

India ready to transport rice in 15 days: Sharma

BSS, Dhaka

Indian Commerce Minister Anand Sharma yesterday said they are ready to export three lakh metric tons of coarse rice to Bangladesh in two weeks.

"It's now a matter of shipment as the legal battle in India regarding rice export to Bangladesh is over," Sharma told BSS after a meeting with Food Minister Dr Abdur Razzaque at Sonargaon Hotel.

Sharma, who also held talks with several other ministers in Dhaka, said the rice from India could reach even within seven days if Bangladesh wants. "We are very much sincere to fulfill our commitment," he added.

Dr Razzaque said the first shipment of rice import from India would take place 'anytime' as India finally cleared the 'intent' to export rice to Bangladesh. He said the government would also import rice from Vietnam and Thailand in order to ensure food security and price stability.

Food ministry sources said India committed in December last year to export five lakh metric tons of foodgrains, including three lakh metric tons of rice and 2 lakh metric tons of wheat, and signed an agreement in January this year. But none of the cereal was transported to Bangladesh, despite repeated reminding from importing nation.

Sharma said the export was stuck up

in legal glitch as some of Indian private suppliers sued against Indian government's decision to exclude them from the export. The ordeal has, however, been over recently.

Official sources said Bangladesh wanted to import the rice much ahead of its major harvest, Boro, which begins shortly, and ensure enough supply of the staple, rice, in the market to offset the trend of price escalation. The rice from India is supposed to cost Tk 31.22 per kilogram and \$446 per metric ton.

Bangladesh produces 3.55 crore metric tons of rice -- 1.9 crore metric tons of Boro, 1.35 crore metric tons of Aman and 0.35 crore metric tons of Aus -- and 10 lakh metric tons of wheat a year.



A policy dialogue styled "Tobacco: Is there a way out?" was held at the conference centre of The Daily Star in the city yesterday. The Management and Resources Development Initiative (MRDI), a non-profit organisation engaged in social development activities, and The Daily Star jointly organised the event with support from Campaign for Tobacco-Free Kids. (Story on Page 20)

PHOTO: STAR



Education Minister Nurul Islam Nahid speaks at a view exchange meeting at the Teachers Training College auditorium in the city yesterday. On his right are Noman ur Rashid, writer Selina Hossain and Prof Dr Shamim F Karim and on his left are AKM Abdul Awal Majumdar and Nazrul Islam Khan.

PHOTO: STAR

Corporal punishment causes hatred, fear among students

Psychologist tells view exchange meeting

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Corporal punishment on students in the name of discipline at schools causes different types of emotional outbursts like hatred, anger, fear, anxiety and depression in the long run, said a psychologist at a meeting yesterday.

"Excessive physical torture often lead to drug addiction. The torture sometimes turns so unbearable that children choose to commit suicide for relief," said Prof Dr Shamim F Karim of the Department of Psychology of Dhaka University.

Corporal punishment and mental torture cause students to lose self-esteem and become reluctant to attend school, one of the factors leading to drop outs, he said.

Representatives from Unicef,

Unesco, PID of Mymensingh, madrasa board and relevant organisations participated in the view exchange meeting to finalise the draft on Training Manual for Teachers to Stop Physical and Mental Torture on Students of Primary and Secondary.

Directorate of Secondary and Higher Education (DSHE) and Ministry of Education jointly organised the meeting at Teachers Training Institute in the city. Prof Taslima Begum, director (training) of DSHE, briefly read out the manual.

Emphasising on activity-based training, speakers said such training would help teachers understand and remember techniques to handle students.

Secretary of Primary and Mass Education Ministry AKM Abdul Awal Majumdar said guardians pressurise

students for outstanding result, which is also a kind of torture and should be addressed.

Mentioning an incident with his relative, teacher of a government school, who was asked to pay bribe for a transfer appeal, he said, "How could we expect teachers not to torture students when they themselves have to face such ordeals."

"We should change our perspectives to stop corporal punishments in schools. You cannot discipline mischievous students by punishing them," said Education Minister Nurul Islam Nahid.

Personal Secretary to prime minister Nazrul Islam Khan and writer Selina Hossain spoke at the programme with DSHE Director General Prof Noman ur Rashid in the chair.

Two industries fined in N'ganj

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Department of Environment (DOE) yesterday fined two industries in Narayanganj Tk 50 lakh for encroaching on and filling up part of the river Buriganga.

Director Munir Chowdhury of the department's monitoring and enforcement wing penalised the industries in Fatulla of Sadar upazila in a drive to prevent environmental crimes.

The two industries -- Tania Textiles Mills and Unity Dying and Garments were directed to make the 75 thousand square feet of land free from encroachment within one month.

Mostafizur Rahman Akhand, deputy director of DoE, said Tania Textiles Mills were fined Tk 12.28 lakh for polluting river and Tk 11 lakh for encroaching river while Unity Dying and Garments were fined Tk 24.75 lakh for polluting river for last 13 years.

Influence of black money mars fair election

Says Dr Kamal

UNB, Dhaka

Eminent jurist Dr Kamal Hossain yesterday said the power of the state belongs to the people and not to a certain group of privileged persons.

"Democracy could suffer from the influence of illegally earned money, abuse of power, inequality and discriminations existing in the society," he said this while he was addressing the inaugural session of a weeklong workshop on 'South Asian Legal System Student Exchange Programme'.

South Asian Institute of Advanced Legal and Human Rights Studies (SAILS) organised the workshop in its conference room at Dhanmondi in the city.

Dr Kamal, also chairperson of SAILS, said: "Election is not free unless it is free from the influences of illegally earned money and misuse of power."

The Election Commission has to play a role which should be independent, he said. Asked his comments by the students on the ongoing constitutional reform, Dr

Kamal said there should not be any discrimination among the citizens on the basis of religion, ethnicity or any other grounds.

On the first day, the session was moderated by Prof Zakir Hossain, dean of the Faculty of Law of the University of Chittagong, Shikder Mohammad Masum Billah, assistant professor of Law Department at Jagannath University, Suraj Basnet, Assistant Professor of Kathmandu School of Law, and Dr Uttam Kumar Das, Deputy Director of SAILS.

A group of 35 law students from Nepal and Bangladesh are participating in the weeklong programme aimed at facilitating their learning various aspects of legal and judicial systems.

The participants include 16 law students from Kathmandu School of Law (KSL) in Nepal, five from the University of Dhaka, and two each from Jagannath University, Rajshahi University, Chittagong University, Islamic University, and Southeast University.

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