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The rising demand for green products hikes investment in jute

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HALF MILLION DOLLAR BOY

Kolkata bags Shakib for \$425,000 at IPL auction

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Subsidised rice, wheat for poor

Amid rising prices, govt to launch food aid schemes for 4 months, covering 1cr families

REJAUL KARIM BYRON

The government is going to launch a programme to supply rice and wheat at low price to about one crore poor families in next four months in the face of prevailing high food price.

The support to the poor will be provided through the extended Open Market Sale (OMS), Fair Price Cards, rationing for fourth class employees and village police members, test relief and Food for Work programmes.

The food monitoring committee at a meeting today would decide about the price and the programme to be executed.

Food Minister Abdur Razzak told The Daily Star yesterday they would continue

the programme from January to April. The monitoring committee would also make a decision as to how much subsidy would be required, the minister said, adding, the price of rice would not exceed Tk24 per kg.

Though Aman has started arriving in the market, the price of both rice and wheat has registered a rise.

According to a report by Trading Corporation of Bangladesh on January 7, coarse rice was being sold at Tk 35-36, having increased by about 32 percent in last one year. Lose wheat was being sold at Tk 33-34 per kg recording 49 percent rise over the year.

Against this backdrop, fair price cards

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No respite from encroachment



A group of influential locals has encroached upon the Buriganga river near Kamrangirchar Bridge in Dhaka. The photo was taken yesterday.

PHOTO: ANISUR RAHMAN

Energy boost for local industries

Import duty on furnace oil to go; power producers, industries allowed to import it

SHARIER KHAN

In a major policy decision, the government is withdrawing import duty on furnace oil to help local industries overcome the on-going energy crisis and resolve their problems on their own.

Private power plant developers and industry operators who will directly benefit from this will also be allowed to import furnace oil to meet their own requirements with permission from Bangladesh Petroleum Corporation (BPC).

All industries, except ship-breaking

industry, will be allowed to import duty-free furnace oil for their needs. This is a major incentive, as the duty is now 37.5 percent.

Since furnace oil or Heavy Fuel Oil (HFO) is the cheapest commercially used oil, industries are now expected to solve their own energy problem by using it.

On the other hand, it is one of the most polluting petroleum products.

The prime minister's energy adviser Towfiq-e-Elahi Chowdhury disclosed the government decision regarding furnace oil

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Rangpur to become city corporation

PM declares; Ershad joins her rally

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Rangpur

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina said yesterday her government is going to make the divisional town of Rangpur a city corporation, and form metropolitan police for it.

The government has already fulfilled its election pledge to create Rangpur division, Hasina said. "Now it is our responsibility to modernise this division."

Addressing a big rally at Rangpur Zilla School ground, the PM said, "We have also kept our commitment about establishing a university here, and set up Begum Rokeya University."

The Awami League-led ruling grand alliance organised the rally where Jatiya Party Chairman and former president HM Ershad, who flew with the premier from Dhaka, also addressed the rally.

Ershad said the premier's visit to the northern district is a great honour for the people of Rangpur. "It is our

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PHOTO ON PAGE 20

A forgotten poll pledge

No wealth report yet from ministers, MPs

HASAN JAHIID TUSHER

Ruling Awami League in the first two years of its tenure did not keep one of its major electoral pledges of publishing annual wealth statements and sources of income of the prime minister, ministers, lawmakers and their families.

"Wealth statements and sources of income of the prime minister, cabinet members, parliament members and their families will be made public every year," said AL in its election manifesto "A charter for change".

"It's very unfortunate. They [AL] will have to explain to the nation why they did not keep their

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BNP struggles to recover from poll shock

RAKIB HASNET SUMAN

Two years after a massive defeat in the parliamentary elections, the main opposition BNP still struggles to get its rhythm back.

The BNP has stayed away from parliament even though it opposed such boycotts in its election manifesto. It has called three dawn-to-dusk hartals mainly to protest BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia's loss of the cantonment house and corruption charges against her two sons Tarique Rahman and Arafat Rahman Koko.

The debate over the house has led to the expulsion of one of the founding leaders of the party, barrister Nazmul Huda. Huda was ousted after his criticism of the party's handling of the cantonment house issue and Khaleda Zia's post-eviction reaction.

The corruption charges against Khaleda's sons have continued to worry the party and its boss.

In the last two years the BNP has struggled with a dilemma: whether to forge closer ties with its most

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KILLED ON BORDER BSF returns body of girl

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Kurigram

Indian Border Security Force (BSF) yesterday returned the body of Bangladeshi girl to Border Guard Bangladesh (BGB) through a flag meeting in the West Rumkhana border area under Fulbari upazila here.

Felani, 15, daughter of Nur Islam Nuru of Banarvita village of the upazila, was shot dead in Anantapur border area by

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Users face trouble with google.com.bd

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Many Internet users yesterday faced difficulties accessing the Bangladeshi Google site following problems in Bangladesh Telecommunications Company Ltd (BTCL).

An official of an Internet service provider said when some Internet users tried to log on to google.com.bd or Gmail, they saw a phishing site, a site designed to exploit private and security information of internet surfers.

The official said BTCL's domain name servers, which direct users to a particular website, had been "poisoned" (compromised) and the users trying to go to google.com.bd or Gmail were being directed to malicious websites.

Sources said BTCL was trying to fix the problem and achieved success to some extent but it could take some

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Child dies after taking vaccine

Parents allege; docs say vaccine not the cause of death

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Jhenidah

A three-year-old boy yesterday died allegedly after taking polio vaccine at Toilokup village under Kaliganj upazila in the district.

Deceased Sami Hossain, son of Shawkat Ali of the village, was in sound health before taking the vaccine, claimed the parents.

Abu Fatta, senior consultant (medicine) of Jhenidah Sadar hospital, said Sami might have died of other disease as the vaccine takes some time to take effect. Reportedly, the child had died within

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We Deeply Mourn

The Board of Directors and the employees of Dutch-Bangla Bank Limited are deeply grieved at the demise of Prof Dr. Farida Huq, wife of former Attorney General of Bangladesh and the country's most respected Lawyer Barrister Rafique-ul-Huq (Inna Lillahi-----Rajeun).

Late Farida Huq was a microbiologist by profession and Honorary Senior Consultant of BIRDEM Hospital. She was associated with different philanthropic organizations and well known for her generosity and contribution to a number of hospitals and healthcare centres in the country.

We express our heart-felt condolences and sympathy to the members of the bereaved family and pray to the almighty Allah for the salvation of the departed soul.



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