

NRB Commercial (NRBC) Bank has often made headlines for alleged money laundering, loan irregularities, over-expenditure and recruitment anomalies. In 2017, Bangladesh Bank had to intervene to dissolve the bank's board and remove its managing director Dewan Mujibur Rahman over a loan scandal involving Tk 700 crore. The then chairman Farasath Ali had to resign from the board. Both Mujibur and Farasath were banned from bank directorship for two years by the BB, and the board was subsequently restructured. The new board is headed by a chairman against whom allegations of irregularities were already rife, and the bank continues to be dogged by anomalies. A six-month investigation by The Daily Star based on hundreds of pages of documents reveals numerous irregularities and even gun toting inside the bank.

Today we run third and fourth installments of this four-part series. Part three is a story of shady and super abnormal increments of 27 bank officials in violation of the bank's own HR policy. The fourth and last part looks into the enviable appetites of the bank's top executives. Judging from their food bills, it is difficult to imagine how one can consume so much food during office meetings.

Dubious reward for a select few

ZYMA ISLAM and PARTHA PRATIM BHATTACHARJEE

Only a select 27 employees of NRBC Bank were given salary hikes, and that too astonishingly, in 2022 in violation of banking rules as well as NRBC's own human resources policy, a Bangladesh Bank investigation has found.

Of them, three senior officials were given up to 13 increments in one go, shows an NRBC office order dated February 13, 2022.

Two deputy managing directors got increases of Tk 1.25 lakh to Tk 1.3 lakh or about 60 percent of their basic pay. At least 10 others were

given salary bumps between 50 and 75 percent, while the rest received 18 to 40 percent pay hikes.

The NRBC office order justified the hefty increments, saying that these 27 had made "exceptional contributions towards the achievement of the bank's goal."

But a report by Bangladesh Bank's Financial Integrity and Customer Services Department (FICSD) said such increments are a violation of banking law as well as NRBC's own human resources policy manual.

"The management can give a maximum of three increments to an

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20 plates of rice, 118 plates of curries for a lunch of 4!

ZYMA ISLAM and PARTHA PRATIM BHATTACHARJEE

NRBC Bank's top managers have great appetites.

On October 24, 2016, the executive committee (EC) of the bank's board held its 56th meeting with four people in attendance. The four were the then EC chairman Md Manzurul Islam, then managing director Dewan Mujibur Rahman and then board members Farasath Ali and Loukit Ullah.

The lunch, at Kasturi
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PRICE CAPPING OF 29 COMMODITIES 26 items selling at higher prices

SHAHEEN MOLLAH

Though the government capped the prices of 29 food items a week ago, traders are still selling 26 of those at higher rates than fixed.

Only eggs, katla fish and onions are sold at prices set by the Department of Agricultural Marketing on March 15.

The department capped the price of Sonali chicken at Tk 262 a kg. But it costs Tk 320-330 a kg at kitchen markets in the capital's Karwan Bazar, Kochukhet, Ibrahimpur and Shewarapara.

Each kg of different varieties of pulses, including red lentils, moong, and maskalai, cost

COMMODITY/ kg	PRICE CAPS	PRICES IN MARKETS
Potato	Tk 28.55	Tk 40
Chicken (broiler)	Tk 175.30	Tk 210-220
Dates (Jahidi)	Tk 185.07	Tk 220-300
Beef	Tk 664.39	Tk 750-780
Grass pea	Tk 92.61	Tk 130-140

Tk 5-35 more than the limit.

Katla fish weighing less than 2kg are sold for around Tk 350 per kg, an egg for Tk 10-11, and local onions at Tk 60-70 per kg.

The authority capped the prices of katla fish at Tk 353 a kg, egg Tk 10.49, and local onions at Tk 65.40 a kg.

The prices of cabbage, cauliflower, bean, brinjal, green chilli, tomatoes, and pumpkin fell by Tk 5 to 20 a kg last week, but these vegetables are still sold at higher prices.

Shopkeepers at the aforesaid kitchen markets

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MV ABDULLAH EU naval force keeping watch on hijacked ship

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

The European Union's warships in the Somali piracy-prone region are watching the hijacked Bangladesh-flagged ship.

The EU Naval Force Operation Atalanta in the Western Indian Ocean posted on X, formerly Twitter, three photos and a video clip of the warships monitoring the hijacked vessel from a distance.

One photo posted at 12:18am (Bangladesh time) yesterday shows a helicopter flying around the MV Abdullah, which is anchored close to the Godobjiraan coast of Somalia.

"Since November 2023, multiple incidents related to piracy have taken place in the area of operations. Three merchant vessels have been assaulted; one is still under pirate control: MV Abdullah," reads the post.

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Gunmen kill 40 at Moscow concert hall

AGENCIES, Undated

At least 40 people were killed and more than 100 injured when five gunmen dressed in camouflage opened fire with automatic weapons at people at a concert in the Crocus City Hall near Moscow, in one of the worst such attacks on Russia in years.

Flames leapt into the sky and plumes of black smoke rose above the venue, Reuters pictures and video showed.

Russian media reported a second blast at the venue and there were reports that some of the gunmen had barricaded themselves somewhere in the building.

The shooting appeared to have begun at a concert of the band "Picnic".

"Suddenly there were bangs behind us - shots. A burst of firing - I do not know what," one witness who asked not to be named told Reuters.

"A stampede began, everyone ran to



the escalator," the witness said. "Everyone was screaming, everyone was running."

The shooting began days after President Vladimir Putin was re-elected for a new six-year term and as Russia is prosecuting a war with Ukraine.

State news agency TASS cited Russia's Federal Security Service (FSB) as saying 40 people had been killed and more than 100 wounded.

The FSB said all necessary measures

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Bangladesh pacer Mustafizur Rahman made a sprightly start to life at Chennai Super Kings as his four-wicket burst helped restrict Royal Challengers Bengaluru to 173 for six in the first match of the Indian Premier League season at Chepauk yesterday. The left-arm pacer took four for 29 - his best figures in the IPL, which included two wickets in his very first over.

PHOTO: BCCI

Tigers relinquish advantage

A spirited bowling effort led by Khaled Ahmed and debutante Nahid Rana saw Bangladesh skittle out Sri Lanka for 280 in the first innings of the first Test in Sylhet yesterday even as Dhananjaya De Silva and Kamindu Mendis scored hundred, but the hosts relinquished the momentum by losing three their top three batters cheaply, finishing the first day on 32 for three.

STORY ON PAGE 10

Airlines pricing out Umrah during Ramadan Ticket prices soar by more than 50pc

RASHIDUL HASAN

Airfare to Saudi Arabia has shot up by more than 50 percent, making Umrah during Ramadan unaffordable for many.

The airfare on the Madina and Jeddah routes is Tk 1.13 lakh to Tk 1.20 lakh, up from Tk 70,000-75,000 previously, according to leaders of the Association of Travel Agents of Bangladesh (ATAB).

Although Umrah can be performed throughout the year, people prefer to perform the ritual during the holy month of Ramadan. As a result, the demand for air tickets on the routes soared.

Different airlines sell bulk tickets in advance to their favoured travel agencies without the names of passengers, said ATAB President Abdus Salam Aref. Sometimes, as much as 80 percent of the tickets are sold in this manner.

The travel agencies later sell those tickets at higher prices.

As the travel agencies invest huge amounts of money for around three to four months, they try to recoup the investment by increasing the airfare, Aref said.

"The airlines should change their policy on this - tickets should be sold directly in the name of particular

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It all starts with a NESCAFÉ

সম্মানিত ডোক্টা ও বিজ্ঞানীদের দৃষ্টি আকর্ষণ করছি!

আপনাদের অজ্ঞাতে বাজারে বেশ কিছু নকল নেস্কাফে পণ্য পাওয়া যাচ্ছে, যেটা আপনারা না জেনেই কিনছেন অথবা বিক্রি করছেন

নেস্কাফে কফি ক্রয়-বিক্রয়ের ক্ষেত্রে সবসময় নিশ্চিত হয়ে নিন যে পণ্যটি আসল এবং সরকার কর্তৃক অনুমোদিত।

আসল ও সরকার কর্তৃক অনুমোদিত পণ্য যাচাই করতে নিচের তথ্যগুলো প্যাকের গায়ে বা পিছনে দেখে নিন:

১. BSTI সার্টিফিকেশন মার্ক।
২. আমদানিকারক ও বাজারজাতকারী হিসেবে প্রকৃত বাংলাদেশী আমদানিকারকের নাম (বর্তমানে নেস্লে বাংলাদেশ একমাত্র বৈধ আমদানিকারক) উল্লেখ করা আছে।

নকল ও অবৈধভাবে আমদানিকৃত নেস্কাফে কেনার ঝুঁকিসমূহ:

১. এই সকল নকল পণ্যের কোনো মেধাস্বত্ব সনদ থাকে না।
২. ল্যাব টেস্ট পরীক্ষায় এই সকল পণ্য ডেজাল হিসেবে প্রমাণিত।
৩. এই সকল পণ্য দেশে বা দেশের বাহিরের কোনো নেসলের কারখানায় উৎপাদন করা হয় না।
৪. অবৈধভাবে আমদানিকৃত পণ্যের মেয়াদ প্রায়ই কম থাকে অথবা মেয়াদ উত্তীর্ণের তারিখ অবৈধভাবে পরিবর্তন করা হয়।
৫. নকল ও অবৈধভাবে আমদানিকৃত পণ্য বাজারজাতকারী সরকারকে যথাযথ শুল্ক ও কর প্রদান করে না।

আসল পণ্য

নকল পণ্য

আপনার পরিবারের সুস্বাস্থ্য এবং সরকারের প্রাণ অর্থ রাজস্ব কোষাগারে টৌঁছাতে, আসল নেস্কাফে পণ্য কিনুন।