

Govt to buy

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None of the import consignments, however, has reached the country yet.

The government is now seeking to import more rice from Thailand and India to ensure the staple's availability in the market as the flood situation is worsening and the prospect of the upcoming rice season seems uncertain.

A two-member official team comprising one official each from the food ministry and food directorate left for Bangkok on Wednesday to look into the possibility of purchasing rice from Thailand under the G2G arrangement. "We're also expecting a team from India to visit Bangladesh soon. We'll try to buy rice from India as well," Food Minister Qamrul Islam told The Daily Star yesterday.

He, however, insisted that he would not say at this stage how much rice the government was intending to buy from the two countries.

In addition to floating international tenders seeking to buy 1.5 lakh tonnes of parboiled (Shiddo) and white (Atap) rice, the food department would also open bids for importing 50,000 tonnes of more parboiled rice this week.

Tender is also being floated to buy 50,000 tonnes of wheat from the international market to replenish the depleting food reserve. This was the first public sector wheat tender since October last year. In 2016-17, Bangladesh imported over 58 lakh tonnes of wheat. Over 80 percent of that wheat was brought in by private importers.

Early flashfloods this season completely washed away 10 lakh tonnes of rice in the northeastern areas while fungal attack blast also caused losses of Boro crops in 19 districts, said the agricultural extension department.

A prolonged flood in the northeast and northwestern regions is also being feared to have some bearings on the productions of this year's two remaining rice crops -- Aus and Aman.

Trump

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relations were established."

Putin said he was positive about repairing US-Russian relations, which plunged during the era of president Barack Obama.

"There is every reason to believe that we will be able to at least partially re-establish the level of cooperation that we need," Putin told a news conference.

"I very much hope (for an improvement in relations) and it seems to me that some basis for this has already been created," Putin said.

Putin said that in particular the US appeared to be less rigid on the war on Syria, where Moscow backs President Bashar al-Assad and Washington has sided with rebel groups.

"It seems to me that the US position (on Syria) has become more pragmatic. There is a comprehension that if we combine our efforts, we can achieve a lot," the Russian president said.

Russia and the US have agreed to a memorandum of understanding on creating a de-escalation zone in south-west Syria from midday Sunday, Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov said Friday.

Lavrov said the ceasefire set to begin Sunday would be supervised by Russian military police "in coordination with the Jordanians and Americans".

- Meddling -

Regarding allegations that Russia meddled in the US presidential election in 2016, Putin said that Trump in their meeting had accepted the Russian's denials.

"Trump asked a lot of questions (on the issue) and I answered him. It seems to me that he acknowledged and accepted (the answers)," Putin said.

Trump has not spoken about the meeting other than to say earlier yesterday that it was "tremendous".

According to US Secretary of State Rex Tillerson, who was present in the two-and-a-quarter-hour meeting, Putin and Trump had a "very robust and lengthy exchange on the subject".

Asked as he was leaving the news conference if Trump had accepted Putin's denials, Tillerson did not answer, noting only that the two leaders "connected very quickly" and there was a "very clear positive chemistry between the two".

"There are so many issues on the table... Just about everything got touched upon... Neither one of them wanted to stop," he said.

"I believe they even sent in the (US) First Lady at one point to see if she could get us out of there, but that didn't work either... We did another hour. Clearly she failed."

Trump's wife Melania sat next to Putin at Friday's G20 gala dinner, and photos gave the impression that the two appeared to hit it off.

Stalker stabs

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yesterday she went to JS Dental Point in Kadinapara where she works.

Tanvir, infuriated by her family informing his family about the harassment, ambushed her outside the clinic near Kali Bari intersection.

Witness Sumon said he heard a girl screaming around 3:30pm and saw a young man running away.

Sumon found seriously injured Sonia and took her to a hospital.

Doctor Sakhawat Hossain of the hospital said Sonia's condition was serious. She was bleeding heavily and that they referred her to DMCH for better treatment.



Fire engines and fire-fighters at work to douse a blaze in Medlar Apparels Ltd in Ashulia last night. No casualties were reported in the fire, but eight to 10 workers were hurt trying to rush out of the nine-storey building. Police arrested one person in connection with arson.

PHOTO: PALASH KHAN

11 judges sent abroad

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will take steps about sending the rest of the 540 officers after the return of the 43 judges.

He expressed confidence that the training would enhance the judges' skills and competence which would have a very good impact on the judiciary.

The SC authorities on May 22 issued a circular imposing travel restriction on 17 judicial officials. It said the apex court was not consulted about sending the judges abroad.

The circular added that if the 17 travel to Australia without the apex court's permission, they will be charged with violation of discipline.

Under the SC's directives in the judgment of Masdar Hossain case, popularly known as the separation of judiciary from the executive branch, it is mandatory for the government to take the apex court's advice before sending lower court judges abroad, read the circular.

On May 25, the law ministry issued a statement saying that the SC's circular has no effectiveness as there is no need to take permission from it to send judicial officials, on deputation to different offices, abroad as per the president's decision.

The law ministry official last month told The Daily Star that the president issued an order last year in this regard.

The ministry concerned has to take permission from the SC about sending judicial officials, who work at courts as full time judge, abroad as per the presidential order, he added.

Contacted, SC Registrar General Syed Aminul Islam refused to make any comment on the issue.

LAW MINISTRY PROJECT

The law ministry last year took up a project named "Capacity Building of Law and Justice Division for Strengthening Subordinate Judiciary Management" to send judges to Australia for training.

The Executive Committee of the National Economic Council allocated Tk 40 crore for the project.

A memorandum of understanding between the law ministry and Western Sidney University was signed on March 28 in Dhaka for arranging the training.

Law and Justice Division Secretary ASSM Zahirul Haque and Vice Chancellor of Western Sidney University Barney Glover signed the MoU. The law minister and the Supreme Court registrar general were present, among others.

Sources at the law ministry said teachers of the university, Australian judges and expert officials would conduct training sessions on at least 25 subjects.

City stung by chikungunya

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infection, according to health experts.

Doctors advise people to not panic and recommend keeping their surroundings clean so that mosquitoes cannot find places to breed.

"There is no mortality record from the disease," said Prof Sabrina, adding people did not die because of contracting chikungunya alone.

She further said that recently the IEDCR conducted a survey on 4,000 dwellers in the capital to determine chikungunya cases.

The institute is analysing the cases, she added.

Earlier a survey conducted between April 1 and May 17 this year by the institute found a positive 86 out of 139 chikungunya cases in the capital.

Most of the patients with symptoms were from Kalabagan, Kathalbag and Hatirpool areas where an outbreak of the virus occurred last December.

People who were recorded succumbing to the disease in India last year were found, in further analysis, to have been carrying other diseases or infections alongside chikungunya, Sabrina told a press briefing at IEDCR in May.

The Directorate General of Health Services has started awareness building

programmes across the country and in the capital to control the disease.

Symptoms of chikungunya are fever, muscle pain, headache, nausea, fatigue, rash and these are often accompanied by a very debilitating joint pain which can last for days. Aedes aegypti mosquito is the carrier of both chikungunya and dengue viruses.

According to World Health Organisation (WHO), there is no specific antiviral drug treatment or vaccine for chikungunya.

Treatment is directed primarily at relieving the symptoms, including the joint pain using antipyretics, optimal analgesics and fluids.

Health experts said if a person suddenly gets a fever, mild or otherwise, feels pain and swelling in joints, and has rashes, then it can be suspected that they have chikungunya.

If the pain is in the muscles and is accompanied with a high fever, it can also indicate that the patient may have dengue, they said.

Laboratory tests are needed for confirmation.

Meanwhile, the Dhaka South City Corporation yesterday conducted special "larviciding and fogging" activities and held awareness building campaigns among school children, says a DSCC press release.

TATP: explosive of choice for 'Neo JMB'

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TATP and different household products to make bombs.

Despite the risks involved in handling TATP, "Neo JMB" militants use it for several reasons: their supply of gel explosives from a neighbouring country had been cut off by law enforcers; TATP can be prepared with ingredients of some products available in shopping malls; most scanners cannot detect its presence and its destructive capacity is huge, said another official wishing anonymity.

"Only 300gm of TATP can kill everyone in a 10-meter radius," said the explosive expert.

Militants now put TATP in surgical belts to maximise the impact of explosions, he said. Local militants earlier used to put grenades in their suicide vests. The CTC chief Monirul Islam suggested strict monitoring on the sales and uses of chemicals being used to make explosives.

The sugar-like, white, crystalline explosive is very risky to handle. The slightest bit of heat or the mild shaking is enough to cause an explosion. The substance is highly unstable and reacts violently to physical hits or friction, experts said.

According to international media reports, TATP was used in terrorist attacks in Brussels on March 22, 2016, in Paris on November 13, 2015 and in London on July 7, 2005.

Nisharul Arif, additional deputy inspector general of Rajshahi Range police, recently said they found three surgical belts containing TATP at a militant hideout in Rajshahi's Tanore during a raid on June 12.

He added that several Improvised Explosive Devices (IEDs) containing TATP were found in a cooking pot in the two-storey earthen house at Dangapara of Tanore, some 40km from Rajshahi city.

Missing teen

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Madrassa when he left us," his mother Monwara Begum told The Daily Star at his house yesterday.

Sohel is fourth among his five brothers and five sisters.

His sister Rahima Khatun said they looked for him in many places but to no avail.

Investigators said JMB's bomb expert Zahidul Islam alias Boma Mizan groomed Sohel after observing his interest in explosives. Boma Mizan was snatched from police custody in a militant assault on a prison van in Trishal on February 23, 2015.

"He [Sohel] got primary training at the house of one Yusuf in Bogra along with some other JMB activists," said an investigator, adding that Sohel later moved to Chapainawabganj where he got married to the daughter of a JMB operative.

Sohel crossed the border and went to West Bengal, India, to evade police drives in the area. During his stay in India, he inspired some Indian militants and they formed a new branch of JMB in West Bengal.

He declared himself the ameer of the unit and remained in West Bengal until he returned to Bangladesh in December 2014.

SI 'kills wife

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Masudur Rahman echoed Shahid's views.

"Family feud might be the reason behind the incident," he said.

Shampa was the sister of Sattar's first wife. Sattar and his first wife have a child, he said.

The security guard of the flat building told The Daily Star that Sattar and Shampa had been living there for the last five months.

3 African leaders to sue TI over corruption case

AFP, Bata

The leaders of the oil-rich African nations of Equatorial Guinea, Gabon and Congo will sue Transparency International over a case in France involving allegedly ill-gotten properties worth hundreds of millions, President Teodoro Obiang of Equatorial Guinea has said.

French human rights lawyer William Bourdon instigated the investigation in 2007 by making a formal complaint on behalf of the pressure group Transparency International France (TIF).

Using such a powerful explosive in belts is a new phenomenon. An advantage of using the surgical belts is that people are likely to mistake a suicide bomber for a patient.

As smuggling detonators from India became difficult since police arrested a group of "Neo JMB" men, who supplied the explosives used in Holey Artisan Bakery, a couple of months ago, the militants learnt how to make plastic detonators by using a syringe in suicide belts, explosive experts believe.

Huge stashes of explosive materials including TATP and plastic detonators were found in recently busted dens in Jhenidah and Chapainawabganj.

"Mother of Satan" Palestinian insurgents in the 1980s nicknamed TATP "the mother of Satan" because it can be easily detonated, reports Reuters.

Our staff correspondent in Rajshahi Anwar Ali contributed to this report.

Woman resists rape, tortured

KONGKON KARMAKER, from Dinajpur

Villagers in in Badarganj upazila of Rangpur on Thursday allegedly tortured a woman and cut off her hair moments after she had narrowly escaped being raped by a stalker.

The victim, a mother of two, filed a case on Friday accusing 18 people. Police have already arrested four of the accused.

The 27-year-old Hindu woman hails from Mostafapur village under Damadarpur union of Badarganj upazila in Rangpur. The wife of a brick-field worker, she supported her family by collecting red spinach from her village and selling those at Champatoli market.

According to her, Mominul Haq, 30, son of Khademul Islam of the same village, has been stalking her for sometime. He often harassed her on her way to the market.

On Thursday, Mominul managed to enter the woman's house when no one else was present and attempted to rape her. However, her screams for help brought villagers to her door and Mominul managed to flee the scene.

Then the villagers turned on her.

They called her a 'characterless woman' and beat her up mercilessly and also tore up the clothes she was wearing. They did not stop at that proceeding to cut off her hair and wiping off the vermilion Hindu married women wear on their hair parting.

According to the victim, the villagers and Mominul Haq are still spreading rumours against her.

She demanded immediate arrest of Mominul, saying "I pleaded for their mercy during the attack but they would not listen to me. Now they are blaming me and questioning my character," she said.

Azizul Haque, chairman of Damadarpur union, confirmed the incident.

Akhtaruzzaman Prodhan, officer-in-charge of Badarganj Police Station said that the victim filed a case naming Mominul Islam as the key accused in the case.

The police have so far arrested Kishori Mohan, 60 and his wife Surjo Bala, 50, and Molin Chandra Roy, 40, and his wife Jotika Rani Roy, 32.

They are trying to arrest the others accused in the case, Prodhan said.

Concessions made

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against an isolationist path and starting a round of trade war.

"Where there is no consensus, the communicative spelt out the discord," said host Chancellor Angela Merkel, who was praised by Russian President Vladimir Putin for finding an "optimal compromise" on the touchiest issue of climate.

French President Emmanuel Macron also hailed the approach, saying that the club found an "indispensable balance" through the text and halted any backsliding on fighting climate change, which is blamed for melting ice caps, rising seas and severe weather events.

The French leader, at his first G20 gathering, also took the opportunity to announce a new climate summit for December 12, which he said would focus on climate financing.

If the meetings within the tightly secured G20 summit venue were anything but harmonious, outside, chaos and violence gripped Germany's second city.

Ten minutes' walk from the summit venue, charred road barricades, trashed shops, debris and shattered glass bore testimony to an anarchic Friday night of street clashes between protesters and police, when commandoes chased militants who hurled rocks from rooftops.

The clashes had blocked US First Lady Melania Trump at her residence on Friday, forcing her to miss a tour of Hamburg harbour, and for G20 organisers to completely alter a programme for spouses of visiting leaders.

Yesterday, thousands of anti-riot cops were again on guard, as helicopters hovered overhead, with at least 20,000 demonstrators on the march again.

Within the summit walls, world leaders were dancing a delicate diplomatic waltz, with discord not only dogging the main G20 conferences, but also adding tension to the atmosphere in bilateral asides.

SC verdict a bar

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were committed to doing so. But there are many people who favour Ziaur Rahman's Supreme Judicial Council," Hasina was quoted by a central committee member as saying.

Mentioning eminent jurists Dr Kamal Hossain and Barrister M Amirul Islam, Hasina said those who claimed to be the architects of the constitution were actually tainting it now, said the meeting sources.

The HC, in May last year, ruled that the 16th amendment was unconstitutional and illegal as it found the changes went against the principles of the separation of powers and the independence of the judiciary.

The government filed an appeal with the SC on January 4 this year.

The apex court on July 3 unanimously rejected the appeal and upheld the HC verdict.

At last night's meeting, Hasina also asked her party colleagues to remain alert as the "BNP and Jamaat leaders were spreading propaganda at home and abroad and hatching conspiracies against the government and the country". She said the BNP and Jamaat were running a negative campaign.

She asked her party leaders to prepare for the 2019 elections.

In her speech, Hasina said the AL needed another term in office to implement the mega projects it has taken up and turn Bangladesh into a middle-income country.

The country's overall development would get a boost on completion of these projects, and Bangladesh would become a country free from hunger and poverty.

Hasina, also the AL chief, said her

Host Merkel herself admitted that "deep differences" remain with Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan after they met on the sidelines of the summit.

But it was Trump's first head-to-head with Russia's leader President Vladimir Putin that stole the show.

A day after Trump slammed Moscow's actions in Ukraine and Syria, the two men had a "robust and lengthy exchange" about allegations of Russian meddling in the 2016 US election, Secretary of State Rex Tillerson said.

But Tillerson, who was present at the meeting that ran two hours and 15 minutes, also said the two alpha-male leaders "connected very quickly" with "very clear positive chemistry".

Trump yesterday said that the tete-a-tete was "tremendous" while Putin gave an upbeat assessment of ties ahead with the US leader.

"There is every reason to believe that we will be able to at least partially re-establish the level of cooperation that we need," Putin said.

While scoring at his Russian encounter, Trump faced another thorny meeting yesterday, when he held talks with Chinese President Xi Jinping.

Trump said it may take time to rein in North Korea's nuclear ambitions, but expressed confidence that Washington and Beijing could eventually do so.

While Trump has expressed some impatience on the issue after North Korea's latest missile test, he showed no signs of it yesterday.

Trump had also said he is considering a "severe" response to Pyongyang's "very, very bad behaviour".

Ahead of the talks with Xi, Tillerson said the US would continue to press China to do more to rein in North Korea.

"Our engagement is unchanged with China and our expectations are unchanged," Tillerson said. "We have not given up hope."

party thinks development would continue if it remains in power. The government had been able to continue with the development projects taken during its previous term (2009-2013) as it returned to power in 2014, she added.

"It's not possible for the people to reap the benefits of development without continuation of the government."

As the AL has been in power since 2009, she said, the country's GDP reached 7.24 percent and the per capita income touched \$1,602.

Bangladesh will celebrate the golden jubilee of its independence in 2021, the PM said.

"Of course, our aim is to celebrate the golden jubilee remaining in power and make the country a developed and prosperous one."

She said the AL also wants to celebrate the birth centenary of Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman while still in power. "By the time, we'll free Bangladesh from poverty and hunger and make it a prosperous nation as dreamt by the Father of the Nation."

She said people would cast their votes in the next general election as per their choice.

Terming the AL a symbol of development, she said if it returns to power the country would see development. "Whoever else comes to power, they will unleash widespread looting."

Hasina said the decision has to be taken by the people.

About the current flood situation in the country, she said the government ensured enough stock of food so that people don't suffer as it might be a prolonged flood this year.