

## Farmers

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Aman in 15 bighas of land in Chhiringbandar. And he is selling a two-maund sack of paddy at Tk 1,100 at best as against Tk 1200/1300 last year.

Some other farmers echoed what he said about the market situation.

Asked about this, Food Minister Abdur Razzaque admitted that the situation is a bit tricky as government food godowns are already full with stocks both from imports and local procurements in the last Boro season.

Razzaque hinted that a concrete decision could be reached after analysing the rice market situation at the cabinet meeting today.

The government now has a stock of 1.5 million tonnes of food grains, the highest since January 2000.

Some sources however said had the government not gone for a food grains import spree in anticipation of a probable shortfall, it could have started Aman procurement.

In first five months of the current fiscal year, the country already imported nearly 0.9 million tonnes of food grains, and the government also locally procured over 0.8 million tonne of rice in the Boro season.

Razzaque said despite a huge off-take and distribution of food grains under various safety-net programmes in recent weeks, the granaries remain full.

Renowned agriculture economist Dr Mahabub Hossain, who follows developments in agriculture sector and rural economy, noted that the government's food import planning needed to be more dynamic so that late shipments from contracts signed months ago do not unnecessarily occupy the food godowns when all domestic rice seasons reaped good harvests this year.

Mahbub, executive director of Brac, explained that the government went for an import drive anticipating future stock deficit. But due to good harvests of both Boro and Aman rice, late consignments of imported food are not that needed.

He, however, said the current slide in rice price is mainly due to stock release by big farmers, who had stocked Boro for high price but were eventually forced to release the stock due to better Aman output.

Mahabub expected that even if the government does not go for Aman procurement drive, the fall in rice price would automatically stop soon once the release of previous stocks of big farmers ends.

## Stop Tipai

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organised the programme.

They also issued a press statement protesting the Indian government's move to construct the dam.

The impact of the dam would be worse than the hydroelectric power it would produce, the speakers said.

The dam would inundate 31,100 hectares of arable land in Indian part and flood vast rice growing low lying areas in lower riparian Bangladesh, they observed.

Other organiser of the event Citizen Rights Movement termed the Tipaimukh dam a 'death trap' for the Bangladesh people.

A press statement of the organisation, signed by its Secretary General Tushar Rehman, urged the government to lodge a case with the international court against the Indian government's move.

Despite protests from millions of people, neighbouring India is taking up such a disastrous project only for monetary gain, violating international conventional law and bilateral agreements.

Abu Naser Khan, chairman of Save the Environment Movement, Ibtul Sayeed Rana, chief of Combined Wetland Protection Movement, Nazimuddin Mahmud, chief of Old Dhaka Development Forum, among others, spoke on the occasion.

## Polls in 90 days

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one, he added.

However, the final decision would be made after Chief Election Commissioner ATM Shamsul Huda returned from Thailand, Sohul said.

The EC will formally inform the government about its decision.

Election Commissioner Brig Gen (retd) M Sakhawat Hossain was present at the briefing.

Although he did not make any comment, he was seen nodding in agreement as Sohul spoke.

On Sunday, Sakhawat Hossain told reporters that it would be "hard" for the EC to hold polls to the two city corporations in the capital within the tenure of the current commission.

The tenure of Shamsul Huda and Sohul Hussain will expire on February 5 next year. Sakhawat Hossain's will draw to a close on February 14.

At present, the commission is busy with preparations for the newly-formed Comilla City Corporation polls, which are due on January 5.

On November 29, parliament passed a bill, in a mere four minutes, slicing the DCC into two, paying no heed to criticism and protests from civil society and political parties, including the main opposition BNP.

The president assented to the bill on Thursday, thus giving it the effect of a law.

Protesting the passage of the bill, BNP yesterday enforced a dawn-to-dusk hartal in the capital.

Meanwhile, in line with the new law the government yesterday appointed two administrators to the Dhaka Uttar (north) City Corporation and Dhaka Dakkhin (south) City Corporation.

Khalilur Rahman, additional secretary of primary and mass education, was made administrator of DCC South, while Khorshid Alam Chowdhury, director general of Bureau of Manpower Employment and Training, was appointed administrator of DCC North.

Their name plates were also affixed at Mayor Bhaban at Gulshan and Nagar Bhaban respectively. However, neither of them went to their new offices till

## Hartal called

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Islam as its associate.

By demanding a halt to the proceedings of the war crimes tribunal, the opposition party has at last lifted the lid on its intentions, he observed.

That BNP's only political agenda is to prevent the war crimes trial from taking place is now out in the open, said Ashraf, who is also general secretary of AL.

No matter how hard they try, the war criminals will not be able to protect themselves, not even by hiding behind BNP chief Khaleda Zia, he added.

He alleged that plots were afoot at home and abroad to thwart the trial, and millions of dollars had been spent to appoint lobbyists for the war criminals.

"Now the people must decide which side they are on -- the ones who want to try the war criminals or those who are out to stop the war crimes trial. There is nothing in between," he said.

Flanked by party leaders, Ashraf said the trial must be held on the soil of Bangladesh. "There is none in this world who can foil the trial."

He said since a new law had been promulgated splitting DCC into two, anyone can support or oppose it. "But what is this hartal for?"

The AL general secretary said Khaleda had enforced the hartal for three reasons -- to save her cantonment residence, her son Tarique from the money-laundering case and the war criminals.

5:00pm yesterday.

Talking to reporters, Khalilur Rahman said he would apply his ability, experience and talent to the best of his ability to serve city dwellers.

"The responsibility of an administrator is huge. I'll try to discharge my duties properly," he added.

Asked whether he had sympathy for any political party or if he would face any political pressure, he said he would do his job as a government official.

The last polls to the DCC were held in 2002. The tenure of the incumbent mayor and councillors expired in May 2007. Polls to the unified DCC could not be held for many reasons, one being the state of emergency in 2007-2008.

Assuming office in January 2009, the Awami League-led alliance government opted not to allow the EC to hold the polls.

The commission in February last year informed the government that it could hold the DCC polls in April, but the government did not approve the plan.

The EC then fell silent on the issue of the DCC elections.

It conducted polls to the Chittagong City Corporation and municipalities and union parishads across the country last year.

The Narayanganj City Corporation polls were held on October 30 this year.

## Two teens die

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Alam, 18, was an SSC examinee from the local Abdul Aziz School and College.

As Ferdous lost control of the bike near Khilgaon flyover, it crashed against the road divider, leaving him dead on the spot. Sabbir was rushed to Dhaka Medical College Hospital, where he was declared dead, said police.

Tamim Hossain, owner of the motorbike, told The Daily Star that his friends Sabbir and Ferdous had taken the bike from his Basabo house to buy food to celebrate his birthday.

## Canada

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course, my government has clear policy that we cannot extradite people to countries that have death penalty," she said in response to question from journalists.

Sources said during the meeting the issue of extraditing Major (retd) Nur Chowdhury figured prominently and the foreign minister reminded the high commissioner about her October 5 letter to Canadian Foreign Minister John Baird with request to handover the convicted killer to Bangabandhu.

Meeting sources said the Canadian envoy told the foreign minister that the Canadian government understands that the matter is very much important to Bangladesh.

As this involves legal matters, sources said the high commissioner assured that she would again inform her government about the Bangladesh government's intention.

Dipu Moni also wrote similar letter on October 5 to the US Secretary of State Hillary Clinton asking Lt Col (Retd) M Rashed Chowdhury, who is now residing in the United States, to be sent back.

The Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman and most of his family members were brutally killed on August 15, 1975 by some disgruntled army officials.

After a long trial, the court awarded death sentences to 12 people. Of them, five were hanged, one died, six are still absconding. Syed Faruque Rahman, Sultan Shahriar Rashid Khan, Bazul Huda, Mohiuddin Ahmed and AKM Mohiuddin were executed on January 28, 2010.

The absconding convicted killers are: Col (retd) Khandkar Abdur Rashid, Lt Col (retd) Shariful Haque Dalim, Major (retd) Nur Chowdhury, Lt Col (Retd) M Rashed Chowdhury, Abdul Mazed and Moselehuddin Khan.

Abdul Aziz Pasha died in Zimbabwe in 2001.

## WWII bomb prompts evacuation

AFP, Berlin

About 45,000 people were being evacuated from their homes in the western German city of Koblenz yesterday ahead of work to defuse a World War II bomb.

The 1.8-tonne British bomb was discovered in the River Rhine after water levels fell. It was due to be deactivated later yesterday.

People living within a 1.8-kilometre radius of the site were ordered to leave their homes by 0800 GMT, the fire service said.

Some 2,500 fire, police, medical and technical personnel as well as city officials are involved in organising the evacuation, the biggest in Koblenz since World War II.

Nearly half the population of the city is affected.

Two hospitals, seven old people's homes, a prison and several hotels have also been evacuated. Streets have been closed off and the main train station was shut to trains in the early morning.

The British bomb was discovered on November 20, together with a 125-kilogramme US bomb which was also due to be deactivated as soon as officials confirm all buildings are empty.

More than six decades after the war, authorities believe there are still some 3,000 bombs buried beneath the capital Berlin alone, and unexploded devices are regularly discovered in construction work.

In June 2010, a 500-kilo Allied bomb, thought to be British, exploded and killed three German sappers and seriously injured two others in the central city of Goettingen as they prepared to defuse it.

## PM goes

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are considered warm in spite of disputes over maritime boundary and the influx of ethnic Rohingya refugees from Myanmar's eastern state of Arakan.

Bangladesh wants Myanmar to speed up the repatriation of about 28,000 Rohingya refugees who have been living in government-registered camps in the border region of Tekhnaf.

Official sources in Bangladesh said another about 300,000 Rohingyas have fled Myanmar over the years alleging persecution. These unregistered refugees live outside the camps, many of them mingling with the local people.

Bangladesh and Myanmar are also trying to resolve their dispute over the maritime boundary in the resource-rich Bay of Bengal.

The prime minister's trip takes place at a time when the long-isolated Southeast Asian nation's first civilian government in decades are opening up with promises to carry out reforms.

Her trip follows two high profile separate visits to Myanmar by Chinese Vice-president Xi Jinping and US Secretary of State Hillary Clinton.

The premier will leave Dhaka for Nay Pyi Taw, the new capital of Myanmar, at 2:00pm today on a special flight of Biman Bangladesh Airlines, according to foreign ministry officials.

Myanmar's Union Minister for Foreign Affairs U Wunna Maung Lwin will receive Sheikh Hasina at Nay Pyi Taw Airport at around 4:00pm local time. Foreign Minister Dipu Moni will accompany the PM, among others.

She will meet Myanmar President Thein Sein and hold talks aimed at boosting bilateral cooperation and removing irritants between the two neighbours.

A host of issues including import of natural gas and electricity, taking lease of land in Arakan for cultivation, building a direct road link, opening direct air and shipping links, easing procedures for issuing business visas and introduction of facilities for banking and financial transactions will be discussed.

From Myanmar the prime minister will fly to Bali, the Indonesian goddess island, on Wednesday to attend an international democracy conference on December 7-9.

## Khoka held, freed

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M Khurshid Hossain, deputy commissioner of police of Lalbagh division, refuted the claim that Khoka was stabbed in the leg, and said he was injured by brickbats.

The BNP leader was later admitted to United Hospital in Gulshan. A nurse at the hospital said that Khoka had suffered injuries on his left leg but that no stitches were required.

Witnesses said police took Khoka into custody from a lawyer's chamber where he had taken shelter. Chhatra League activists allegedly hurled stones at Khoka while he was being escorted to a police vehicle.

Meanwhile, pro-government organisations, including Chhatra League and Sramik League, brought out anti-hartal processions in the capital.

The hartal caused disruption to business activities and public life in the capital. Schools and shops remained closed, and traffic was thin on the streets.

Law enforcers kept the BNP central office under siege, and obstructed opposition activists from bringing out processions in parts of the city.

Masudur Rahman, additional deputy commissioner of police, told The Daily Star that 34 people had been detained for their alleged involvement in hartal violence.

Mirza Fakhru, however, claimed that more than 200 opposition activists were arrested during the hartal.

"Awami League cadres stabbed Khoka on his left leg while law enforcers were taking him to the detective

police office," Alamgir alleged at a press briefing at the party's central office in Naya Paltan.

A demonstration would be held today to protest the incident, he said.

"The government decision to split Dhaka without any discussions is proof of its autocratic attitude. People will not accept it," said Alamgir.

Witnesses said when Khoka led a procession into the premises of Dhaka District Judge's Court, pro-BNP lawyers joined them. As they were about to march on to the street, police blocked the exits, prompting protesters into pelting them with stones and brickbats.

Law enforcers, in retaliation, charged batons on them and fired tear-gas canisters. Activists of Chhatra League, the student body associated with the ruling party, reportedly attacked the demonstrators.

Opposition supporters set fire to a police vehicle in the courtyard. They also torched a number of motorbikes and vandalised several vehicles before the court gate.

A group of protesters also damaged windows at Dhaka Bar Association.

Several policemen and protesters were injured in the clashes.

Police last night filed two cases with the Kotwali Police Station in connection with assault on law enforcers, and the torching of the police vehicle during the hartal, said police sources.

One was filed under the speedy trial act against seven people, who were arrested during the torching

of the police vehicle in the court area.

Seventeen identified and more than a hundred unidentified people were accused in the other case filed for assault on police.

Law enforcers picked up pro-BNP lawyer Iqbal Hossain, general secretary of Dhaka Bar Association, from his chamber but later released him.

Lawyers loyal to the ruling party and the opposition blamed one another for the violence and demanded punishment for those responsible for it.

It may be recalled that on November 29, a bill was passed by parliament, splitting the DCC amid protests from the opposition and DCC staff.

KHALEDA TERMS AL BARBARIC

Terming Awami League a barbaric party, BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia last night demanded arrest of BCL cadres who allegedly attacked Khoka.

Khaleda, who went to United Hospital to visit Khoka, claimed that BCL cadres assaulted the immediate past DCC mayor at the court premises before detective police detained him during the hartal.

She said the government, on the one hand, preaches about the Liberation War, but on the other, carries out attack on freedom fighters like Khoka.

The BNP chief urged the government to try those involved in such crimes before trying war criminals.

The anti-government movement cannot be stopped by repression or torture, added Khaleda.

## Rail, ICT new ministries

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By bifurcating the Ministry of Communications, the government has established a new Ministry of Railways. It has divided the Ministry of Science and Information and Communication Technology to create a Ministry of Science and Technology and a Ministry of Information and Communication Technology.

The Cabinet Division has issued separate gazette notifications in this regard. The two new ministries are the 37th and 38th ministries of the government.

Reliable sources claim that Communications Minister Syed Abul Hossain will be reassigned to the Ministry of Information and Communication Technology while new minister Obaidul Quader will replace him at communications.

Newly appointed minister Suranjit Sengupta is likely to get the Ministry of Railways while Commerce Minister Faruk Khan and Aviation Minister GM Quader are likely to swap portfolios, the sources claimed.

The move to create new ministries came five days after Suranjit and Obaidul were sworn in as ministers, albeit without portfolios.

Prime Minister's Office sources said Sheikh Hasina

had already approved the changes. Although The Daily Star could not obtain an official confirmation of the changes, an announcement is likely to be made today.

The parliamentary standing committee on communications ministry and other quarters have been demanding a separate railway ministry for improving train services. But sources in the ruling Awami League say that the creation of the railway ministry has nothing to do with their demand. Rather, the railway ministry was created so that the controversial communications minister could have a job and the government could come by World Bank funding for the Padma multipurpose bridge project.

The Padma bridge project ran into uncertainty when the World Bank, the lead financier of the \$2.97 billion project, suspended \$1.2 billion funding over allegations of Communications Minister Syed Abul Hossain's involvement in corruption. The bank reportedly placed the precondition that it would not fund the project unless Abul left his position.

Minister Abul has been widely criticised for the bad condition of roads and highways as well.

"The creation of the rail-

way ministry can be a solution to the problem," a senior ruling party leader said, requesting anonymity.

The communications ministry is comprised of three divisions--roads, bridges and railways. Train communications are overseen by Bangladesh Railway.

Known to be the safest and cheapest mode of transport, the railway remains a neglected sector in Bangladesh. While many developing nations, including the country's next-door neighbour, have been modernising their railways through phenomenal improvements in quality of service, Bangladesh's railway network has rather shrunk over the years.

Buet the academic and communications expert Jamilur Reza Chowdhury believes that merely establishing a railway ministry will not improve services unless the railway is given more autonomy and is run by specialists rather than bureaucrats. "Once railway served better as the railway board had enough autonomy, but now bureaucrats make all the decisions, which is the reason behind the railway's poor services," he told The Daily Star last night.

## Two icons pass away

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from Indian cinema stars, reports Pallab Bhattacharya from New Delhi.

Waheeda Rehman, who worked with him in the classic "Guide" and in several other films, said she was sad to hear the news because he was her first hero and she did maximum films with him.

"We had to learn so much from him because he had so much energy in him. I used to tell him 'Dev you are like an ever-ready battery'."

Amritabh Bachchan wrote on twitter "an era has come to an end ...Dev Anand leaves a void never perhaps to be filled again... his never-give-up belief, his joy of life! Had just met Dev Saheb at his premiere recently...he was weak but full of spirit...He was such a positive person...never associated death with him," he said.

Melody queen Lata Mangeshkar said Dev Anand never looked back and never

regretted anything. He was a great personality.

"Dev Anand is dead. As the new dawn breaks over Mumbai I salute the memory of this star who has left us with the glow of his smile," veteran director Mahesh Bhatt said. "So as a Tribute to Dev Saab let's only hum his songs today. Songs that became such an integral part of our lives. Abhi na jao chhodkar."

"Dev Saab was kind, passionate, courageous, forthright, charming, encouraging, contemporary, always a leader and a great human. Will Miss him," said actor Anupam Kher on the micro-blogging site.

Actress Madhuri Dixit said, "Sad to hear about Dev Anand's demise. Another icon leaves the stage. My condolences to his family. We will miss him."

SOCRATES

Socrates, the clever playmaker who in 1982 captained what is widely regarded as the best Brazil

side never to have won the World Cup, passed on aged 57, report agencies from Sao Paulo.

Known for his elegant style on the field and his deep involvement with Brazilian politics, Socrates died of septic shock resulting from an intestinal infection, according to a statement by the Albert Einstein hospital.

He had been rushed to the hospital on Saturday and had been in critical condition in an intensive care unit, breathing with the help of a ventilator.

Socrates was twice hospitalised and placed in intensive care in the last few months, most recently in September. Both times, he was admitted for a haemorrhage caused by high pressure in the vein that carries blood from the digestive system to the liver.

Socrates has acknowledged being a heavy drinker, even when he starred as a player in the 1980s.

## Reflect sun

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conference in South Africa on Friday said that - in theory - reflecting a small amount of sunlight back into space before it strikes the Earth's surface would have an immediate and dramatic effect.

Within a few years, global temperatures could return to levels of 250 years ago, before the industrial revolution began dumping carbon dioxide into the air, trapping heat and causing temperatures to rise.

But no one knows what the side effects would be.

The idea of solar radiation management 'has the potential to be either very useful or very harmful,' said a joint study led by Britain's Royal Society, the Washington-based Environmental Defence Fund and TWAS, the academy of sciences for the developing world based in Trieste, Italy.

The final report is the climax of a year-long dialogue spanning experts in 22 countries.

It was prompted by the failure of a 20-year UN negotiating process to take decisive action to curb greenhouse gas emissions, mainly from burning fossil fuels, responsible for climate change.

"The slow progress of international climate negotiations has led to increased concerns that sufficient cuts in greenhouse gas emissions may not be achieved in time to avoid unacceptable levels of climate change," the report said.

But geoengineering is not an alternative to climate action, said John Shepherd, a British oceanographer from the University of Southampton who was the lead author of the report.

'Nobody thought this provides a justification for not reducing carbon emissions,' Shepherd told AP.

'We have to stick with Plan A for the time being, and that could be a very long time indeed,' he said. 'This would buy time for people to make the transition to a low-carbon economy.'

Deliberately tinkering with nature to counter global warming can only be a stop-gap measure, and is fraught with danger, the report said.

The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change sees temperatures rising as much as 6.4 degrees Celsius by 2100, swelling the seas with melted glacial water and disrupting climate conditions around the globe.

Action such as spraying sulfur into the air or brightening clouds with sea water to reflect more sunlight would have to be sustained indefinitely because 'there would be a large and rapid climate change if it were terminated suddenly,' the report said.

Theories of manipulating the climate to impede global warming have been on the fringe of scientific discussion for some time, but is now moving towards the mainstream.

## NU asked

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university authorities cannot recruit new employees following the SC order.

Now the HC will settle issue of termination and fresh appointment of NU employees, he said.

The six-member bench of the Appellate Division headed by Chief Justice Md Muzammel Hossain yesterday passed the order after disposing of three leave-to-appeal petitions filed by the terminated