

Low prices

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After a good harvest of the main crop boro, the prices of the coarse and medium varieties are now at Tk 13-Tk 14 a kilogram, which is lower than the government's estimate of boro production cost at Tk 15.76 a kg for this year.

"It's a harsh reality. The prices of paddy are low but those of other essentials are high. Running a family only with agricultural income has become tough these days," said Abdul Motaleb, a small farmer at Kaunia in Rangpur. "The current prices are lower than my production cost," said Motaleb, who grows crops by leasing lands from others.

The prices of rice have been on the decline since the second half of the present fiscal year depressed by a good harvest of the second biggest crop aman following increased aus and boro outputs last season.

A huge stock at public warehouses and market intervention by the government through various safety net schemes also contributed to a fall in the prices of rice.

On the other hand, growers' production cost went up as the government hiked the prices of fertiliser along with fuel and electricity, which are linked with tilling and irrigation costs.

Keeping pace with high inflation, wages for farm labourers also marked a rise, squeezing farmers' scope to make margins at a time when the prices of other major crops -- potato and jute -- remained low.

To find a safe haven, many farmers shifted from rice and potato to other crops such as maize.

But maize also failed to cushion the growers against losses as demand for the

grains in poultry feed mills slumped after bird flu hit farms in the second quarter of the current fiscal year.

During the current fiscal year, potato production slumped by 82.05 lakh tonnes as acreage fell amid farmers' shift to other crops.

Production of cash crop jute also slid 4.68 percent to 80.30 lakh bales in the fiscal 2011-12 from a year ago, according to Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics.

"Low prices have ruined us," said Md Moqbul Hossain, a maize grower in Bogra. "Rice growers are grappling with low prices along with us."

"We spend months to grow crop. If we can't make profit, our efforts of around six months will go in vain," said Hossain.

To help farmers get higher prices, the government has increased the purchase target of food grains from the domestic market to 1.35 million tonnes for the ongoing fiscal year.

The food ministry had earlier said it would buy one million tonnes of boro -- 0.1 million tonnes of paddy at Tk 18 a kg and 0.9 million tonnes of rice at Tk 28 a kg.

Nirod Boron Saha, a rice and paddy wholesaler at Naogaon, said millers have taken a go-slow stance to buy rice in the face of a lack of space at public warehouses.

"If we purchase higher quantity of paddy and the government cannot buy the produce because of space constraints, our funds will remain stuck," said the wholesaler.

Until last week, food stocks at public warehouses were 1.19 million tonnes meaning that space for 0.33 million tonnes was free.

"Against this backdrop, chances of an increase in the prices of rice are thin," he

Arrestee remanded

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case, sought the remand.

Eighteen-year-old Himadri Majumdar Himu, a student of Summerfield School and College, died on May 23 in the capital's Square Hospital, 26 days after his friends pushed him off the rooftop of four-storey Farhad Mansion in Panchlaish Residential Area in the portcity.

Before pushing him off, they beat him up mercilessly and also had three dogs set upon him.

Asit, a distant uncle of Himu, filed a murder case with the police station on May 24 against Himu's four friends Junaid Ahmed Riad, Shaju, Danny and Shaon and Riad's father Shah Selim Tipu, also owner of Farhad Mansion, in connection with the murder.

Shaju also denied having

The accused went into hiding after the case was filed against them.

On Saturday, detectives arrested Shaju from a house at Shah Pori Island in Teknaf of Cox's Bazar, nine-days after the case was filed.

Nitai Proshad Ghosh, the plaintiff's lawyer, told The Daily Star yesterday the court granted the seven-day remand of Shaju after police had applied for it.

Shaju told The Daily Star, after he was produced before the court yesterday, that he had not been involved in the incident, and knew nothing about what had happened on that day.

He only came to know about the incident through different newspapers, Shaju said.

Shaju also denied having

any friendship with Riad, one of the five accused in the case, terming him as his neighbour.

Asked why Riad and three others killed Himu, he said, "I do not know anything about it."

On Saturday, when police quizzed Shaju after his arrest, he denied outright any involvement in the murder, said SM Tanvir Arafat, assistant commissioner (DB) of Chittagong Metropolitan Police.

Earlier, on April 28, Himu's father Prabir Kanti Majumdar recorded a general diary with the police station in connection with the torture on Himu on April 27.

Only talks can resolve crisis

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inauguration of a workshop on upazila governance project held at the LGED auditorium in the capital.

"But the current constitution will guide the dialogue," he added.

Ashraf, also Awami League general secretary, said the government was not worried about the opposition parties' June 10 ultimatum for a restoration of the caretaker government system.

"Neither are we concerned about the opposition's June 11 mass rally in the capital," he said.

Asked about the BNP's demand that the govern-

ment would have to come up with the proposal on how the next election will be held, Ashraf said such disagreements during the initiation of any dialogue were normal.

"At the beginning of any dialogue, the opposition may express ninety percent disagreement centering on the [dialogue] issue," Ashraf said, adding "but gradually, the two (opposing) sides reach an agreement."

He said the next general election, expected to be held in early 2014, would be held in line with the country's constitution.

"And I hope all political parties will take part in the

election and people will select the next government of their own free will," Ashraf said. "I am very much hopeful and optimistic that the next general election will be peaceful," he mentioned.

Earlier, speaking at the workshop, the LGRD minister said sometimes military-backed political governments used different local government bodies to stay in power illegally.

He said the government was determined to strengthen the local government bodies, but it cannot be done "unless they become financially independent".

State of denial

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are we to question their intentions?

And yet there are all the inevitable questions which keep boring their way into the public consciousness here in Bangladesh. Take the matter of the recent Dhaka visit by US Secretary of State Hillary Clinton. You would need to be extremely sharp of intellect or imagination to put your finger on the nature of the visit. Was it official? Was it a private trip on Clinton's part?

The secretary had no lunch or dinner with Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina or Foreign Minister Dipu Moni. Earlier, she took an excruciatingly long time to emerge from her aircraft when it landed in Dhaka.

And then there is the matter of her rather longish meeting with Leader of the Opposition Khaleda Zia at the latter's home. A powerful American does not come all the way to a chaotic Dhaka on a pleasure trip.

We do not mean to quibble. All we are saying is that the Clinton visit, preceded by a good number of Obama administration functionaries' visits, could not have come to pass without a

purpose. Now that Leon Panetta has made it clear that in future as much as 60 percent of American warships will be deployed in the Asia Pacific region, we need to take a second look at that Indian media report and wonder anew if anything of a disturbing note is indeed going on.

At a time when Bangladesh's need is a reshaping and reassertion of diplomatic and economic ties with India and China and Myanmar, it does become a matter of concern if, only if, the US is doing all it can to make a military presence in or around Chittagong.

But, of course, we have those denials from Dhaka and Washington to reassure us. We would like to feel reassured, especially given the history of the Cold War. In its enthusiasm to contain communism, Washington roped states like Pakistan (and we were part of that state) into SEATO and CENTO in the 1950s. That did not help Pakistan any. In fact, precisely the reverse results were to be observed. Pakistan alienated itself from the Soviet Union and

Mao Zedong's China and not until the late 1960s was it able to pry itself somewhat loose from the two regional bodies. A catalyst to that change was the Vietnam War, then shattering America materially and psychologically in more ways than one.

Pakistan's close ties with America led to Egypt's Gamal Abdel Nasser giving short shrift to Pakistan. HS Suhrawardy's bid to denigrate the non-aligned movement caused howls of derision outside Pakistan. Again, going back in time, one recalls the embarrassment Pakistan ran into when Francis Gary Powers took off from a US base near Peshawar in 1960, penetrated Soviet airspace and was shot down. Nikita Khrushchev exulted over the incident, and was eloquent in his castigation of America and Pakistan. The perils of housing a foreign base in a putatively independent country had never been more glaring.

It now remains for Bangladesh's political leadership, across the bipartisan divide, to come together in guaranteeing the country's

continuity as a state in actual practice of the idea, voiced by Bangabandhu in 1972, that Dhaka believed in friendship with all and malice toward none. It is important today -- 41 years after the Nixon administration sought to undermine an emerging Bangladesh in favour of Pakistan and 38 years after Washington would not have food grains sent to Bangladesh to feed its hungry because of Dhaka's attempts to keep up friendly ties with Castro's Havana -- for politicians in Bangladesh to come together in a vigorous defence of the national interest.

And that means playing a geopolitical role that will not pit Bangladesh against India or China or Russia or indeed any other country. Enlightened self-interest should be all.

Back in the 1970s, a fundamental reason why Bangabandhu and Tajuddin Ahmed fell out was policy toward Washington. Tajuddin quit the government in October 1974. Ten months later, the pro-American commerce minister Khondokar Moshtaqur Ahmed led the violent coup

Request for Proposal

Internet Connectivity for NHRC Project



United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) in Bangladesh hereby invites sealed proposals from interested bidders for Internet Connectivity for NHRC Project.

Submission of Proposal: The envelopes should state "Proposal for Internet Connectivity for NHRC Project" and marked as 'Confidential'. The selection of Proposals will be done based on the UNDP procurement rules and regulations.

All interested firms may collect the bidding Documents (RFP) from the below e-mail address: parvin.akther@undp.org. Proposal must be dropped to the UNDP Registry, IDB Bhaban (12th Floor), Sher-e-Bangla Nagar, Dhaka before 16.30 hrs on 18 June 2012.

Infrastructure Development Company Limited (IDCOL)

Invitation to participate in Solar Home Systems (SHS) Programme

IDCOL is a public-private sector institution promoting economic development in Bangladesh by encouraging private sector investment in infrastructure, renewable energy and other sectors. IDCOL seeks applications from non-governmental organizations ("NGOs")/ micro-finance institutions ("MFIs")/ private entities for selection as Supplier Participating Organizations or Lender Participating Organizations (hereafter referred to as "POs") under its Renewable Energy Programme for installation of SHSs in areas where grid electricity is absent or unlikely to reach in the near future. IDCOL has a target of financing installation of 4 million SHSs by 2016.

Activities under IDCOL Renewable Energy Programme include dissemination of SHS by:

1. Providing capital buy down grants and institutional development grant, as applicable, sourced from KfW/the World Bank/GIZ/GPOBA/Asian Development Bank (ADB)/ Government of Japan and other development partners to the users of SHS and technical assistance for institutional development of POs; and
2. Refinancing of loans, as applicable, sourced from International Development Association (IDA)/ Asian Development Bank (ADB)/ Islamic Development Bank (IDB) and other likely development partners such as JICA for SHS installed by the POs.
3. More than 1,400,000 SHSs have already been installed all over Bangladesh under the programme through IDCOL's 29 POs.
4. To further accelerate the dissemination of SHS across Bangladesh with a view to supplementing Government's vision of 'Ensuring Access to Electricity for all by 2020', IDCOL intends to select few new POs from organizations mentioned above who have a successful track record of doing business and/or micro-credit operations, and are interested to work in the area of renewable energy.
5. Interested organizations are requested to download complete application package from IDCOL website www.idcol.org. Application package may also be collected from IDCOL office at a cost of Taka 500/- (non-refundable). **Completed applications must be submitted to the address mentioned below before 4:00 p.m. on 5 July 2012.**

Applications will be evaluated by an independent evaluation committee in accordance with the criteria described in the application package. Selected POs will be required to sign Participation Agreements with IDCOL. IDCOL reserves the right to accept or reject any of application without assigning any reason.

Please contact:



Infrastructure Development Company Limited

UTC Building, Level-16, 8 Panthapath, Kawranbazar, Dhaka-1215.
Phones: 9102171-8, Fax: 8116663, E-mail: solar@idcol.org



Janata Bank Limited

Estate Department, Head Office
110, Motijheel C/A (5th floor)
Dhaka-1000

INVITATION FOR TENDER

Sealed tenders are invited from the intending genuine interior design firms for Interior Design & Decoration works of the 12th floor of our 24-storied "Janata Bhaban" at 110, Motijheel Commercial Area, Dhaka-1000. Required information's are as follows:

1.	Procuring Entity	: Janata Bank Limited
2.	Source of funds	: Janata Bank Limited's own. ftdm
3.	Tender package no.	: JBL/PAR/ED/DECO/HO/03/12
4.	Tender Invitation no. and date	: JBL/AGM/ED/DECO/HO/67/12 and 04-06-2012
5.	Name of the works	: Interior Design & Decoration works of the 12th floor of 24-storied "Janata Bhaban" building at 110, motijheel C/A, Dhaka by supplying all materials, goods, equipments, labours etc. complete in all respect up to the satisfaction of the Bank Management.
6.	Brief description of works	: Interior Design works:- Partition wall, decorative false ceiling, marble & tiles work, tempered glass door, wall panelling, electrical & lighting works, furniture supplying etc. details as per schedule.
7.	Allowable time for works	: 90(ninety) days from the date of signing contract
8.	Tender Security	: Tk.2,00,000/-(two lac) only, in the form of Pay Order or irrevocable bank guarantee issued from any schedule Bank, in favour of Janata Bank Ltd. Head Office, Dhaka.
9.	Performance Security	: 10% of approved amount in the form of Pay Order or irrevocable bank guarantee issued from any schedule-Bank, in favour of Janata Bank Ltd. Head Office, Dhaka.
10.	Price of the tender documents	: Tk.2,000/-(two thousand) only, in cash (non-refundable).
11.	Condition for purchasing tender documents.	: Intending Tenderers should apply to the undersigned in Firm/ Company's own letter head pad.
12.	Last date and time of purchasing tender document	: 26 / 06 / 2012, within office hour.
13.	Date and time of submitting tender	: 27 / 06 / 201 2, within 2:30 P.M.
14.	Date and time of opening of the tender	: 27/06/2012, at 3:00 P.M.
15.	Eligibility of tenderers	: The intending firms must have the following capability and experience of performance:- i). Successful completion of Interior Design & Decoration works of commercial building of any Govt./Semi Govt./Autonomous/ Corporate office/reputed private organization during the last 5(five) years. ii). The performed work value as mentioned in 15(i) should not be worth less than 50(fifty) lacs in a single Work order, which should be mentioned in the experience certificate issued by an Engineer not below the rank of an Executive Engineer or equivalent.
16.	Special terms and conditions	: i). Bank will supply only the layout plan of 12th floor of the building, ii). Bidders will propose the interior design with 3D- View on the basis of Bank's layout plan. The 3D-View should include the detail of partition walls, ceiling, floor, furniture arrangement, lighting & air conditioning arrangement etc. iii). A modern, attractive and quality design will be considered one of the selection criteria, iv). If any Tenderer produces a false, wrong information or any fabricated certificate, the security money will be forfeited and the related tender will be treated as cancelled, v). Bank authority reserves the right to accept or reject any/all the tenders without assigning any reason thereof. 6). The tenderers should be bound to obey all the terms & conditions, rules and regulations of PPR-2008. 7). Interested Tenderer may view the document at the office of undersigned during office hours.

(Purnendu Kumer Roy)
Deputy General Manager