

Farmers bear the brunt as dealers stop lifting urea

STAR NATIONAL DESK

Farmers in several districts are facing fertiliser crisis in the peak season of Aman cultivation following the recent stoppage of lifting of urea by dealers from government godowns.

The hoarders in the districts are selling urea at higher prices taking advantage of the situation.

The dealers last week stopped lifting urea in accordance with a

decision taken at a meeting held at Bangladesh Fertiliser Dealers Association.

The meeting protested the government decision for upazila-wise allocation of urea, effective this month, in place of earlier system of zila-wise allocation.

Our correspondent in Brahmanbaria reports, the dealers association in the district has threatened to go for tougher agitation if the authority does not cancel upazila-

wise allocation system of urea.

The association held protest meetings at their Ashuganj office Monday and yesterday to press for earlier system of district-wise allocation.

Presided by Md Jahangir, the meeting was addressed by Haji Md Rafiqul Islam, Md Mijanur Rahman, Md Jakir Hossain, Md Humayun Kabir, Md Rafiqul Islam, Md Naser Ahmed and Md Selim.

The meeting criticised the

Agricultural Ministry order to Ashuganj Zia Fertiliser Company Limited (ZFCL) and other fertiliser factories to distribute urea under upazila-wise allocation system, saying it will affect the dealers as all of them will not get equal quantity of fertiliser.

As a result, many will have to count huge loss. Some dealers will draw maximum quantity of urea while others will get little, they observed.

Some influential groups will be benefitted by the system, the dealers said in the meeting. They expressed the fear that this will create a group of puppets of ruling party leaders and officials.

There are 675 dealers under ZFCL who lift urea for six districts Brahmanbaria, Comilla, Chandpur, Kishoreganj, Netrakona and Sunamganj.

The dealers of ZFCL have not yet deposited money to lift their fertiliser allocated for the month of September.

As the dealers are not lifting urea from ZFCL, some retailers have started selling urea in their shops at high rate, farmers alleged.

Our Correspondent in Nilphamari adds: The farmers are facing an acute crisis of urea following stoppage of lifting of urea by dealers.

Taking advantage of the situation, a section of unscrupulous traders are selling hoarded urea at an exorbitant rate. At present, a 40 kg bag of urea is being sold at between Tk 320-300 against the official rate of Tk 265 per bag.

Earlier, Nilphamari dealers association president Abdul Wahed lodged a protest with the Deputy Commissioner (DC).

In his protest letter, he said the government is committed to allot urea to all the 74 dealers in the district equally as per decision of a meeting of the district fertiliser and seeds monitoring committee held on July 12 this year. He blamed the authorities for violating the decision.

According to the Department of Agriculture Extension (DAE) here, the government allotted 17 metric tons (MT) of urea to each dealer in Saidpur upazila in September while it was 50 MT in Kishoreganj and Jalidhaka upazilas, 51 MT in Sadar upazila and 54 MT in Domar and Dimla upazilas.

Our Patuakhali Correspondent adds: Farmers are facing crisis of urea fertiliser as all 62 dealers did not lift fertiliser from godowns in Chittagong protesting new allocation system.

Dealers alleged each of them in seven upazilas in the district was given each up to 6 tons of urea per month which proved inadequate. But the agriculture ministry introduced a new rule in July this year. According to it, fertiliser would be distributed in the upazila as per land ratio.

Meanwhile, crisis of fertiliser in the peak Aman season in the district has pushed up prices. In the beginning of the season it was sold at between Tk 8 to 10 per kilogram in place of the government rate of Tk 5.80. But for the last two months farmers could not buy fertiliser from the local markets as all fertiliser shops were found empty.

Abdul Hanif, a farmer of Auliapur village under sadar upazila said, 'I went to Patuakhali to buy urea but in vain as there is no fertiliser in the local market.'

Tk 1.25 lakh illegal drug seized

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Cox's Bazar

A team of Narcotics Control Department yesterday seized illegal drug worth Tk 1.25 lakh and arrested two persons from a residential hotel here.

Acting on a tip-off, the narcotics department team led by inspector Dilip Kumar Debnath raided Hotel Renasha and seized 251 illegal tablets of Yaba and arrested the two for selling those to their customers.

The arrested are Shayed Alam, 20, son of Abdus Shookor, North Jaliyapalong village in Teknaf upazila and Kamal Hossain, 24, son of Nurul Islam of North Lombory village in Teknaf upazila.

Notice on school to pay back coaching fee

OUR CORRESPONDENT, B'baria

The Annada Government High School here was served with a legal notice on Saturday to return Tk 11,37,380 to students realised from them as coaching fees.

The headmaster was asked to pay back the entire amount within seven days of receipt of the notice.

Advocate Khairul Anam served the notice on behalf of two residents of Brahmanbaria Pourasabha.

On contact, headmaster Md Ali Akkas Patwary said an official notice was circulated to all educational institutions in 2004 with a directive to take special care so that students do better result.



Khandakar Asaduzzaman



Rafiqul Islam Manju



Abdus Salam Pintu

Infighting threatens AL hopes in Tangail-2

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Tangail

Infighting among the party leaders and activists is damaging opposition Awami League's (AL) prospects of regaining the Tangail-2 (Bhuapur-Gopalpur) Jatiya Sangsad (JS) seat in the coming polls.

AL candidate Khondokar Asaduzzaman left the area after his defeat to BNP candidate Abdus Salam Pintu by 2,274 votes in the last election in 2001.

He remained absent in all party programmes in Bhuapur and Gopalpur in last five years. It created a distance between him and party activists. Although he resumed communication with the party men and participating in different party programmes it will be tough for him to regain party control because of bitter intra-party feud.

After the parliament election in 2001, the ruling party men attacked leaders and activists of AL in Bhuapur and Gopalpur. As Asaduzzaman failed to take effective steps to protect the party men, his nephew Khondokar Ashrafuzzaman Smrity, organising secretary of AL, Tangail district unit steered the party at that time.

The situation gave rise to hostility between the uncle (Khondokar Asaduzzaman) and nephew (Khondokar Ashrafuzzaman Smrity). At one stage the hostility became so acute that the party had to arrange a compromise meeting in Dhaka.

Asaduzzaman and Ashrafuzzaman reached an understanding, but in the mean time, Rafiqul Islam Manju, a high official of Acme Group of Industries, sprang up as their competitor in Bhuapur.

The situation turned more critical when a section of the leaders and activists of AL in Bhuapur and Gopalpur upazilas backed Rafiqul Islam Manju. The party wrangle assumed a new form with both groups holding procession and rallies-counter rallies in the areas.

Two separate processions and rallies of the both groups were held in Bhuapur on July 27. Besides, the leaders and activists of both groups locked in clashes over two separate programmes in Bhuapur on August 11. At least 10 leaders and activists were injured in the clashes.

On the day after the incident, the supporters of Asaduzzaman and Rafiqul Islam Manju clashed

again centering the public meeting, called by Asaduzzaman at Gobindashi High School ground in Bhuapur. The administration imposed Section 144 on the meeting venue to avoid further clashes.

On the other hand, Abu Syed, president of Dhopakandi union unit of Jubo League (JL) in Gopalpur, was hacked to death by some unidentified people on August 15. Although a murder case was filed with Gopalpur Police Station against several BNP men, insiders believe the killing was a sequel to the party infighting.

Some leaders of Gopalpur and Bhuapur upazila units of AL while talking to this correspondent said the AL started losing its grips on the upazilas after Khondokar Asaduzzaman left the area and Rafiqul Islam Manju replaced him after the parliament election in 2001.

The AL central leaders are now struggling to remove the wrangle between Khondokar Asaduzzaman and Rafiqul Islam Manju for regaining the seat, party sources said.



PHOTO: STAR

A human chain was formed in Cox's Bazar Sunday protesting death threats to Hasan Azizul Haque and Muhammad Zafar Iqbal, two university teachers.

SUST STUDENTS' DEADLINE Accept demands by September 9 or face tougher agitation

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Sylhet

The students of Shahjalal University of Science and Technology (Sust) yesterday staged a one-hour sit in at the local Shahid Minar and took out a procession in the city to press for immediate resumption of academic activities.

After the sit in from 10 am to 11 am they paraded the streets from Chouhatta to Rikabi bazaar and returned to the Shahid Minar to hold a rally there.

The speakers at the rally announced, a day-long token hunger strike at the Shahid Minar today it will start at 10 am and continue till 6 pm.

They demanded immediate resumption of academic activities and trial of the killers of fellow student Mosharrif Hossain Shamim. Shamim died in police firing on May 14. They called upon the authorities to accept the demands by September 9, or face tougher agitation from September 10.

Meanwhile, the Sust Teachers' Association president Dr Mostafa

Hasan said yesterday there was no progress regarding the demands placed before the VC. The association's ultimatum ends today.

The Association leaders handed over a memorandum to the VC Sunday afternoon. They urged the VC to accept 4-point demand in three days.

The demands include promotion and upgradation of teachers in different departments, purchase of flat in the capital for using it as teachers' guest house, shifting of teachers from development head to revenue head.

The opposition-backed students action committee yesterday morning took out a procession from the city's Madina Market area. But police stopped it near the BDR gate-III, about half a kilometer off the varsity gate.

The processionists held a rally on the road and said the agitation would continue till the withdrawal of the 'corrupt' VC.

VESTED PROPERTY DISPUTE

Sylhet lawyers to abstain from work today

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Sylhet

The lawyers in Sylhet will observe a day-long work abstention today to press their demand for withdrawal of three top officials including the Deputy Commissioner (DC).

The other two officials are Additional Deputy Commissioner (Revenue) and Superintendent of the Vested Property Section.

The decision was taken at a meeting on Sunday with the district bar president Advocate Dewan Golam Rabbani Chowdhury in the chair.

The lawyers recently began agitation against the lease of the paternal property of a senior lawyer Dhruva Jyoti Shyam in the city's Kashtoghar area terming it vested property. They are pressing for scrapping the lease order, which was stayed days ago after the Arpita Sampatty Ain Protirodh Andolan, Sylhet threw some agitation programme while the lawyers also took to the street and held protest

rally. The Deputy Commissioner (DC) allegedly misbehaved with the members of the delegation of Sylhet district bar association when they went to meet him for placing the demand.

The lawyers also boycotted the magistrate court as well as those of the district magistrate and the additional district magistrate on August 23.

President of the Sylhet District Bar Association Dewan Golam Rabbani Chowdhury told The Daily Star that the district administration officials did it with an ulterior motive. But, the Deputy Commissioner also did not give a patient hearing to the bar association delegation when it went to meet him to protest the misdeed.

The district officials recently leased out the ancestral house on 43 decimals of land belonging to the family of Advocate Dhruva Jyoti Shyam, a senior lawyer in the city's Kashtoghar area to some persons showing it vested property.

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