

Artificial crisis of fertilizer sparks agitation among farmers

BANDARBAN, Feb 7: An agitation has been developed among the farmers of Bandarban hill district following the creation of alleged artificial crisis of fertilizer allegedly by the dealer in connivance with the district administration.

Acute scarcity of fertilizer has been prevailing in the district which has already caused an impasse in cultivating land to be brought under 'rabi' cultivation in the ongoing season, sufferers alleged.

The sufferers termed the fertilizer crisis 'artificial' alleging that the crisis has been created by the dishonest unscrupulous appointed dealers in connivance with the district administration and the monitoring committee meant for it.

Urea fertilizer is being sold in Bandarban district town and its adjacent areas at the rate between Tk 370 and Tk 400 per bag in the black market which are scheduled to distribute among the farmers at the rate of Tk 225 per bag by the dealers. The sub-dealers are instructed to sell the urea at Tk 235 per bag in the open market. The rates were fixed officially by the district administration.

The former factory rate of urea from fertilizer manufacturing plant is Tk. 186.25 per bag.

Fertilizer scandal is not a new phenomenon in Bandarban hill district or some other places in the Chittagong Hill Tracts region. The district administration of Bandarban hill district are found apparently insincere in appointing the dealers, local leaders and sufferers alleged.

Earlier, the farmers and the local leaders led by the local Member of Parliament, Bir Bahadur staged an agitation programme and submitted a memorandum to the Deputy Commissioner (DC) protesting the smuggling of 700 metric tonnes of fertilizer reportedly to Myanmar, which was allotted for distribution among the farmers of the district.

No action has yet been taken against the alleged corrupt dealer by the DC mysteriously well after proving of the allegation by an enquiry committee, though the DC assured it in the face of repeated protest, sufferers alleged.

The dealer who allegedly smuggled out the 700 metric tonnes of fertilizer to Myanmar was Abul Kalam Azad, sources added.

Farmers in the district apprehended that they will not be able to bring their land under cultivation cover due to shortage of fertilizer in the ongoing cultivation season.

Hundreds of farmers in Alikadam thana of the district told The Daily Star on January 31 last that they did not get any fertilizer from their dealer till date though a quantity of 800 bags on October 10, 700 and 400 bags on November 11 and 18 along with 300 bags on December 3 was allotted for distribution among the farmers of Alikadam thana to enable them to bring their land in cultivation cover.

Either the fertilizer allotted for them has been smuggled out to Myanmar by the dealer or the dealer is in a bid to smuggle out in connivance with the admin-

From CHT Correspondent

istration in exchange of money, suffering farmers in Alikadam alleged in a body.

Farmers from the far flung inaccessible areas of the district have been rushing to the shop of the sub-dealer Ibrahim at Bandarban sadar with the sale proceeds of their domestic pets and horticulture products for the only hope to get the fertilizer at fair price but are hopelessly being disappointing, they alleged.

Ibrahim reportedly has drawn three metric tonnes of urea last week for distribution among the farmers out of his allotment of nine metric tonnes of fertilizer by the district administration, sufferers alleged, adding that Ibrahim has been disappointing them asking above Tk. 400 per bag of urea and enjoying the benefit of bargaining ignoring his responsibility as a dealer.

Violating the mere norms of appointment, the district administration appointed three sub-dealers for dealing with fertilizer, who have been selling their quotas in the black market instead of distributing among the farmers through creating an artificial crisis, local leaders alleged.

The Bandarban district administration appointed three sub-dealers - Ibrahim is one of them, they added.

Dealer or sub-dealer in Bandarban district did not hang any banner inscribing the schedule rate of fertilizer with their shops nor maintaining any register for the purpose. The dishonest dealers have been disposing off the fertilizer in the black market through

making false master-rolls in an insincere bid to get rid of the allegation and give an eye-wash to any quarter who challenge, sources informed.

The dishonest dealers in Bandarban have been doing this corrupt practice with fertilizer managing more than three local agencies with money being blessed by the district administration, an official from the local District Agriculture Extension Department alleged, adding that for the recent crisis of fertilizer, they have already managed those whom they consider their party.

While expressing his impression to The Daily Star, Kazi Mohammad Muzibur Rahman, the president of the Bandarban district unit of Jatuya Sramik League held both dealers and the district administration responsible for creating the artificial crisis of fertilizer and enhancement of its price in the black market in phase by phase. "Crisis of fertilizer is a sensitive issue and its creation is not at all desirable," Muzib said.

Where the Prime Minister and the minister of industries of the Republic declared that the country has sufficient quantity of fertilizer in its stock, the dealer here has created the crisis artificially under the umbrella of the district administration, Kazi Muzib observed.

The Bandarban district administration appeared to be very much reluctant in facing the artificial crisis prevailing in the district very mysteriously ignoring the government standing directive to fight against it, if it takes place any-

where in the country.

The aggrieved peasantry in Bandarban who were deprived of getting their extremely essential fertilizer in fair prices from the dealers sought the immediate intervention of the appropriate authorities into the matter and punish the responsible quarters behind the repetition of the issue through an early enquiry to get rid of their repeated misery.

It is mentionable that about 1.5 lakh acres of arable land remain uncultivated every year due to various reasons in the Chittagong Hill Tracts region.

Official sources said about 2.5 lakh metric tonnes of foodgrains worth about Tk. 4 crore could be produced annually if those land were brought under cultivation cover.

The land remain fallow due to lack of agricultural inputs, irrigation and credit facilities, scarcity of draft animals, absence of agricultural and technical know-how.

About 1,68,082 metric tonnes of foodgrains are produced annually in 25 thanas of the three hill districts of Rangamati, Khagrachhari and Bandarban, sources said.

The production of foodgrains in the fallow land could play a vital role in solving food deficiency of the country, said Rabintra Lal Chakma, Chairman of the Rangamati Hill District Local Government Council.

He urged the concerned authorities to take all possible measures to bring the fallow land under cultivation without further delay.



Agitated electricity consumers recently brought out a rally demanding regular supply of electricity in Barguna. They later gheraoed the local Power Development Board office in the town to press home their demand. — Star photo

Forest resources on wane in the Sundarbans

From Staff Correspondent

KHULNA, Feb 7: Lives of deer of the Sundarbans are not secure in the hands increasing number of amateur hunters who never bother for the wildlife preservation act. Hardly a day passes without killing of deer by these unauthorised hunters who allegedly manage easy access to the forest with guns of offering bribe to corrupt officials concerned.

Nobody can give the real figure about the number of deer in the Sundarbans. But according to a 1993 statistics, there are nearly one lakh deer of different species in the Sundarbans. The amateur hunters look for skin and venison. So, they do not consider what harm they are doing by indiscriminate killing of deer.

When asked, one of the forest guards said that they are not well equipped to keep the Sundarbans free from killing of deer. It is quite difficult to keep the forest secure from the onslaught of hundreds of people who enter without any lawful authority everyday particularly during winter season.

The District Forest Officer, Mosharef Hossain said that there are ten launches, 15 trawlers, five speed boats and seven radio transmitter sets for 1,038 people serving in different capacities in the forest department. This is not at all

enough to preserve and protect resources of the Sundarbans, he observed.

The DFO admitted that there are large number of deer in all the 55 compartments of the Sundarbans. But eyewitnesses said that in most of the compartments deer is hardly found as before. They are living elsewhere in the forest getting scared of the hunters.

Besides, in the compartments of Jhapa, Tiarchar and Khajura tigers frequently move around taking full advantage of security lapses. In these compartments deer is never found since last two years, said a forest official.

Obaid alleges AL oppression over BNP men

From Our Correspondent

FARIDPUR, Feb 5: The ex-BNP Secretary General, K M Obaidur Rahman urged the party workers, to work wholeheartedly to make BNP stronger politically. He told that the ruling party continued oppression over the BNP leaders and workers across the country.

Smuggling of silk yarn rampant in Jessore border

From Staff Correspondent

JESSORE, Feb 7: A large-scale smuggling of imported Chinese-silk yarn is going on in the bordering district, local people complained, reports UNB.

It is being smuggled into neighbouring India through Keshe-Danga, Rampur, Kanayadaha, Baropota, Puthkali and Daulatpur ghat of the district.

Smugglers carry the imported Chinese yarn to Navaron by road from Jessore to smuggle those to India.

IU opens Mar 8

From Our Correspondent

JHENIDAH, Feb 7: The Islamic University (IU) in Kushatia will reopen on March 8 and the residential halls on March 7, according to university sources.

The university was closed on January 8 following clashes between the activists of two student groups.

Meanwhile, the university authorities have decided to hold admission tests for honours classes between February 26 and March 4.

When contacted, some student leaders told this correspondent that the authorities took the decision to reopen the university with a satisfactory settlement between the IU understanding committee and the rival student fronts.

Foreign cigarettes worth Tk 20 lakh seized from fishing trawler

From Staff Correspondent

COX'S BAZAR, Feb 7: Police seized 80 master cartons of foreign cigarette worth Tk 20 lakh from a fishing boat at the offshore of the Bay of Bengal here Thursday night, reports UNB.

Acting on a tip-off, police challenged the fishing trawler, "FB Shaheda", near Laboni Point at about 8 pm and recovered 80 cartons of Benson and Hedges cigarette.

They also arrested nine people from the trawler owned by a businessman of Chittagong.

The arrested confessed to the police that they were transporting the cigarettes to Chittagong from Shahpari Dwip of the district.

Two held with forged 500 Taka notes

From Staff Correspondent

COMILLA, Feb 7: Two activists of an organised gang were rounded up with 58 forged notes of 500 Taka denomination, reports UNB.

According to police, Jamsed and Kabir bought cigarettes from Madhaia bazar of Chandina thana and paid a 500 Taka on January 16. The shop-keeper suspecting note as forged informed the police.

Sub-Inspector of Chandina thana police station went to the spot and arrested the criminals. Police also recovered more 57 forged notes from their possession.

Further investigation is on.

One killed in road mishap

From Staff Correspondent

KISHOREGANJ, Feb 7: A minor girl was killed in an accident on Saturday in Kishoreganj-Mymensingh road on Thursday, reports UNB.

The dead identified as Jahannara, 8, daughter of Reazuddin of Mahespath village in Kendua thana of Netrokona district.

Witnesses said a Kishoreganj-bound speeding truck hit Jahannara and ran over her while she was crossing the road at Barabagh in the afternoon.

The driver fled the scene just after the accident. Police seized the vehicle. A case was filed in this connection.

Armed gang loot valuables worth Tk 5 lakh killing woman

From Staff Correspondent

NARSINGDI, Feb 7: Armed terrorists swooped on a house in sadar thana on Saturday, leaving a septuagenarian woman dead and five people injured, reports UNB.

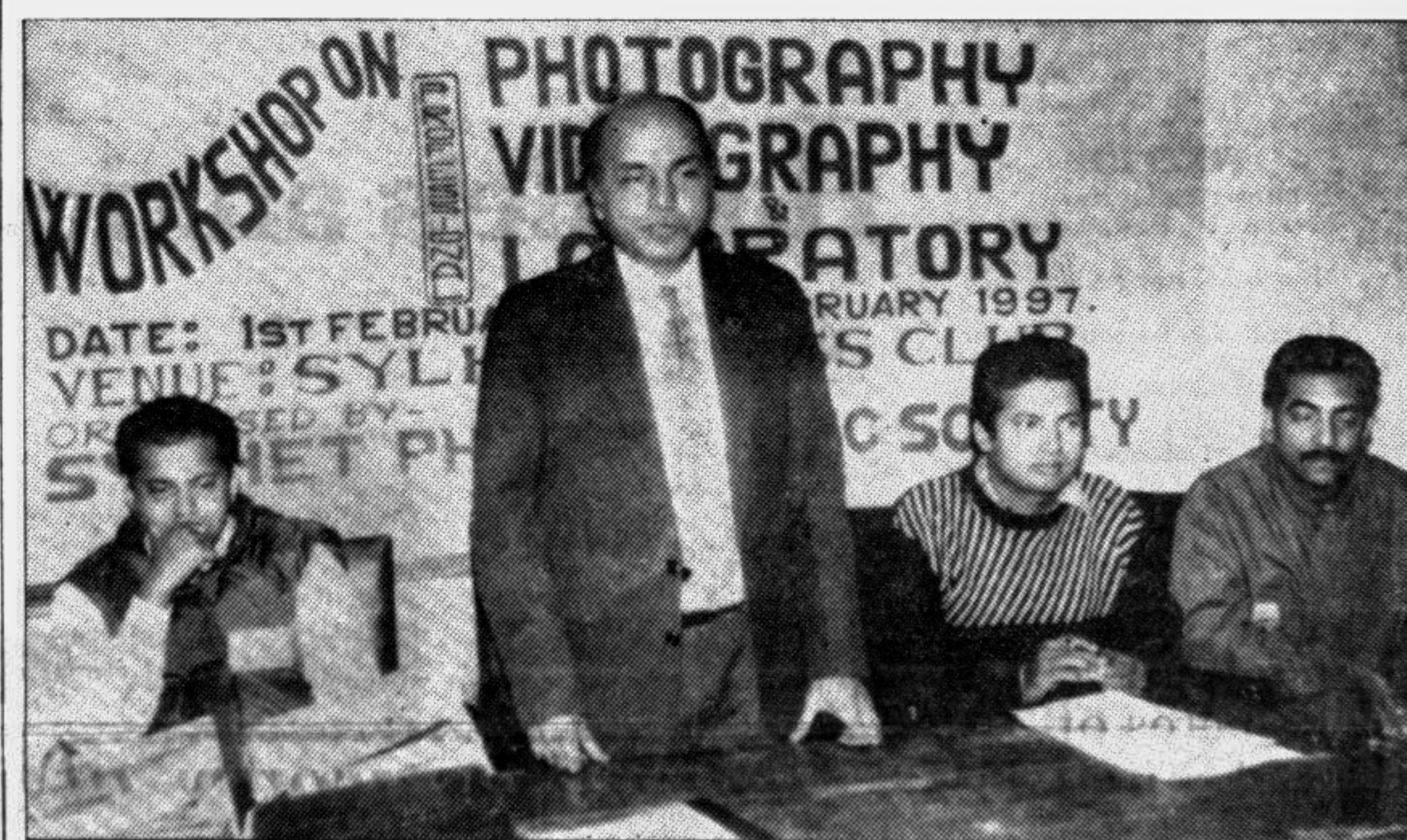
Police and witnesses said, a gang of about 20 gunmen stormed the house of one Abdul Haq of Chouala village and chopped his family members indiscriminately.

Seriously injured Feroza Begum, 71, mother of Haq, succumbed to her injuries on way to hospital. Housewife Aleya and her husband, and one Monir Hossain were admitted to Narsingdi sadar hospital with serious stab injuries.

The attackers also looted valuables, including gold ornaments, worth about Tk 5 lakh.

Family members told police that the attack followed a marriage proposal made by a youth from their neighbouring village. The youth was said to have proposed to marry the daughter of Abdul Haq.

A case was filed with Sadar thana in this connection.



SYLHET: Md Habibur Rahman, Divisional Commissioner, Sylhet speaking at a three-day workshop on professional videography, photography and laboratory recently at the Sylhet Press Club premises. The Sylhet Photographic Society organised the workshop. — Star photo

Two minors killed in road mishaps

From Our Correspondent

KISHOREGANJ, Feb 7: Two minor girls were killed in two separate road accidents in the district recently.

Police sources and witnesses said an eight-year-old girl, named Jahannara, daughter of Reazuddin of village Mo-hishkhat in Kendua thana was crushed to death under the wheels of a speeding truck (Dhaka Metro Na-8419) on Kishoreganj-Mymensingh road at Barabagh in Kishoreganj sadar thana. The victim came to visit her uncle's house and the accident occurred while she was crossing the road.

In another accident at Bhairab thana headquarters, Rumana, 4, daughter of Abdul Awal of village Kamalpur met the tragic end of her life. A passenger bus hit her from behind in front of Bhairab Telegraph Office on Kishoreganj-Bhairab road killing her on the spot.

Lack of improved seeds may hamper cotton cultivation

From Our Correspondent

MAGURA, Feb 7: The procurement of cotton seeds has started in four cotton cultivation units of Magura district, official sources of Cotton Development Board (CDB) said.

According to the sources,

Baby falls into underground water reservoir, dies

From Staff Correspondent

JHALAKATHI, Feb 7: A baby boy was killed as he fell into an underground water reservoir at Station Road in the town Thursday, reports UNB.

Family sources said the two and a half years boy Hridoy, son of local businessman Himayet Uddin Talukder, slipped into the reservoir in the afternoon as it was kept open for reconstruction works.

The body was recovered from the tank at about 3:30 pm.

CDB are not in a position to procure sufficient cotton seeds from the farmers directly as the farmers have been selling cotton seeds between Tk 1200 and Tk 1300 instead of government rate of Tk 1040 and Tk 1120 per maund. As a result, CDB authorities face problems in procuring sufficient cotton seeds from the growers.

Talking to the officials of the unit offices of CDB said about one thousand five hundred eleven hectares of land have been brought under cotton cultivation programme in Magura district during the current season. Deltapine 90 and Deltapine 92 varieties of cotton seeds have been cultivated in the district, sources added.

The CDB purchased cotton seed at a rate of Taka 1000 per maund last year. The procurement rate of cotton seed has been fixed at the rate between Taka 1040 and Taka 1120 per

maund during the current cotton seed harvesting period. They are purchasing Deltapine-92 variety of cotton seeds at a rate of Taka 1120 per maund this year.

The officials of cotton unit informed that almost all the cotton cultivators show interest in selling their products to private sector buyers for higher rate which might affect quality cotton seeds in these areas in near future.

Talking to some cotton seeds growers of Sripur thana in Magura district said, a good number of private dealers purchase cotton seeds at a higher rate from their field against cash. It was alleged that cotton seeds with moisture are being sold in private sector. As a result, government purchasing of cotton seeds are being seriously hampered. A section of private buyers are making oil from the

cotton seeds. Some officials told the correspondent that cotton cultivation will face setback due to lack of improved cotton seeds.

Next year if CDB fails to buy cotton seeds during the current year.

They applied to concerned authorities to take necessary step to ban selling cotton seeds with moisture in the private sector.

Initiate politics of development: Kibria

From Staff Correspondent

HOBIGANJ, Feb 7: Finance Minister Shah A M S Kibria Thursday laid emphasis on bridging the gap between the people and the administration in implementing the development programmes.

The minister was addressing as the chief guest a meeting of Madhabpur thana Awami League here. Thana Awami League President Maulana Asad Ali presided over the meeting, reports BSS.

Kibria said the government had taken development plans for all regions of the country and the plans would be implemented in phases by increasing the financial allocation.

The finance minister said the prime objective of the government is to initiate the politics of development in lieu of the politics of chaos and confrontation.

The minister said the government is pledge-bound to realise the dream of the father of the nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman by establishing Sonar Bangla (golden Bengal).

The meeting was addressed, among others, by Enamul Haque, MP, Abu Laice Mohammed Mubin Chowdhury, MP, Divisional Commissioner of Sylhet, Habibur Rahman, District Commissioner of Hobiganj, Burhanuddin and Hobiganj Pourashava Chairman, Shahid Chowdhury.

Later, the minister visited the victims of the fire which occurred on Monday at Madhabpur bazaar.



NATORE: The Police Super of the district, M Aminul Haq distributing winter clothings among the destitute people at sadar police station premises. — Star photo

Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh Office of the Divisional Forest Officer Dhaka Forest Division, Ban Bhaban, Gulshan Road Mohakhali, Dhaka-1212

Tender Notice No-03

Sealed tenders are hereby invited from all government/semi-govt/autonomous organisations enlisted 1st class/equivalent eligible contractors for completion of the development & construction works described in the undermentioned schedule at Bhawal National Park under Wild Life Conservation & Management Development Project (amended) of Dhaka Forest Division.

Schedule of work					
Gr No	Details & location of work	Estimated cost	Earnest money	Price of schedule	Time limit for completion of work
1)	Construction of office building at Bhawal National Park and dormitory/inspection Bungalow for officers at breeding centre.	8,94,597/90	5% of the quoted rate	400/-	3 (three) months or ninety days from the date of issuing work order
2)	Construction of dormitory and laboratory-cum-store room for supervisors/field investigators at Bhawal National Park.	7,95,197/65	-do-	400/-	-do-
3)	Construction of rearing tank for crocodiles and tortoise at Bhawal National Park.	3,97,583/37	-do-	400/-	-do-
4)	Site development with construction of fence of breeding centre with heavy wire netting alongwith RCC pillars and enclosure of breeding centre for deer breeding at Bhawal National Park.	9,93,999/76	-do-	400/-	-do-

Terms & conditions

- 1) Schedule of tender can be purchased at the price (non-refundable) mentioned against each work described in the said schedule from the office of the undersigned and Officer-in-Charge, Bhawal National Park from 12/2/97 to 16/2/97 during office hours.
- 2) 5% of the quoted price as earnest money should be submitted with the tender through Pay Order/Bank Draft from any scheduled bank in favour of the Divisional Forest Officer, Dhaka Forest Division.
- 3) Tenders will be received in the tender box kept at the office of the undersigned, Office of the Divisional Commissioner, Dhaka Division and Office of the Officer-in-Charge, Bhawal National Park up to 12:00 Noon of 18-2-97 and the tender boxes will be opened on the same day at 2:00 PM only at the office of the undersigned before the tenderers (if any) present.
- 4) Tenders will be treated as cancelled if the quoted price is more than 5 per cent below the departmental estimated cost or more than the estimated cost.
- 5) The undermentioned documents should be submitted with the tender:
 - (a) Past experience certificate of executing similar work worth equivalent amount.
 - (b) Attested copy of enlistment certificate of 1996-97.
 - (c) Attested copy of income tax clearance certificate of 1995-96.
 - (d) Bank certificate from any scheduled bank certified by its manager that the firm concerned has the capacity to invest Tk 10 (ten) lakh & statement of financial transaction over the past 2 (two) years.
 - (e) Attested copy of trade licence (up to date).
 - (f) Attested copy of VAT registration (up to date).
- No tender will be acceptable without the said papers/documents.
- 6) Detailed information and terms & conditions of tender can be known or seen from the office of the undersigned during office hours.
- 7) The authority reserves the right to reject any or all tenders without assigning any reason.

Md Ikliel Mandol
Divisional Forest Officer
Dhaka Forest Division
DFP-2471-1/2
G-405