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2 HOSPITAL PROJECTS

# Three sued for embezzling Tk 43.67 crore

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A staffer of Tejgaon Health Complex in connivance with two businesspeople misappropriated about Tk 43.67 crore by producing fake bills for two projects, found a probe by the Anti-Corruption Commission.

They submitted seven fake vouchers to the chief accounts and finance officer (CAFO) of the health ministry that disbursed the money.

The money was embezzled from Shaheed M Monsur Ali Medical College and Hospital project and Sheikh Sayera Khatun Medical College and Hospital project.

The forgery was discovered when project officials input bills data through iBAS+, an integrated Budget and Accounting System of the government.

The CAFO office on September 15 filed two complaints with Ramna Police Station, which later forwarded those to the ACC as the matter was related to graft.

After conducting an enquiry, an ACC deputy director yesterday filed two cases with its integrated district office against the "cash sarkar" of Tejgaon Thana Health Complex, Anisur Rahman, proprietor of M Jahan Traders Mohsin Ali, and owner of Green Traders Mahfuz Huda Saikat.

According to the case statements, Anisur produced the bills dated June 12, June 19 and June 20 before the CAFO office even though he did not have any legal authority to do so.

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PHOTO: RASHED SHUMON

A rickshaw-puller, covered in a plastic sheet to keep as dry as possible, pedalling through the rain in the capital's Mohammadpur area. With depression in the Bay and Cyclone Sitrang making landfall early today, the country saw continuous rains throughout yesterday.

# Govt has no plans to halt power supply in daytime

Says info minister

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Information and Broadcasting Minister Hasan Mahmud said the government has not taken any decision to halt power supply during the daytime.

He said what Prime Minister's Energy Adviser Tawfiq-e-Elahi Chowdhury said on the matter was his personal statement and only he could explain it.

The minister was replying to a question from a journalist during a meeting at the Secretariat yesterday.

"The prime minister's adviser can explain his suggestion about stopping electricity use during the daytime, but it's not a suggestion from the government," said Hasan, also the joint general secretary of the Awami League.

Amid an energy crisis which has led to severe

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# US-BANGLA TIES The Kennedys to visit Dhaka Oct 29-Nov 5

DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT

The family members of late US Senator Edward M Kennedy, who was a staunch advocate for Bangladesh's Liberation War as opposed to the Nixon administration, will be visiting Bangladesh from October 29-November 5.

The visit, a part of the yearlong celebration of the 50th anniversary of US-Bangladesh relations, comes days after two US Congressmen introduced a resolution calling to recognise the genocide against the Bengalees in 1971.

Kennedy's son Edward M Kennedy Jr, a former member of Connecticut State Senate, and five his family members, will call on Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina and Foreign Minister AK Abdul Monem. They will also visit the Bangabandhu Memorial Museum, Liberation War Museum and visit the historic banyan tree planted by Kennedy in Dhaka University.

When the Nixon-

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# Seven reasons behind the sugar crisis

Consumer rights directorate identifies, recommends measures to make market stable

MOHAMMAD SUMAN, City

The Directorate of National Consumers Right Protection has identified seven reasons behind the price hike and shortage of sugar, including gas crisis, not mentioning price in sales invoices and complications in opening letters of credit.

The directorate mentioned this in a report revealed yesterday after conducting several drives in markets and meeting stakeholders.

It also made an 11-point recommendation to make the market stable.

Based on information from mill owners, dealers, and wholesalers, the report stated that there were 3,75,675 tonnes of sugar in stock and there was no shortage of unrefined sugar.

Gas crisis and complications in

opening LCs with banks have been cited as reasons for reduced supply of the sweetener, the report said.

The mill owners, dealers and wholesalers are getting an opportunity to make undue profits as they sell the item at more than the price fixed by the government as the price is not mentioned in the sales invoices.

Similarly, due to the complexity of delivery of goods from the mill gate, a truck has to wait there for seven to eight days, which increases the transportation cost, the report said.

During drives in markets, the directorate teams found that many sellers were tampering with the price printed on packaged sugar and were also unpacking the sugar to sell it loose at high prices.

The teams visited five sugar

refinery mills -- Meghna, City, Abul Monem, Deshbandhu and S Alam -- on October 22 and 23 to collect production and stock data.

The report said irregularities happened due to not mentioning the price of sugar in supply order receipts and the mill gate price and not keeping the sales invoices.

For market stability it recommended ensuring smooth supply of gas to sugar mills, solving the existing problems in LC opening, quickly loading sugar on trucks at the mill gates, appointing area-based dealers, mentioning the price in sales invoices and regular market monitoring.

Biswajit Saha, director for corporate and regulatory affairs at City Group, said the government and they were trying to solve the supply crisis of sugar. "We are also trying to follow the things we are asked to do..."

"I hope the crisis will not exist if the gas crisis and complications in LC opening are resolved."

The directorate officials said they conducted 103 drives across the country and fined 278 traders Tk 14.75 lakh.



# POLICE FIRING Pak journo shot dead in Kenya

REUTERS, Nairobi

Well-known Pakistani journalist Arshad Sharif was shot dead in Nairobi when police hunting car thieves opened fire on the vehicle he was travelling in as it drove through their roadblock without stopping, according to a Kenyan police report yesterday.

A Kenyan police watchdog has said it is investigating the incident, which happened at 10:00pm (1900 GMT) on Sunday on the outskirts of the capital.

A senior police officer told The Star newspaper that the shooting was

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# Rats with backpacks could help rescue earthquake survivors

CNN ONLINE

Buildings don't collapse very often – but when they do, it's catastrophic for those trapped inside. Natural disasters like earthquakes and hurricanes can level entire towns, and for the search and rescue teams trying to find survivors, it's a painstaking task.

But an unlikely savior is being trained up to help out: rats.



The project, conceived of by Belgian non-profit APOPO, is kitting out rodents with tiny, high-tech backpacks to help first responders search for survivors among rubble in disaster zones.

"Rats are typically quite curious and like to explore – and that is key for search and rescue," said Donna Kean, a behavioural research scientist and leader of the project.

In addition to their adventurous spirit, their small size and excellent sense of smell make rats perfect for locating things in tight spaces, said Kean.

The rats are currently being trained to find

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# AL leader lands in jail for murder of rival

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Pabna

A Pabna court sent an Awami League leader and 16 others to jail yesterday, rejecting their bail pleas in a case filed over the murder of their rival.

Pabna municipality unit AL member Saidur Rahman Malitha's wife filed a case with Pabna Police Station on September 10, accusing 20 named and other unnamed of murder after her husband was shot dead in broad daylight allegedly by Alauddin Malitha and his peers on September 9.

Police earlier arrested three named and three unnamed in connection to the murder while key accused Alauddin Malitha, vice president of Pabna Sadar upazila unit AL and the former chairman of Hemayetpur Union Parishad, and 16 others

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With barely any safety gear on, a worker grinding a metal plate while repairing a launch in Dhaka's Keraniganj dockyard. Most workers in such places have to work in precarious conditions, as the authorities concerned turn a blind eye to the safety of their employees. The photo was taken recently.

PHOTO: PALASH KHAN

# GAIBANDHA-5 BY-POLLS EC probe body seeks three more days

MOHIUDDIN ALAMGIR

The probe committee, formed by the Election Commission to identify those responsible for electoral irregularities during the Gaibandha 5 by-polls, has failed to submit its report yesterday, the deadline for the submission.

It sought another three working days to complete the report.

"We have recorded statements of over 600 people, including election officials of the by-polls. We are compiling the report, so we need sometime. We are hopeful the commission will give us the time," said Ashok Kumar Debnath, additional secretary of EC Secretariat and also the chief of the committee.

"The committee is working cordially and transparently. It is a huge task. It sought time and the Election Commission will consider it," said Election Commissioner Brig Gen (ret) Ahsan Habib Khan.

In a rare move, the EC stopped the Gaibandha-5 by-polls on October 12, saying the situation went "out of control" due to widespread electoral irregularities. This was the first by-election held by the current EC.

Before halting the entire election about 2:30pm, the EC stopped voting at 50 out of the 145 centres after noticing irregularities. Returning officer stopped voting of another polling centre.

On October 13, the EC formed a three-member probe committee to find out how the irregularities took place and who were behind them. It was asked to submit its report within seven working days.

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