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Toxic poultry feed poses health risk

Tannery waste used in producing feed for fish, fowls

HELEMUL ALAM

The use of tannery waste in poultry and fish feed poses serious health risk for consumers as the hazardous waste has the possibility of directly entering the food chain.

Experts say consumption of tannery waste through fish and poultry might cause liver and kidney diseases, even cancer.

An inquiry by The Daily Star found around 100 small traders in and around Hazaribagh who use raw tannery waste as ingredients and supply those to some 20 feed factories across the country.

The practice of using tannery waste for fish and poultry feed started around 10 years ago, as the price of imported protein for feed has gone up over the years.

Studies suggest that tannery waste contains a huge amount of chromium, which, if used in poultry or fish feed, enters the food chain. People eating such

fish, chicken or eggs may be subjected to cancer or liver and kidney-related diseases.

A study in 2007 by Dhaka University and Bangladesh Council for Scientific and Industrial Research (BCSIR) found higher rate of chromium in eggs and poultry meat than the tolerable level.

The samples were collected from Dhaka, Narsingdi, Kishoreganj, Mymensingh, Tangail, Gazipur, Narayanganj and Munshiganj.

Under the study, scientists fed 21 one-day-old chicks the waste-based feed for 42 days and found presence of chromium above the permissible level in their meat, he said.

Prof Abu Zafar Mahmud of Department of Chemistry, Dhaka University, said if chromium and lead remain in the chicken and fish feed, it can be transferred to people consuming these.

"This is very dangerous," he commented.

Dr Habibullah Talukder, head of the cancer epidemiology department at the National Institute of Cancer Research and Hospital (NICRH), said the number of cancer patients is rising due to many factors including smoking.

According to NICRH, in 2005, the recorded number of cancer patients treated in the hospital was 5,411, which rose to 6,492 in 2006, 6,926 in 2007 and 7,518 in 2008.

"Use of tannery waste in poultry and fish feed might cause cancer," Dr Talukder told The Daily Star.

Dr Formuzul Haque, former director of BCSIR, said heavy metals like chromium and lead may cause dangerous diseases like cancer and liver cirrhosis and damage the kidneys.

Such heavy chromium is very much likely to be present in poultry and fish feed manufactured by the Hazaribagh-based factories, as they make meat bone,

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Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina talks to an elderly woman while distributing aid among the Aila-hit locals at Shyamnagar in Satkhira yesterday. Story on page 16.

PHOTO: PID



Mirpur erupts in protests

RMG worker's mysterious death sparks clash with police; 11 held

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Several thousand garment workers in the capital's Mirpur clashed with police and demonstrated following the alleged murder of a female worker by some fellow staff yesterday.

During the hour-long clashes from around 2:00pm at Mirpur Section-1, police lobbed at least 30 rounds of teargas shells and charged batons on the agitating workers.

The demonstrators fought back with brickbats and bamboo sticks. They blocked the road and ransacked several vehicles.

In the face of the unrest, at least 15 factories in the area shut their production after lunchtime.

Officer-in-Charge Kazi Wazed Ali of Mirpur Police Station said the clash left five policemen, including him, injured. They picked up 11 persons from the scene.

Police and demonstrators said sewing operator Beauty Akhter, 19, of Vertex Garments Ltd was found dead around 10:00am on the

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Garment workers rampage through the street at the capital's Mirpur Section-1 yesterday, following the murder of a female worker allegedly by some factory staff. Top, sister of the deceased, Beauty Akhter, cries out holding the girl's body in front of Vertex Garments Ltd at Kalwala Para.

PHOTO: STAR

RAMADAN PRICE HIKE SCARE MPs asked to help keep market stable

SHAKHAWAT LITON

The commerce ministry has formally asked members of the parliament to monitor activities of daily essentials traders, to foil attempts to manipulate the market during the upcoming month of Ramadan.

In a letter issued to all lawmakers on June 30, Commerce Minister Faruk Khan also asked them to monitor whether dealers of the Trading Corporation of Bangladesh collect goods on time from TCB warehouses and distribute those properly to keep prices stable.

On receiving the letter recently, many ruling Awami League-led grand alliance MPs, especially those who represent constituencies in the capital, said they are preparing to monitor the market engaging their parties' local leaders.

For the first time in recent history lawmakers are formally being engaged in the process of reining in prices of basic commodities to avert a

recurrence of the bitter experience of last year.

The basic commodities market experienced volatility during last Ramadan, causing sufferings for consumers.

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina on Thursday, at a meeting of AL's parliamentary party, also asked her party deputies to monitor the market in a bid to thwart unscrupulous traders' attempts to manipulate it during the Ramadan, a ruling party lawmaker told The Daily Star yesterday.

Commerce Minister Faruk Khan said over the phone that he sent the letter to all MPs, excepting the prime minister.

Asked whether the move will instead open avenues for ruling alliance MPs and activists to engage in market manipulation, he said he believes no lawmaker wants his or her constituents to suffer due to price hikes of essentials.

"I believe all MPs will sincerely work to keep

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JCD general secy freed hours after arrest

DU CORRESPONDENT

Rapid Action Battalion personnel detained Jatiyatabadi Chhatra Dal General Secretary Amirul Islam Khan Alim and seven members of the pro-BNP student body at Satgaon of Srimangal in Moulvibazar yesterday and later released seven of them.

Shahidul Islam Babul, senior vice-president of JCD, told The Daily Star that Rab-9 personnel picked up Alim while he was returning to Dhaka on a microbus after completing the JCD council at Habiganj district around 7:00pm.

"Rab personnel claimed that some local criminals were traveling with him in that

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BNP to go for hartal if govt obstructs party protests again

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

BNP leader Mirza Fakhru Islam Alamgir yesterday threatened to call hartal if the government continues to obstruct the party's protest programmes.

"The government by its anti-democratic activities forcing us to call hartal though we don't want to go for such tough action," Alamgir, the party's senior joint secretary general, said at a press briefing held at the BNP chairperson's Gulshan office.

Asked about the anti-hartal bill placed in parliament on Thursday as private members' bill, he said it would be undemocratic and a denial of people's fundamental right.

"It won't be easy to pass such bill in parliament though this government can do anything by force."

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FALSE FIRE ALARM 50 RMG workers hurt in stampede

A CORRESPONDENT, Gazipur

At least 50 workers were injured in a stampede when garment workers, panicked by a false fire alarm, rushed to get out of their factory in Gazipur yesterday afternoon.

Among the injured, 36 workers of Utah Fashion Ltd were admitted to Gazipur Sadar Hospital and the condition of at least 10 of them was stated to be critical.

Witnesses said that around 5:00pm the fire alarm went off on the first floor of the seven-storey factory at Tek Nogpara. Over 4,000 workers of the factory tried to get out in a hurry. Some of them fell on the narrow staircases and were trampled by others as the workers were running to get out of the factory.

Police and locals rushed to help the injured, most of whom were women.

Hearing the news, hundreds of workers of nearby factories and locals thronged the factory area obstructing vehicular movement on the Dhaka-Mymensingh Highway for over an hour.

Utah Fashion Ltd Administrative Officer Lt Col (ret'd) Aziz said the workers panicked hearing the fire alarm.

He said nobody knows who set the alarm off.

He said they hold meetings with the workers twice a month to talk about fire hazards, safety and other issues and they were bewildered as to why the workers got so panicked and tried to get out in such a manner.

Dr Kamal ready to help JS special body

UNB, Dhaka

Eminent jurist Dr Kamal Hossain yesterday expressed his readiness to give advice to the special committee for amending the Constitution in the light of the High Court verdict.

"Definitely, I'll give advice about this constitutional matter. For this, fee should not be offered nor expected...It is our duty," he told a private television channel.

Dr Kamal, one of the framers of the 1972 Constitution,

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Announcement

See page 11 for Prof Wahiduddin Mahmud's comments on the minimum wage of garment workers.



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