

Adulterated fertilisers flood market

Lax monitoring by law enforcement agencies blamed

MAMUN AL MOSTOFA

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.

In 2004-05, SRDI examined 800 samples of various types of fertiliser collected from different markets across the country and found proof of adulteration in 56 percent of cases.

According to experts, adulteration of fertiliser is going on unabated because the persons involved are very influential and it is difficult to take action against them.

If the Fertiliser Control Act 2006 could be enforced properly, such practice of adulteration would have declined, they observed.

According to official statistics, there are 70 fertiliser factories in the country. but the experts suspect that there might have been more than 100 'fake' fertiliser factories across the country and most of them are located in south-western districts of Jessore and Jhenaidah.

Mainul Ahsan, principal scientific officer at the SRDI, said the use of adulterated and substandard fertilisers leads to lower yield of crop and decline in fertility status and soil quality.

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 Faisul Islam Farouki, 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 Badiul Alam, vice-chancellor of Chittagong University; and Prof Dr AMM Shaifulah, 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.



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

8 killed in road accidents

STAR REPORT

At least eight people were killed and eight others injured in separate road accidents in Chittagong, Manikganj, Bogra and Kishoreganj yesterday.

Our STAFF CORRESPONDENT from Chittagong adds: Two people were killed in a road accident yesterday in front of Nasirabad Govt Boys School on the CDA Avenue.

The victims were identified as Shilpi Rani Barua, 35, wife of Tapash Kumar Barua of Raozan, and her niece Sampti Chowdhury alias Rocky, 15, daughter of Supriya Chowdhury of Rangamati, police said.

Rocky was a student of class X of Rangamati Govt Girls High School while Shilpi was a housewife and her husband Tapash is the chief

Antique idol worth Tk 15cr found

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Munshiganj

Workers found an antique idol of lord Vishnu worth about Tk 15 crore while digging up a land at South Betka in Munshiganj yesterday.

The 51-inch idol made of black stone weighs about 150 kilograms.

The idol was found when the workers were digging up the land of Mohammad Ali bepari at noon.

As the news spread, thousands of people rushed to the scene to have a glimpse of the idol.

Later, the idol was handed over to Tongibari police.

Army to help ease traffic jam in Ctg

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

Alongside the ongoing drive against the terrorists, the army has taken an initiative to help streamline traffic movement and ease congestion in the port city.

They held a coordination meeting with different authorities concerned for traffic management at Chittagong Cantonment yesterday.

In the meeting, the army asked the authorities concerned to identify different impediments to smooth vehicular movement and allow them to help bring an order in the traffic system.

Representatives from traffic department of Chittagong Metropolitan Police (CMP), Bangladesh Road Transport Authority (BRTA), Chittagong Development Authority (CDA), Chittagong City Corporation (CCC), Chittagong Port Authority (CPA) and other related organisations participated in the meeting where high officials of Bangladesh Army were also present, said the sources.

The meeting laid emphasis on immediate improvement of traffic signal system including repair of signal lights, erection of signal posts and road marking.

It also decided on launching drives against vehicles moving without legal documents and illegal parking of public transports at different points of the city streets.

The meeting underscored the need for improving the footpaths through eviction of illegal occupants.

The participants at the meeting stressed on going tough against billboard generators set up on the footpaths posing seri-

Our Correspondent from Kishoreganj adds: A man was killed and another injured critically in a road accident on Bhairab-Brahmanbaria highway at Bhairab bridge area in the district yesterday.

The dead was identified as Omed Ali, 30, and the injured Dhon Mia of Bashgari village of Bhairab upazila.

The accident occurred when a Dhaka-bound bus hit a rickshaw coming from opposite direction, leaving rickshawpuller Omed Ali dead on the spot and passenger Dhon Mia injured critically, police and locals said.

Police seized the bus and arrested its driver Jafar Ali.

Critically injured Dhon Mia was admitted to Bhairab Upazila Health Complex, hospital sources said.

Killing of nurse condemned

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Bangladesh Mahila Parishad yesterday condemned the killing of a nurse of a hospital in the city and demanded punishment to the criminals.

They also demanded security of women in the workplaces and protection of their human rights, says a press release.

It is reported in the media that Reshma, 22, a nurse of City Hospital, was allegedly beaten to death.

It is further reported, according to the press release, that she was taken to the Dhaka Medical College and Hospital (DMCH) on Monday night in a critical condition where the doctors declared her dead. Her body bears marks of bruise.

Mahila Parishad demanded steps to arrest the criminals and their punishment after proper investigation.

It also urged all to create a social movement on repression against women.

RU seat rent enhanced

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.

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

Pope 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 Stiangaccha 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 Ponen 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.

Md Abdur Rahman Siddiqi

January 13 at the age of 60, says a press release.

Abdur Rahman, father of Dhaka University economics department teacher Md Shahadat Hossain Siddiqi, hailed from Narayanpur village in Atpara, Netrakona.

He left behind his wife, seven sons, one daughter and a host of relatives to mourn his death.

Quikhwani and milad mahfil will be held at Narayanpur tomorrow. Relatives and well-wishers are requested to attend the programmes and pray for the salvation of the departed soul.

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

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

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



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.

DU urged not to appoint teachers on political consideration

DU CORRESPONDENT

Progotishil Chhatra Jote (PCJ), an umbrella of left wing student organisations, yesterday demanded that authorities should stop appointment of teachers at Arabic Department of Dhaka University (DU) on political consideration, says a press release.

PCJ leaders articulated their demand to Vice Chancellor Prof SMA Faiz, as they met him yesterday noon at his office.

Mentioning reports on authorities' alleged move to appoint three teachers at Arabic Department on political consideration, they urged the VC to appoint best-qualified candidates as teachers without considering candidates' political background.

They also urged Prof Faiz to reduce extra price of foods at TSC Cafeteria and Science Cafeteria and fixed it at Tk 18 considering students' affordability.

Bangladesh Chhatra Union (BCU) President Samsul Alam Sazzan, Samajtantrik Chhatra Front President Khalequzzaman Lipon, Biplobi Chhatra Maitree President Mahfuzur Rahman, and Bangladesh Chhatra Federation General Secretary Julhasnain Babu were present.

CA, advisers hailed

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Different social and professional organisations congratulated the chief adviser (CA) to the caretaker government (CG) and other advisers for taking the charge of CG in the crucial moment of the country.

Bangladesh Film Producers Distributors Association in a statement yesterday expressed hope that CA and his advisory council will be able to hold a free and fair election.

The association urged the CG to take necessary steps to improve the overall law and order situation and economy of the country.

Bangladesh Sangbadpatra Parishad (BSP) in a separate statement hailed the president and the CA to assign BSP President and President of Editors Board of Daily Ittefaq and New Nation Barnister Moinul Hossain as adviser to the CA.

Bangladesh Society of Medical Microbiologists greeted its founding life member Major Gen (Retd) Dr ASM Motiur Rahman for being a member of CA advisory council.

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 Jessore, 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
Dhaka	25.7	11.0
Chittagong	24.0	16.5
Rajshahi	24.4	7.6
Khulna	24.2	15.0
Barisal	24.4	14.8
Sylhet	26.8	9.5
Cox's Bazar	22.0	17.4