

Rationing hardly improves urea crisis in Gaibandha

People from Rangpur, Kurigram also crowd dealers' shops

OUR CORRESPONDENT,
Gaibandha

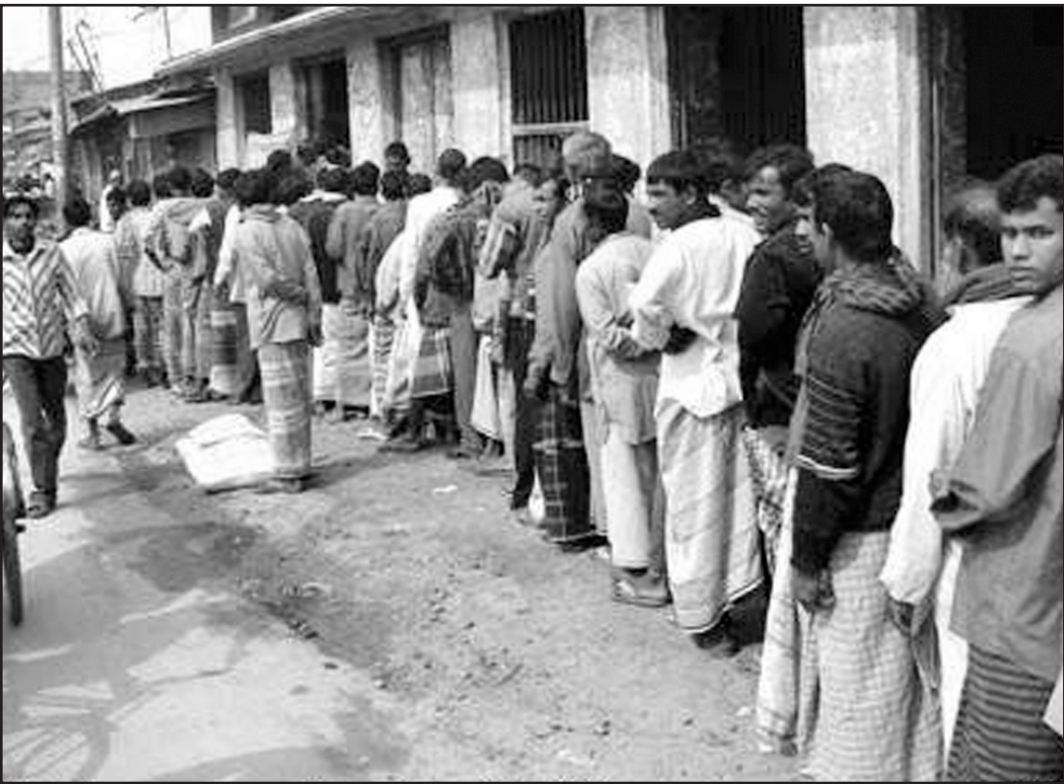
Farmers in remote areas of Gaibandha and adjoining districts are facing crisis of urea while rationing of the fertiliser among dealers could make little impact on improving the situation during the peak Irri-Boro cultivation season.

According to a decision of Gaibandha district fertiliser monitoring cell, each dealer gets up to 16 tonnes of urea every alternate day.

The decision was taken to stop black marketing and illegal dispatch of fertiliser from one district to the other and to boarder areas, sources in the monitoring cell said yesterday.

They said there are 100 dealers in Gaibandha and each of them will get 133 tons of urea for February.

But at farmers level, this correspondent saw a different picture. Every day farmers in large numbers from remote areas in Gaibandha and adjoining districts are seen crowding dealer's shop in the district headquarters for urea. Many of them return disappointed



Farmers in a long queue at a fertiliser dealer's shop at Godown Road in Gaibandha town yesterday.

PHOTO: STAR

after a long wait in queue, farmers alleged.

"We don't know why the rush of farmer is increasing day by day. I can not satisfy all of them with the stock", said a dealer at Station Road in Gaibandha town yesterday.

Standing in the long queue, farmer Jasimudding from Gideri village in Gaibandha Sadar upazila said, I need three bags of urea. I am to spend three days as the dealer gives only one bag per head each time".

Investigation by this correspondent in last three days revealed that a large number of people from Mithapur in Rangpur district and from certain areas in Kurigram thronged dealers' shops in Gaibandha Sadar for urea.

Some sources claimed that middlemen and a section of retailers have engaged people who stand in queues posing as farmers to collect fertiliser. They sell the lifted urea bags to deficit areas at high prices.

Asked about this, officials said it is difficult to ascertain in queues who is a farmer and who is not. But they admitted that all these are due to short supply in remote areas.

Gaibandha Sader Upazila Nirbahi Officer (UNO) however said he is looking after fair distribution of urea. He said the rationing

system has been introduced as per requirement in different areas and dispatch of consignments allotted for one area to another area is not allowed.

Meanwhile, a mobile team during a drive on February 11 seized 105 bags of urea from Gaibandha railway station area while the consignment was being sent to another area illegally. The team also recovered 15 bags from Sunderganj bus stand on February 13.

Additional police have been deployed in different points in the town including railway station area and bus stands, who are checking urea-loaded trucks, sources said.

"We have a sufficient stock of urea to meet the demand for February in the district (Gaibandha)", said Abdul Matin, member secretary of the monitoring cell.

The administration has set up a control room to monitor urea supply. According to sources there, requirement of urea in Gaibandha for February is 13,300 tonnes. Till yesterday, 7,888 tonnes were distributed among dealers. More 7,431 tonnes are there in the stock, they said.

The fertiliser is stockpiled under the sky as warehouses with a totals capacity of 2,000 tonnes are packed, they said.

100MT inedible maize dumped under soil

OUR CORRESPONDENT, *Satkhira*

Bhomra Customs authorities yesterday destroyed 100 metric tonnes of inedible maize worth Tk 10 lakh by digging earth near the land port in Sadar upazila.

According to Bhomra Customs sources, a trader in Jessore imported the maize from India through on December 6, 2005. Messrs Gazi Enterprise, a clearing and forwarding (C&F) agent released the maize, the sources said.

On suspicion, the Customs officials sent some maize to Bangladesh Standards and Testing Institute (BSTI) in Dhaka to determine the quality of the maize, they said. BSTI confirmed the maize to be inedible and the entire lot was destroyed.

On contact, Benapole Customs Office joint commissioner Mustafa Ali confirmed the incident.

AL activist killed in Jhenidah

A CORRESPONDENT, *Jhenidah*

An Awami League (AL) activist was killed by criminals in Harinakundo upazila on Tuesday night, police sources said.

The dead is Hashem Ali, 35, son of Javed Ali Joarder of Malipara village in Viana union, police said. He was also a Ansar-VDP commander, they said.

Police said, a gang of criminals waylaid Hashem while he was returning from a mosque after offering his prayers at Malipara at about 8-00pm. They chopped him with sharp weapons resulting in serious injuries. Immediately after the incident, he was rushed to Harinakundo hospital where he succumbed to his injuries at around 9-00 pm.

On contact, Harina Kundo Police Station officer-in-charge (OC) Golam Sarwar said police detained four people for interrogation. Police are yet to find out the clue of the murder.

BSF stops road work near Chatlapur land port

OUR CORRESPONDENT,
Moulvibazar

Reconstruction of part of a road near the Chatlapur land port in Moulvibazar is stopped for a week due to obstruction by Indian Border Security Force (BSF).

BSF stopped the work on the plea that the road is within 150 yards of the no mans land, saying it is illegal as per border law.

At a flag meeting on Tuesday, BSF told Bangladesh Rifles (BDR) that a decision would be taken as per directive of higher authorities.

BDR sources said they requested BSF for another flag meeting to resolve the issue but are yet to get any response.

This correspondent during a visit to the area yesterday saw work on about 800 yards of the road near the Chatlapur land port is stopped.

Reconstruction of the road is part of a Tk 3.25 crore project to develop infrastructure facilities at the land port and reconstruct the six kilometre road from Shomshernagar. A customs office and a truck stand will also be built at the land port under the project.

Work on rest of the road from Shomshemagar is however going on. A Dhaka-based construction firm is

doing the work under the Roads and Highway Department (RHD).

Maj Shahed, second-in-command of BDR in Srimongal, said BSF has no reason to obstruct the road work because it leads to the border point. Customs offices of both Bangladesh and India are within 150 yards of the no mans land, which is necessary to facilitate border trade, he said.

Roads and Highways officials said the project is being implemented with funds from the World Bank and the Asian Development Bank. If the work is not completed on schedule, the rest of the fund may be withdrawn, they said.

Some exporters and importers at the land port said the immediate past government approved the project after a demand for long. Bilateral trade between Bangladesh and India will increase manifold if the road is repaired and infrastructure facilities built at the land port, they said.

Aminul Islam, RHD executive engineer in Moulvibazar, said the problem created by BSF should be solved through a flag meeting between BDR and BSF. He also urged the district administration to take steps to resolve the problem at the earliest so that the project can be implemented on schedule.



PHOTO: STAR

The office of Pabna Bus Owners Association, built illegally on government land near bus stand in the town, being demolished during an eviction drive yesterday.

6.5x2

5X2

2x3

6x3

10x4