

Tomatoes

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was declared formalin-free on September 19. The traders there have not been selling any tomatoes since.  
Other kitchen markets in the capital, however, are teeming with ruby-red tomatoes.

Shamim Bhuiyan, secretary general of Malibagh Market Traders Cooperative Limited, yesterday said, "From today the vegetable traders will take our formalin detection kit to Karwanbazar and check for formalin before buying any fruits or vegetables."

Some other vegetables, such as cucumber, carrot, green chilli, cauliflower and beans are also under inspection, said Shamim.

"How can we rely on a single detection kit for checking all fruits, fishes and vegetables? Still, we are glad that at least some initiatives have been taken here to curb the use of formalin," said Mahub Hossain, an employee at a private firm, at the Malibagh kitchen market on Wednesday afternoon.

As so many products are now contaminated with formalin, it is time for customers to carry a formalin detector. Before buying such products, they should check for formalin on their own, he added.

At the fruit shops outside the kitchen market, most shopkeepers were selling native fruits, among which were papaya, wood apple, cherimoya, pummelo, carambola, water chestnut, guava, olive and banana. Only one shop was selling imported fruits.

The fruit sellers also check grapes and other imported fruits for formalin, said Shamim Bhuiyan.

"We have detected formalin only in ripe tomatoes and a red fruit called cherry," Shamim added.

Services

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Kawrakandi at the same time.

However, no buses were allowed as the authorities only permitted smaller vehicles and goods-laden trucks to use the ferry services, he said.

The river had swelled up as flood water from Assam came gushing in through the Brahmaputra meeting the Padma near Manikganj.

Around 600 vehicles were trapped on both sides of the river causing the commuters to suffer, reports our correspondent from Munshiganj.

Matin Miah, a truck driver, said the authorities should have ferries strong enough to operate despite the heavy current.

The BIWTC wanted to use Paturia-Daulatdia and Chandpur-Shariatpur routes instead of the Mawa-Kawrakandi route in which case passengers would have to experience longer queues, said Feroz Miah, president of Munshiganj Sammilita Bebohayee Oikya Parishad.

Two killed

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opened fire on the activists as they were on their way to Dudhukchhara Bazar around 8:00am.

However, PCJSS Press Secretary Sajib Chakma denied the involvement of his party men in the killings.

Suniti died on the spot, while bullet-wounded Hridoy managed to escape, added Riku.

Lt Col Abdur Rahman, commanding officer of Border Guards Bangladesh (Logang zone), said police recovered Hridoy's body from Logangchhara, 1.5 kilometres from the Dudhukchhara Bazaar, around 1:30pm.

Activists of UPDF brought out a procession protesting the killings at the district town in the afternoon.

Since July, four UPDF activists have been shot dead while two men of PCJSS have been shot and injured following clashes between the two parties over establishing supremacy in Khagrachhari.

Niece or uncle?

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on election day," Returning Officer Mihir Sarwar Morshed told The Daily Star yesterday.

He added that the commission was all prepared to conduct the polls. Measures had been taken to ensure tight security so people could cast their votes without any hindrance.

The Gazipur-4 (Kapasia) seat fell vacant on July 7 after the resignation of ruling Awami League lawmaker Tanjim Ahmad Sohel Taj, son of Tajuddin Ahmad, the wartime prime minister of Bangladesh.

His sister Simeen Hussain Rimi and uncle Afsaruddin Ahmad appear to be the two main contenders in the by-polls. Rimi is running on the AL ticket and Afsaruddin as an independent candidate.

The Communist Party of Bangladesh-backed Asadullah Badal is the other contestant in the polls.

Kapasia has over 2.1 lakh voters, 1.1 lakh of them women. The number of polling centres is 102.

Ballot boxes, ballot papers and other election materials were sent to the polling centres by yesterday afternoon under the supervision of respective supervising officers, who were escorted by two teams of police and the Rapid Action Battalion.

Voting and other poll-related activities will be recorded through webcams

inside 43 risky voting booths, the returning officer said.

Eleven teams of police and Rab led by 22 magistrates have been deployed at all 11 unions of Kapasia. Besides, there will be four mobile striking teams to assist them, he added.

The RO also said four teams of Border Guard Bangladesh led by as many magistrates have been deployed to patrol the Shitalakha river. Besides, several check posts have been installed at the entrances to Kapasia.

Different foreign missions in Dhaka including the US embassy as well as local election observer groups will monitor the polls, EC sources said.

The government has declared a public holiday for the constituency where voting will begin at 8:00am and continue till 4:00pm without any break.

A good number of voters, especially garment workers in Dhaka and Tongi, however, might not be able to cast their votes, as their factories will remain open today.

The three MP aspirants spent the day yesterday mostly at their houses, contacting personally with the voters and giving instructions to their polling agents, sources said.

The EC had earlier set a deadline till Friday midnight for electioneering.

BCL leader arrested at DMCH

*Gun, bullets seized*  
STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Members of Detective Branch of police last night arrested a BCL leader along with his accomplice for possession of illegal arms and ammunition from Dhaka Medical College Hospital (DMCH).

The arrestees are Sagar Ahmed Shahin, former president of Lalbagh Thana unit of Bangladesh Chhatra League, and his accomplice Anwar Hossain.

Acting on information, police arrested the two from the Emergency Department of the DMCH, Inspector Tajul Islam of the DB told The Daily Star.

The law enforcers seized a foreign-made pistol loaded with two bullets from Sagar and a magazine loaded with two bullets from Anwar.

Lankans

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The Sri Lankan reply with an unbeaten 65, sharing an unbroken 108-run stand for the second wicket with Kumar Sangakkara (39 not out) after Tillakaratne Dilshan fell for 13.

Sri Lanka must avoid defeat in their last match against England while the West Indies need to beat the Black Caps with a superior net run-rate -- both games here on Monday -- to reach the last four.

In case Sri Lanka lose to England and West Indies beat New Zealand it will come down to net run-rate to decide the semifinalists, with three teams on four points.

New Zealand's slim chance of reaching the semifinals hinges on Sri Lanka winning their last match and them convincingly beating the West Indies.

The West Indian bowlers failed to worry any of the two great Sri Lankan batsmen, with Jayawardene hitting 10 boundaries and a six off 49 deliveries while Sangakkara hit five boundaries during his 34-ball knock.

Earlier, Ajantha Mendis took 2-12 in his four overs while Jeeven Mendis fetched 1-12 as West Indies, who won the toss and opted to bat, found it hard to score freely in their 20 overs after batting first.

Marlon Samuels (50) and Wayne Bravo (40) were the main run-getters, lifting their team through a 65-run third wicket partnership after West Indies lost Chris Gayle (two) and Johnson Charles (12) at the same score of 16.

Samuels hit two sixes and four boundaries during his 35-ball knock before he holed out in the last over.

Mendis, who came on to bowl the fifth over of the innings, had Charles stumped off the fifth ball of the over which was a maiden.

Bravo hit four boundaries and two sixes during his 34-ball knock before he holed out to Jeevan Mendis.

Earlier, defending champions England beat New Zealand by six wickets in another group one match, to remain in contention for a semifinal place.

**SCORES IN BRIEF**  
**WEST INDIES:** 129 for five (Samuels 50, Bravo 40, Russell 19 not out; A Mendis 2-12, J Mendis 1-12, Kulasekara 1-28).

**SRI LANKA:** 130 for one in 15.2 overs (Jayawardene 65 not out, Sangakkara 39 not out; Rampaul 1-39).

**Result:** Sri Lanka won by nine wickets.

**Player-of-the-match:** Mahela Jayawardene

Extortionist

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who could not be identified, shot Rabiul around 7:30am, when he was working at the construction site. Before the shooting, he left a letter with guard Moazzafur Hossain.

One Pathan, in the letter, gave his name and phone number and demanded Tk 10 lakh from Rashid. The contractor was told to call at that phone number.

Rashid lodged a case with Pallabi Police Station in this connection.

He said a man called him around 11:00am and threatened to kill him for informing police.

Abdur Rahman, sub-inspector of the police station, said one suspect had been detained in this regard.

Shortcut to fortune

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The project in Hemayetpur, some 30km northwest of the capital, is built on a 100-acre land, a large portion of which was bought with Sonali Bank loan.

Tushar, the key man to deal with banks on Hall-Mark's behalf, defended his boss's decision to divert the loan money.

He claimed his company did not siphon off the money; it rather invested in setting up more factories and creating jobs.

According to Hall-Mark, its net liabilities to Sonali Bank stand at Tk 2,268 crore. Of the sum, Tk 1,567 crore is funded loan, meaning the amount has been taken in cash. The remaining amount is non-funded loan, mostly in the form of guarantee against letter of credits (LCs).

The company paid back Tk 400.38 crore to the bank after the lender stopped disbursing new loans to the company in May this year.

A Bangladesh Bank investigation in May found the group's total liabilities to be

Tk 2,686.14 crore.

All of the Hall-Mark loans were against IBP, which is a short-term credit facility utilised as working capital. But the hitherto little-known company used these loans for buying land and building factories.

"We are ready to pay the loans, but our factories must keep on running for that," said Tushar.

He claimed that they had export orders worth \$7 million (about Tk 57 crore) from renowned buyers like H&M, JCPenney and Walmart.

"We cannot export anything as no bank wants to accept our letter of credits now," he said.

Hall-Mark bought 36 decimals of land from Janata Housing at Hemayetpur in 2006 and set up its first factory, Hall-Mark Fashion, there in 2007, the year it started banking with Sonali Bank's Ruposhi Bangla Hotel branch.

In 2008, the group set up Bobby Fashion, Wall-Mart Fashion, Hall-Mark Style, Bobby Denim and Hall-Mark

Iran terror group

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Paris, has invested much money and years of intense lobbying to be taken off the list.

But Hillary Clinton's decision to take the MEK off its blacklist will increase its fund raising clout in the United States and annoy Tehran.

The move comes at a time when Western powers are stepping up pressure on Iran. Israel's Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and US President Barack Obama stressed their "shared goal" to stop Iran getting a nuclear bomb.

Netanyahu, who is in New York to attend the UN General Assembly, followed up on his demand for a "clear red line" to be drawn on Iran's nuclear drive with a telephone call to the US president focused on the nuclear showdown.

Yesterday, Iranian Defence Minister Ahmad Vahidi said Israel has already breached its own red line set by Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu by acquiring "dozens of nuclear warheads."

**'LONG OVERDUE'**  
MEK leader Maryam Rajavi said in a statement from Paris that she "welcomed and appreciated" Hillary's decision to delist the movement.

"This has been the correct decision, albeit long overdue, in order to remove a major obstacle in the path of the Iranian people's efforts for democracy," she was quoted as saying in the statement.

The cult-like leftwing group was founded in the 1960s to oppose the shah of Iran, and after the 1979 Islamic revolution that ousted him it took up arms against Iran's clerical rulers.

The MEK says it has now laid down its arms and is working to overthrow the Islamic regime in Tehran through peaceful means.

But in its note about delisting the MEK, the State Department stressed that it had not forgotten the group's militant past.

"With today's actions, the Department does not overlook or forget the MEK's past acts of terrorism, including its involvement in the killing

of US citizens in Iran in the 1970s and an attack on US soil in 1992," it said.

"The department also has serious concerns about the MEK as an organization, particularly with regard to allegations of abuse committed against its own members."

A senior US official said that Washington does "not see the MEK as a viable opposition."

"We have no evidence and we have no confidence that the MEK is an organization that could promote the democratic values that we would like to see in Iran," the official told reporters. "They are not part of our picture in terms of the future of Iran."

Washington designated the MEK a "foreign terrorist organization" in 1997, putting it in a category that includes al-Qaeda, the Palestinian Hamas and Lebanon's Hezbollah.

The State Department holds the group responsible for the deaths of Iranians as well as US soldiers and civilians from the 1970s into 2001.

It said that Hillary's decision to delist the group "took into account the MEK's public renunciation of violence, the absence of confirmed acts of terrorism by the MEK for more than a decade and their cooperation in the peaceful closure of Camp Ashraf, their historic paramilitary base" in Iraq.

Part of the conditions for delisting the group were that more than 3,200 MEK members living at Camp Ashraf in Iraq's Diyala province, north-east of Baghdad, move to another area called Camp Liberty.

Earlier this month, the last major group of the Iranian exiles relocated from the camp that former Iraq leader Saddam Hussein had allowed them to use.

The exiles were moved under a December 25 deal between the United Nations and Baghdad that aims to see them eventually relocated to third countries.

The MEK has no support in Iran, and no connection to domestic opposition groups.

Britain struck the MEK off its terror list in June 2008, followed by the European

Design Wear with Sonali Bank loans.

There was no factory built in the next two years. But in 2011, it suddenly got hold of a source of money and set up 27 factories that year.

"We've invested all loans from Sonali Bank to set up these factories," said Tushar.

A chief executive officer of a leading private bank said IBPs are a short-term working capital that cannot be used for long-term investments.

"It's a violation of banking norms and grammar," he added, preferring not to be named.

The CEO said the way Hall-Mark used the loan money was not viable either because it had to repay the loan within 120 days; but it would not get the return of its investments in two to three years for the nature of the business.

Group Managing Director Tanvir Mahmud did not respond to the phone calls by The Daily Star. He also did not reply to the text messages requesting his comment on such violation.

Union in 2009.

In June, the US Court of Appeals in Washington said that if Clinton did not decide whether to deny or grant the group's request to be delisted within four months, it would issue a special writ and remove the group itself.

Hasina

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parties to speak on this issue in parliament.

Now in New York to attend the 67th UN General Assembly, the prime minister made the remarks in an interview aired by the Voice of America Bangla Service on Friday.

The government repealed the caretaker system by introducing the 15th amendment to the constitution in June last year. The scrapping means general elections will now be held under a party government.

Demanding restoration of the system, the BNP-led opposition has announced they would not participate in any elections under this government.

Talking to VOA, Hasina claimed that over 6,000 local elections had so far been held under her government and no irregularities had been reported about those.

She said she would prove that free, fair and neutral elections were possible under a strong election commission even with a partisan government in place.

Reiterating her government's firm stance against terrorism, the prime minister said the United States and other countries had lauded Bangladesh for its efforts to contain the scourge of militancy.

On combating corruption, she said the Anti-Corruption Commission was working independently. "For the first time in the country's history, a sitting minister and advisers had to appear before the commission," she added.

Hasina also claimed that organised violence had lessened and law and order situation improved.

POOR HEALTH CARE

Mobile court jails doctor, 10 others

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A mobile court sentenced 11 people, including a doctor, to various prison terms for providing low-standard health care at a clinic and a pathology centre at Mohammadpur in the capital yesterday.

Aided by Rapid Action Battalion-2 and Directorate of Health Services, the court raided New Medicom Medical Services and Bikrampur Maternity and Pathological Centre on Humayun Road from 12:15pm to 6:00pm.

The court sentenced Sumon Miah, 32, Sharif Hossain, 22, Debabrata Dutta Shuvo, 24, and Nurunnesa, 26, of New Medicom to six months' simple imprisonment and fined them Tk 1 lakh each.

The doctor of the clinic Shahid Hasan, 57, was fined Tk 1 lakh with no imprisonment.

The owners of the pathology centre Johora Begum, 45, Shimu Begum, 35, and employee Raqibul Islam, 23, were sentenced to one and a half years' imprisonment and fined Tk 2 lakh each.

Employees Amir Hossain, 22, Borhan Uddin, 65, and Parvin, 25, were sentenced to six months' jail term and fined Tk 1 lakh each.

The accused were sent to jail following the judgment.

Executive Magistrate HM Anwar Pasha, who led the court, said both the health facilities had appointed some employees to convince patients of government hospitals to switch to theirs by promising better treatment.

"But we found few medical equipments in their labs and no pathologists and nurses," he added. "They used different doctors' names and seals on their pathology report cards but made the reports without conducting any test."

"They did have an X-ray machine, but it was too old and they were still using it," he noted.

The owners of the pathology centre admitted that they had earned a huge amount of money by working as brokers for some private clinics. It was with their earnings that they opened the centre nine years back.

Rajuk gives

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government to reinstate the employees.

The Appellate Division having rejected the Rajuk appeal later upheld the HC verdict.

The termination was not founded on an appropriate procedure, said Huda, and the court directed the authorities to follow a procedure for termination, if required, with due compensation.

The Rajuk has ever since been paying them salaries without designated work, said several officials wishing anonymity.

In the face of constant pressure from the employees backed by political quarters, Rajuk strived to create new posts to accommodate them along with other fresh recruitments.

Huda said they have paid the sacked-and-reinstated employees with the money of various housing schemes and that most of them were engaged in some work, while a small section has no work.

Speaking anonymously, Rajuk officials said such a complicated situation was created due to temporary recruitment en masse in the face of pressure from political leaders and government high-ups despite the fact that there were no approved posts.

The new 2,000-strong manpower of Rajuk, increased from existing 1,087 posts, got approval of the finance ministry around a month ago as part of a move to double Rajuk workforce.

The new workforce structure includes two urban planners with 13 deputy planners and 26 assistant planners and two urban architects with five deputies and 10 assistants.

The number of authorised officers, who approve building plans, will increase to 24 from existing five.

In addition to four zonal offices of Rajuk, there will be four more regional offices, one each in Gazipur, Savar, Keraniganj and Narayanganj.

Not arrested

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the city. MBA Association of Bangladesh organised the programme.

Fakhrul said that not only a few officials of a Sonali Bank branch but many government high-ups were involved in the Tk 4,000-crore scam.

He also observed that the present condition of the country's banking sector was very fragile.

Former secretary AM Nasiruddin said some state-owned commercial banks had given loans to a few big defaulters mortgaging land at highly inflated prices.

He also alleged that some influential people of the government were taking out huge sums as loans and destroying BASIC Bank, a

state-owned scheduled bank that was once considered sound and stable.

Shamsul Haque, former director of Institute of Business Administration at Dhaka University, said loans worth Tk 21,000 crore had been written off by this government but people did not know who had got those loans.

"Even Bangladesh Bank has now turned into a political organisation," he added.

Mahmudur Rahman, acting editor of Bangla daily Amar Desh, said the Sonali Bank authorities in the case of loans to Hall-Mark Group failed to notice how much money a single customer was taking. This needed to be investigated, he said.

Former Sonali Bank

chairman Mahub Ullah said the gross amount of money obtained illegally would surpass the annual budget of the country.

Abu Ahmed, a teacher of Dhaka University, said if the directors of the bank's board had been honest and efficient, the managing directors or other officials would not have dared to indulge in corruption.

In his keynote paper at the roundtable, Syed Abu Naser Bukhtear Ahmed, former managing director of state-owned Agrani Bank, said the loans defaulted now amounted to Tk 29,000 crore, which is 7.17 percent of the total Tk 4.04 lakh crore loan disbursed by public and private commercial banks.