

Millers asked to buy rice at govt-fixed price

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Rice millers will have to buy a certain portion of rice directly from farmers at the government-fixed price and supply those to the government stock to ensure that the farmers get fair price, Food Minister Abdur Razzaque said yesterday. "We will make such rules for rice procurement in future so that farmers get fair price of rice," the minister said as he exchanged views with leaders of North Bengal Rice Millers Association at Bogra Circuit House on the sidelines of monitoring the procurement drive in the northern districts. The minister said the government would set up three more modern silos of 2.5 lakh metric tones in Sirajganj, Narayanganj and Mongla Port to increase the government's food stock capacity, according to a PID handout. Razzaque made the comment at a time

when Boro farmers are selling their paddies at lower prices than the government-fixed price of Tk 560 a mound paddy. Farmers at different northern districts said they now sell paddy at Tk 450 to Tk 480 which was Tk 350 to Tk 400 just one to two weeks ago. In the wake of such low rice prices of paddies, he expressed concern, saying that the government would procure more rice to help protect farmers' interests. In the meeting, the minister called on the rice millers to increase the market price of rice from the farmers. "The preservation of food by the government is urgent for food security. When the government can buy more amount of rice, farmers can sell rice at fair prices," Razzaque said. Presently, the government has the capacity of preserving 12 lakh metric tons of rice in its stocks.



Fahmida Nabi sings at a festival titled 'Celebrating Life' at Rangpur Zila School auditorium in Rangpur on Thursday night. The songs were selected from the contest titled 'Celebrating Life 2008', a joint initiative of The Daily Star and the Standard Chartered Bank.

'Celebrating Life' in Rangpur

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Rangpur

The Daily Star and the Standard Chartered Bank jointly organised a festival titled 'Celebrating Life' at Rangpur Zila School auditorium on Thursday night. Noted singer Fahmida Nabi and other singers sang at a cultural function on the occasion. The songs were selected from the contest titled 'Celebrating Life 2008', a joint initiative of The Daily Star and the Standard Chartered Bank. Dr Mafizul Islam Montu, a cultural activist of Rangpur, said this is a unique initiative and such programmes are rare in Rangpur. The programme began with the performance of dance artistes of Spandan Nrityashilpi Gosthi of Dhaka. Close Up stars Bappi, Liton and Parul, who are residents of Rangpur, also sang with Fahmida Nabi.

CAMPAIGN FOR PREVENTION OF BLINDNESS 2 cr children to be given vitamin A capsule June 6

UNB, Dhaka

About two crore children of the 1-5 age group will be administered high-powered vitamin A capsule on June 6 across the country to protect them from blindness and strengthen their immune systems. On the day, some 1.7 crore children of 2-5 years of age will also be given anti-helmethic tablet each under a programme titled 'Vitamin A Plus Campaign', Prof Fatima Parveen Chowdhury, director of Institute of Public Health Nutrition (IPHN), told the news agency. She urged guardians to take their under-five children to the nearest vaccination centres so that they can properly be fed the tablets. "The government carries out the campaign every year with a six-month interval across the country... This is an important step towards building a healthy nation," she said. The IPHN director said IPHN under a programme, Planning and Advocacy, is

now holding meetings at district and upazila levels across the country to make people aware to make the campaign a success. "People from the administration, media and NGOs and other stakeholders are taking part in the planning and advocacy meetings," she said, adding that they would be mobilised at all vaccination centres to feed the capsule and anti-helmethic tablet. She said they have already completed similar meetings at all divisional headquarters. Gradually, they will go to upazila and union levels to make the people aware of the programme until the campaign ends. Prof Parveen said child blindness is still not a serious problem in Bangladesh. An estimated 0.04 percent of the children are suffering from night blindness, although the trend of blindness was 3.76 percent in the country a few years ago. Distribution of vitamin A capsule among the children has certainly reduced the rate of night blindness in our country," the IPHN official

said referring to the last study report updated in 2006. She further said that they are working in dealing with some other programmes, including Breast Meal Substitute (BMS Code), Universal Salt Iodination (USID), Bangladesh Nutrition (BAN Nut) and School Health. The IPHN director said four lakh volunteers would take part in the campaign to successfully feed vitamin capsule and anti-helmethic tablet to children from some 1.4 lakh centres. "Of them, some 1.2 lakh are fixed vaccination centres, while the rest will be opened at bus stands, launch terminals and railway stations and airports." She said all volunteers under the direct supervision of civil surgeons would be given a one-day training locally on how to operate the campaign. Prof Parveen stressed the need for creating mass awareness about the nutritional dietary items through education and dissemination of information.

Laptop fair kicks off in Ctg

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

A three-day laptop fair titled 'Laptop Fair Chittagong 2009' began in the port city yesterday with a view to making the young generation more familiar with the latest innovation in computer technology. Maker Communication, an event management firm, is organising the fair for the fourth time in the country with the slogan 'Lit up the light of technology'. Three leading computer suppliers Asus, Benq and Posh-Book are sponsoring the fair. Chittagong City Corporation (CCC) Mayor ABM Mohiuddin Chowdhury inaugurated the fair by lighting candles at the auditorium of Institution of Engineers, Bangladesh (IEB) Chittagong. Chittagong University (CU) Vice Chancellor (VC) Prof Dr Abu Yusuf, Bangladesh Computer Association President Mostafa Jabbar, Bank Asia Deputy Managing Director SM Khorshed Alam and Asus

Country Manager Mohiuddin Khasru were special guests at the inaugural ceremony with Strategic Planner of Maker Communication Muhammad Khan in the chair. Mohiuddin said he would take initiatives to digitalise CCC soon to boost the bid for 'Digital Bangladesh'. He said CCC has already set up computer training schools to provide computer education at a cheaper rate. The CCC Mayor stressed giving the young generation more scopes to use information technology to refrain them from misdeeds and make them competent and self-dependent. CU VC Prof Abu Yusuf said the country's natural resources are limited but the young generation can be turned into unlimited resources if they are made efficient in using information technology. Mostafa Jabbar urged the CCC mayor to take steps to establish e-governance so that

the citizens can avail themselves of different facilities from home. Bank Asia DMD SM Khorshed Alam announced that his bank would provide the students with loan to buy laptop at 15 percent interest. A huge number of visitors thronged the fair yesterday to have a look at the laptops of the latest model. A number of renowned laptop brands, including Asus, Benq, Posh-Book, Compaq, Apple, Dell, HP, Gigabyte, Toshiba, Acer, Great Wall and Deluxe are participating in the fair. Flora Limited sold a 6530s model HP Compaq Notebook with a Tk 5000 discount to its first customer within half an hour of the opening. Iqbal Hossain, a 3rd year student of a private medical college, expressed his joy getting a laptop of the latest model at a great discount. Computer Village, a local computer seller, offered a brand new Asus laptop at only

Tk 22,000. Huge gathering was seen at the pavilion of Bank Asia that offered loans at 17 percent interest for purchasing laptops at the fair. A jobholder who draws at least Tk 12000 per month can apply for loan, said Md Abu Obaida Khan, senior officer (consumer finance), adding that they would make an arrangement of disbursing the loan within only three days if the clients can provide them with required documents. Radio Foorti, bdnews24.com, the Dainik Azadi, bdjobs.com, Nescafe, wheelsbd.com and Hotel Tower Inn are the partners of the fair.

One held after bomb attack on Kushtia livestock office

UNB, Kushtia

An alleged extremist was arrested while fleeing after a bomb attack on the livestock office in the town on Thursday night. The police said Masud and his accomplices hurled two bombs at the livestock office at about 9:00pm. Local people chased the attackers who tried to flee firing blank shots after the bomb attack. The mob caught hold of Masud, but his accomplices managed to flee. Later, the police arrested Masud along with a pistol loaded with four bullets. With the latest one, three incidents of bomb attack were reported in the district in the last two months.



Naya Krishi Andolon and UBINIG jointly form a human chain at Shahbagh intersection in the city yesterday marking the World Biodiversity Day.

NSU to offer scholarships to indigenous students

METRO DESK

Chairman of the board of governors of the North South University (NSU) Foundation and vice chancellor of the NSU recently decided to set aside two full tuition waivers per semester for bright and needy indigenous students, says a press release. Earlier, the Education Minister Nurul Islam Nahid made a strong and explicit appeal at a meeting to grant full tuition waivers to indigenous students. In order to receive the financial aid, the indigenous students have to meet the admission requirements of the university and qualify in admission test.

Advertisement for 'Star Campus' magazine, featuring the text 'Linking Young Minds Together' and an image of the magazine cover.

Govt trying to offset financial meltdown impacts: Muhith

UNB, Sylhet

Finance Minister Abul Mal Abdul Muhith yesterday said the government is well aware of the ongoing global economic recession impacts and trying to overcome the problem successfully. "The global recession could not weaken the country's economic base because of the government's efficient economic management," he said while speaking as the chief guest at the inaugural ceremony of a three-day remittance fair at Hafiz Complex in Sylhet. He hoped that the remittance fair would play an effective role to stop 'hundi' business. All concerned would have to work together so that the expatriates can send home their remittances properly, he said. The minister said inflow of remittance increased by 23 percent the current year and the people of Sylhet region played a significant role in this regard. Twenty-five local and foreign banks have organised the remittance fair with a view to stopping 'hundi' business. The fair will remain open from 10:00am to 10:00pm everyday.

Bank Managing Director Helal Ahmed Chowdhury. The finance minister said the government is taking various steps to protect the interest of expatriate Bangladeshis. All Bangladesh missions abroad would be strengthened further in six months for the purpose, he added.

Advertisement for DOM-INNO apartments, featuring the text 'where home is an inspiration...' and a list of apartment locations.

Advertisement for a real estate agency, featuring a table of properties for sale with details like location, size, and price.