

Can't sell rice in name of 'miniket'

Says cabinet secretary

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A month after the declaration of launching a drive against the selling of miniket rice by the Directorate of National Consumers Right Protection (DNCRP), Cabinet Secretary Khandker Anwarul Islam yesterday said miniket rice cannot be sold in the markets.

"The type of rice must be written on the sacks during packaging. If anyone fails to follow this instruction, legal action will be taken," he added.

He made the remarks after visiting the rice museum of Bangladesh Rice Research Institute (BRRI) in Gazipur.

"If we can provide farmers with new rice varieties at the quickest possible time through proper coordination, we will be able to double our production in the next five to six years," said Anwarul.

On Saturday, Food Minister Sadhan Chandra Majumder said a group of traders usually sell polished rice to the market after cutting the grain four times. However, the process omits the most nutritious parts of the rice.

At least five tonnes of rice are wasted if 100 tonnes of the staple food grain are polished as the most nutritious part of the rice is lost, said the minister, adding that this leads to malnutrition in the people.

Using modern rice husking machines, millers cut and polish hybrid coarse varieties into fine rice before whitening it with chemicals. The rice loses its nutritional

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KHANDKER ANWARUL ISLAM
Cabinet Secretary



With trucks, covered vans and pickups parked in multiple rows, Tejgaon-Satrasa Road has once again become a parking spot, choking traffic movement. For decades, an illegal truck stand occupied the road. But things changed for the better after late DNCC mayor Annisul Huq removed it, braving pressure from influential transport leaders. But the road, named after Annisul after his death in 2017, continues to face the same problem, due to absence of any visible action from the authorities concerned. This photo was taken on Tuesday.

PHOTO: AMRAN HOSSAIN

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'Address climate impacts on health'

Speakers tell event

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The impact of climate change on people's health should be addressed adequately in the National Plan (NAP) on climate change, said speakers at an event.

The proposed NAP has several provisions on health. However, those are not elaborated in the plan, for which there should be a separate chapter, they said at the event, titled "National Consultation on Health Effect of Climate Change: Inclusion of Health into NAP Process", held in Dhaka on Tuesday.

"We cannot separate health-related issues from the NAP. We will properly integrate the health-related aspect of climate change in the action plan," said Md Anwar Hossain Howlader, secretary of the Health Services Division at the health ministry, while speaking as chief guest.

Vibhavendra Raghuyamshi, UNFPA chief of health, spoke on the objectives of the workshop. "We are here to see how the health sector can be a part of the national plan," Raghuyamshi said.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- Include health-related aspect of climate change in NAP
- Increase climate budget for health sector
- Initiate sector-wide plan
- Ensure coordination among ministries
- Conduct thorough research

Prof Md Iqbal Kabir, coordinator of the Climate Change and Health Promotion Unit (CCHPU) at the health ministry, presented a keynote on the activities of CCHPU and the inclusion of health-related aspects into the NAP.

Referring to the World Health Organization data, he said only 0.5 percent of the global climate budget was allocated to the health sector. "In Bangladesh, the amount is even smaller -- only 0.35 percent is allocated for the health sector. There should be a budget for addressing the climate issue in the health sector," he added.

During the expert panel discussion, Malik Fida A Khan, executive director of Center for Environmental and Geographic Information Services, made a multimedia presentation pointing out how health issues have been addressed in the NAP.

Emeritus Professor Ainun Nishat, said, "After the NAP is approved by the prime minister, there should be a sector-wide plan for the health aspect."

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A ticking time bomb?

Dhaka residents exposed to risks of septic tanks, manhole blasts

HELEMUL ALAM and SHAHEEN MOLLAH

Life was never easy for 40-year-old Hosne Ara. Amid constant struggles, the 40-year-old car showroom cleaner worked hard and supported her family to the best of her ability.

However, a single unfortunate moment was enough to increase her hardship by manifolds and turn her life upside down.

On November 11 last year, Hosne Ara was returning home from her workplace at Modhya Kuni Para when three slabs of a manhole suddenly blew up around 15 to 16 feet high and fell on one of her legs.

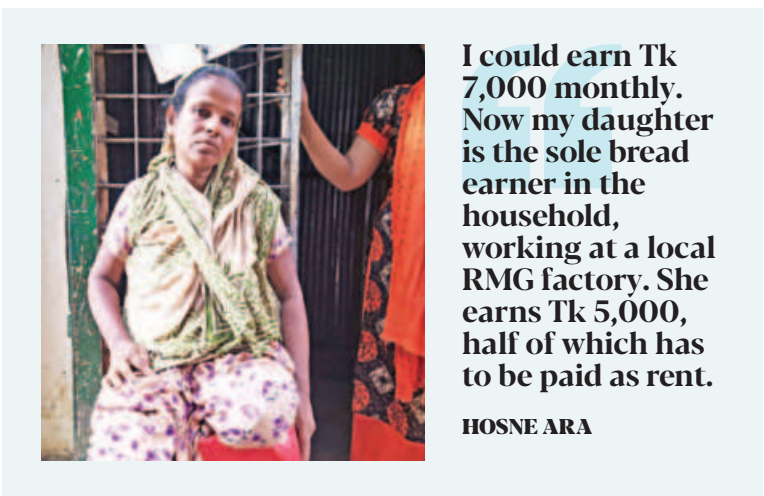
Following the momentary shock and intense pain, she had to undergo surgery and took treatment for around three months at National Institute of Traumatology and Orthopedic Rehabilitation (Pangu Hospital) with the help of locals.

A vent is a must for a safety tank from where the gas goes out. When we construct buildings haphazardly, many building owners shut the vent to get rid of the bad odour. In the process, they activate a ticking time bomb.

IQBAL HABIB
Joint Secretary, Bapa

The leg had to be amputated and Hosne Ara lost her job.

"I could earn Tk 7,000 monthly. Now my daughter is the sole bread earner in the household, working at a local RMG factory. She earns Tk 5,000, half of which has to be paid as rent," she told this



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HOSNE ARA

newspaper recently.

Dhaka residents are exposed to risks of such accidents related to septic tanks or uncleaned sewerage lines. Many of these lines are not maintained properly. Some are not even constructed following proper designs, said experts.

Several incidents were reported in the last few years in different newspapers.

A three-year-old child died while four others were critically injured in a septic tank blast in the capital's Pallabi on March 27, 2018.

At least five members of a family sustained burn injuries in a septic tank blast in Dakkhinkhan's Faridabad area on November 30, 2015.

As Dhaka Water Supply and Sewerage Authority (Wasa) failed to bring the entire city under a sewerage network, residents of many areas were either forced to set up septic tanks or connected their sewage lines with storm water drains.

Prof Md Mujibur Rahman of Buet said at a programme last year that 71 percent of household latrines are directly or indirectly

open to drains, eventually discharging wastes to the city's lakes and canals.

He said septic tank soak pits do not work in Dhaka because of their low capacity for soil infiltration.

A soak pit or soakaway is a closed, porous chamber that is directly connected to the primary treatment unit of a residential or commercial building. It serves the function of letting wastewater coming from the septic tank to slowly soak into the ground.

Adil Mohammad Khan, former general secretary of Bangladesh Institute of Planners, said regular maintenance of septic tanks and underground sewers should be done and relevant local government organisations should monitor this maintenance activity.

"Oxygen masks, other safety gear and regular training should be ensured for the septic tank and sanitary workers," he said.

Iqbal Habib, joint secretary of Bangladesh Paribesh Andolon, said a vent is a must for a safety tank from where the gas goes out.

"When we construct buildings

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Dhaka hopes for victory in UNHRC elections

PORIMOL PALMA

Bangladesh is set to contest in the UN Human Rights Council elections on October 11, to embolden its voice on human rights on the global stage.

This year's elections are for the 2022-25 term; 17 countries of different regions are running for 14 seats in the 47-member council.

From Asia and the Pacific States, six countries -- Bangladesh, Afghanistan, Kyrgyzstan, Maldives, Korea and Vietnam -- are contesting for four seats.

Dhaka, which has been a member of the UN body four times in the past, is optimistic about winning the next elections, to be held at the UN General Assembly in New York. Officials said the country has always been vocal about human rights anywhere in the world.

"I believe we will win this year, too. We are well prepared," Foreign Minister AK Abdul Momen told reporters at his office on Tuesday.

According to foreign ministry officials, Bangladesh has had a good campaign, covering the members in New York, and is always an active participant in the Human Rights Council.

Bangladesh also submitted its pledge of upholding human rights domestically, though this is not mandatory, they said.

"Given our seriousness, even as a non-member in the Human Rights Council, we are hoping for victory," said a Bangladesh embassy official in Geneva, where the Council holds its session.

The council members serve three-year terms and are not eligible for immediate re-election after serving two consecutive terms. Bangladesh last served on the council during the 2019-21 term.

According to foreign ministry officials, the Human Rights Council holds three sessions every year. More than 100 resolutions are adopted every year on various national, regional and global issues.

"You can surely negotiate the interests of your country, even if you are not an elected member of

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Theft in power sector behind grid failure

Says Fakhru

UNB, Dhaka

BNP yesterday blamed the government's overall "failure" and theft in the power sector for Tuesday's power blackout in most areas of the country caused by a national grid failure.

"We feel that this (national grid failure) happened due to a total government failure and the problem relating to planning, structural and technical matters, and widespread theft in the power sector," he said.

The BNP leader also said the power sector is not the only arena facing such problems. "These are happening everywhere. I think the main reasons behind this are the various unplanned development projects by the government only for indulging in corruption."

He made the remarks while talking to reporters at BNP standing committee member member Iqbal Hasan

Maritime ports asked to hoist signal 3

UNB, Dhaka

More light to moderate shower is likely to drench Bangladesh in the next 24 hours, the weather department said yesterday.

Light to moderate rains or thundershowers accompanied by temporary gusty winds and lighting flashes are likely to occur at many places over Rangpur, Khulna, Sylhet and Mymensingh divisions, according to the weather

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PRAYER
TIMING
OCTOBER 6

Fazr

Zohr

Asr

Maghrib

Esha

AZAN 4:45

12:45

4:15

5:53

7:30

JAMAT 5:20

1:15

4:30

5:56

8:00

SOURCE: ISLAMIC FOUNDATION



Despite a clear directive from the city corporation against dumping waste, people keep using the side of the Tongi bridge as a garbage dump, defying the warnings. The photo was taken recently.

PHOTO: AMRAN HOSSAIN

Two members of mugging gang held

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Police have arrested a private university student and one of his associates, who allegedly mugged people after quarrelling with them on the streets, in the capital's Uttara.

The arrestees are Al Raju (25), the student, and his aide Suman Khan (29), Mohammad Mohsin, officer-in-charge of Uttara West Police Station, told The Daily Star yesterday.

The arrestees scuffled with a private car driver on Road-13, Uttara Sector-13, saying the car hit one of them around 11:00pm on Tuesday. They later beat up the driver and tried to mug him. Hearing screams, a patrol team of police rushed there and arrested them, the OC said.

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BNP is the centre of communal politics: Quader

BSS, Dhaka

Awami League General Secretary Obaidul Quader yesterday said speaking of non-communal Bangladesh does not suit BNP leaders.

Quader, also the road transport and bridges minister, said the country's people know it better that BNP is the centre of communal politics.

Whenever BNP assumed the state power, it patronised the communal evil forces, he said.

The AL general secretary said Bangabandhu restricted religion-centric politics through the 1972 Constitution.

Quader said Ziaur Rahman, who seized the state power unconstitutionally, amended the Constitution and legalised the misuse of religion in politics.

"Awami League is doing its best to flourish and maintain democracy in the country," he added.

Quader also said history testifies that when BNP came to power, Bangladesh turned into a sanctuary of terrorism and militancy.

After assuming power, the BNP established a fascist state by sponsoring terrorists and extremist groups, he said.