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PUBLIC PROCUREMENT

Move to stop malpractice

Cabinet okays draft amendment to bidding rules in the law

HASAN JAHID TUSHER

The cabinet yesterday approved in principle a proposed law, with a provision prohibiting bidders from quoting a price 10 percent lower or higher than the official estimated price of a public procurement tender.

Another provision of the proposed Public Procurement (4th Amendment) Act-2016 stipulates that a tender would be deemed as cancelled if any bidder quotes a price more than 10 percent lower or higher than the estimated price.

Currently, there is no limit on quoting prices. This allows contractors to quote a low price at their whims to win a tender which adversely affects the quality of goods or work. The amendment is aimed at improving the quality of work and curbing corruption.

Another provision of the amendment seeks to increase the ceiling of the estimated price of a "limited tender" from Tk 2 crore to Tk 3 crore. It would allow the government agencies or departments to award their listed contractors any tender amounting up to Tk 3 crore.

Briefing reporters after the meeting, Cabinet Secretary Mohammad Shafiqul Alam said the amendments to the Public Procurement Act (PPA) have been brought to control the bidders' tendency to quote abnormally low or high prices of tenders.

Meanwhile, Transparency International Bangladesh lauded the cabinet decision saying it would help reduce

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Women drying up red chillies in the sun at Chalitabari char in Sariakandi of Bogra. Farmers in the area expect a bumper production of chillies this year.

Bogra farmers see bumper production of chilli

MAMUN-UR-RASHID, Bogra

Bogra farmers are eyeing bumper production of chilli this year.

Sources of the Department of Agricultural Extension (DAE) said chilli grew well as there was favourable weather throughout the season, and the farmers got proper advice on cultivating chilli from the DAE officials.

Farmers of Sariakandi, Sonatala, Gabtoli and Dhunat upazillas of the district see a good yield of chilli on the river basins of Jamuna and Bangalee, according to the DAE.

Ashutosh Kumar, a farmer of Chaluabari Char of Sariakandi upazila, hoped that they would make a profit by selling their produce at a high price.

Amena Begum, wife of Saied Ali of Bohail Char of the upazila, said her husband cultivated chilli on five bighas of land and he started earning much from the sale of chilli.

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PHOTO: STAR

Creative method still ineffective

Teachers of 40pc secondary schools cannot set creative question papers, shows govt study

WASIM BIN HABIB

Teachers of more than 40 percent secondary schools still cannot set question papers in creative method though seven years have gone since its introduction, according to a latest government report.

They either depend on question papers from outside or take help of fellow teachers from other institutions to compose questions to conduct internal exams.

Released on Sunday, the report was based on a survey of 6,594 out of countrywide 18,598 schools, conducted in Dhaka, Mymensingh, Sylhet, Chittagong, Rangpur, Rajshahi, Khulna, Barisal and Comilla regions by the planning and development unit of the Directorate of Secondary and Higher Education (DSHE).

The survey found that over 16 percent schools bought question papers from teachers' associations for internal exams last year while teachers of over 23 percent schools took help of their colleagues from other schools to compose questions as they could not set those partially, as per the Academic Supervision Report, November-2015.

The education ministry claimed to have trained some 5 lakh teachers of different subjects in phases

Schools whose teachers cannot prepare questions in creative method and buy questions from outside

REGIONS	SCHOOLS SURVEYED	PERCENT
Dhaka	929	23.68
Mymensingh	337	38.87
Sylhet	456	4.61
Chittagong	414	21.01
Rangpur	1077	10.86
Rajshahi	952	14.50
Khulna	1265	10.91
Barisal	550	24.36
Comilla	550	24.36
Total	614	19.38

in this method since its introduction at the secondary level in 2008.

The new textbooks brought out in the light of the method do not have any sample question. Students first answered to creative questions in 2010 Secondary School Certificate exams.

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Mysterious death of 2 siblings

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Two siblings died at Dhaka Medical College Hospital last night, hours after they ate food bought from a Chinese restaurant at Banasree in the city's Rampura.

Family sources said Nusrat Jahan, 14, a seventh grader at Viqarunnisa Noon School and College, and Alvi Aman, 6, a nursery student at Holly Crescent School, along with their parents had their dinner at the restaurant on Sunday night. They brought the leftover food home and kept it refrigerated.

Yesterday afternoon, Jasmine Begum served the food to her children and asked them to go to sleep.

Around 5:30pm, the two were found lying unconscious on the bed. Family members whisked them off to a local clinic and later to Dhaka Medical College Hospital (DMCH) around 7:30pm where doctors declared the siblings dead.

Rampura police visited the apartment of businessman Md Amanullah, the victims' father, on the fourth floor of a six-storey building at Block B of Banasree.

The bodies were kept at the DMCH mortuary. Autopsies will be carried out on those at Dhaka Medical College today.

AIDS rumour empties Sri Lankan school

BBC ONLINE



A school in western Sri Lanka has been emptied of all but one pupil amid false rumours that the boy has AIDS.

Parents removed their children from the Kurunegela school last week, despite the six-year-old having a certificate proving he does not have the disease.

His mother said many other schools had rejected him because her husband's death had been wrongly blamed on AIDS.

School officials told the BBC's Sinhala service they would try to hold a session to educate parents.

Chandani De Soysa said she had been trying for

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AL may defer its national council

Says party leader

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The March 28 national council of the ruling Awami League is set to be deferred for a couple of weeks due to union parishad polls.

The 20th council might be held in mid-April, said party sources.

Talking to party colleagues on Sunday, AL

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PRAYER TIMING
MARCH 1
Fazr Zohr Asr Maghrib Esha
AZAN 5-15 12-45 4-30 6-05 7-30
JAMAAT 5-50 1-15 4-45 6-10 8-00
SOURCE: ISLAMIC FOUNDATION

COUNCIL ON MARCH 19 BNP to hold elections to 2 top posts

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Ahead of the party's sixth national council, the BNP yesterday announced the schedule for elections to its top two posts -- chairperson and senior vice-chairman.

Jamiruddin Sircar, a standing committee member of the party and also election commissioner, announced the schedule at a press conference at the BNP's Nayapaltan central office.

He said the elections would be held on the day of the party's national council on March 19. The aspirants would have to collect nomination papers on March 2 from the party's Nayapaltan office and submit it there on March 4.

The nominations would be scrutinised on March 5 and aspirants could withdraw those by March 6, said Sircar.

Party insiders told The

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Umar Akmal (L) and Shoaib Malik rode through the early storm and struck an unbeaten 114-run partnership to see Pakistan home with eight balls to spare in their Asia Cup T20 match against UAE at the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium in Mirpur yesterday. Story on page 14.

PHOTO: FIROZ AHMED

Raushan hails govt for dev

Critical of govt failure to ensure safe food

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Leader of the Opposition Raushan Ershad last night thanked President Abdul Hamid for his address to parliament saying his speech is "a clean document of development and progress" achieved by the Awami League-led government.

She, however, blasted the government for its "failure" to ensure safe food and proper disposal of city's garbage.

"Our country has already passed more than 40 years. Why have we failed to set up a proper disposal system for garbage within this long period? Garbage remains scattered at city's different parts, causing serious health hazards," she told Jatiya Sangshad while speaking on the thanksgiving motion on the president's speech.

Raushan, also a senior presidium member of Jatiya Party, called upon Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina to visit the city at night in disguise to get a first-hand experience about the miseries of city people, especially the floating people and slum dwellers.

The ninth session of parliament was prorogued last night after 27 working days with the passage of thanksgiving motion on the president's speech of January 20.

As many as 211 MPs including Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina and the leader of the opposition took part in the thanksgiving motion. The participating lawmakers talked 53 hours and 46 minutes on the president's speech.

Chief Whip ASM Feroz piloted the motion, which was passed by a voice vote irrespective of treasury, opposition and independent MPs.

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