

Urea rationing in Gaibandha

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Gaibandha

Short supply of fertilisers have pushed up their prices, affecting Irri-Boro and vegetable cultivation in seven upazilas of the district.

Urea, the main input for Irri-Boro, is scarce and hard to procure, many farmers told this correspondent. They said at times they have to return home empty handed after

waiting in long queues for hours at shops of retailers and dealers.

A 50-kg bag of urea is sold at between Tk 380 and Tk 400 against the government-fixed price of Tk 290, they alleged. Triple Super Phosphate (TSP) is sold at Tk 1,200 against Tk 970, TSP (China) at Tk 680 against Tk 530, Murate of Potash at Tk 700 against Tk 600 and compost at Tk 700 against Tk 670

per 50 kg bag, they said.

The Bangladesh Chemical Industries Corporation (BCIC) has introduced rationing in distribution of urea in the district.

BCIC officials said they started rationing to check smuggling across the border but some dealers claimed that this affected farmers but could hardly check smuggling. Each dealer will get 30 tonnes of

urea this month, 21 tonnes from BCIC buffer stock and nine tons from Jamuna Fertilizer Factory, sources in Bangladesh Agriculture Development Corporation (BADC) said.

Fertiliser stock and supply position is 'better' in Gaibandha than in other districts in the region because of the rationing system, claimed Abdul Matin, member-secretary of district fertiliser monitoring cell.

According to Agriculture Extension Department (AED), around 1,51,000 hectares of land have been brought under Irri-Boro cultivation and 20,000 hectares under vegetable farming in the district in the current Rabi season.

AED officials said they sought 41,990 tonnes of urea to meet the requirement from October last year to March this year.

BCIC supplied only 6,772 tonnes against the requirement of 7,800 tonnes till December last year, they said.

Till December last year, there was a buffer stock of 9,000 tonnes of urea in Gaibandha district.

Till Saturday, 403 tons of urea were supplied from the buffer stock. Distribution was hampered by political unrest, they said. Slow distribution created crisis in the market, said Abdul Latif Hakkani, president of district Fertiliser Traders Association.

The crisis intensified as 87 railway wagons with 653 tonnes of urea from Jamuna Fertiliser Factory remained stranded at Tarakandi and Bahadurabad Ghat as the railway suspended ferrying wagons from Balashi and Bahadurabad ghats due to navigation problem as the Jamuna channel dried up in the area.

Railway authorities said they are trying to dispatch the fertiliser wagons through Jamuna Bridge.

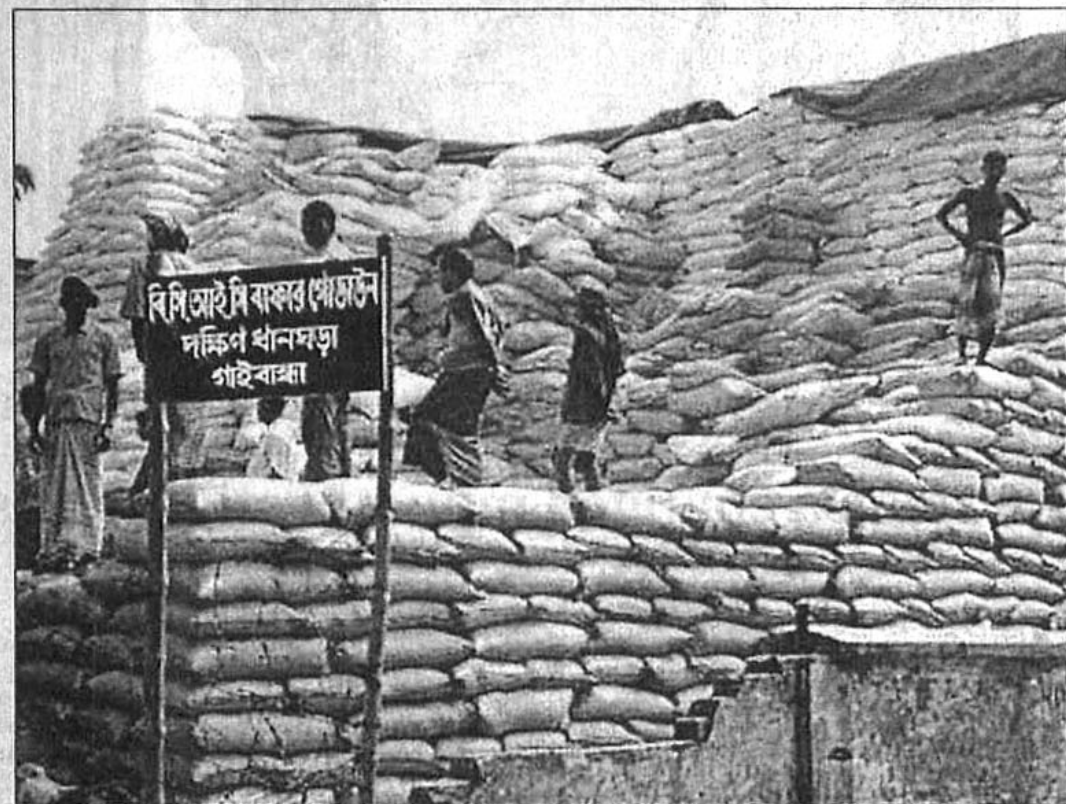


PHOTO: STAR

Urea stacked on BCIC godown campus in Gaibandha for distribution through rationing while farmers cry for the fertiliser.



Beaten for micro-credit installment

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Nilphamari

Staff of a regional NGO beat and injured a micro credit recipient for failure to repay installment.

The victim-- Ayanul Hossain of Panchapukur Para in Nilphamari municipality is being treated at Nilphamari Sadar Hospital.

The victim also alleged that the NGO staff also physically assaulted his wife, while beating him.

Day labourer Ayanul Hossain said he took a loan of Tk 10,000 from the NGO last year. He has to pay Tk 11,250 in 45 installments including interest. His weekly installment was Tk 250.

He claimed that he paid Tk 10,750 in 43 installments, leaving only two installments unpaid. On Thursday, four staff of the NGO came to his house in the morning and pressed for the two installments at a time.

As he failed, the NGO staff swooped on him and dragged him out of his house to take him to their office forcibly. Ayanul's wife Sahana Begum resisted the NGO men. The NGO men then beat the husband and the wife. Sahana Begum fled away. At that stage, the NGO workers hit Ayanul with a pointed rod, injuring him, said Ayanul.

As their screams drew neighbours, the NGO workers fled away leaving behind their bicycles, bags and register books. Local people took Ayanul Hossain to hospital. When contacted, District Manager of the NGO claimed that Ayanul first attacked his men and they hit him only to save themselves.

50 hurt as pirates loot 6 trawlers in Bay

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Patuakhali

At least 50 fishermen were injured and fish worth Tk 8 lakh was looted by pirates from six fishing trawlers on Thursday.

FB Khadiza, FB Ohab Ali, FB Rafiqul, FB Aleya, FB Sharmin and FB Fatima, came under attack by a gang of pirates numbering 14 led by Azahar, said Abdul Mannan, a fisherman and owner of a trawler.

Pirates also looted oil, cash and food from the trawlers, he said.

Five critically injured were shifted to Pathorghata Upazila Health Complex for treatment on Thursday.

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Rubel, 25, all of different villages in Pathorghata upazila.

Being informed, Rapid Action Battalion (Rab) arrested a pirate named Afzal from his house in Lalua union on Thursday. A looted trawler engine was also seized from his house.

Earlier, the same gang attacked five trawlers carrying merchandise in the river on Tuesday. They looted Tk one lakh from the trawlers.

Eight businessmen who were returning from Kalapara bazar with their goods were injured by the attack.

Later, the pirates fled towards Lalmonohar upazila in Bhola.

On contract, Kalapara police confirmed the report.

Fish fair begins in Moulvibazar

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Moulvibazar

The century old traditional 'fish fair' began at Sherpur under Moulvibazar Sadar upazila yesterday. It will continue till Saturday noon.

The fair, which begins on the last day of Bangla month of Poush, draws thousands of people of all classes and religions from far flung areas. Though it originated from a local Hindu culture of having good fishes on Poush Sangkranti (last day of Poush), it is now a tradition with people of all classes and religions in the area.

Big and attractive fishes caught from different rivers and haors (big water bodies) in greater Sylhet, Kishoreganj and Mymensingh districts are brought to the fair on the bank of Kushiya river at Sherpur.

Several thousand people thronged the fair yesterday evening to purchase fishes of their choice.



PHOTO: STAR

Patuakhali district administration distributed blankets to distressed people in the town yesterday as cold wave swept the country.

'Ensure rights of indigenous people'

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Satkhira

Speakers at a discussion at Shyamnagar yesterday said that indigenous people are yet to get their constitutional rights although they are fighting for the same for a long time.

The discussion titled 'Indigenous People's Rights to Land and Government Property and Actual Wage' was jointly organised by Action Aid Bangladesh, CPD Khulna and a local NGO Pragati Samaj Unnayan Sangstha.

Held at the Pragati Samaj Unnayan Sangstha auditorium at Shyamnagar the discussion was presided by Principal Ashke El Elahi.

Speakers demanded enactment of appropriate law to protect their rights including their culture and heritage. They wanted a separate ministry for indigenous people and special allocation for them from national budget to ensure equal rights with other citizens

of the country.

They urged the government to ensure their right to land and vote because they are still facing racial discrimination and being deprived of human rights.

Now their existence is at stake due to repression perpetrated on them for a long time, they said.

Although indigenous people contribute a lot in national development, yet they do not get their due wage, they said.

They were critical of influential people who grabbed their land taking advantage of poverty and illiteracy.

They called upon people of all walks of life in society to come forward to ensure their rights.

Among others, Sharifullah Kaisar Suman, Prof Abdullah Al Farooque, freedom fighter SM Monsur Ali, Akbar Kabir, Abdul Hakim, Humayun Kabir, Zahidul Islam and others.



PHOTO: STAR

Farmers wait in a long queue at a filling station in Jhenidah town for diesel to irrigate their Irri-Boro lands.

Killing in bomb attacks up in SW dists

156 blasts kill 24 last year

AMANUR AMAN, Kushtia

Despite anti-crime drives and increased vigilance by law enforcers, at least 156 bomb blasts took place in ten southwestern districts last year, killing 24 people and injuring around 150.

Chudanga, an outlaw infested district in the region, was top on the list with 32 blasts and eight killings.

In 2005, 103 blasts were recorded in the region, in which 13 people were killed and around 100 injured. The figure excludes 72 blasts by Islamist militants of Jamaatul Mujahideen, Bangladesh (JMB) on August 17, 2005 in the region.

According to law enforcers, at least 80 of the blasts were 'targeted attacks for killing' or 'destruction' and the rest were for creating panic and anarchy.

Outlawed parties and gang groups active in the region carried out the attacks and blasts. They also claimed responsibility for many of the incidents, law enforcers said.

Those killed and injured in the

blasts included leaders and activists of different political parties, journalists, businessmen, public representatives, law enforcers and government or non-government officials.

The latest blast took place on December 28 in Chudanga in which two Awami League leaders were critically injured. Outlaws belonging to Purbo Banglar Communist Party (ML) and Communist War immediately claimed responsibility for the attacks, the law enforcers said.

Some high officials in the region, when asked, admitted increase in activities by outlaws in the region.

According to data available from police and newspaper reports, political leaders and activists were the prime targets.

Sixteen out of the 24 killed last year were leaders and activists of different political parties, mainly Awami League and BNP. The rest included rival outlaws, businessmen and innocent people. Most of

the businessmen and innocent people were killed for not paying toll.

Of the bomb blasts last year, 27 took place in Kushtia killing two people, eight in Jessore killing seven, 13 in Khulna killing three people, 32 in Chudanga killing eight and 25 took place in Meherpur killing four people, police records said.

Besides, 19 blasts took place in Jhenidah, five in Satkhira, three in Bagerhat and two each in Narail and Magura, in which no one was killed but at least 120 people were injured.

At least 30 law enforcers including police, BDR, Ansar and members of Rapid Action Battalion (Rab) were also injured in the bomb blasts.

Janajuddho, the most notorious outlawed outfit in the region, claimed responsibility for at least 60 bomb attacks.

At least 12 outlawed parties and 20 gangs are active in the 10 southwestern districts.

The government launched at least 30 special drives including Operation Clean Heart and Operation Spider Web in last five years to contain outlaws but those could not attain any mentionable success.

Death of criminals in 'crossfire' also could not dent outlaws' activities in the region.

At least 368 'crossfire' deaths were recorded in the 10 districts since June 2004 - 158 during June-December 2004, 108 in 2005 and the rest 102 last year.

Some high officials in Khulna Police Range, when contacted, however claimed that 'all out steps' have been taken to contain outlaws and criminals.

"It is not possible to root out outlaws overnight as they are active for about 30 years", a high police official told this correspondent over cell phone yesterday.

He said outlaws are protected by a section of political leaders who use them for vote rigging and maintaining supremacy in their respective areas.

BBA Admission

The School of Business is inviting applications in prescribed form for admission into the Bachelor of Business Administration (BBA) program (071 semester) of Bangladesh Open University (BOU). Collection and submission of application forms are to be done by the applicants from 15th January, 2007 and will continue up to 15th February, 2007 (except Saturday and Sunday). Application Form can be collected from the following Regional Resource Centers (RRCs) and Coordinating Offices (COs) of BOU by paying Tk.200.00 (two hundred) only which has to be deposited to the selected Janata Bank branch (name of the branch is to be known from respective RRC). Filled-up application form, along with bank deposit slip of Tk.200.00 (two hundred), attested copies of all certificates, mark sheets and two passport size photographs, is to be submitted to the respective RRC & CO, BOU.

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Result of Admission Test will be published on: 22nd March, 2007
Areas of Admission Test: Bangla, English, General Math & General Knowledge (Guide line for admission test will be given along with the Admission Form).

Students are also advised to collect their Admit Card from the concerned RRC/CO on submission of the application. No one would be allowed to appear at the Admission Test without Admit Card.

List of selected applicants will be published in daily Newspaper (The Daily Naya Diganta, The Ittefaq, The Manab Jamin and The Daily Star) between 23rd March to 28th March, 2007.

Md. Shafiqul Alam
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Addresses of RRC's & CO's

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Chittagong RRC C.R.B. Road (to the west side of the stadium) Chittagong Phone : 031/619633	Chittagong University (Venue: Mohsin College) Chittagong City College
Mymensingh RRC Mashkanda, Mymensingh Phone : 091/52408	Bangladesh Agricultural University
Rajshahi RRC Naohata, Poba, Rajshahi Phone : 0721/800008	Accounting Department & Marketing Department of Rajshahi University Govt. Edward College, Pabna
Rangpur RRC R.K. Road (Central Bus Stand) Rangpur Phone : 0521/63593	Karmicheal College, Rangpur Hazi Danesh University of Science & Technology, Dinajpur
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Barisal RRC Rupatoli, Barisal Phone : 0431/71322	Barisal BM College
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তেজগাঁও, ঢাকা

দরপত্র সংশোধনী বিজ্ঞপ্তি

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