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SHAH CEMENT

Imported rice brought in after duty cut

Price drops by Tk 2.50 per kg at import level

REZAUL KARIM BYRON

The price of rice at importer level came down by Tk 2.50 per kg as the latest duty cut became effective yesterday following issuance of a circular by the National Board of Revenue (NBR).

According to the circular, the rice import tariff was lowered from 10 percent to two percent. The move came a day after a cabinet committee meeting decided to cut the import duty to keep the rice price stable.

Chitta Majumder, a rice importer, said their cost of rice import from India would come down to Tk 35.50 to Tk 36 from Tk 38 to Tk 38.50 a kg under the new tax rate.

Prices of coarse rice would come down below Tk 40 per kg within two to three days due to a cascading effect of the tax cut, Chitta, proprietor of Majumder Traders, told The Daily Star yesterday.

The retail prices of coarse rice shot up to Tk 47-48 in June-July, a 47 percent increase from last year's price band of Tk 30-34. However, the prices later stabilised at Tk 43-45, according to data of Trading Corporation of Bangladesh.

The importer said they had been waiting for over a week on the announcement of the tax cut. He hoped rice prices would ease as about 20,000 to 25,000 tonnes of rice would be imported in the next four or five days.

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Around 600 trucks carrying 18,000 tonnes of rice began unloading in Hill land port area of Hakimpur upazila in Dinajpur yesterday. The trucks had been waiting for more than a week as rice traders expected a duty cut. As the government finally moved to slash duty on imported rice by 8 percent, the trucks began to unload.

PHOTO: COLLECTED

Australia to arrive tonight

STAR SPORT DESK

The Australian cricket team will arrive in Dhaka tonight for a two-Test tour of Bangladesh that has been two years in the making, and which was in serious trouble till only about two weeks ago.

It was only on August 3 that a long-standing pay dispute between Cricket Australia and the Australia Cricketers Association was resolved, allowing the tour to go ahead as planned. This was after Australia had cancelled an earlier tour of Bangladesh in 2015 due to security reasons.

But the arrival of a 15-man squad tonight will be the signal for cricket to take centre-stage, if weather permits. The incessant rainfall has already plunged the venue of Australia's only two-day practice match starting on August 22 into uncertainty as the scheduled venue in Fatullah remains waterlogged.

If the rain does play fair for the duration of the two Tests in Dhaka from August 27 and Chittagong from

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Malala wins a place at Oxford

AFP, London

Nobel peace laureate Malala Yousafzai, who was shot by the Taliban for advocating education for girls in her native Pakistan, announced yesterday she has won a place to study at Oxford University.

"So excited to go to Oxford!!" the 20-year-old posted on Twitter, along with a picture of the message she received confirming her acceptance on the philosophy, politics and economics (PPE) course.

The announcement came on the day that

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Comilla univ teacher faces BCL wrath

Sent on forced leave for 'holding class on Aug 15', an allegation he denies

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Comilla

Comilla University yesterday sent a teacher on a month's forced leave after the university Chhatra League unit demanded his suspension for "holding classes on the National Mourning Day".

The university yesterday sent Mahbulul Huq Bhuiyan, a lecturer and acting chairman of department of mass communication and journalism, on leave and formed a probe body to investigate the allegation.

The pro-Awami League student body had been demonstrating for two days on campus and had locked the gates of administrative and academic buildings.

Following the decision made by the university in the afternoon, Chhatra League unlocked the gates and withdrew their agitation programme.

However, around 50 teachers of the Comilla University Teachers Association and Bangabandhu Parishad staged a sit-in in front of the Bangabandhu Sculpture in the afternoon protesting the university's decision to send the teacher on leave.

They also blocked the vehicle of Vice-Chancellor Prof Ali Ashraf as he was leaving the office in the evening.

University sources said 14 to 15 students of the mass communication and journalism department went to Mahbulul's room to discuss something about their upcoming exams. The teacher took them to a classroom since he could not accommodate them in his room, they said.

At that time, the Chhatra League leaders went to the classroom and made a video clip. They submitted a memorandum to the VC on Wednesday and issued a 24-hour ultimatum to suspend the teacher, said the sources.

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EC won't mediate between political parties: CEC

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Chief Election Commissioner KM Nurul Huda has asserted that the Election Commission will not step in to resolve disputes between political parties.

"It is not our job... We will not go to anybody. We are an independent body," he said in a dialogue yesterday as he replied to a query whether the commission would mediate between the ruling Awami League and the opposition BNP in helping them negotiate election-time government.

The EC discussed the next parliamentary election with senior media personnel and journalists from the electronic media at its office in the capital.

Most of the participants were not in favour of army deployment in the polls but supported the reintroducing of "no vote". They suggested that the EC should create a level-playing field for all political parties and earn trust of theirs and the people.

The commission should also organise workshops for media personnel.

Other recommendations include keeping civil administration and law

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The ultimate act of loyalty

Capitan the German shepherd stands by its owner's grave for 10 yrs



MAIL ONLINE

A loyal dog has kept vigil at his dead owner's graveside for more than 10 years after the man passed away in Argentina.

Capitan the German shepherd has spent virtually every day sitting beside the grave of his late master Miguel Guzmán since he died in 2006.

And it seems the 15-year-old dog intends to remain faithful to his last, as he continues his ritual despite being almost totally blind and barely able to walk.

Cemetery workers, who feed and care for Capitan, told Oddity Central that it seems "as if he is

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Saudis open border to Qatar pilgrims

AFP, Riyadh

Saudi Arabia yesterday ordered the reopening of its border with Qatar to Muslim pilgrims, a move which Doha said was welcome but too little to heal relations between the feuding Gulf neighbours.

The Salwa border crossing, also known as Abu Samrah, a key passage for Muslims on the annual hajj pilgrimage to Makkah, has been closed since June in a diplomatic crisis that saw Riyadh cut ties with Doha over accusations the emirate supported Islamist extremists.

Qatar has denied the allegation and in turn accused Riyadh of restricting its citizens' right to make the hajj, or annual pilgrimage to Makkah, the holiest site in Islam, located in western Saudi Arabia.

Saudi King Salman authorised "the entry of

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Songs of seclusion

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Barisal

Every morning a sweet cacophony of songs signals the rise of the sun in a corner of Saheber Haat village under Barisal Sadar upazila. This nook is the famous "Banik Bari", the origins of the moniker "village of birds" as the village has come to be known.

"Seven to eight years ago, I saw a group of birds sitting on my trees, building their nests," Sumitra Banik, 52, a house wife and the owner of the residence, said. "The wild birds come around Baisakh and live here for six months. During this time they lay their eggs and the mothers leave when the babies can fly," she told The Daily Star.

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A siege of herons nesting on the many trees dotting Banik Bari, a residence in Barisal Sadar upazila's Saheber Haat village. The residence is home to over a 100 birds of different species and has earned the village the title of "village of birds". This place has been the birds' nesting home for over a decade.

PHOTO: STAR

Militants adopt new strategy

They no longer migrate months ahead of attack, say police

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Shortage of funds and difficulties in renting apartments are forcing "Neo-JMB" militants to shun the practice of leaving their homes months ahead of carrying out an attack, counterterrorism officers said.

Suspected suicide bomber Saiful Islam, killed in an anti-terror operation on Tuesday, came from his village in Khulna's Dumuria only about a week before his planned attack.

"Neo-JMB" militants used to live in hideouts, where they were indoctrinated and trained, well ahead of an attack. An officer of the Counter Terrorism and Transnational Crime (CTTC) unit of Dhaka Metropolitan Police yesterday said the militant outfit desperately wants to carry out an attack in the capital to get media attention, which, it hopes, would entail new recruits and funds.

Saiful had plans to carry out an attack on a crowd paying homage to Bangabandhu on National Mourning Day on Dhanmondi 32, said CTTC officials.

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SIBL Foundation Hospital & Diagnostic Center

PRAYER TIMING AUGUST 18

Fazr Juma Asr Maghrib Esha

AZAN 4-25 12-30 4-45 6-38 8-00

JAMAAT 5-00 1-15 5-00 6-41 8-30

SOURCE: ISLAMIC FOUNDATION