

Govt urged to buy rice from farmers

STAFF CORRESPONDENT
Farmers from across the country yesterday demanded the government purchase rice from them instead of from foreign sources. They made the call at a sit-in organised jointly by Nagorik Sanghati and Campaign for Sustainable Rural Livelihoods (CSR) in front of the National Press Club in the city. The speakers said the government should buy rice from farmers to encourage them to produce crops and to create job sources for the small and marginal farmers to ensure food security. They said the government's food monitoring and evaluation committee in the last week of November decided to buy rice from India and Vietnam instead of from domestic sources. "The decision will directly deprive the marginal farmers," Secretary General of Nagorik Sanghati Sharifuzzaman Sharif chaired the programme.

Body to probe train crash

STAFF CORRESPONDENT
A citizen's investigation committee formed by Paribesh Bachao Andolon questioned the preliminary findings on Narshingdi train accident, prepared by the official investigation team. The citizen's committee at a press conference yesterday said it has not been proved that signal violation by the loco master of Chattola Express was the main reason behind the accident. The committee members said Chattala followed the clearance given by Narshingdi stationmaster. The report accused the stationmaster's negligence. They demanded a judicial investigation for more neutral findings, proper treatment of the injured and punishment to those who are responsible.



PHOTO: STAR
Planning Minister AK Khandker speaks at the National Convention of Sector Commanders Forum at the Institute of Diploma Engineers in the city yesterday. (Story on Page 16)

10,000 to get free cataract surgery

STAFF CORRESPONDENT
At least 10,000 cataract patients will get cataract surgery free of cost under a project of Rehabilitation of People's Advancement (Ropa), says a press release. A patient selection programme has been taken in this regard. Actress Mousumi as a brand ambassador of the project launched the patient selection programme at Khalil Sardar Community Centre at Hazaribagh in the city yesterday, while Ropa Executive Director Zahidul Islam Farooq and Chief Executive of Mujibunnessa Eye Hospital Sayed M Jamal were present at the program. Ropa, a non-government organization, and Mujibunnessa Eye Hospital will jointly assist the project.



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Economic dev, democracy vital for sustainable peace

Dipu Moni tells Bali Forum session

DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT
Foreign Minister Dipu Moni said sustainable peace and stability in a society can be ensured through economic development and democracy. Poor people can get the benefit of economic development in any country if there is a democratic atmosphere, otherwise the fruits of development go to a handful of people who are close to power, she said. Dipu Moni was addressing an interactive session as the panelist on the second day of Bali Democracy Forum III in Bali Indonesia on Friday. She said democracy and practice of democratic culture should be nurtured constantly for welfare of the people. Turning to Bangladesh, she said Bangladesh was by birth a secular democracy after a long struggle for independence under the leadership of Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman. Although extra-constitutional military took over time and again and disrupted continuation of democracy, they were never able to break the aspirations and resilience of the democracy loving Bangladesh, she added. Referring to the historic peace accord in Chittagong Hill Tracts (CHT) reached under the visionary leadership of Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina in her previous term, the FM said process of securing long lasting peace in the region is underway. Inclusion and participation of the ethnic minorities in the CHT within the political framework and by addressing their concerns and needs ensured the peace process, she said. Dipu Moni said the "Digital Bangladesh" programme would ensure access to different services for everyone and promote transparency and accountability. She also talked about women's empowerment programme and their enhanced participation in the political process and decision-making. The interactive session was participated by ministers and delegates from about 44 countries. The foreign minister also responded to questions tabled by the audience.

Remove discrimination Say child labourers

DU CORRESPONDENT
Hundreds of child workers and social activists formed a human chain with the slogan "step up to remove discrimination" on the occasion of Human Rights Day in the city yesterday. Voluntary Association For Family Welfare and Social Development (VAFWSD) and Manusher Jonno Foundation organised the programme in front of the national public library in Shahbagh. Leaders and activists of VAFWSD later visited the national museum with the children.



PHOTO: COURTESY
Rupali Chowdhury, managing director of Counties Bangladesh Ltd, inaugurates the 15th Berger Young Painters' Art Exhibition at Zainul Gallery, Institute of Fine Arts, Dhaka University recently. Mohsin Habib Chowdhury, general manager of sales and marketing of Berger Paints; Qayyum Chowdhury, chairman of the jury committee; and Md Emadul Haque Motlub Ali, dean of the Faculty of Fine Arts were also present.

S Asian confce on early childhood dev ends

METRO DESK
The comprehensive early childhood development policy and early learning and development standards (ELDS) will be incorporated in the National Child Policy which is under review now, says a press release. Dr Shirin Sharmin Chaudhury, state minister for the ministry of women and children affairs, told the closing session of the three-day South Asia Regional ECD conference at Bangabandhu International Conference Centre in the city on Thursday. Some 300 specialists on early childhood development (ECD) and practitioners attended the conference participated by about 100 people from South Asia. The conference aimed at building relationship, sharing ideas and research findings on ECD among professionals, researchers, academics, and officials. Other speakers at the session were Prof Lutfullah Safi, advisor of the ministry of education, Afghanistan; Theo Oltheten, chair of Education Local Consultative Group; Carel de Rooy, country representative of Unicef Bangladesh; Derek Elais, officer-in-charge of Unesco Bangladesh; Kelland Stevenson, country representative of Save the Children USA, Bangladesh; Anwar Hossain Shikder, acting country director of Plan Bangladesh; Louise Zimanyi, director of Global Consultative Group on Early Childhood Care and Development, Ryerson University, Toronto, Canada; and AKM Abdul Awal Mazumder, secretary to the ministry of primary and mass education, Bangladesh. Mahmuda Akhter, the member secretary of Bangladesh ECD Network (BEN) thanked all the delegates from different countries, professionals, and participants of the conference.

DHAKA TODAY

Discussion
National Forum of Organisations Working with the Disabled will arrange a discussion. Venue: Dhaka Reporters Unity, Time: 3:00pm.

Photo exhibition
Bangladesh Visually Impaired Peoples Society will arrange a photograph exhibition. Venue: Russian Cultural Centre, Dhanmondi, Time: 11:00am.

Seminar
Ahsanullah University of Science and Technology will arrange a seminar. Venue: AUST seminar hall, Time: 3:00pm.

Cultural programme
Zia Sanskritik Jote will organise a cultural programme. Venue: Banani Community Centre, Time: 3:00pm.

Rally
Jatiya Mukti Council will arrange a rally. Venue: Mukhtangan, Time: 3:00pm.

Roundtable
Bangladesh Jatiyatobadi Sanskritik Foundation will arrange a roundtable. Venue: National Press Club, Time: 3:30pm.

Meeting
Bhasani Smriti Sangsad will arrange a meeting. Venue: 80, Naya Pallan, Time: 11:00am.

Human chain
Coalition for the Urban Poor will form a human chain. Venue: Shahbagh, Time: 11:00am.

Workshop
Community-based Dairy Veterinary Foundation will arrange a workshop. Venue: Saarc Agricultural Centre, BARC, Farmgate, Time: 9:30am.

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