

SUB-STANDARD HYBRID SEEDS

Matia warns importers of legal action

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Agriculture Minister Matia Chowdhury yesterday warned the seed companies of taking legal action against them if they import sub-standard hybrid rice seeds and sell those to farmers.

"Those doing hybrid seed business must be disciplined. If they try to do unethical business, they will have to come under legal action."

The minister said this at a workshop on 'Hybrid rice for food security: Research and development and farmers' experiences in South and Southeast Asia' organised by Bangladesh Rice Foundation and Brac at Spectra

Convention Centre in the city.

The productivity of hybrid is six-seven metric tons a hectare against four-five metric tons of high-yielding varieties. The government favours hybrid rice production to feed the increasing population, but wants short duration and quality varieties.

The previous Awami League government allowed import of hybrid seeds and made rules that imported seeds must undergo trials for three years locally before cultivation, but gradually many of the seed companies violated the rules, she added.

"Bad seeds were sold to the farmers. Besides, there was not good crop man-

agement that ultimately resulted in bad yield and slow growth of hybrid rice here."

Stating that serious depletion of underground water in the northern parts of the country are posing threats to Boro cultivation, she said developing short duration hybrid rice and salinity-tolerant variety, especially meant for the southern region, could greatly reduce the challenges.

Dr SS Virmani, a former IRRI scientist, BRF Vice Chairman Dr Z Karim, Brac Executive Director Dr Mahabub Hossain and Bangladesh Agricultural University Vice Chancellor Dr MA Sattar Mandal also spoke while M Sayeduzzaman, former chairman of Bangladesh Rice Foundation, chaired the session.

PM apprises president of China visit

UNB, Dhaka

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina met President Zillur Rahman at Bangabhaban yesterday evening and apprised him of the outcome of her state visit to China.

The prime minister said three agreements and one MoU were signed during the March 17-21 visit.

Zillur expressed satisfaction at the outcome of the visit.

He hoped that the visit would strengthen bilateral ties and cooperation in the most potent sectors of the two economies.

Hasina handed over a Bengali New Year's card to Zillur and felicitated him in advance.

Thimphu to get facelift ahead of Saarc summit

DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT

Thimphu will be made cleaner and greener later this month with the Bhutanese authorities have already launched a mass cleaning campaign for the upcoming 16th Saarc summit scheduled for April 28-29.

About 3,000 volunteers, equipped with masks, gloves and sticks, cleaned the main part of the city and vegetable market area in the third phase of the campaign, which will be conducted on every Saturday until April 17.

Quoting officials, Bhutan's national newspaper Kuensel said on April 17, there will be a mega mass cleaning campaign, which will cover almost all corners of the city. For better coverage,

Thimphu City Corporation (TCC) has divided the city into several zones.

From Dechencholing in the north to Babesa in the south, all the settlement areas were divided into six zones, which will be cleaned by the end of the month.

The Bhutan chamber of commerce and industries has enthusiastically backed the cleaning campaign, by involving all the business people, which made the work a lot lighter.

Sources in Bhutan said unemployed Thimphu youths have found a way to participate in the next Saarc summit. The youths, mostly class 12 and 10 dropouts, have registered with TCC to clean the city and paint over the ugly retaining walls around the city.

The volunteers have also started planting flowers along the streets after they had finished painting the walls.

Ways to bring back fugitive killers discussed

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The government task force formed to bring out all the procedures to bring back the convicted killers of Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman and other convicts held its maiden meeting at the law ministry yesterday.

The nine-member high-powered task force headed by Law Minister Shafiqe Ahmed discussed ways to bring the absconding killers and convicts back to the country.

The task force would sit again to finalise the work plan, the law minister told reporters.

The government the task force, which was formed on March 28, was notified until further notification.

If a convict got the nationality of the country where he has been hiding, then the task force would also take measures to bring him back.

The members of the task force are law minister, home minister, foreign minister and the secretaries of the three ministries, attorney general, inspector general of police and director general of National Security Intelligence.



Young students of a madrasa are engrossed in reading the holy Qur'an at the time when BIWTA and Dhaka District Administration attempted to dismantle the madrasa at Kamrangirchar, on the outskirts of the city, yesterday as part of a drive against illegal structures set up along both the banks of the river Buriganga.

BNP leaders urge Ctg party men to unite

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

BNP leaders at a discussion in Chittagong yesterday emphasised greater unity among the grassroots level leaders and workers to wage a movement against 'the misrule of the government'.

They also called for resolving the prevailing disputes among the leaders in different areas. Chittagong divisional unit of the party organised the meeting titled 'Role of Grassroots Level Conferences of BNP'.

BNP standing committee member Mosharraf Hossain was the chief guest at the discussion with Chittagong University Teachers' Association (CUTA) President Prof Abul Kashem in the chair.

Chief coordinator of the programme Mirza Abbas, Chittagong city unit President Amir Khasru Mahmud Chowdhury and Abdullah Al Noman spoke at the discussion.

Dhaka to focus on health issues in COP16

Says minister

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Health Minister AFM Ruhul Haque yesterday said the government will discuss the ways of reducing health hazards caused by climate change in the upcoming conference of the parties (COP16).

"The environment has its immediate and strong impact on public health. The people are suffering from different kinds of diseases due to climate change. We will discuss the ways of reducing health hazards caused by climate change in detail in COP16"

scheduled to be held at the end of this year."

The minister said this at a seminar titled 'Climate change and its impact on health' organised by Bangladesh Medical Association (BMA) at its auditorium on the eve of World Health Day today.

BMA President Prof Mahmood Hasan presided over the seminar while State Minister for Health Mozibur Rahman Fakir, Prof Kazi Toriul Islam of Dhaka Medical College Hospital and Convener of Climate Change and Rights Mizanur Rahman Bijoy also spoke.

AG bins SC bar chief's allegations

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Attorney General (AG) Mahbubey Alam and Supreme Court Bar Association (SCBA) President Khandaker Mahbub Hossain have accused each other of serving political purposes of 'particular' parties through their activities.

The attorney general at a press briefing at his office yesterday countered the statement of the SCBA president, who claimed that 11 assistant attorneys general (AAGs) have no enrolment certificates for practising law in the High Court (HC).

The attorney general claimed that all the 140 law officers under his office are practising lawyers having necessary certificates.

On Sunday, Mahbub at a function on the SCBA premises said he was informed that at least 11 AAGs have no enrolment certificates, and all the law officers were appointed on political

considerations.

The AG called on the SCBA chief to withdraw his statement through media, saying that all the law officers have become members of the SCBA after having necessary certificates.

The chief law officer also said that his office has never issued any letter to the jail authorities not to release the people, who were granted bail from the HC in the cases against them.

He made the comment as Mahbub said the AG office has issued letters to different jail authorities not to release the people of opposition political parties from jail.

The SCBA president yesterday told reporters at his office that he will examine the papers of the law officers who were appointed on political considerations.

"After examining the papers, I'll decide the withdrawal of my statement," he added.

'Women more vulnerable to climate change'

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Women become more vulnerable when a community faces the negative impacts of climate change, said speakers at a dialogue yesterday.

Centre for Global Change (CGC) and Gender CC jointly organised dialogue titled 'Addressing Gender Concerns in Adaptation Discourse: Leadership Awaits Bangladesh' was held at the National Press Club in the city.

While presenting the keynote, Prof Sharmind Neelormi of Jahangirnagar University said women's rights, justice regarding gender-related issues and climate justice need to be linked to ensure the community's fundamental development.

State minister to the Ministry of Women and Children Affairs Dr Shirin Sharmim Chowdhury, lawmaker Zunayed Ahmed Palak and CGC Executive Director Ahsan Uddin Ahmed also spoke.

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Obituary

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Mosammat Fayazunnisa, wife of Haji Noor Mohammad, passed away due to liver cirrhosis at United Hospital in the city on Wednesday at the age of 60.

She left behind her three daughters, one son and a host of admirers to mourn her death.

She was buried at Mirpur Martyred Intellectuals' Graveyard.

Death anniversary

METRO DESK

Today is the 21st death anniversary of Mohammad Hussain, former news editor of the Daily Azad, The Daily Gonokontho, The Daily Janapad and The Daily Sangram, says a press release.

He was also the elected Vice President of BFUJ.

On the occasion, a doa mahfil will be held at Mirpur Jannatul Mawa graveyard after Zohr prayers.

WEATHER

Thundershowers likely

UNB, Dhaka

Rain or thundershowers accompanied by temporary gusty or squally wind is likely to occur at one or two places over Sylhet division in the next 12 hours as of 6:00pm today.

Weather may remain dry with temporary partly cloudy sky elsewhere over the country, Met Office said.

Severe heat wave sweeping over the regions of Rajshahi, Ishwardi and Chuadanga and mild to moderate heat wave over rest of Rajshahi and Khulna divisions and the regions of Dhaka, Faridpur, Tangail, Barisal and Majidpur Court may continue.

Day temperature may rise slightly over the country. The sun sets in the capital at 6:17pm today and rises at 5:44am tomorrow.

Country's highest temperature 41.0 degrees Celsius was recorded yesterday at Ishwardi and lowest 21.2 degrees Celsius at Sylhet.

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	37.1	27.1	67	62
Chittagong	31.5	25.2	78	77
Rajshahi	40.6	26.7	76	26
Khulna	37.4	27.0	75	59
Barisal	36.2	26.3	80	70
Sylhet	31.8	21.2	75	73
Cox's Bazar	33.2	25.5	80	79

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