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Rice Tk 10 a kg never pledged
Matia responds to BNP campaign
STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Agriculture Minister Matia Chowdhury yesterday said Awami League did not make any pre-poll pledge of giving rice at Tk 10 per kg and fertilizer free of cost.

She made this clarification while replying to a query before the journalists at her secretariat office as a few leaders of BNP have been saying that Awami League had pledged to give rice at Tk 10 and so they are asking to fulfil that "promise".

"For the sake of Allah, don't impose these things on us," said Matia.

She also said, "BNP is saying this. We have not said so anywhere." She requested

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High-ups' wealth must be known to public

Ministers, MPs, secretaries should reveal their assets soon for good governance, says Shujan

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The new government should soon ask the ministers, lawmakers and secretaries of all ministries to declare their wealth statements as part of its commitment to establishing good governance in the country, Shushashoner Janney Nagorik (Shujan) said yesterday.

"We hope the prime minister will soon ask the ministers, lawmakers and secretaries to declare their wealth statements. We are waiting for it," Shujan Chairman Prof Muzaffer Ahmad said at a discussion on democracy and good governance at the Jatiya Press Club.

The government should create a separate cell in every ministry to deal with the complaints of irregularities and also refrain from favouring partisans in business matters. It should also take necessary measures to make the parliamentary standing committees effective, he said.

Democracy is not very safe in the present form of the parliament where the ruling party has a huge majority and can pass any law it wants, he said.

Prof Muzaffer, also the chairman of Transparency International Bangladesh, said it is very important to make space for common people to have debates on crucial national issues and put forward their proposals to the government.

It is the common people who can identify the real problems of the country, he said, adding that the ministers and the lawmakers must communicate with them to understand the real problems.

Eminent economist Prof Rehman Sobhan said some new realities have emerged after the polls. In parliament the opposition is small in size but the matter of hope is that many new faces have made it to the cabinet.

The senior lawmakers from both the ruling party and the opposition could be given chairmanship of the parliamentary standing committees to hold the ministries accountable, he said.

Commenting that the parliament was not very effective during the tenure of the previous governments, Rehman Sobhan said the new government can introduce

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Chandra Shekhar Haldar, vice-chairman candidate of the upcoming Rajapur upazila parishad elections in Jhalakathi uses a civet, an endangered animal, to woo voters. The people who captured the animal gave it a beating and broke its teeth. Luckily, following a newspaper report yesterday, the forest department sent its officials to rescue the civet.

BNP moves to find able men at grassroots

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

BNP high-ups have decided to assign some party leaders to find out efficient grassroots-level leaders across the country as part of a move to strengthen the party.

Sources said BNP's national executive committee is likely to sit in the first week of the next month to discuss various issues including the reason for party's debacle in the parliamentary polls and reorganisation of party committees.

Party insiders said two

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46 killed as militants clash with Pak troops

AFP, Peshawar

Hundreds of foreign militants attacked Pakistani forces near the border with Afghanistan, sparking clashes that left six soldiers and 40 militants dead, the military said yesterday.

The fierce fighting began late Saturday and continued early Sunday in the lawless Mohmand tribal area in northwest Pakistan, a known Taliban and al-Qaeda stronghold, the military said in a statement.

The cross-border attack was the biggest in recent months against Pakistan's security forces, who are battling to flush out militants in several areas of the country's restive northwest.

The rugged border area is a key battleground in the US-led "war on terror", with extremists operating on both sides and using "safe havens" in Pakistan from which they are said to launch attacks on foreign forces in Afghanistan.

Most of the insurgents came from the Afghan side of the border and were joined by local Taliban fighters. The combined force of about 600 militants then attacked a Pakistani paramilitary Frontier Corps base near the border.

The militants, armed with mortars, rocket launchers and grenades, attacked the fort at Mamad Gate -- where members of Pakistan's elite Quick Reaction Force were stationed -- from several directions, officials and witnesses told AFP.

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5TH AMENDMENT Full court to hear leave to appeal

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Supreme Court (SC) yesterday adjourned for four weeks the hearing of the long pending leave to appeal filed by then BNP-led alliance government against the High Court (HC) verdict that declared illegal the fifth amendment to the constitution approving late President Ziaur Rahman's takeover and previous acts from August 15, 1975.

After hearing both sides of the case, the four-member full

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2 murdered, 2 shot in city

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Two youths were hacked to death by unknown criminals in the city's Kotwali and Demra areas early yesterday amid growing incidence of crime in the last few days.

Besides, armed muggers shot two persons, including a sales representative of a cellphone company, and snatched around Tk 1 lakh from the salesman in Badda area.

One of the slain youths was identified as Wahiduzzaman alias Intu, 27, of Aga Sadeque Lane under Kotwali police station.

Family sources said criminals killed Intu at his own residence and his sister Shimu found the body in a storeroom at the top of the five-storey building at about 9:30am.

Abdur Rahman Mahbub, maternal uncle of Intu, said his nephew went out of the house around 12:30am and his body was found in the morning.

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RMG workers clash with cops: 15 hurt

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

At least 15 garment workers were injured in two separate clashes with police and factory staffers in the city's Uttara and Adabar yesterday.

Several hundred workers of those two garment factories staged demonstrations on the busiest Airport and Shyamoli Roads demanding their out-

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A murder pushed into oblivion

Family bears the scar of 1980 killing but too scared still to seek justice



Mojiur Rahman Sarwar

বরিশালে বিএনপির কর্মী হত্যা সম্পর্কে শংনদে দুটি আকর্ষণীয় প্রস্তাব

১। সংসদে বিএনপির ১১ জন সদস্যের সম্মেলন।
২। এন পি পলিটিক্যাল সভা।
৩। নতুন আইনজীবীর বোর্ডের তত্ত্বাবধায় সংসদে আবেদন।
৪। দুটি আকর্ষণীয় প্রস্তাব উপস্থাপন করিয়া যাবেন। ২০/০১/০৯ তারিখে বিকাল ৪টায় বরিশাল জাতীয়-সভায় গিয়ে বাংলাদেশী জাতীয়তাবাদের বিনীত সৈনিক জনতার আবেদন কলমে প্রকাশ।
৫। ১২-৪৪ জা ১।

EMRAN HOSSAIN, back from Barisal

Haider Kuti, who gradually went insane witnessing the murder of his brother in broad daylight allegedly by BNP lawmaker-elect from Barisal-5 Mojiur Rahman Sarwar, still wanders around the killing spot.

His brother Kalam was chopped to death on March 29, 1980 on Kalibari Road in Barisal city. During a visit to the city, Haider was found mumbling on the same spot.

Asked a few questions, he only answered one: "I don't know who Kalam is," and continued murmuring.

Back at home, several yards off from the spot, lives his 80-year-old helpless mother Kushum. She has been living in fear for her three other sons for the last three decades and didn't comment on the matter.

"I have lifted all charges against Sarwar. If he does any harm to any of my sons again, I have none but Allah to seek justice," said widowed Kushum.

Locals say Kushum, intimidated by Sarwar, was forced to make a court statement for withdrawing the murder case

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A bomb dropped by an Israeli air force jet explodes in Jabalia in northern Gaza. Inset, Israeli tanks roll on towards the Gaza Strip from the Israel-Gaza border yesterday. Israeli troops and armour pushed deeper into Gaza's main city.



RESERVED JS SEATS EC to seek expert opinion on polls

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Election Commission (EC) yesterday decided to seek constitution experts' opinion on whether the EC is legally bound to hold election to 45 reserved parliamentary seats for women before the inaugural session of this parliament on January 25.

The EC, claiming that it is on the right track, remains firm on its stance to hold the polls after the new parliament goes into session.

"I will consult former attorney general Mahmudul Islam and seek his opinion on the matter," Election Commissioner Muhammed Sohul Hussain told The Daily Star yesterday after a meeting at the EC which discussed the election to the reserved seats.

Referring to a High Court (HC) verdict in this regard, former attorney general Mahmudul Islam in his book "Constitutional Law of Bangladesh" said, "While the provision for reservation of

SEE PAGE 2 COL 5

US rejects Israel's plea for strike against Iran

AFP, Washington

US President George W Bush last year rejected a secret Israeli request for an air strike against the main Iranian nuclear complex using US bunker-busting bombs. The New York Times reported on its website late Saturday.

But citing unnamed senior US and foreign officials, the newspaper said Bush had authorised a new covert operation aimed at sabotaging Iran's suspected effort to develop nuclear weapons.

The request was made last

SEE PAGE 15 COL 1

POST-POLLS VIOLENCE BNP man killed in Ctg; 25 hurt in Natore

STAR REPORT

A pro-BNP labourer was killed in Chittagong city Saturday night while at least 25 people were injured in a clash between the supporters of Awami League (AL) and BNP in Lalpur upazila of Natore yesterday.

Our correspondent in Chittagong reports: Labourer Khokan Majhi, 37, a Jatiyatabadi Sramik Dal activist and joint convenor of the election committee of BNP candidate Abdullah Al Noman, was beaten to death at Chhotopul of Halishahar in the port city.

Local BNP leaders blamed AL cadres for the killing but police did not find any political link with the murder.

Sub-inspector Humayun Kabir, also the investigation officer, suspected that the killing might be a result of dispute between

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Biman makes emergency landing at ZIA

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A Boeing 747 of the country's flag carrier Bangladesh Biman had to make an emergency landing in the first hour of today at Zia International Airport (ZIA) about an hour into its take off, due to malfunctioning of one of its engines.

Chief Security Officer of ZIA Nurul Islam said the plane made the emergency touch down with all passengers

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PRICE CONTROL Monitoring cell to be strengthened

UNB, Dhaka

Commerce Minister Lt Col (ret'd) Farooq Khan yesterday said the existing price monitoring cell at his ministry would be strengthened to keep the prices of essentials at tolerable level.

Briefing newsmen at his ministry after the cabinet meeting, he said the monitoring cell would regularly

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Prof Faiz to quit as DU VC

DU CORRESPONDENT

Dhaka University (DU) Vice Chancellor (VC) Prof SMA Faiz decided to step down and requested the education ministry to take necessary steps in this regard.

Prof Faiz yesterday confirmed The Daily Star that he tendered a letter to the education secretary yesterday afternoon.

"There was no fear or

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Prayer Timing		
January 12		
	Azan	Jamaat
Fajr	5-30	6-05
Zohr	12-45	1-15
Asr	4-00	4-15
Maghrib	5-36	5-40
Esha	7-00	7-30

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