

CHILMARI OIL DEPOT RUNS OUT OF STOCK

Kerosene, diesel prices go up in 3 districts

RAFIQUE SARKER, back from Kurigram

The Chilmari floating depot of Bangladesh Petroleum Corporation (BPC) has run out of stocks due to lack of supplies for about two weeks.

This has caused price hike of diesel and kerosene in Lalmonirhat, Kurigram and Jamalpur districts.

Diesel and kerosene are selling at Tk 38-40 per litre in markets in the districts against the government fixed price of Tk 30.25 per litre.

The Chilmari depot has a capacity to store 60,000 litres of diesel and 45,000 litres of kerosene.

Dealers in Kurigram said they

are procuring kerosene and diesel from Bhagabari depot and selling those at Tk 38 to 40 per litre.

They said in the last few days, oil tankers supplied fuel to Bhagabari depot but did not go up to Chilmari depot.

When asked, General Manager (Operation) of Jamuna Oil Company, Ferdousul Islam, told this correspondent that oil tankers and barges can not go up to Chilmari with supplies due to fall in the water level of Brahmaputra. He however said arrangements were being made to supply fuel to Chilmari depot. He was in Rangpur yesterday on an official visit.

BPC set up the Chilmari depot on the Brahmaputra in 1989 with a view to supplying kerosene and diesel to Gibanda, Rangpur, Lalmonirhat and Jamalpur districts.

Three oil companies under BPC had their barges at the depot. Later, Padma Oil Company shifted its barge to Balashi in Gibanda from Chilmari. Meghna Oil Company and Jamuna Oil Company were tasked with supplying fuel to Chilmari depot.

Sources at the depot said Meghna did not supply fuel for about two months and Jumuna for two weeks.

Kurigram Deputy Commissioner

Azizur Rahman Mollah and Chilmari Upazila Nirbahi Officer Rabindranath Roy said they did not know anything about shortage fuel at the depot.

About 60000 litres of diesel and 20000 litres of kerosene are needed in the three districts daily, sixty percent of which was usually supplied from the Chilmari depot.

The price hike has affected the farmers who need those for daily use and irrigation. Many farmers this correspondent talked to said they need to irrigate their Aron fields after transplantation of seedlings because the rainfall is inadequate this year.

TRANSPORT STRIKE ON Hartal in Dinajpur today

A CORRESPONDENT, Dinajpur

A day-long hartal has been called for today in Dinajpur jointly by Dinajpur transport owners association and the Santrash Protirodh Committee (committee to resist terrorism) demanding arrest of Mujibar Rahman, general secretary of Dinajpur Transport Workers Union for his alleged involvement in illegal toll collection and other acts of violence.

Transport owners, joined by people brought out processions in the town yesterday in support of today's hartal. The hartal was called on Sunday.

Meanwhile the indefinite transport in the district strike called by the transport owners association for Mujibar's arrest entered the third day yesterday.

On the other hand, the North Bengal Transport Association in a statement urged the Santrash Protirodh Committee to stop 'harassment' of Mujibar and threatened of paralysing vehicular movement in the northern region. Mujibar is also secretary of the North Bengal Transport Association.

As tension mounted following the counter-programme, police have been deployed in Dinajpur town to avert any untoward incident.

275 chocolate bombs seized in Dinajpur

A CORRESPONDENT, Dinajpur

Police on Tuesday recovered about 275 chocolate bombs from a house at Dangapara border village in Dinajpur Sadar upazila and arrested one person.

Officer-in-Charge of Dinajpur Kotwali police station Abu Bakar said they sent Abdus Salam to Rangpur Jail but failed to nab Atwar Rahman despite a raid on his residence of Kamarpara in Rangpur town.



PHOTO: STAR
Sramik League, labour front of opposition Awami League, brought out a procession in Barisal city yesterday protesting price hike of fuel and other essentials.

JCD, SHIBIR CROSS SWORDS

Bid to reopen Kushtia KC College fails

A CORRESPONDENT, Kushtia

A meeting yesterday to reopen KC College in Jhenidah ended in chaos amid shouts by JCD and ICS activists blaming each other.

The college was closed sine die on Tuesday following Monday's clashes between activists of JCD (Jatiyatabadi Chhatra Dal) and ICS (Islami Chhatra Shibir), student wings of ruling BNP and Jamaat-e-Islami.

Yesterdays meeting, held at the college, was attended by Police Superintendent Akram Hossain, Deputy Commissioner's representative NDC Fahmid Hossain, local leaders of BNP and Jamaat-e-Islami. At least 30 students were injured.

Sources said the meeting ended amid chaos without any decision as JCD and ICS leaders shouted and blamed each other for Monday's clashes.

When contacted after the meeting, its principal Prof Shahidul Islam he will not hold any more meeting and reopen the college when he thinks the atmosphere is suitable.

The college authorities closed the institution as tension mounted when activists of the two student organisations tried to enter the campus on Tuesday.

Campus sources said a large number of ICS activists along with 'outsiders' tried to enter the campus at about 11am.

JCD men who 'captured' the campus on Monday resisted them.

They were equipped with firearms, iron rods, bamboo sticks and lethal weapons, sources said.

Police were deployed but an uneasy calm was prevailing the

campus.

The JCD and ICS blamed each other for 'vitiating the healthy environment' and 'harboring terrorists'.

Sources said Monday's clash ensued when both JCD and ICS wanted to conduct a freshers' reception, organised by students of Economic Department. Police batoned the students and quelled the violence.

After the clash, JCD activist forced ICS men out of the campus and 'captured' it, including a dormitory.

Six of the injured JCD activists were admitted to Jhenidah Sadar Hospital and as many of ICS including its college unit president and general secretary were taken to Islami Bank hospital in the town.



PHOTO: STAR

Obaidur Rahman, younger brother of JMB chief Abdur Rahman, being taken to court in Jamalpur by police on Tuesday.

Jamuna Oil official held in Rangpur

Tk 5 cr defalcation alleged

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Rangpur

Police arrested Rangpur depot superintendent of Jamuna Oil Company Abdus Salam Tuesday night on charge of defalcation of about Tk 5 crore.

He was arrested after departmental probe detected the defalcation, company officials said yesterday.

The company authorities also suspended two other officials - Shakil Ahmed and Ali Hossen - for their alleged involvement in the scam.

An agent of the oil company - Atwar Rahaman - is also facing charge in this connection. He is absconding since Tuesday.

The probe revealed that Abdus Salam and company agent Atwar Rahman, in collaboration with some

officials, misappropriated about Tk 5 crore kerosene and diesel. The company did not get the amount against the fuel handled by Atwar Rahman from the depot.

Atwar Rahman, proprietor of Balaka Filling Station and Talukder Filling Station, was an enlisted oil-handling agent of Jamuna Oil Company. He had been loading and unloading oil from railway wagons.

Meanwhile, loading and unloading of kerosene and diesel at the depot remained suspended since Monday.

Rangpur Kotwali police yesterday said they sent Abdus Salam to Rangpur Jail but failed to nab Atwar Rahman despite a raid on his residence of Kamarpara in Rangpur town.

Officer-in-Charge of Dinajpur Kotwali police station Abu Bakar said that acting tipped off, team led by SI Nurul Islam raided the house of Shainul Islam and recovered the bombs. Islam was arrested but other inmates fled away, police said.



PHOTO: STAR
A mobile court in Barisal city yesterday dumping food items of Ananya Foods into a nearby drain after detecting use of toxic chemicals in their production.

Govt out to save August 17 culprits, says Tofail

A CORRESPONDENT, Tangail

Awami League (AL) leader Tofail Ahmed has alleged that the ruling BNP is trying to save the perpetrators of August 17 serial bomb blasts across the country.

The prime minister's speech in the Jatiya Sangsad proves this, the AL Presidium member told a public meeting at Khaer Para Shaheed Salam High School field in Ghatal on Tuesday.

"The coalition government is trying to save Jamaat-e-Islami cadres who were behind the explosions", Tofail said.

The former minister also expressed concern that the August 17 serial bombings this year, last year's grenade attack on Awami League rally in Dhaka and such other blasts earlier have tarnished the image of the country.

These incidents have branded Bangladesh as a country of religious extremists and foreign investors are shying away, he said. A US diplomat recently expressed skepticism about smooth holding of the next parliamentary polls, Tofail said.

These are ominous signs for the country and the government is solely responsible for this, he said.

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7X2

10X3