

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.

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.

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

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.

'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

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



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.

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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 Ali Vice Marshal (retd) 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 silting 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.

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.

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.

Dialogue on economic crisis

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'Power brokers grip state system thru' corruption'

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Adviser to Prime Minister Syed Modassar 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 a law cannot be implemented properly even at the order of a political leader," he said.

Modassar 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 percent 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 Akther Chowdhury and Shaikh Giasuddin Ahmed presented separate papers.

Nasrin presented a paper titled 'Occupational safety and health in Bangladesh' and Shakil Akther 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.

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(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.

PHOTO: STAR

KILLING OF KHAIRUL VOROSHA

Refusal to pay money for business led to killing

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Kabirul Islam Vorosha killed his younger brother Khairul Islam Vorosha, managing director of New Age Tobacco, as the victim did not give him money to put a cold storage into operation in Rangpur, according to a source.

Khairul was shot dead by Kabirul at one of their business offices at Bijoy Nagar in the city on Monday afternoon. They were the sons of former Jatiya Party lawmaker Karimuddin Vorosha.

Khairul was the 14th of 16 children born to the family of Karimuddin Vorosha who has two wives.

Mahmud Hossain, another brother-in-law of Khairul, said as Karimuddin Vorosha largely depended on him (the deceased) to run a number of businesses, most of his children did not like it and hatched conspiracies against the victim, who completed BBA course in Canada five years ago.

Police said the deceased's brother-in-law Imran Hossain filed a murder case yesterday with Paltan Police Station accusing Kabirul.

Sub-Inspector (SI) Shamsur Rahman told The Daily Star that following filing of the case, they raided Kabirul's residence at Banani and seized his passport.

Photographs of Kabirul were sent to all the immigration points asking not to allow him to leave the country, he said, adding that they could not yet arrest the killer who managed to flee the scene after killing his brother.

SI Rahman, who is also investigation officer of the case, said Kabirul set up a cold stor-

age in Rangpur around six months ago, but he could not start it due to lack of money.

Khairul several times asked his brother to help him to give him money, but he was denied that by the killer, he added.

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HC directs govt to set up CCTVs, help desks at airports

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The High Court (HC) yesterday directed the government to set up closed-circuit television (CCTV) cameras and help desks at all the airports in the country to ensure security of the passengers.

It also asked all the on-duty officials at the airports to carry their identity cards with their names and addresses and behave gently with the passengers to avoid any kind of untoward incidents.

A HC bench comprising Justice Md Imran Ali and Justice Sheikh Abdul Awal came up with the directives while delivering the verdict on a petition which was filed following an incident of assaulting Barrister Rezwan Hossain, a Bangladeshi-born British citizen, at Zia International Airport in April last year.

Rezwan Hossain, who is an adviser to a charity department of London-based television Channel S, went to ZIA to see his younger sister off as she was going back to London on April 14, 2008.

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