

Massive plan to develop agri sector, says PM

Steps to rehabilitate flood-hit farmers of five districts

BSS, Sunamganj

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina yesterday said her government gave highest priority to agriculture sector for ensuring food security in the country.

"We don't want to see that a single person is starving, we are relentlessly working for ensuring food security for every person," she said while speaking at a function for

distribution of agro inputs to flash flood affected farmers of Haor area under Taherpur upazila in the district.

Finance Minister Abul Maal Abdul Muhith, Agriculture Minister Matia Chowdhury, Awami League Advisory Council member Suranjit Sengupta, local member of parliament Engineer Moazzem Hossain Ratan

spoke while secretary in charge of agriculture ministry Qazi Akhter Hossain was in the chair.

Sheikh Hasina said her government took massive programmes including lowering of fertiliser prices for development of agriculture sector and providing huge subsidy to bring agro inputs to the doorsteps of farmers.

She said the government

made the scope for farmers to open bank account against only Taka 10. The bank accounts would help the farmers to get the subsidy money directly, she added.

Terming the Awami League government agriculture friendly one, Sheikh Hasina said the government believes that the overall development of the country would take

place if the agriculture sector is properly developed.

She said the government took intensive programme for development of the people of haor area through providing education, health service and other basic facilities.

The prime minister said the government would provide agro inputs to 3.5 lakh flood affected farmer families living at haor areas in five districts - Netrakona, Kishoreganj, Moulvibazar, Sunamganj and Sylhet.

Besides, steps have been taken to rehabilitate 3,85,000 flood affected farmers.

The government believes that water bodies belong to those who have fishing net, the prime minister said, adding that only the real fishermen would be allowed to catch and sell fish.

She said the government would build embankments across the haor area in Sylhet to protect the agriculture lands.

Under the ongoing government's dredging programme the navigability of the River Surma and the River Kushiya would be revived, the prime minister added.

Besides, the government also took a decision to make the Tanguar Haor into a tourism destination, she said.



Workers sort hilsa at a wholesale market in Barisal that sees abundant supply of the popular fish following good catches from the Bay and coastal rivers recently.

PHOTO: STAR

WHOLESALE CENTRES BUSY

Trawlers unload hilsa round the clock in Barisal

A CORRESPONDENT, Barisal

Eleven hilsa mokams or large wholesale centres in Barisal region are buzzing with activities as trawlers and boats are unloading the popular fish almost round the clock during the last one week.

Crowding of buyers and sellers and noise of haggling mark the hilsa sales centres including the large ones at Barisal Port Road, Alipur, Mohipur, Patharghata, Monpura, Hizla, Ilsha, Gupter Bazar Golachipa, Mathbaria, Kalapara and Pirojpur Machghat.

After a crisis period from

the beginning of the hilsa season this year, this is the first time hilsa traders are making good amounts of profit while all the ice factories in the area are now busy producing ice to cope with the increased demand.

"Following crisis of hilsa fish during the last few years, a large number of hilsa traders of the region have wound up their business. The number of Barisal Zila Matsya Aratder Samity has come down to 68 from earlier 138," said Ajit Kumar Das, president of Barisal Zila Matsya Aratder Samity.

During a visit to Barisal

wholesale hilsa market, this correspondent found that price of the fish is still high.

Hilsa seller Uttam said medium sized hilsa is now selling for Tk 13,000 per maund. Big sized hilsa now sells for Tk 17,000 per maund. About 20,000 maunds of hilsa have been waiting disposal in different fish ghats for the last 45 hours, traders said, adding that there are good catches of medium sized hilsa but only a small portion of it are over one kg.

They said crisis of hilsa will return if the government fails to check catching of jatka (young hilsa).



PHOTO: PID

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina addressing a public meeting at Taherpur of Sunamganj yesterday. She was visiting the place to open distribution of agro inputs among flood-hit farmers of the area.

7 OUT OF 9 HELD FOR TANORE BRUTALITY GET BAIL

Foul play by police alleged

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Rajshahi

Seven of the nine people arrested in the case for Tuesday's barbarous attack on five people including three women at Chanduria in Tanore upazila were freed on bail from a Rajshahi court yesterday.

The victims alleged that the accused managed bail through influencing the local police who did not show them arrested in the 'proper case' and did not accurately describe the incident before the court.

The court of Additional Chief Judicial Magistrate ABM Mahmudul Haq granted bail to main accused Ashraf Ali Khan, 60, Chanduria union BNP vice president, his sons Rashed Khan Bablu, 38, Badsha, 35, and Bahadur, 30, in one case filed by victim Mamunur Rashid, court officials said.

Mamun filed a case against the four people for Monday's attack on him but the four people, also accused in the case filed for Tuesday's barbarous attack on him and others including women, were not sent to the court as arrestees in the case filed for Tuesday's attack, he alleged.

Mamun's brother Sumon Parvez, who

is plaintiff of the case filed for Tuesday's attack, alleged that police favoured the accused as injuries of the victims were shown as minor injuries while police did not include charges of torture on the women.

Sumon, 26, his sister Tania Akhtar Sharmin, 22, a degree student, and cousin Sokhina Bewa, 55, were undergoing treatment at Rajshahi Medical College Hospital while Mamun, 30, and his sister Monira Mondol Sabana, 35, being treated at Tanore upazila health complex yesterday.

According to the injured and police, there was a feud between the families of Ashraf and Mamun over land for several years.

Ashraf gave Mamun's sister Moslema Mondol Tk 20,000 for buying her 7.5 decimal land for Tk 50,000 in 2001, but he did not buy the land later, nor did he take back the money.

Recently Ashraf wanted to buy the land, but Moslema refused to sell, instead she wanted to return his money with proportionate bank interests, but Ashraf insisted on his demand for buying the land.

After a quarrel over this on Monday, Ashraf beat up Mamun in front of the

latter's house at Chanduria Bazar and threatened him of dire consequences. As Mamun lodged a case with Tanore Police Station over this, Ashraf became angry.

The next morning when Tania was waiting for a vehicle for her college at Chanduria Bazar, Ashraf's sons and their men forcibly took her to their (Ashraf's) house nearby. They made Tania fall on the ground and beat her up with bamboo sticks.

Hearing her screams, her brothers and sisters rushed to Ashraf's house. Ashraf and his men then tied Mamun and Sumon to a mango tree in front of their house and beat them. The accused also beat up Monira after taking her into their house.

With the help of locals, police later rescued the injured breaking open the door of Ashraf's house and caught nine people red-handed.

The investigating officer of the two cases, sub inspector Masudur Rahman denied all the allegations against police, saying, "How can any accused influence the police? We saw the incident in the way it happened. We have nothing to do if the court grants them bail."

None of Ashraf's family was available for comment.

Bangladeshi shot dead by BSF in Lalmonirhat

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Lalmonirhat

Indian Border Security Force (BSF) shot dead a Bangladeshi cattle trader along Burimari border in Patgram upazila of Lalmonirhat Tuesday night.

The victim was identified as Mottal Hossain alias 'Goru' Mottal, 40, son of Panta Mahmud Chowkidar of Dangabari village in the upazila.

BDR sources said a patrol team of BSF opened fire on Mottal at around 10:00pm when he was crossing the border, leaving him dead on the spot.

BSF men took away the body of Mottal to their camp.

Subedar Sayeed, company commander of Burimari BDR camp, said Bangladesh Rifles sent a protest letter to the BSF Panisala camp commander at night.

"BSF will return the body within 24 hours after autopsy," he said.

Contacted, Commanding Officer of Lalmonirhat 31 Rifles Battalion Lt Col Aslam Hossain also confirmed the matter to this correspondent over mobile phone.

Indefinite transport strike in Khulna

UNB, Khulna

Indefinite transport strike on 18 inter-district highway routes here called by district bus and minibus owners association began from 5am yesterday.

District bus, minibus owners association enforced the strike demanding ban on plying of shallow engine-run human haulers 'Nosimon' and 'Karimon' on all the regional routes of northern region.

General Secretary of the association Zakir Hossain Biplob said that transport owners are facing financial losses due to plying of illegal human haulers on the regional routes.

The association which placed their demand several times earlier before the authorities concerned, decided to enforce the strike as their demand was ignored, said Biplob, adding that the strike will continue until their demand was met.

Sources said all modes of vehicles went off all the regional routes and highways causing untold sufferings to the commuters.



A huge number of Eid cattle have started arriving in Rajshahi. The photo was taken from a makeshift cattle market in the outskirts of the city yesterday.

PHOTO: STAR

BCL-SHIBIR CLASH AT OSMANI MEDICAL

23 more Shibir men held, probe body convener changed

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Sylhet

The authorities of Sylhet MAG Osmani Medical College yesterday changed the convener of the probe committee that they had formed in the academic council meeting on Tuesday afternoon.

Associate Professor of Cardiology Md Shahab Uddin will now work as convener of the five-men committee to probe into the Tuesday's BCL-Shibir clash that left at least 38 people injured.

Associate professor of Surgery Shakhawat Hossain, who was made the convener of the committee, through a letter to the principal yesterday expressed his inability to perform the job on 'personal grounds', an official said, adding that another member would also be included in the committee.

Meanwhile, the probe committee members yesterday started their job and talked to some of the injured people in

the hospital. They also collected some alamsats (samples) and photos of the canteen and windows of some adjoining rooms that were vandalised during the clash. Besides, they collected some blood stained aprons and broken portraits of the father of the nation.

As the committee requested for a time extension, it would be given one week more, college Vice Principal Prof Harun Ur Rashid told this correspondent yesterday evening.

It was earlier asked to file report in three working days, ending today (Thursday). However, the probing would be hampered due to the Eid vacation. Besides, most of the injured had left Sylhet Tuesday with their families, he said.

The college authority announced the Eid vacation from November 10 to 22 although it was earlier scheduled from November 14 to 20. Prof Harun said the admission process would continue till November 15, if needed.

Meanwhile, 175 out of the 178 students selected for the college had already completed their admission process till yesterday, he added.

Sylhet Kotwali police arrested 23 activists of Islami Chhatra Shibir early yesterday from different private dormitories of the city. They were shown arrested in the cases filed in connection with the November 8 clash. The arrestees, students of different colleges, were produced before a judicial magistrate's court where from they were sent to the jail, police said.

The number of arrestees in connection with the incident has now stood at 70.

At least 38 people, including 25 BCL men, sustained injuries in the clash that took place when the activists of the rival student organisations were trying to win over the new entrants.

BCL activists alleged that a number of outsider Shibir men joined the attack on them that day.



PHOTO: STAR

Sumon Parvez, left, along with four other family members, get free after police with the help of locals break open the house of their captor and torturer, a local BNP leader, at Chanduria in Tanore upazila of Rajshahi district, on Tuesday.

Charges against 40 BDR men read out in Kushtia

Trial of 71 in Cox's Bazar adjourned till Jan 4

STAR NATIONAL DESK

Trial of 73 alleged BDR mutineers under Mirpur sector in Kushtia was adjourned till this morning yesterday.

Prosecutor Lt Col Khandaker Ainul Jamal read out the charges against 40 accused of 32 Rifles Battalion during the hearing, reports our Kushtia correspondent.

Lt Col Nazrul Islam, Commander of Kushtia BDR sector, started the trial pro-

ceedings at Special Court 17 at about 10:00am which ended around 1:30pm.

The Kushtia sector has two battalions--32 in Kushtia and 35 in Chuadanga. Out of 53 alleged mutineers, 41 belonged to 32 Rifles Battalion and 12 from 35 Rifles Battalion.

But the authorities concerned arrested 20 more jawans of 32 Rifles Battalion yesterday morning and sent them to Kushtia district jail follow-

ing a special court order.

All the accused took part in the mutiny on February 26, 2009. They were arrested after a case was filed against them, the sources added.

A correspondent from Cox's Bazar reports, a BDR court yesterday adjourned the trial of 71 accused of 17 Rifles Battalion till January 4, 2011.

The three-member Special Court-16, headed by Rangamati BDR Sector

Commander Col Md Bashirul Islam, began the trial proceedings at the Rifles Battalion headquarter at 10:30am.

All the 71 accused were produced in the court.

Maj Khondoker Abu Huraira, battalion captain and the prosecutor, brought charges against the accused for their involvement with February 2009 mutiny.

The other members of the court were Lt Col Abdur Rauf and Maj MA Rakib.