



BUDGET FOR NEXT FISCAL YEAR

Bigger subsidy on food likely

Govt to go for rice import, expand OMS to ease pressure amid huge crop loss

REAZ AHMAD and REJAUL KARIM BYRON

The government is getting ready to further increase its fiscal outlay on food dole in the 2017-18 fiscal year.

On June 1, the new budget will show food subsidies going up to Tk 4,500 crore from Tk 2,821 crore of initial allocations for 2016-17, now being revised to Tk 3,721 crore.

Sources in the finance ministry told The Daily Star that the government was keeping aside a hefty sum to pay for the imports of six to eight lakh tonnes of rice as well.

The government intends to procure the rice from international market to recoup domestic production loss caused by devastating flash floods in the haors of seven districts and fungi attacks in 19 districts.

Even though it would be taxing for the state to offer to pay for all these, yet the government has decided not to backtrack on newer initiatives of food charities on an election year, sources told The Daily Star.

The next general elections would be at the end of 2018 calendar year.

The government introduced a programme last year to distribute rice among the poor at Tk 10 a kg, which is now creating pressure on subsidies, a food ministry official said.

Amidst the high rice prices and substantial crop loss, the government is planning to increase in 2017-18 the number of beneficiaries of Tk 10 per kg rice and would allocate 8.5 lakh tonnes of rice, one lakh tonne

SEE PAGE 10 COL 4



PHOTO: ANURUP KANTI DAS

SEEKING SAFETY FROM CYCLONE MORA: People from coastal areas take shelter inside a public library in Cox's Bazar. The cyclone was about to hit the country's southeastern coast this morning. The photo was taken around 11:00pm yesterday.



Chief justice warns law ministry

Says officials must not try to dominate SC thru misinterpretation of law

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Chief Justice Surendra Kumar Sinha yesterday said it would be a serious mistake on the part of law ministry officials if they try to dominate the Supreme Court through misinterpretation of law.

"A little learning is a dangerous thing. If those in the law ministry -- of the rank of assistant judge to senior district judge -- think the Supreme Court will act in line with their decision, that will be a serious mistake on their part," he said.

The SC judges think a lot before making any decision regarding the judiciary, the CJ said while presiding over a hearing on the Masdar Hossain case, popularly known as the separation of the judiciary case. A seven-member bench headed by the CJ is hearing it.

Justice Sinha made the remarks referring to a law ministry statement on a SC circular that said 17 lower court judges cannot travel abroad without the apex court's approval.

In the statement issued on May 25, the law ministry said the SC circular has no effectiveness and is not applicable to the judicial officials working at the ministry on deputation, as the president approved their travel plans.

On May 22, the SC authorities issued a circular

SEE PAGE 2 COL 4

PLAN TO TACKLE FOOD SITUATION

	2016-17	2017-18
Food subsidy	Tk 2,821cr	Tk 4,500cr
Public sector rice import	Nil	6 to 8 lakh MT
Allocation under Public Food Distribution System (PFDS)	23.50 lakh MT	27.40 lakh MT
Tk 10/kg rice allocation among rural poor	7.50 lakh MT	8.50 lakh MT



Cyclone poised to strike

Entire coastal area on highest alert; evacuation of people ordered as Cyclone Mora set to make landfall this morning

STAR REPORT

A severe cyclonic storm, Mora, was formed over the north and adjoining east central Bay of Bengal on Sunday, which was expected to hit Bangladesh coast this morning, the Dhaka Met office said.

The Met office in a special cyclone bulletin asked Chittagong and Cox's Bazar ports to hoist great danger signal number 10 and Mongla and Payra ports danger signal number eight.

Till yesterday afternoon, the Met

office classified the storm as a medium scale adverse event. However, the storm intensified further and gathered strength by evening and the office reclassified it as a severe cyclonic storm.

Some coastal areas in the country were experiencing thunderstorms with heavy rain since yesterday afternoon.

According to the special bulletin, the cyclone was centered around 280 km south of Cox's Bazar port, 360 km south of Chittagong port, 430 km south-southeast of Mongla port and

350 km south-southeast of Payra port at 9:00pm yesterday.

The wind speed in the eye of the cyclone was between 89 km and 117 km per hour. The storm might bring a tidal surge of over five feet to the coast, said a duty forecasting officer at the Met office.

Under the influence of Mora, the low-lying areas of Cox's Bazar, Chittagong, Noakhali, Laxmipur, Feni, Chandpur, Barguna, Bhola, Patuakhali, Barisal, Pirojpur,

SEE PAGE 2 COL 1



People, including children, cross train tracks right in front of an approaching train near Malibagh level crossing in the capital around 11:00am yesterday. Despite frequent fatal accidents on the tracks, people go about their business oblivious to the risks. PHOTO: SK ENAMUL HAQ

BNP terms 15pc VAT unjustified

MOHAMMAD AL-MASUM MOLLA

The proposed 15 percent uniform VAT is the ruling party's tool for "political exploitation" before the next parliamentary election scheduled to be held late next year, according to BNP leaders.

Termining the move "unethical and unjustified", they said it would directly impact the living standard of the people, especially those in the lower income group.

Under the existing VAT Act 1991, the government collects indirect tax at varying rates, ranging from 1.5 percent to 15 percent, on a number of goods and services.

VAT is now the biggest source of revenue for the government, followed by income tax and import duty.

"The government has made such a decision keeping in mind the next election. The money will go into the pockets of the ruling party men through corruption. It is a kind of political exploitation of the citizens," Amir Khasru Mahmud Chowdhury, party's standing committee member, told The Daily Star yesterday.

SEE PAGE 10 COL 1

HANDCUFFED TO HOSPITAL BED HC orders police to explain why they did it

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The High Court yesterday summoned Officer-in-Charge of Ashulia police Mohsinul Quader to appear before it tomorrow to explain why a Jahangirnagar University student had been handcuffed during his treatment.

An HC bench of Justice Salma Masud Chowdhury and Justice AKM Zahirul Hoque came up with the order and a suo moto rule when drawn to Monday's news in The Daily Star with headline "Handcuffed to hospital bed".

Lawyer for Bangladesh Legal Aid and Services Trust (BLAST), SM Rezaul Karim placed the report before the HC bench for necessary orders.

JU student Nazmul Hossain fell sick on Saturday while protesting deaths of two fellow students in a road crash in Savar the day before.

He was first taken to the university medical centre. But police allegedly forced him to get admitted to Enam Medical Hospital so that they could arrest him there. Nazmul was handcuffed when he was receiving treatment at the hospital in Savar in the early hours of Sunday.

Police rejected Nazmul's request to remove the handcuffs so that he could eat, witnesses and fellow students said.

Two photos of a handcuffed Nazmul, a master's student of the government and politics department and general secretary of Jahangirnagar Cultural Alliance, went viral, triggering a firestorm of protests on Facebook.

As two JU students died in a road accident on Friday, students blocked Dhaka-Aricha road the next day demanding punishment of those responsible.

SEE PAGE 2 COL 1

FOR THE FIRST TIME IN BANGLADESH

WE ARE MANUFACTURING HIGH VOLTAGE UNDERGROUND POWER CABLES

UP TO 72.5 kV

PARTEX CABLES

- Zero set triple crosshead THX 50/90 to ensure proper eccentricity and ovality
- High impulse and AC breakdown strength
- SIKORA X-RAY 8000 NEXT for higher quality of measuring and analyzing process
- Catenary Control and Curing System
- SICCON 600 & MAILLEFER NCS (Nokian Curing System) formula for proper cross linking and curing
- Continuous long length of cables with the use of German technology STRECKER welding machine

BY USING WORLD'S NO.1 MAILLEFER CDCC CCV LINE

PARTEX Cables powering with safety

A concern of **PARTEX STAR GROUP**

HOTLINE +88-09612-725725, EXT-19701

partexcables.com partextargroup.com facebook.com/partexcables