

Fertiliser import bill to hit Tk 3,300cr

3 factories shut for 4 months to allow gas in power generation

REAZ AHMAD

A daily diversion of over 100 million cubic feet (mcf) of gas to different power plants forced three of the six state-run urea factories to stop production for the last four months, prompting the government to go for an all time record import of chemical fertilisers.

Such forced closures of fertiliser factories due to the gas crisis is becoming too taxing for the government that has to spend at least Tk 3,300 crore to meet the import bills, according to an official

estimation.

Amid a gas crisis in power plants, the government ordered temporary shut down of Polash Urea Fertiliser Factory Ltd, and Urea Fertiliser Factory Ltd in Ghorashal in mid-March, and also Chittagong Urea Fertiliser Ltd (CUFL) on April 26.

Officials of the Bangladesh Chemical Industries Corporation (BCIC) that operates the six gas-fired urea factories see no prospect of the three shut factories resuming production anytime soon.

While the demand for power is rising, a

BCIC source feared that the three factories will remain closed for another month or so at the least, continuing to hamper domestic urea output.

Of the three running factories -- Zia Fertiliser Company in Brahmanbaria, and Natural Gas Fertiliser Factory in Sylhet -- are running at their capacities but the largest -- Jamuna Fertiliser Company in Jamalpur is producing nearly one-third of the capacity, due to poor gas supply.

BCIC and the industries ministry sources said the government will have to

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Matin sued for Tk 25cr compensation

COURT CORRESPONDENT

A Tk 25 crore damage suit was filed with a Dhaka court yesterday against former shipping adviser Maj Gen (ret'd) MA Matin, a former shipping secretary, and Chittagong Port Authority (CPA).

The former secretary, Sheikh AK Motahar Hossain, is now a member of the Privatisation Commission.

Mohammad Shahadat Hossain, a businessman, filed the suit with the First Joint District Judge's Court of Dhaka, claiming Tk 25 crore in compensation.

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Foreign militants used country as transit point

Discloses detained Indian terrorist; safe homes also built for fugitives

SHARIFUL ISLAM and KAILASH SARKAR

Militants fighting in Kashmir have regularly used Bangladesh as a transit point to travel to Pakistan and have built safe havens here to shelter and train militants for terrorist operations in the region.

Detained Indian terrorist Mufti Obaidullah, a top leader of the India-based Asif Reza Commando Force (ARCF), revealed this information to law enforcers in his interrogation statement, obtained by The Daily Star. ARCF works as an associate of international terrorist group Lashkar-e-Taiba (LeT).

Obaidullah said that Pakistani militants crossed the Line of Control (LoC) to enter India to run terrorist operations and fight with government forces in Indian-controlled Kashmir then cross the border into Bangladesh to fly back to Pakistan.

"As it was tough to cross back to Pakistan through the India-Pakistan border, the Mujahideen would cross to Bangladesh and then left for their destinations using fake passports and visas," the statement said.

He said his student Selim and close associate Jalal helped him in this operation.

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Patients confused as testing facility stops

Govt says no need to confirm swine flu; suspects advised to start treatment; 34 more infection reported

MAHBUBA ZANNAT

The Institute of Epidemiology, Disease Control and Research (IEDCR) yesterday stopped its testing facility for detecting swine flu--the only available service in the country--except for cases referred to it.

But more positive cases of the deadly flu are being reported every day, with 34 yesterday, the highest since detection of the first case on June 18. The total number of swine flu infection in the country now stands at 247.

Most hospitals are still ill prepared to cope up with the increasing number of cases of swine flu positive.

Doctors at Dhaka Medical College and Hospital and Mitford Hospital are referring patients with swine flu-like illness to the IEDCR.

As symptoms of seasonal flu and swine flu are almost the same, the doctors said they could not start treatment of the patients without being confirmed of swine flu.

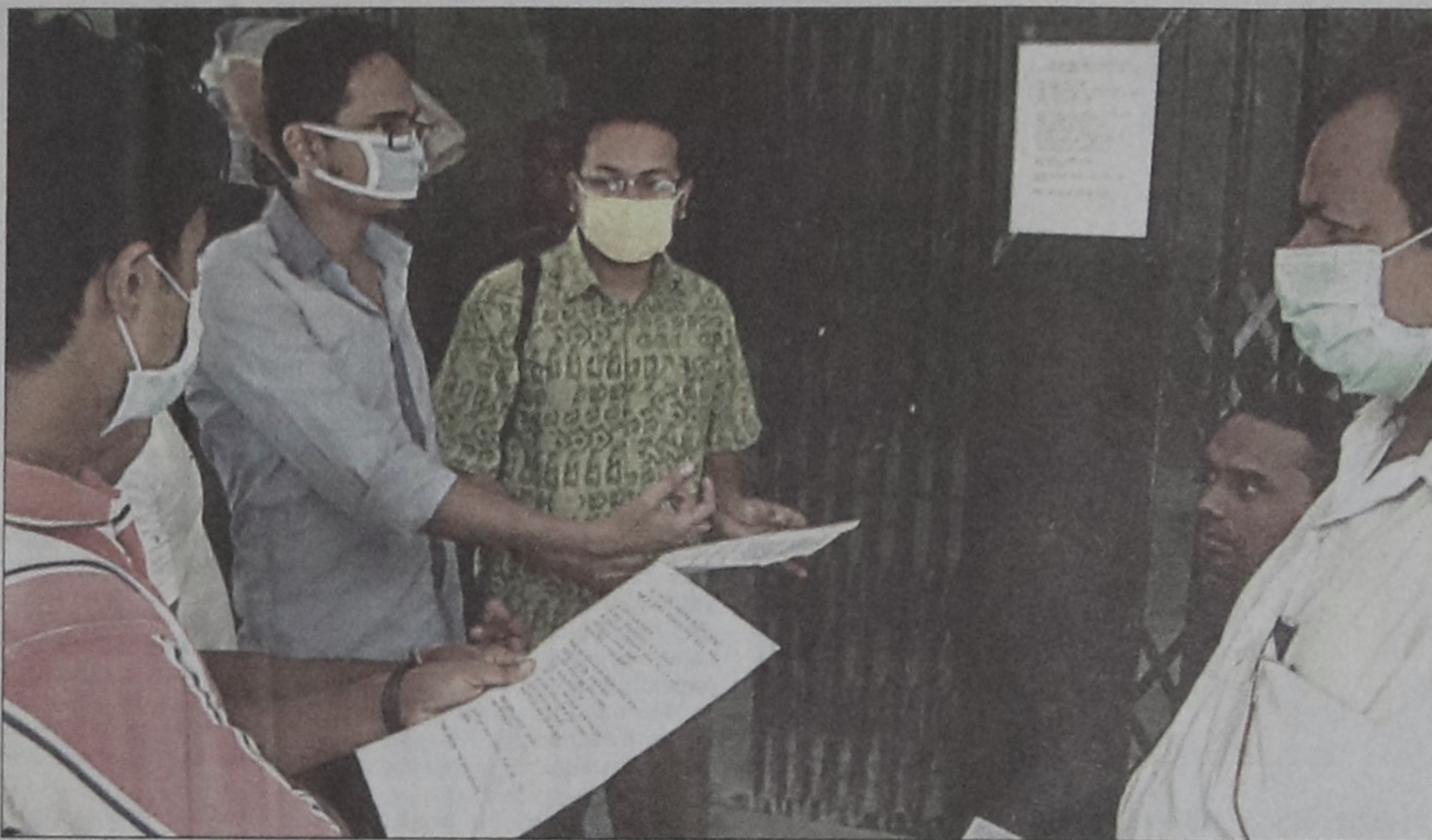
Anxious patients referred from different hospitals were seen at the IEDCR yesterday.

Senior Scientific Officer of IEDCR Mushtaq Husain told The Daily Star yesterday that they did not test patients who came for diagnosis on personal initiatives but took samples from those referred by other hospitals.

The IEDCR is the only government institute for testing swine flu. The ICDDR,B also has the testing facility but it tests only for research purpose.

Quoting the guideline of the World Health Organisation, IEDCR Director Prof Mahmudur Rahman said as the flu has spread widely there

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An official of IEDCR in Mohakhali yesterday tells people, who suspect to be infected with swine flu, that the institute only tests patients for the viral disease if a doctor wants the test done. The official is also giving away a paper with information on where to get help. PHOTO: STAR

Imams to play awareness role

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The government has decided to involve imams to raise awareness about the deadly swine flu as spread of the H1N1 virus looms in the country with one death and at least 247 cases of infection so far.

The decision came yesterday at an inter-ministerial meeting at the health ministry with Health and Family Welfare Minister AFM Ruhul Haque in the chair.

In case of flu infection, the government is not going to conduct any lab test, which was only available at the Institute of Epidemiology, Disease Control and Research (IEDCR), the minister told newsmen after the meeting.

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BDR TRIAL Army act not applicable, says Dr Kamal

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Amici curiae Dr Kamal Hossain and barrister M Amir-Ul Islam yesterday said the offences committed during the BDR mutiny cannot be tried under the military law since this law is not applicable to BDR personnel.

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No respite from tailbacks

KAILASH SARKAR

Traffic congestions continued causing havoc for commuters in the capital yesterday, as vehicles slowed to a crawl on the city streets narrowed by illegally parked vehicles.

Things did not improve despite the prime minister's instructions for the police to act against illegal parking the day before.

Cars and microbuses were seen parked on either side of the roads for

hours.

As drivers snoozed in their parked cars, the traffic toiled slowly along the roads.

This was the scene common to all major roads including those in Jatrahari, Motijheel, Paltan, Bijoy Nagar, Shantinagar, Rajarbagh, Khilgaon, Rampura, Mouchak, Maghbazar, New Market, Dhaka College, Farmgate, Tejgaon and Panthapath.

Meanwhile, high officials concerned met at the Prime Minister's Office (PMO)

yesterday to discuss traffic situation and the PM's directives in this regard.

HT Imam, an adviser to PM, presided over the meeting attended among others by secretaries of home, communications and LGRD ministries, BRTA and BRTC chairmen, officials of Dhaka City Corporation and the law enforcement agencies.

Shafique Alam Mehdi, additional secretary of the communications ministry, said manpower shortage and logistics

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This photo shows the rare crab-eating frog spotted in Nalian Bazar in the Sundarbans.

PHOTO: STAR

Rare frog found in Sundarbans

DR REZA KHAN

I saw this rare crab-eating frog in Nalian Bazar in the Sundarbans recently. It is rare in both India and Bangladesh mainly because it is restricted to the mangrove forests only. Biologically as it sits in the open, unlike other frogs, it is being preyed upon by the daytime predators as well as nocturnal ones like the owls, mongooses and foxes.

In Southeast Asia people do

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রাজধানীর অভিজাত এলাকা
গুলশানে
আল-আরাফাহ ইসলামী ব্যাংক লিঃ-এর
২৩ তম শাখার
২ সেপ্টেম্বর ২০০৯ শুভ উদ্বোধন

গুলশান শাখাঃ ১০৬, গুলশান এভিনিউ, গুলশান, ঢাকা
শীঘ্রই উদ্বোধন হতে যাচ্ছে
● হাজারীবাগ শাখা, ঢাকা ● দেবানীপাড়া শাখা, ঢাকা ● পথের হাট শাখা, রাউজান, চট্টগ্রাম
● মেলো শাখা, বাগেরহাট ● চকদপার শাখা, বুলনা ● নন্দীপাড়া শাখা, ঢাকা ● মাজা শাখা, ঢাকা

[শুধু খেঁকেই অন-লাইন ও এসএমএই-সহ সকল প্রকার ব্যাংকিং সুবিধা নিয়ে]

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