

DISRUPTION OF GAS SUPPLY

CUFL unlikely to achieve target



Chittagong Urea Fertilizer Limited.

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Chittagong Urea Fertiliser Limited (CUFL) is unlikely to achieve its target this financial year due to disruption of gas supply that cripples production for the second time after 1992-93 FY.

CUFL, the largest state-owned fertiliser factory in the country, would suffer a loss in production of 70,000 tons of urea worth around Tk 35 crore in the first four months of the current fiscal following the dearth of gas supply since the first week of September.

The factory suffered a production loss of around 35,000 tons of urea this month.

The factory resumed its production last week after gas supply was restored at a very limited scale on October 16. Gas supply was suspended on September 30.

Since the factory began start-up process with supply of 13 million Cubic Feet (Cft) gas as against the daily requirement of 50 million Cft, it had to wait until October 22 to go for full production, sources said.

"The factory can now produce on an average daily 1680 tons of urea as against its capacity of 1700 tons," said CUFL General Manager (Operations) Shahidur Rahman.

But after suffering production loss of around 70,000 tons since July, it will be difficult for the CUFL to achieve its annual target of five lakh tons for the current financial year, Shahid said.

Since its operation in 1987, the CUFL factory faced such a situation in 1992-93 FY when production remained suspended for around nine months, he said.

The factory suspended the production on September 6 in the current fiscal year when

Bakharabad Gas Supply Limited (BGSL) abruptly stopped supply to both CUFL and Kafco due to non-availability of gas at the offshore gas field of Sangu that tripped at around 6:30pm on the same evening.

Gas supply was restored to CUFL and Karnaphuli Fertiliser Company (Kafco) at 10:30am and 9:30am respectively on September 7.

But, after the total suspension of production it took three more days to go for full production, said the sources.

Production at the CUFL factory came to an abrupt halt once again when the pressure of gas in the supply line drastically came down to 37 million Cft at around 9:15am on September 18.

The factory resumed operation at 5:30pm on September 19 only to be shut down at around 7:30am the next day (September 20).

The gas supply rose above 80 per cent of the usual flow to enable CUFL to begin start-up in the next morning of September 21.

But, since then poor supply had been hampering production at CUFL until the gas supply was suspended there on September 30.

CUFL produces urea at a maximum production cost of around Tk 6000 per ton and having a subsidy ranging from Tk 900 to 1200 while it sells the fertiliser at Tk 4800 per ton at the mill gate.

On the other hand, the government has to purchase urea from the adjoining Kafco at the international market price at as high as 273 US dollar (equivalent to around Tk 18,500) per ton, sources said.

As such, the circles concerned demanded gas supply to the state-owned fertiliser factory on a priority basis.

Political unrest triggers price hike of essentials

DWAIPAYAN BARUA

Traders here are on a frenzied spree to increase prices of essentials, including food items, taking advantage of the 'poor supply' of commodities due to political unrest.

The wholesalers and retailers at the kitchen markets, including Bakshirhat, Reazuddin Bazar and Karnaphuli, on Sunday and Monday said only a few items, those were stocked a week ago, are available.

They attributed this price hike to the countrywide unpredictable political situation.

Potato, aubergine, cucumber and papaya that grow almost round the year are being sold at a

much higher price. Potato is being sold at Tk 26 to 28 per kg, which was Tk 23 to Tk 24 per kg on the day before the Eid. Aubergine is being sold at Tk 28 to Tk 30.

The consumers prefer cucumber and papaya most, as these are the only 'cheaper' items. The prices of cucumber and papaya ranged from Tk 16 to Tk 18 and Tk 12 to Tk 14 respectively at the city markets.

Some off-season vegetables like patal, bean (barbati), kakrol, cauliflower and cabbage of poor quality are available in the markets but costly. Patal is being sold at Tk 24 per kg, barbati at Tk 30 and kakrol at Tk 36. The price of tomato is Tk 100 to 120.

Shirin Afroze, a housewife, bought a cauliflower of one kg at Tk

34 from Bakshirhat Bazaar on Sunday.

Iskandar, a seller, said the cauliflower and cabbage were brought from Satkhira and Jessore four days ago.

The similar scenario prevailed at fish markets.

A small-sized Ruhu fish is being sold at Tk 120 to 140 while a small hilsha of 'Chandpur' at Tk 200 to 250.

Price of 100 eggs is Tk 440 against Tk 410 a week ago. Eggs of ducks rose to Tk 500 from Tk 470. Retailers sell an egg of hen at Tk 5.

Prices of poultry have decreased as it is being sold at Tk 95 per kg which was Tk 115 just before Eid.

Amir Hossain, a poultry seller of Bakshirhat, said, "I sold only 50

pieces of poultry in last two days while I used to sell around 100 to 130 pieces of poultry a day before the Eid."

A trader at Karnaphuli market said prices of onion have increased as supply of Indian onion remained stopped for the last three days. It is being sold at Tk 25 per kg.

Prices of other essentials also rose remarkably in the city markets.

Abul Hasnat, a service holder, expressed his anger on the failure of control on markets as well as price hike of essentials by the authorities concerned.

Though supply of vegetables and other food items started since Monday afternoon, shoppers are still charging exorbitant price.



Fish sellers sit idle at Karnaphuli Bazar Complex market in the port city due to inadequate supply of fish.

the week that was

Nat'l Road Safety Day observed

Speakers at a seminar here on Saturday blamed corruption in traffic management, reckless driving by unskilled and illiterate drivers, as well as lack of awareness for frequent road accidents.

Nirapad Sarak Chai, Chittagong

Metropolitan unit organised the seminar titled, "Road Accident: Perspective Chittagong" on the occasion of National Road Safety Day 2006 at the Chittagong Metropolitan Union of Journalists (CMUJ) auditorium.

Former fisheries and livestock minister Abdullah Al Noman was the chief guest at the seminar with the unit President Ward Commissioner MA Naser in the chair.

Chittagong Divisional

Correspondent of Channel 1 Shah Newaj Riton presented the keynote paper.

Deputy Commissioner (Traffic) of Chittagong Metropolitan Police (CMP) Mohammad Ahsan Habib, Daily Amar Desh Bureau Chief Zahidul Karim Kachi, Red Crescent Society Chittagong Acting Chairman Dr Shahadat Hossain, General Manager of Ispahani Group Minhazuddin Ahmed and Light Vehicle Driver-Workers' Association General

Secretary Anwar Hossain took part in the discussion.

Closure of Jai Jai Din protested

Chittagong Union of Journalists (CUJ) protested and condemned the closure of

the daily Jai Jai Din, leaving 104 journalists jobless.

CUJ President Shahidul Alam and General Secretary Reaz Haider in a joint statement on Sunday demanded immediate resumption of the daily's publication and withdrawal of the termination order of the newsmen.

They also blamed Shafiq Rehman, editor of the daily, for cheating the journalists and doing business with the daily.

11 broad-gauge wagons handed over to Rly

Eleven broad-gauge wagons, out of recently imported 50, were handed over to the eastern zone of Bangladesh Railway here on Friday.

Former communication minister Nazmul Huda handed over the wagons to the railway officials at a function at Chittagong port.

Bangladesh Railway is procuring the wagons at a cost of Tk 80 crore under an agreement signed between government and an Indonesian company last year.

The wagons reached Chittagong port from Indonesia recently, sources said.

Bangladesh Railway Director General Sultan Ahmed Talukder, Eastern Zone General Manager Mohammed Akhtaruzzaman, Project Director Engineer Abul Hossain and other high officials were present at the ceremony.

Call to help disabled

Speakers at a view exchange meeting here on October 19 emphasised the need for extending the working area for the disabled, establishing new organisations and strengthening the existing ones.

They called upon all to extend their helping hands to ensure normal growth and life of the disabled in the society.

The meeting was jointly organised by Bangladesh Disabled Welfare Association and National Alliance of Disabled People's Organisation (NADPO) at Centre for

Disabled Chittagong (CDC) Training Institute.

Bangladesh Disabled Welfare Association Chairman Abdus Sattar was the main speaker with CDC Executive Director Selim Nazrul in the chair.

Visually impaired advocate Khademul Islam Chowdhury, MA Gafur, Abul Kalam Azad, Sanaulah Helal, Mohammed Shafiqul Islam, Barnanjali Chakma and Tareq Mohamed Iqbal took part in the discussion.

Medicine for leukaemia patients

Children Leukaemia Assistance and Support Services (Class) distributed medicines for the leukaemia (blood cancer) patients at Child Health Department of Chittagong Medical College Hospital (CMCH) on Sunday.

Class handed over the essential drugs of around Tk 50,000 for cancer treatments to the department Head Dr Badrul Alam on Sunday on the occasion of the Eid-ul-Fitr.

Class Chairman Osman Gani Mansur, Director Dr Mohammed Jahangir, Rotaract Club of Chittagong Sagorika President Mizanur Rahman, Engineer Subhas Chandra Barua, GM Jahurul Islam and the department physicians Dr Shamim Hasan, Dr Ashutosh and Dr Mohammed Iqbal were present during the distribution.

Later, they visited the Class-run Leukaemia bloc at the CMCH and distributed new cloths and gifts among the patients.

Attack on temple protested

Bangladesh Hindu Buddha Christian Oikya Parishad here on Sunday condemned the incident of fire and

loot at a Kali Mandir of Hindu community in Anwara upazila in the district.

In a statement on behalf of the Parishad Chittagong North, South, Metropolitan and Anwara units Binod Bihari Chowdhury, Ranjit Kumar Chowdhury, Prof Ranjit Kumar Dey, Advocate Rana Das Gupta, Tapas Hore, Advocate Aujit Narayan Audhikari, Prakiti Ranjan Dutta and Advocate Chandan Biswas protested the incident.

They said the miscreants took the opportunity of the unstable political situation in the country and demanded exemplary punishment to the culprits involved in the incident.

The miscreants on Saturday night looted cash and furniture from Sri Sri Kali Mandir of village Patnikotha and damaged some images in it.

Later, they set fire to the temple using petrol, sources said. The temple authorities filed a case in this connection.

Course on English concludes

A 21-day long English Language Improvement Project (phase 3) concluded here on October 19.

Education ministry organised the training course with a view to improving the quality of English teachers at secondary level at Chittagong Teachers' Training College.

A total of 30 English teachers from 21 educational institutions took part in the course of its 9th batch.

Chameli Das and Munmun Muhury conducted the course. They said this course is essential for the teachers to teach their students in an appropriate way.



A large number of tourists throng Patenga Sea Beach during Eid holidays.