

Monga has taken serious turn in N-region: CPB

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Monga, a near famine situation, has taken a serious turn in northwestern region of the country due to government's indifference, said the leaders of Communist Party of Bangladesh (CPB) yesterday.

Addressing a rally at Muktagong in the city, they said like abnormal price hike of essentials, the government has also failed to combat Monga.

"When Monga-affected people cannot manage even a square of meal, the BNP-Jamaat alliance government is hosting expensive Iftar parties in the capital," said CPB President Manzurul Ahsan Khan.

He alleged that the government is forcing people to take foods mixed with various toxicants to protect the interest of unscrupulous traders.

"It is very mysterious that the government has blamed a foreign power for grenade attack on Awami League rally, but it does not want to reveal the name of that power," said Manzurul.

CPB General Secretary Mujahidul Islam Selim said unabated corruption is going on over the distribution of VGF Cards in

Monga-affected areas.

He said the poor people are selling their land and labour to rich people at cheap prices to save their lives.

CPB leaders Ruhin Hossain Prince and Asaduzzaman also spoke.

Later, a procession was brought out that paraded different streets.

3,575 more held, 33 firearms recovered

UNB, Dhaka

Police arrested 3,575 people, including 2 listed criminals, on various charges during their countrywide drive in the last 48 hours ending 6.00am yesterday.

During the period, law-enforcers recovered 33 firearms, 11 other weapons, 51 bullets and eight bombs and filed 21 cases against 32 people under Arms Act.

Producers blamed for vulgarity in films

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Leaders of the Bangladesh Motion Picture Exhibitors' Association (BMPEA) yesterday blamed the key leaders of Film Producers and Distributors Association for growing vulgarity in films.

They also called on the government to take steps immediately to stop video piracy and develop the film industry to make it competitive.

Obscenity in films could not be checked as the leaders of the pro-

ducers' association were patronising it, said BMPEA General Secretary Mirza Abdul Khalek at a press conference in the city.

BMPEA President Saiful Islam Chowdhury called on the cinema exhibitors not to screen vulgar films and threatened legal action against those showing such films.

The association has already sent notices to all cinema owners warning them against screening of vulgar films, he added.

'Reconsider time bar on import of paddy seeds'

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Hybrid Paddy Group (HPG), a coalition of seed producers and importers, urged the government to reconsider the five-year time bar on import of hybrid paddy seeds to meet the growing demand for seeds in the country.

At present, the government allows an importer to import hybrid paddy seeds only for a period of five years and insists that the importer should produce the seeds locally after the end of that period.

"Although all of us (importers) are trying hard to grow the seeds locally, it would take at least 10 years to meet the growing domestic demand with locally produced seeds," said Mohammad Masum, chairman of Supreme Seed Company, at a press briefing on Friday.

He called on the government to allow the importers to import seeds for 10 years.

Representatives of Brac, Aftab Bahumukhi Farms, Mollika Seed Company and Chains Crop Science were present at the press briefing.

They said that after the government first allowed import, sale and production of hybrid paddy seeds in 1999, only a handful of companies sold only 40 tonnes of seeds in 2001-02, but the sales figure jumped to 1255 tonnes in the current fiscal, of which 542 tonnes would be locally produced and the rest would be imported.

They hoped that the use of hybrid paddy seeds in 2.5 lakh acres of land this year would produce an additional 2 to 2.5 lakh tonnes of paddy worth Tk 160 crore.