

Adulterated fertilisers flood market

Lax monitoring by law enforcement agencies blamed

MAMUN AL MOSTOFA

Substandard and adulterated fertilisers have flooded the local market due to lax monitoring by the law enforcement agencies.

Eighty percent of locally produced mixed fertilisers were found substandard or adulterated. This variety of fertiliser is most popular among the farmers as it contains nitrogen, phosphorus, potassium and sulphur.

Zinc sulphate were found substandard in 75 percent cases, SSP in 87 percent cases, sulphate of potash in 60 percent cases and gypsum in 43 percent cases, according to an analysis conducted by the Soil Research and Development Institute (SRDI).

SRDI, one of the six authorised laboratories in Bangladesh, has prepared an annual review of the fertilisers based on the tests conducted in 2005-06.

During the period, the laboratory collected 750 samples from the Department of Agricultural Extension (DAE), Bangladesh

Agricultural Research Council (BARC), importers, fertiliser dealers, non-governmental organisations, private enterprises and law enforcement agencies.

SRDI found that in most cases, urea fertiliser is packed and sold as zinc sulphate. The figure for percentage of zinc in zinc sulphate should be between 22 and 36, but the samples tested revealed that the percentage of zinc is only 1 to 2 percent, SRDI officials said.

Unscrupulous businessmen are also making a huge profit by selling adulterated zinc sulphate. One kilogram of urea costs only Tk 7 while the price one kg of zinc sulphate is around Tk 20, they added.

Similarly, magnesium sulphate that costs only Tk 12 per kg is crushed and then sold as boron fertiliser, which sells at Tk 40 per kg.

Farmers are forced to buy adulterated and substandard fertilisers due to acute scarcity of fertiliser during the peak season, an agriculture ministry official said.

CA's intervention sought to resolve fertiliser, seed, power crises

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Karmojibi Nari, a platform of working women, has sought direct intervention of the chief adviser (CA) of the caretaker government (CG) to resolve the problems related to fertiliser, seeds and power outage for the sake of marginal farmers and punish those responsible for the crises.

In a faxed message to Dr Fakhruddin Ahmed, Karmojibi Nari President Shirin Akhter yesterday said the farmers have been facing serious shortage of fertiliser.

She said a sack of fertiliser is being sold at Tk 500, but the actual price of it is not more than Tk 290.

Shirin alleged that the dishonest traders have been stocking fertiliser to create artificial crisis and increase the price.

About the crisis of good seeds, the faxed message said some non-government organisations (NGOs) are supplying low quality seeds to the farmers.

The message also demanded resolving of power outage, as irrigation is very important for several major crops of the country.

12 UGC officers, employees promoted

BSS, Dhaka

The 110th meeting of the Full Commission of University Grants Commission (UGC) of Bangladesh was held at the Commission Bhaban yesterday with UGC Chairman Prof M Asaduzzaman in the chair.

The meeting approved the recommendations of Selection Committee regarding the promotion and upgradation of 12 officers and employees of UGC from junior to senior level.

It also okayed the UGC Book Publication Principles-2007 and the principles for MPQ (Minimum Prescribed Qualification).

The meeting discussed the progress of implementation of the decision taken at the 109th meeting.

UGC members Prof M Mahbub Ullah, Prof Faisal Islam Farouqi, Prof M. Sultan Hussain, Prof Tareque Shamsur Rahman and Prof Ehsanul Haque attended the meeting.

Besides, Prof Khondoker Mustahidur Rahman, vice-chancellor of Jahangirnagar University, Prof M Badul Alam, vice-chancellor of Chittagong University; and Prof Dr AMM Shaifullah, vice-chancellor of Buet, attended the meeting as part-time members of the commission.

Mohammad Mufakker, secretary of UGC, and all divisional heads of the commission were also present on the occasion.

Jalil leaves for Kolkata for check-up

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Awami League General Secretary Abdul Jalil left for Kolkata yesterday morning to have a routine check-up.

During his (Jalil) stay abroad, AL Joint General Secretary Obaidul Quader will be the acting general secretary, says a party press release.

NU admission test on Feb 23

BSS, Dhaka

The first year honours admission test of BA, BSS, B.Sc, BBS and B.Ed of all the affiliated university colleges under the National University (NU) will be held from 10:00am to 11:00am on February 23 instead of February 9.

All kinds of admission related information will be available at the dean office (Phone No. 9291073-4) and National University website: www.nu.edu.bd.

MA, M.Com and M.Sc final year examinations under the National University will begin February 13.

Fresh Schedule

Besides, NU has announced fresh schedule of some of its postponed examinations.

According to the new schedule, the 3rd year examinations of 4-year term honours-2005 scheduled for January 17, will now be held on January 28. The 3-year term honours part-3 examinations-2005 schedule for January 14, will be held on January 29.

The masters 1st part examinations-2005 scheduled for January 15 will be held on January 29 and LLB final examinations-2005 scheduled for January 19 will now be held on February 2.

The schedule for other examinations will remain unchanged. These information will also be available at the National University website: www.nu.edu.bd.

Members of Rapid Action Battalion (Rab) search a vehicle at the diplomatic zone of Baridhara in the city yesterday as part of beefed up security measure.

Hold election within three months

Demand 89 DU teachers

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Some 89 teachers of Dhaka University (DU) yesterday called on the caretaker government to hold a free, fair and peaceful general election within three months after reconstituting the Election Commission, preparing a flawless voter list and depoliticising the administration.

In a joint statement, they also called for restoration of all fundamental rights of the people, including holding meetings and rallies, at the earliest.

Hailing the appointment of a new caretaker government, the teachers also called for arrest of corrupt people and removal of those appointed on political considerations from the organisations involved in the election process, such as Red Crescent Society, National University and Bangladesh Open University.

They urged the caretaker govern-

WEATHER TODAY

Dry weather likely

UNB, Dhaka

Weather is likely to remain mainly dry over the country in the next 12 hours until 6:00pm today.

Moderate to thick fog may also occur over the river basins and light to moderate fog may occur elsewhere over the country during late night until morning, Met Office said.

It said severe cold over Srimongal region and mild to moderate cold wave over Rajshahi division and the regions of Jessor, Sylhet and Tangail may continue.

Night temperature may remain nearly unchanged over the country during the period.

Highest temperature 26.8 degree Celsius was recorded yesterday at Sylhet and lowest 4.0 degree Celsius at Srimongal.

The sun sets in the capital at 5:35pm today and rises at 6:43am tomorrow.

Highest and lowest temperature and humidity recorded in some major cities and towns yesterday were:

City/Town	Temperature		Humidity in percentage	
	Max	Min	Morning	Evening
Dhaka	25.7	11.0	57	36
Chittagong	24.0	16.5	62	60
Rajshahi	24.4	7.6	85	65
Khulna	24.2	15.0	75	66
Barisal	24.4	14.8	85	70
Sylhet	26.8	9.5	59	42
Cox's Bazar	22.0	17.4	68	67



PHOTO: STAR
BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia presides over an emergency meeting of the 4-party alliance at her Hawa Bhaban office in the city yesterday.

Listed criminal held, freed on bail in Khulna

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Khulna

A Khulna court yesterday released a listed criminal, shown arrested under section 54, on bail.

Joint forces arrested listed criminal Abdul Malek on Tuesday midnight from his residence at TB Cross Road under Khulna Sadar Police Station.

But he was released on bail from court at noon yesterday as he was shown arrested under section 54 of CrPC.

Malek was arrested by joint forces of army and police during special operation. He is a listed criminal and wanted in several criminal cases by different police stations in Khulna. Besides, he possessed illegal arms.

Sub-Inspector Shah Alam produced Malek before the Chief Metropolitan Magistrate's Court yesterday with a forwarding letter endorsed by OC of Khulna Police Station.

Shah Alam, who filed the general diary, appealed to the Chief Metropolitan Magistrate to put the criminal in jail custody until completion of investigation.

Malek hails from Kalabogi union under outlaw infested Dakop upazila of Khulna.

Father Gervas new Bishop of Rajshahi

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

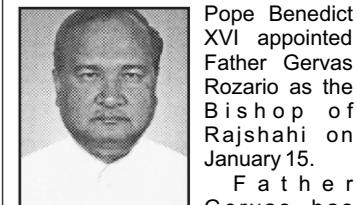


Photo: Benedict XVI appointed Father Gervas Rozario as the Bishop of Rajshahi on January 15. Father Gervas has been acting as Rajshahi diocesan administrator since Paulinus Costa, then Bishop of Rajshahi, took over as the Archbishop of Dhaka on July 9, 2005, says a press release.

Father Gervas Rozario was born at Stiengaccha in Rajshahi on August 15 in 1951. He completed studies in philosophy and theology at the national major seminary in Dhaka. He was ordained a priest on December 31, 1980 first for the diocese of Dinajpur and later transferred to the diocese of Rajshahi.

Archbishop Paulinus Costa of Dhaka, Bishop Patrick D Rozario of Chittagong, Bishop Moses Costa of Dinajpur, Bishop Bijoy D'Cruze of Khulna, Bishop Ponon Paul Kubi of Mymensingh and Auxiliary Bishop of Dhaka Theotonius Gomes congratulated the new Bishop of Rajshahi.

Obituary

Dr AKM Amjad Hossain, 69, former Director of Bangladesh Agricultural Research Institute (BARI), passed away at his house at Uttara in the city on January 14, says a press release.

He was buried at Azimpur graveyard on the following day.

Sher-e-Bangla Agricultural University Alumni Association has arranged a condolence meeting in memory of late Dr Amjad at Farmgate BARC Conference Room today at 4:00pm.

RU seat rent enhanced

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Resident students plan agitation against decision

RU CORRESPONDENT

Rajshahi University authorities increased seat rent in the 16 residential halls to be effective from January this year.

Earlier the attempt was foiled through agitation of students.

According to the sources, the new seat rent has been fixed at Tk 120 per month instead of Tk 55.

Earlier, RU Registrar Professor Abdus Salam issued a letter to all hall provosts in this regard and asked to make the new rules effective from January 2007, according to the campus sources.

The letter said the 438th meeting of the university finance committee, held last year, recommended imposing Tk 120 from a student. As per meeting decision, Tk 20 has been fixed for furniture, Tk 60 as establishment fees and Tk 40 for seat rent.

Meanwhile, students residing in dormitories are going to launch greater movement against the authorities demanding withdrawal of the additional seat rents.

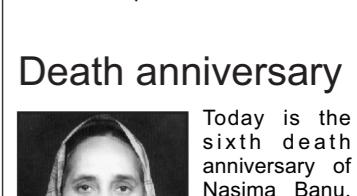
Agitating political student leaders said they would begin movement against rise of seat rents after the state of emergency is over.

Sources in the administration said the new fee was imposed during the state of emergency so that the authorities can avoid student's demonstration on the campus.

Bangladesh Chhatra League (BCL), Samajtantrik Chhatra Front and Progressive Student Alliance of RU units strongly protested the decision of increasing hall fees.

Nasima, eldest daughter of late Nizamuddin Ahmed Chowdhury, was born in Kartikpur, Faridpur on July 28 in 1938.

On the occasion, Qurankhuri and doa mahfil will be held at 14 East Testuri Bazar in the city today.



Today is the sixth death anniversary of Nasima Banu, wife of late Dr Saifuddin Ahmed Chowdhury, says a press release.