

Silted rivers keep fertiliser away from farmers

Short supply in peak *Rabi* season in northern districts

GOLAM MOSTAFA JIBON, back
from Baghabari ghat

Farmers in northern districts including Sirajganj are facing short supply of fertiliser and fuel in the peak season of *Rabi* cultivation mainly due to transportation hurdles created by navigation problem in different routes of Jamuna.

Water levels of Jamuna and its tributaries have fallen drastically.

Baghabari port sources said cargo vessels and barges with fertiliser and fuel can not reach Baghabari ghat as numerous underwater shoals have appeared in the waterways. At least 35 vessels and barges were stuck up between Nagorbari and Nakalia in last one

week, they said.

Small boats are being used to unload fertilisers from stranded vessels and take those to riverbanks. Those are then transported to different destinations through trucks and other transports, which substantially increases the transportation costs, they said.

This correspondent during a visit saw fertilisers being unloaded from big vessels at Natuarpara with the help of small boats and stacked on the riverbank. About 20,000 tonnes of fertiliser were piled up there, awaiting dispatch to different destinations.

Taking the advantage, truckers have almost doubled fares, for which farmers will ultimately bear the brunt, they said.

Sources at Baghabari fuel depot said diesel and kerosene are being unloaded from their oil tankers at Kazirhat point through drums and then supplied to dealers. Even small tankers can not move as underwater shoals have appeared at least 100 points including Nakalia, Latifpur, Verakhola and Mohonganj on Jamuna river.

This has increased costs while supply of diesel, kerosene, petrol, octane and different kinds of fertiliser to 16 northern districts may be stopped any time, they said.

Authorities at Baghabari port and depots urged the BIWTA several times for dredging of river channels in the region, they said.

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Oil company officials at Baghabari said fuel crisis in northern districts is created only due to navigation problem. If this can be resolved, smooth supplies can be maintained throughout the year, they observed.

Baghabari port was set up in 1982 at the confluence of Jamuna and Boral rivers, followed by installation of depots of Padma, Meghna and Jamuna oil companies mainly to ensure smooth supply of fuel to northern districts. But the purpose is being denied only due to lack of effective dredging of river channels in the region, they said.

Authorities detected a fault in its ammonia plant and immediately halted production at around 9:30pm, sources in the factory said.

Engineers started repair work on Saturday but could not say till yesterday when production will resume, they added.

Technical glitches twice earlier this year, on February and October 18, kept the factory idle for several days.

Jamuna Fertiliser falls silent again

Supply interrupted four times in last two months

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Tangail

A team of foreign experts with the help of local engineers repaired the fault after the February 3 glitch.

The country's biggest urea factory at Tarakandi in Sarisabari upazila in Jamalpur has a production capacity of 1,750 tonnes a day.

Its Managing Director Abul Kasem Joardar and General Manager (Technical) Nurul Islam could not be contacted over phone despite repeated attempts.

Urea supply from the factory was interrupted four times this year due to 14 party's blockade, technical glitches and porters' strike in October.

No charge sheet 2 years into murder of Prof Yunus

Protesters slate RU authorities for 'indifference, inaction'

RU CORRESPONDENT

The 2nd death anniversary of Rajshahi University teacher Prof Muhammad Yunus was observed on the campus yesterday with a call for speedy trial of the case and punishment of the killers.

Teachers, students, officials and employees of the university at different programmes also urged the university authorities to observe December 24 as a mourning day on the campus.

Prof Yunus, a teacher of Economics department and president of RU unit of Bangabandhu Parishad, was killed by unidentified terrorists on December 24 in 2004 when he was on a morning walk at Binodpur near his university campus residence.

Yesterday, Awami League-backed RU Teachers, Officials and Employees Welfare Association brought out a mourning procession on the campus and placed wreaths at the grave of Prof Yunus and the spot where he was killed.

At a condolence meeting in front of the Senate building, speakers bitterly criticised the government and Rajshahi police for not submitting the charge sheet in the case two years of the murder.

They expressed great anguish that the university authorities did not take programme to observe the death anniversary Prof Yunus, a noted economist.

They also declared that they would abstain from work on every December 24 to show respect to the memory of Yunus.

The rally was addressed by, among others, Mozaffar Hossain, Prof Chittaranjan Misra, Dr Mirza Wazed Hossain Beg.

Bangabandhu Parishad,



Prof Muhammad Yunus

Bangladesh Chhatra League (BCL) and Economic department yesterday took out separate mourning processions on the campus and demanded immediate submission charge sheet.

BCL at its rally in front of Central Library criticised university authorities for not observing the day.

A mass prayer was also held for late Prof Yunus at the university central mosque after Asr prayer.

Prof Yunus joined RU as a lecturer in 1963. He became a Professor in 1997.

He was elected member of RU Syndicate twice and worked as Students' Adviser and Proctor in early '90s.

Prof Yunus was Registrar of the university for three years from 1997.

He was Ruta general secretary in 1987 and president in 1996.



PHOTO: GOLAM MOSTAFA JIBON

As big cargo vessels cannot approach Baghabari Ghat, fertiliser bags unloaded from those by small boats being carried by labourers (left) and piled up on the bank of Jamuna.

BNP-BJP feud takes a new turn in Satkhira-4

ABU AHMED, Satkhira

The feud between BNP and its ally Bangladesh Jatiya Party (BJP-Nazir) took a new turn yesterday as BNP leader Dr. Shahidul Alam filed nomination paper to contest the coming polls from Satkhira-4 (Kaligni-Debhatia), a seat also demanded by BNP.

Dr. Shahidul Alam submitted nomination papers to returning officers in Kaligni and Debhatia.

"I have resigned from government service to campaign. I submitted nomination paper on assurance from BNP high-ups," he told this correspondent after submitting nomination papers. Dr. Shahidul Alam was also a central leader of Doctors Association of Bangladesh (DAB).

He also sought nomination from the constituency in 2001 election but was denied.

Submission of Shahidul's nomination paper to fight former BJP lawmaker Kazi Alauddin has become a talk of the town.

Shahidul Alam said he submitted nomination paper due to great pressure from party rank and file in the area.

Earlier, BNP and its front organisations held several meetings in the area demanding a party candidate in Satkhira-4 and vowed to resist Kazi Alauddin, if nominated by the 4-party alliance. They alleged that the BJP lawmaker had ignored them during his tenure.

They also alleged that Kazi Alauddin joined Jamaat-e-Islami 'secretly' to confirm nomination. So he can not demand ticket from the area, they said.

Sources in BJP however claimed that alliance leaders assured Alauddin of nomination from Satkhira-4. Alauddin submitted nomination paper earlier to run in the constituency.

Mohila Dal to agitate if Lobi denied ticket

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Khulna

AL rejects LDP's Razzak Ali in Khulna-6

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Khulna

LDP Presidium member and former Speaker Shaikh Razzak Ali has been declared 'unwanted' by Koirala upazila unit of Awami League.

Koirala upazila Awami League, Juba League and Chhatra League held a rally yesterday and the day before protesting reported nomination of Razzak Ali from Khulna-6 (Koirala-Paikgacha) constituency as a candidate of the 'grand alliance' led by Awami League.

Several hundred AL leaders and activists brought out a procession in the area yesterday raising slogans against Razzak Ali.

Yesterday's rally was presided over by former president of Koirala upazila Awami League Mostafa Rafiqul Islam.

Speakers said they will not accept any candidate other than a party man.

AL rejects LDP's Razzak Ali in Khulna-6

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