

Govt to ensure transparency in food procurement

Says food minister

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The government will ensure transparency in food procurement and is considering incentives for farmers so that they cooperate in building food security, the food minister said yesterday.

"We will ensure that farmers get fair price of rice and paddy, and market price of food grains remains stable. We are about to form monitoring committee in every upazila to oversee food procurement," said Abdur Razzaque.

"Each monitoring committee will include locally acceptable and popular school or college teachers, imams and government officials."

The minister was addressing a luncheon meeting on 'Food Security' in the capital, organised by the American Chamber of Commerce in Bangladesh (AmCham).

The government will take steps so that no middleman or syndicate can take advantage of food procurement by depriving farmers and creating artificial crisis in market,

he said.

Attaining self-sufficiency in food grains production and making it sustainable are the main goals of the government, Razzaque said. It also aims at ensuring a balance between lower commodity prices and farmers' interests.

The government will continue to make all farm inputs available in time and at reasonable prices, ensure fair prices for farm products and extend credit facilities to farmers. It will also encourage export of agricultural goods, the minister said.

Expansion of VGF (vulnerable group feeding) net and food-for-work programme to ensure food for all is under consideration, he mentioned.

Razzaque said the government would redesign its 100-day employment-generation programme and launch it after the next budget is passed.

Heather Variava, deputy chief of economic and political affairs of the US Embassy in Dhaka, and Syed Ershad Ahmed, president of AmCham, among others were present at the meeting.



(From right) Tariq Ali, Mafidul Haq, Akku Chowdhury, Mutual Trust Bank Limited Managing Director Anis A Khan and Md Hashem Chowdhury hold copies of an album 'Our Liberation War: Down the Path of History' at the album handover ceremony at the Liberation War Museum auditorium in the city yesterday. Mutual Trust Bank donated the album to the museum.

2 policemen suspended on charges of negligence

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Two policemen of Motijheel Police Station who recorded a general diary (GD) against the inspector general of police (IGP) was suspended last night on charges of negligence of duty.

The suspended police personnel are Sub-Inspector Mohammad Malek and Assistant Sub-Inspector Naimul Islam.

Officer-in-charge (OC) Syed Sajjad Selim told The Daily Star that Deputy Commissioner (DC) of Motijheel Zone of Dhaka Metropolitan Police issued the suspension letters.

When contacted, DC of Motijheel zone said that they inquired into the matter and found that SI Malek did not go through the statement of the complainant before filing the GD, although it is mandatory to go over the complaint.

And ASI Naimul handed over the GD copy to the complainant, which he should not do as the GD was not recorded by him, the DC added.

He also said that the police are investigating the accusations made in the GD.

The police said editor of the weekly Anusandhan Barta Delawar Bin Siraj filed the GD against the IGP on April 26.

68 Myanmar citizens handed over to Nasaka

A CORRESPONDENT, Cox's Bazar

A total of 68 Myanmar citizens, who were serving in Cox's Bazar jail, were handed over to Myanmar border force Nasaka yesterday as their tenure of convictions ended.

In this regard, a two-hour battalion-level flag meeting between BDR and Nasaka was held at the rest house of Teknaf Roads and Highways at Cox's Bazar at 2:00pm.

Commander of Teknaf 42 Rifles Battalion Lt Col Abdul Khaleda led the seven-member Bangladesh delegation at the meeting, while Nasaka No 6 sector director led the 16-member Myanmar team.

BDR sources said the BDR commander handed the citizens over to the Nasaka commander.

Obituary

UNB, Dhaka

Muhammad Nur Islam, senior assistant secretary posted at the Establishment Ministry, died of cancer at Dhaka Medical College Hospital yesterday at the age of 43.

He left behind his wife, one son and one daughter and a host of well-wishers to mourn his death.

He will be buried at his family graveyard at Chaktabari village in Roumari upazila in Kurigram today.

Nur Islam, a 13th batch official of BCS (Admin) cadre, had joined the administration service in 1994.

Nurul Anwar

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Nurul Anwar, a freedom fighter, president of Bangladesh Sramojibi Kendra, and executive director of LRC, passed away at Cancer Centre Welfare Home and Research Institute in Kolkata, India on Sunday at the age of 60, says a press release.

He left behind his wife, a son, three daughters and a host of relatives and admirers to mourn his death.

He was buried with state honour at his village home at Kotlipara in Gopalganj yesterday.

Shamsun Nahar

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Shamsun Nahar, wife of former divisional commissioner of Rajshahi Sirajul Karim, passed away due to old-age complications at her Dhanmondi residence in the city on Monday at the age of 96, says a press release.

She left behind her two sons, grandchildren and a host of relatives and well-wishers to mourn her death.

Her elder son Rezaul Karim is a former acting secretary and younger son Enayet Karim is a former vice president of Uttara Bank.

'Allocate sufficient budget for veterinary health sector'

DU CORRESPONDENT

Bangladesh Agriculture University (BAU) Vice Chancellor Prof MA Sattar Mandal yesterday urged the government to ensure sufficient allocation for the veterinary health sector in the next national budget.

Terming 'Avian Flu' and 'Swine Flu' widespread concern, he said, "The village economy may stumble if swine flu and avian flu affect the country's poultry farming industry."

"We have many expertise to carry out researches with these viruses to find out ways of preventing or controlling the diseases. But we do not have modern laboratories to conduct such researches," he

added.

The BAU VC said this as the chief guest at a town hall discussion at the National Museum auditorium in the city.

He urged the government to provide necessary allocation for the next fiscal budget in the veterinary health sector to prevent the strains of avian flu or swine flu and address ways of controlling such diseases.

Prof Mandal also stressed the need for participating in dialogues or discussions organised on trans-boundary diseases at regional levels with sufficient information.

Voice of America (VoA), a US broadcasting organisation, organised the discussion with a view to raising awareness of the deadly new strain of swine

flu among the people related to poultry farming.

Head of Bangla Service of VoA Iqbal Bahar Chowdhury, leaders of Bangladesh Poultry Industries Association and experts spoke at the session.

The speakers called on the poultry farmers not to be afraid when crisis arrives and tackle the situation taking concern from veterinary experts.

They also urged the government to set up modern laboratories so that experts can deal with these viruses and find out new ways to prevent or tackle diseases.

A question-answer session was also held after the discussion. The ceremony ended with a stage drama on the topic.

'Power brokers grip state system thru' corruption'

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Adviser to Prime Minister Syed Modasser Ali yesterday said law could not be implemented in the country properly as 'power brokers' have gripped the whole state system through abuse of power and corruption.

"Our society is so small and power brokers have been controlling government institutions in such a way that law cannot be implemented properly even at the order of a political leader," he said.

Modasser made the observation at a seminar titled 'Occupational safety and health: Human rights of a worker,' organised by Population Services and Training Centre (PSTC) in association with ActionAid Bangladesh at Cirdap auditorium in the city.

With reference to the objective of arranging the seminar, he said, "Suppose we formulate a law in this regard. But the reality is that 90 per cent industrialists will not follow the law. They are organised and powerful enough to shut down all the industries in the country if we force them."

PSTC Executive Director Milon Bikash Paul and ActionAid Country Director Farah Kabir also addressed the seminar where Dr Nasrin Khan, research fellow of NIPSOM, and Shakil Akhter Chowdhury and Shaikh Giasuddin Ahmed presented separate papers.

Nasrin presented a paper titled 'Occupational safety and health in Bangladesh' and Shakil Akhter and Shaikh Giasuddin jointly submitted a paper on 'Occupational safety and health policy: Bangladesh perspectives and corporate social responsibility'.

In her paper, Nasrin recommended formulating a national policy regarding the topic, ratifying ILO conventions relating to the issue, rapid assessment and re-addressing of legislations, developing active data system and establishing a national and regional accident and occupational disease database.

The paper on CSR also recommended empowerment of female workers through training, employment of physically handicapped people, support to acid burn victims, medical camps, medical support for AIDS patients and relief and rehabilitation.

Shamim Chy appointed DG of PIB

STAFF CORRESPONDENT



A K M Shamim Chowdhury, an official of BCS (information) cadre, was appointed director general of Press

Institute of Bangladesh on deputation.

Shamim Chowdhury is the president of BCS Information Association.

Earlier, he served in various posts at the Department of Film and Publication, Press Information Department and National Institute of Mass Media.

RU reopens June 1

RU CORRESPONDENT

Academic activities of Rajshahi University (RU) will resume on June 1 amid tight security measures.

The dormitories of the university will reopen for students in phases on May 30 and 31.

RU authorities took the decision at an emergency meeting at the Senate Building yesterday with RU Vice Chancellor Prof Abdus Sobhan in the chair.

According to the academic calendar, the university was scheduled to have a summer vacation from May 1 to June 15.

But the teachers had suggested curtailing the summer vacation by 15 days and reopening the university on June 1 and residential halls on May 30.

Earlier on March 13, the RU authorities closed the university indefinitely following a clash between Bangladesh Chhatra League (BCL) and Islami Chhatra Shibir (ICS) where a Shibir leader was killed and 100 others were injured.

2 construction workers shot in city

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Unidentified criminals fired bullets at construction workers sleeping inside a shed at Kafrul in the city early yesterday, leaving two workers injured.

The injured workers were identified as Nazrul Islam, 20, and Mohammad Hafizur Rahman, 18, of a construction site of NSP Real-estate Pvt at East Shampara Parbata in Kafrul.

Both the workers hail from Jamalpur and they had joined work only three days ago.

The injured were rushed to Dhaka Medical College Hospital (DMCH).

Nazrul told The Daily Star at DMCH that they were asleep in the shed when a gang of six criminals, aged between 16 and 18, attacked him with lethal weapons.

"Hafizur sustained a bullet injury to his buttock as the criminals opened fire when he tried to resist," he added.

When other workers woke up at the sound of gunshots the criminals fled firing two shots in the air, he said.

Kafrul police could not ascertain the motive behind the attack.

No case was filed in this connection.

Govt to help develop newspaper industry Says information minister

UNB, Dhaka

The government would extend all necessary cooperation for the development of the newspaper industry, Information Minister Abul Kalam Azad said yesterday.

Stressing the need for more objective news, he said the newspapers and journalists have a significant role to play in ensuring transparency and accountability of individuals and organisations.

The minister said this while exchanging views with a 17-member delegation of Bangladesh Regional Newspaper Council at the information ministry.

The regional newspapers are serving the local people by projecting the local problems, the minister said, adding that the government is determined to help such newspapers.

Regional Newspaper Council secretary general M Habibur Rahman spoke of various problems facing the regional newspapers.

The information minister assured the council of necessary cooperation to resolve the problems.

Principal Information

DHAKA TODAY

Seminar

BIDS organises a seminar on 'Meeting the challenges of Global recession: Recommendations for the national budget 2009-10'. Venue: BIDS conference room. Time: 10:00am

Workshop on khas land

PPRC and Concern Worldwide jointly organise a workshop on 'Dynamics of khas land management and settlement in haor basin'. Venue: LGED auditorium. Time: 9:30am.

Workshop

Centre for Inter-religions and Intercultural Dialogue of Dhaka University, Episcopal Commission for inter-religious Dialogue, Bangladesh and Department of World Religions of Dhaka University jointly organise a workshop on 'Imams and pastors dialogue on unity in diversity'. Venue: 434 Lecture Theater. Time: 9:30am.

Policy dialogue

Department of Population Science of Dhaka University in cooperation with the UNFPA will organise a policy dialogue on 'Revisiting population policy of Bangladesh'. Venue: Sheraton Hotel. Time: 9:00am.

Talk

Prof Mesbah-us-Saleheen of Jahangirnagar University will deliver a talk on ageing population of Bangladesh. Venue: Asiatic Society auditorium. Time: 4:00pm.

View exchange meeting

Democratic Lawyers Association of Bangladesh organises a view exchange meeting on expectation of the nation on trial of the war criminals. Venue: Supreme Court Bar Association Hall-2. Time: 4:30pm.

Dialogue

ActionAid Bangladesh organises a dialogue on 'Emerging economic recession: Fate of the Bangladeshi migrant workers'. Venue: Dhaka Reporters' Unity. Time: 3:00pm

Roundtable

Nagorik Forum organises a roundtable on war crime and its trial. Venue: National Press Club. Time: 3:30pm.

Dialogue on economic crisis

A high-level policy dialogue on 'Global economic crisis: Its impact on overseas employment sector of Bangladesh' will be held. Venue: Sonargaon Hotel. Time: 9:00am.

UNDP to help carry out studies on rivers

BSS, Dhaka

The UNDP will assist to carry out studies on navigability of the rivers of Bangladesh.

UNDP Country Director Stefan Presner made the assurance yesterday while he called on Planning Minister Air Vice Marshal (ret'd) AK Khondaker at his office, an official handout said.

They discussed various issues of mutual interest including navigability of the rivers, river dredging, river training and poverty alleviation.

AK Khondaker said most of the rivers lost navigability due to siltation and became wider.

A huge area of agriculture land will be recovered if the depth of the rivers can be increased through dredging, he added.

WEATHER TODAY

UNB, Dhaka

Weather is likely to remain mainly dry with partly cloudy sky over the country in next 12 hours as of 6:00pm today.

There are also chances of rain or thundershowers accompanied by temporary gusty or squally wind at one or two places over Rajshahi, Dhaka and Sylhet divisions, Met Office said.

Prevailing mild to moderate heat wave over Khulna division and the regions of Rajshahi, Iswardi, Dhaka, Madaripur and Rangamati may continue, it said, adding that day temperature may remain nearly unchanged over the country during the period.

The sun sets in the capital at 6:26pm today and rises at 5:25am tomorrow.

Yesterday's highest temperature of 39.2 degree Celsius was recorded at Jessore and the lowest of 21.3 degree at Dinajpur.

The highest and lowest temperature and humidity recorded in some major cities and towns yesterday were:

City/Town	Temperature in Celsius		Humidity in percentage	
	Max	Min	Morning	Evening
Dhaka	36.5	26.6	66	59
Chittagong	32.5	26.0	80	72
Rajshahi	38.2	26.0	79	47
Khulna	37.5	27.4	71	54
Barisal	34.7	26.1	76	66
Sylhet	34.0	26.0	69	63
Cox's Bazar	33.5	25.7	73	71