 tonnes of TSP fertiliser for Tk 449 crore.

The meeting also approved a proposal for constructing the Purbachal Upashahar road and another for setting up a container scanner at Chittagong port involving Tk 43.40 crore and its maintenance at a cost of Tk 59.88 crore.

Make women ineligible to become head of govt, state

Khelafat Andolon tells govt in dialogue

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Bangladesh Khelafat Andolan (BKA) yesterday called upon the interim government to make women ineligible for becoming head of the government or the state.

"We have told the government to take measures so that men hold the top executive positions and no woman assumes the responsibility of head of state or government," said BKA Secretary General Muhammad Zafrullah Khan in a joint press briefing following the party's dialogue with the panel of advisers led by Chief Adviser Fakhruddin Ahmed.

The BKA during the dialogue also suggested reintroducing presidential form of government in the country and mentioning religion of voters on voter identity cards to determine their religious identity.

The party urged the government to implement the recommendations made by Baitul Mukarram National Mosque's acting Khatib-led committee that was formed to review the National Women Development Policy 2008.

A seven-member delegation of the BKA, led by Amir-e-Shariah Shah Ahmedullah Ashraf, attended the dialogue and demanded the release of those held for violence.

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Schoolboy killed in dispute over Tk 5,000

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A schoolboy was killed and five of his cousins were injured when their neighbours attacked them at Dasherbandi on the outskirts of the capital yesterday.

Saifuddin Bhuiyan, 16, a student of class-VII in Trimohani Adarsha High School, died instantly as the neighbours attacked him and his cousins with knives and sticks around 2:00pm. He was stabbed in the throat.

Officer-in-charge of Khilgaon Police Station Sheikh Mohammad Abu Jahid said the deceased and his relatives came under attack when they went to the house of Nuruzzaman in their village to protest assault on Alamgir, a cousin of Saifuddin.

In the morning, Nuruzzaman and his family members allegedly assaulted Alamgir when he went to their home to collect Tk 5,000, which Nuruzzaman reportedly owed him.

As the news of Saifuddin's death spread in the neighbourhood, around 200 villagers rushed to the house of Nuruzzaman but he along

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CITY CORPORATION POLLS

Nomination discords still trouble AL, BNP

Last day of candidacy withdrawal today

HASAN JAHD TUSHER

Internal tussles over nomination for mayoral candidates in city corporation polls still trouble the Awami League (AL) and BNP although the deadline to withdraw nominations ends today.

There is at least one candidate from both AL-led 14-party and BNP-led four-party for the four city corporation polls scheduled for August 4. However, the BNP-led four-party alliance has formally boycotted the polls while AL-led 14-party combine has announced their candidates.

The AL-led coalition has unanimously nominated Talukder Abdul Khaleque for Khulna City Corporation (KCC), Badar Uddin Ahmed Kamran for Sylhet City Corporation (SCC), Shawkat Hossain Hiron for Barisal City Corporation (BCC) and Fazle Hossain Badsha for Rajshahi City Corporation (RCC).

The 14-party combine now has two other candidates from the alliance running in the RCC polls, one in the KCC polls, two in BCC polls and four in SCC polls while four-party has one candidate in KCC polls, four in RCC polls, two in

BCC polls and three in SCC polls.

The AL-led combine is facing severe crisis in Rajshahi as AL central leader and Rajshahi city AL General Secretary AHM Khairuzzaman Liton vowed to contest the polls. Besides, Badsha and Liton, Rajshahi city AL President Maksudul Haque Dulu is also willing to contest.

AL presidium, the party's highest policymaking body, sits today at acting AL President Zillur Rahman's Gulshan residence to discuss ways to settle the Rajshahi tussle. The presidium members

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SIDR VICTIMS

Waiting through the rain for succour

PINAKI ROY back from Southkhali, Bagerhat

It was raining for two days. The weather was not so bearable for fifty-seven-year old Lalmeher Begum of Southkhali who is an asthmatic patient. On the first day, all stuffs she had in her tent got soaked. The next day the floor submerged.

Lalmeher was taking preparations to move elsewhere, may be to the nearby school building when she heard someone from Dhaka was talking with people and writing their names. With

high hopes, she rushed to that tea stall.

"Are you writing names?" Lalmeher, the skinny, old woman, wearing a wet torn saree, asked breathlessly. "Please jot my name on your list. The situation is so tough here. How can we survive under this torn tent during the rains?" she asked.

"My tent is inundated and I am fasting, as the hearth is under water. When will we get housing?" she asked.

This is not the first time Southkhali people asked someone to enlist them. People from

government or non-government offices, foreigners, and members of law enforcement agencies repeatedly came here and wrote down names of Lalmeher, Monira, Shahjahan Hawlader, Moqbul Hossain, Hasan and many others.

As the worst-hit area of cyclone Sidr where over 300 died in a single village on November 15 last year, Southkhali union drew much attention both from home and abroad.

Different national-international non-government

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PHOTO: ANISUR RAHMAN

Sidr victim Lalmeher Begum, left, leaves her tent along with her family to higher grounds as rain inundates the tent at Southkhali in Bagerhat. Many like her are still living in tents almost eight months into the devastating cyclone.

Jamaat activists' attack on freedom fighter sparks protest

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

An assault on a freedom fighter by some operatives of Jamaat-e-Islami and its students' wing Shibir on Friday in the capital sparked widespread condemnations and protests across the country yesterday.

The operatives of the political organisations, well documented as major anti-liberation forces in the country, dragged and kicked veteran freedom fighter, Sheikh Mohammad Ali A man, as he demanded immediate trial and execution of war criminals while speaking to the news crew of a private TV channel outside the venue of a representatives' meeting of a Jamaat backed organisation ironically named 'Jatiya Muktiyoddha Parishad' or the National Forum of Freedom Fighters.

Mohammad Ali attended the programme at Diploma Engineers Institution thinking the organisation was a platform for freedom fighters, but ultimately had a violent awakening to its real character.

"Don't ask me to describe the assault on me. I can't narrate the ordeal, I can't bring shame on the liberation war," the valiant freedom fighter burst into tears yesterday as he uttered these words.

Asked whether he will file a case, Mohammad Ali firmly said he will not file a case as an individual, adding, "The government must

take legal actions against the perpetrators as the assault on me was an assault on all freedom fighters and desecration of the liberation war," he told The Daily Star in the office of private satellite television ETV.

Vested interests using liberation war banner to create trouble

Says Amu

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Vested interests using the banner of the liberation war are plotting to create a civil war-like situation at a time when people are waiting for transition to democracy through a general election, Awami League leader Amir Hossain Amu yesterday said.

He pointed finger at a meeting of the Jamaat-backed so-called 'Jatiya Muktiyoddha Parishad' Friday where Shibir cadres swooped on a liberation war veteran as he demanded punishment to those Jamaat men who had been al-Badr and Peace Committee members during the liberation war.

Amu was speaking at a discussion on Liberation War of Bangladesh: Role of Field Marshal Sam Manekshaw, organised by Muktiyoddha Samonoy Parishad (MSP) at Cirdap auditorium.

K Nandini Sinhal, first secretary at Indian High Commission in

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PHOTO: STAR

Passengers throng Sadarghat Launch Terminal in the capital yesterday after launch workers withdrew their strike demanding pay hike.

Launch strike ends on pay hike assurance

Cargo vessels still off the routes as negotiations fail

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

After around 38 hours, passenger vessels resumed services yesterday as water transport workers partially called off their countrywide strike demanding higher wages.

Following meetings with BIWTA and vessel owners, the striking workers decided to allow launches and other passenger carriers to run while keeping the freight vessels still off the routes.

In line with the decision,

launches and steamers got back to operation at 3:00pm, ending sufferings of the passengers who had been stranded at different terminals for hours.

The announcement of partial adjournment came on assurance from the owners of a pay hike soon, said sources in Bangladesh Inland Water Transport Authority (BIWTA).

Talking to The Daily Star, Abdur Razzaq, a leader of Bangladesh Water Transport Workers

Federation, said, "We have suspended the strike for passenger vessels only, considering the sufferings of passengers."

The workers stopped working at midnight Thursday, calling for increased wages in keeping with the current prices of essentials and cost of living.

Meeting the labourer leaders, the inland water transport authorities yesterday said the government has already formed a committee to

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No agreement against national interest

Says foreign adviser on transit issue

UNB, Dhaka

Foreign Affairs Adviser Iftikhar Ahmed Chowdhury yesterday made an unequivocal and firm resolve regarding the question of transit to India, saying the foreign ministry will never agree to any arrangement which is contrary to Bangladesh's sovereign national interest.

Responding to some reports related to transit to India, he said, "I wish to announce unequivocally and firmly that the Ministry of Foreign Affairs will never, under any circumstances, agree to any arrangement that is contrary to our sovereign national interest."

"We are prepared to negotiate with any country on any subject, but no solution can ever be imposed on us without our

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Anti-crime drive before polls not needed: Matin

UNB, Ctg

Home Affairs Adviser Maj Gen (ret'd) MA Matin yesterday said the law and order situation is now under control, though it had deteriorated a little bit.

"I think there is no need of conducting special drive ahead of the national election. Regular drive to arrest the listed criminals will continue as a routine work," he said.

His remarks came while talking to the media after a closed-door meeting on law and order with high officials of police and district administration at local Circuit House.

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