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PADDY PROCUREMENT

Haor farmers still deprived of fair price

Middlemen, crooked local officials are to blame, allege the growers

MINTU DESHWARA, back from Sunamganj

Despite different initiatives, most of the paddy farmers in Sunamganj are not benefitting from the government's ongoing food procurement programme allegedly because of the actions of middlemen and lack of monitoring.

While only a minority of farmers (less than seven percent of the total number) are eligible to sell paddy, many middlemen are using fake farmer cards or allegedly resorting to foul play, depriving genuine farmers. But nobody is watching this, the farmers alleged.

This year the government is buying one maund of paddy for Tk 1,040. But most farmers are not in the government list. As a result, they are being forced to sell their produce in the open market at Tk 520-650 per maund.

To ensure the fair price, the government came up with different initiatives including announcing a 20 percent incentive on rice export so that businessmen buy more paddy from farmers and export more. In addition, the government raised its paddy procurement target from 1.5 lakh tonnes to 4 lakh tonnes from across the country. Still most farmers do not get the benefit.

In Sunamganj, 3.84 lakh farmers have produced 13.18

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Some farmers stuffing paddy into sacks to sell it to middlemen in a haor area of Sunamganj's Bishwambhapur upazila recently. These middlemen are allegedly using farmers' cards to supply paddy to the local food office, depriving the marginalised growers in the haor area of fair prices for their produce.

PHOTO: MINTU DESHWARA

KAMALAPUR STATION

Girl's body found in abandoned carriage

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Railway police recovered the body of an 18-year-old girl from the toilet of an abandoned carriage at Kamalapur Railway Station yesterday morning.

Asma Akhtar was the student of a madrasa in Panchagarh, police said quoting family members.

Police also found her birth certificate near the body and contacted her family members. Sub-inspector Rusho Banik of Dhaka Railway Police Station said.

It appears to be a homicide, the SI said, adding that the body was sent to Dhaka Medical College morgue for autopsy.

Asma's father Abdur Razzaq of Panchagarh said his daughter left their home on Sunday morning without telling anyone and had been traceless since then.

Asma had arguments with him and her mother in the last few days, Razzaq said.

Indian FM flies in

Talks with Momen today

UNB, Dhaka

Indian External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar last night said Bangladesh and India have many things to discuss to take the relationship between the two countries to a higher level.

"We have a very good relationship. We have a very strong relationship. We have many things to discuss about taking the relationship to a higher level," he told reporters after arriving at Hazrat Shahjalal International Airport.

Jaishankar, who arrived here on a three-day official visit, said he was truly delighted to be in Dhaka and was looking forward to having a "very productive day" today.

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INDO-PAK CONFLICT OVER KASHMIR

Trump calls for easing tensions

Speaks to Modi over phone; schools reopen in the valley; Pakistan extends army chief's tenure

AGENCIES

US President Donald Trump on Monday spoke with India's Prime Minister Narendra Modi, urging a reduction of tension between India and Pakistan over the disputed Kashmir region.

"The president conveyed the importance of reducing tensions between India and Pakistan and maintaining peace in the region," White House spokesman Hogan Gidley said in a statement, according to an AFP report.

"The two leaders further discussed how they will continue to strengthen United States-India economic ties through increased trade, and they look forward to meeting again soon."

Meanwhile, schools reopened in Indian Kashmir's main city yesterday but most classrooms were empty as parents kept their children home, fearing unrest over the government's decision two weeks ago to revoke the region's autonomy.

The authorities said that they were re-opening 190 primary schools in the city yet few children could be seen at half a dozen places visited by AFP. Parents said their children would stay home until cellular networks are restored and they can be in contact with them.

"How can we risk the lives of our children?" said Gulzar Ahmad, a father of two who are enrolled in a school in the city's Batamallo district where protests have occurred.

"Troops have arrested minor children in the last two weeks and several

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I face wrath for protesting their wrongdoings

Alleges VP Nur citing recent attacks on him by 'ruling party men'

DU CORRESPONDENT

Ducsu Vice-president Nurul Haque Nur yesterday alleged that he and activists of his organisation face the wrath of the ruling party men frequently for protesting their wrongdoings.

At a press conference at Madhur Canteen, he also alleged that Awami League men and members of law enforcement agencies had threatened him that he might have to face the fate of BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia if he opposed the government.

On Wednesday, Nur and his several friends were beaten up allegedly by local Chhatra League and Jubo League activists in Patuakhali's Galachipa while they were going to the house of Nur's sister in Dashmina upazila. The attackers also confined them to a shop.

Nur is the joint convener of Bangladesh Sadharan Chhatra Adhikar Sangrakkhan Parishad, the platform spearheading the

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British man sets new cycling speed record



INDEPENDENT.CO.UK

A daredevil set a new cycling speed record of over 174mph as he was released from the back of a Porsche and hurtled down a runway.

Architect Neil Campbell used a £15,000 bike to break the previous record of 167mph.

The elongated, custom-built bike is based on the design of a tandem.

He achieved the fastest bicycle speed in a male slipstream record at Elvington Airfield in North Yorkshire on Saturday, beating the previous mark set by a Dutch rider in 1995.

Campbell, from Little Horkesley, Essex, was pulled along the two-mile track by the powerful Porsche Cayenne, then released so he went through the timing gate under his own power.

He was timed at 174.33mph after going through the 200-metre speed trap on the machine, built

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MINNI'S STATEMENT

Submit report on Barguna SP's briefing

HC asks authorities

COURT CORRESPONDENT

The High Court yesterday wanted to know in details about a briefing by Barguna SP on Minni's confessional statement in the case filed over the murder of her husband.

An HC bench comprising Justice M Enayetur Rahim and Justice Md Mustafizur Rahman directed the authorities concerned to submit a detailed report on whether the superintendent of police held the briefing before or after the statement was given.

At one point of the hearing on a bail petition by Minni, the bench asked her lawyer ZI Khan Panna to submit a supplementary application with details in this regard within 2:00pm today.

The application should have details about

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ACC arrests land owner of FR Tower

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Anti-Corruption Commission (ACC) yesterday arrested the land owner of Banani FR Tower SMHI Faruque in two separate cases filed over his alleged involvement in illegally extending the building.

An ACC team led by its Deputy Director Abu Bakar Siddique arrested Faruque from the capital's Gulshan area around 1:30pm, said Pranab Kumar Bhattacharya, public relations officer of ACC.

Meanwhile, a Dhaka

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PRAYER TIMING AUGUST 20

Fazr	Zohr	Asr	Maghrib	Esha
AAZAN 4-25	12-45	4-45	6-38	8-00
JAMAAT 5-00	1-15	5-00	6-41	8-30

SOURCE: ISLAMIC FOUNDATION



The construction of this road connecting Chattogram's Bayezid Bostami Road with Faujdarhat is at the final stage. Once built, the six-kilometre road will allow people from north Chattogram, Rangamati and Khagrachhari to travel to the capital without having to cross the port city, reducing their travel time. Inset, an under-construction bridge on the road. The photos were taken in Sitakunda on Sunday.

PHOTO: RAJIB RAIHAN

Crackdown will harm trade talks

Trump warns China as HK pro-democracy activists gear up for further protests

AFP, Washington

Donald Trump has warned China that carrying out a Tiananmen Square-style crackdown on Hong Kong pro-democracy protests would harm trade talks between the two countries, in comments that followed a huge, defiant march through the streets of the global finance hub.

Hong Kong has been rocked by more than two months of protests and clashes between police and hardcore activists who fear the semi-autonomous city's freedoms are under threat from Beijing.

Pro-democracy activists are gearing up for further protests this week after hundreds of thousands of anti-government demonstrators braved heavy rain to rally peacefully on Sunday, marking a change to what have often been violent clashes.

Sunday's massive turnout, which organisers put at 1.7 million, showed that the movement still has widespread support despite chaotic scenes last week when protesters occupied the Chinese-ruled city's airport.

The American president cautioned that any violent effort by China to quell the unprecedented protests would damage trade negotiations.

"I think it'd be very hard to deal if they do violence, I mean, if it's another Tiananmen Square," Trump told reporters in New Jersey on Sunday. "I think it's a very hard thing to do if there's violence."

Trump's comments came as Washington and Beijing look to revive pivotal high-level talks aimed at ending their trade war.

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