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A woman and her brother till the land to prepare it for sweet potatoes in Baraikandi area of Khadimnagar union of Sylhet Sadar yesterday. Another family member is seen planting seedlings on the prepared field. In this poverty-stricken region, crops like potato, onion, chilli, brinjal, radish, cauliflower, and cabbage are widely grown.

PHOTO: SHEIKH NASIR

HC halts Ctg port tariff hike for a month

Seeks explanation from shipping ministry, CPA

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The High Court has stayed the implementation of Chattogram Port's newly revised tariff schedule for one month, following a writ petition that challenged the legality of the decision to raise port charges for the first time in four decades.

The bench of Justice Kazi Zinat Hoque and Justice Aynun Nahar Siddiqua passed the order today in response to a petition filed by the Bangladesh Maritime Law Society (BMLS).

The petition contested the Statutory Regulatory Order (SRO) and the subsequent circular issued by the Chittagong Port Authority (CPA) on September 30, which gave effect to the revised tariff from October 15 this year.

The court also issued a rule asking the authorities concerned -- including the secretary of the Ministry of Shipping and the chairman of the CPA -- to explain why the impugned SRO and circular should not be declared to have been issued without lawful authority and be of no legal effect.

Until further orders, the operation of the CPA's circular implementing the new tariff will remain suspended for 30 days.

Confirming the development, Chattogram Port Secretary Omar Faruk told The Daily Star, "We have heard about the High Court order but have not yet received a copy. Once we get it, we will review the directive and take further steps accordingly."

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Shortage of contraceptives, medicine may end soon

Tk 3,422cr projects to be placed today

TUHIN SHUBHRA ADHIKARY and MD ASADUZ ZAMAN

The ongoing shortfall in the supply of medicines, family planning materials and the procurement of medical equipment is likely to ease soon as three related projects are scheduled to be placed before the ECNEC for approval today.

The three projects, involving Tk 3,422 crore, mainly aim to procure contraceptives, medicines, medical equipment and hospital furniture, as well as complete unfinished expansion works at several upazila-level hospitals.

Another important project, involving Tk 2,988 crore, aims to procure medicines and pay the salaries of health workers.

It has completed scrutiny and is likely to be placed before the next meeting of the Executive Committee of the National Economic Council (ECNEC), officials said.

The supply of medicines and contraceptives, as well as the procurement of medical equipment, was severely disrupted after the expiry of the

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Trinamool, BJP clash over West Bengal voter roll purge

PALLAB BHATTACHARYA, New Delhi

West Bengal's ruling Trinamool Congress (TMC) and its main rival, the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), are set for a collision course as the Election Commission of India (ECI) undertakes a Special Intensive Revision (SIR) of the state's electoral roll ahead of assembly polls slated for March-April next year.

The SIR is an exercise aimed at verifying the authenticity of existing and new voters. During the exercise, Booth Level Officers will go door-to-door to identify and remove duplicate, deceased and ineligible

The revision process has raised concerns among a section of Hindu and Muslim voters in West Bengal, particularly those with ancestral ties to Bangladesh, who fear they may be unfairly excluded from the updated electoral roll.

voters and verify details of new voters. The base for the SIR is the electoral roll of 2002.

West Bengal is among the 12 states and union territories where the SIR of the electoral roll will be carried out in the first phase of the exercise.

The ECI decision on SIR announced at a press conference on October 29 has set off anxiety and panic as people rush to arrange the necessary 12 documents to ensure their names either remain or are included afresh as voters.

However, the revision process has raised concerns among a section of Hindu and Muslim voters in West Bengal, particularly those with ancestral ties to Bangladesh, who fear they may be unfairly excluded from the updated electoral roll.

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Theft rising amid lax security at HSIA cargo zone

REFAYET ULLAH MIRDHA and RASHIDUL HASAN

The lax security at the export cargo zone of Hazrat Shahjalal International Airport (HSIA) in Dhaka has led to a rise in theft incidents, tarnishing Bangladesh's reputation among international buyers.

For years, freight forwarders have lodged complaints with the authorities, but no effective measures have been taken to punish offenders or strengthen surveillance and monitoring in the cargo village, said sources.

They alleged that an organised group regularly steals goods from the export cargo village.

On November 5, two people were identified from CCTV footage stealing items from a carton stored in the export cargo area, but no action was taken against them, said the managing director of a freight forwarding company, seeking anonymity.

The affected freight forwarder said he reviewed CCTV footage from the Bangladesh Freight Forwarders Association (BAFFA) and identified the person responsible.

The thief was found to be a peon or food supplier working informally at the Airport Security Office. Despite not being a permanent employee and having no valid access pass, he was able

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Ukraine strikes leave 20,000 without power in Russia

Moscow downs 44 drones; energy crisis in Ukraine deepens

AFP, Moscow

Ukrainian strikes on energy infrastructure have left more than 20,000 people without power in several Russian border regions, local authorities said yesterday.

Belgorod Governor Vyacheslav Gladkov said the "electricity and heating supply network has suffered severe damage" in the regional capital of the same name.

"Several streets are affected by power issues... More than 20,000 residents are without electricity," he said on Telegram.

In the western Kursk region, "a fire broke out at one of the power plants in the village of Korenevo," cutting power to 10 localities, Governor Alexander Khinshtein announced on Telegram.

A fire also broke out at a heating facility in the southern Voronezh region, according to Governor Alexander Gusev. Russia's defence ministry, for its part, reported having shot down 44 drones over the border Bryansk region.

Meanwhile, Ukraine was scrambling to turn lights and heating back yesterday after Russian attacks targeting energy infrastructure, with the state's power provider saying its generating capacity was reduced to "zero".

Moscow, which has escalated attacks on Ukraine's infrastructure in recent months, launched hundreds of drones at energy facilities across the country overnight into Saturday.

Electricity, heating supply suffered severe damage in Belgorod

Power cuts of 8-16 hours a day across most regions of Ukraine

Russian drones targeted two power substations deep in Ukraine

Chinese astronauts figure out how to barbecue in space



INDEPENDENT.CO.UK

Astronauts aboard China's Tiangong space station have successfully grilled chicken wings and steaks in a microgravity environment for the first time.

The space barbecue was made possible by a new type of oven that allows smokeless and residue-free cooking in orbit.

A video of the feat shows the astronauts placing chicken wings in a cage and placing it in a hatch that is about the same size as an air fryer.

"It's the first oven of its kind in the world that can actually be used aboard a space station," said Liu Weibo, a deputy chief designer at the China Astronaut Research and Training Centre.

"By raising the temperature to 190 degrees Celsius, astronauts can now really cook in orbit. Previous food heating is purely physical warming, but this is actual cooking, with chemical reactions included. The food can now come out golden and crispy."



In this handout photo released by Mayor Benjie Ver, town officials ride a boat to inspect a flooded street in Jipapad, Eastern Samar province, after heavy rains from Super Typhoon Fung-wong. More than a million people have been evacuated and at least two people killed as floodwaters rose in the Philippines after the typhoon slammed into the eastern seaboard.

PHOTO: AFP

18 injured as BNP factions clash over nomination

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A local Chhatra Dal activist died of a "heart attack" and at least 18 others were injured yesterday in clashes between BNP-nominated candidates and those denied party tickets across several districts.

In Mymensingh's Gouripur, violence erupted in the Patbazar area in the afternoon when supporters of BNP candidate M Iqbal Hossain and nomination-deprived leader Tyabur Rahaman Hiron clashed during a campaign event.

During the chase and counter-chase, Tanzim Ahmed Abid, 35, a supporter of Iqbal and son of Ulama Dal member Md Dewan, collapsed and died on the way to Mymensingh Medical College Hospital.

Quoting doctors, Gouripur Circle Assistant Superintendent of Police Debashish Karmakar said

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