

BOGRA ZIAUR RAHMAN HOSPITAL-III

Faulty oxygen projects for patients cause huge loss

HASIBUR RAHMAN BILU, Bogra

Plans in implementing two projects to supply oxygen to patients at Shaheed Ziaur Rahman Medical College Hospital in Bogra has caused huge losses to the government.

The work of Tk 1.16 crore Central Medical Gas System Project was completed in December last year as the Tk 2.87 crore Medical Gas System Project was abandoned after about seven months of its opening in 2006, sources at Public Works Department (PWD) in Bogra said.

"The medical gas system' project aimed at ensuring oxygen supply through

pipes for patients at hospital wards but it was abandoned due to high expenses and system loss of gas. At least Tk 60,000 has been saved every month by using cylinder oxygen instead of the medical gas system," said Dr AYM Fazley Rashid, deputy director of the hospital.

Besides, the government has incurred a loss of over Tk 1 crore as the oxygen supply project at Shaheed Ziaur Rahman Medical College Hospital was completed without arrangement for the intensive care unit (ICU), sources said.

The hospital authorities have been using cylinders for oxygen supply since the first project was suspended due to technical problems.

"The work of the fresh project of 'central medical gas system' was completed in December last year and but it is yet to be opened mainly due to lack of gas supply. To start the system, we need Tk 86.60 lakh more," said Md Joydul Abedin, executive engineer of PWD in Bogra.

Several officials of the hospital, however, expressed fear that the new project may also face the fate of the earlier one due to high costs and in that case the hospital will again return to cylinder gas supply system.

Hospital Director Md Shafiqul Islam said they are likely to open the ICU in a new building soon.

Potato growers worried for lack of storage facility

Hoarders-owners 'nexus' alleged

QUAMRUL ISLAM RUBAIYAT, Thakurgaon

A large number of small and marginal potato growers in Thakurgaon and Panchagarh districts are worried before harvesting the produce as they failed to book space for potato preservation in the local cold storages.

Farmers have blamed 'nexus' between cold storage authorities and a section of middlemen and hoarders for the situation while storage owners claimed that small and marginal farmers were given priority regarding distribution of advance slips for potato preservation.

Storage owners said the space crisis has appeared due to potato cultivation on larger areas of land.

When harvest of potato will start in full swing in the first week of March, growers may have to sell the crop to hoarders at a nominal price due to unavailability of preservation facilities, they said, adding that production will be hampered in the next season if they fail to preserve a portion of their produce.

Seven cold storages in Thakurgaon have capacity to preserve 39,784 tonnes of potato only while two more cold storages with about 7,000 tonne capacity will be set up soon in the district. However, there is no cold storage in Panchagarh.

The potato season begins in November and ends between April and May. The item needs to be stored between April-May and November.

Cold storages in Thakurgaon charge Tk 250 for keeping a 84 kg sack of potato while the preservation cost is between Tk 160 to Tk 180 in adjacent districts, local farmers said.

About 25,125 hectares of land have been brought under potato cultivation this season against the target of 20,110 hectares in Thakurgaon while production target has been fixed at 3,32,000 tonnes, according to the officials

of Department of Agriculture Extension (DAE).

In Panchagarh, potato has been cultivated on about 9,700 hectares of land against the target of 7,208 hectares this season while production target is 1,18,932 tonnes.

This year's potato production target is much higher than the previous years but storage facility in these districts is very inadequate, said DAE officials.

"I cultivated potato on three bighas of land at Sakoa village in Boda upazila. I have failed to get potato reservation slip at this cold storage as authorities told me that they have already completed slip distribution," farmer Shamsuzzoha told this correspondent in front of Giant Cold Storage in Thakurgaon Sadar upazila.

"If I cannot preserve seed potato in cold storage, I will not cultivate potato next season as buying seeds from companies or traders will cost me a lot," he said.

Many farmers of the region have echoed the same.

It will be hard to buy seed potato from traders or seed companies next season as a 84kg sack of potato seeds will cost between Tk 4000 and 5000, said another farmer.

Delwar Hossain, managing director of Shahi Cold Storage, said, "We distributed slips for preserving 15,000 sacks of potatoes to traders while we have capacity for 1,20,000 sacks. Marginal and small farmers were given priorities."

Nurul Huda Swapan, business development manager of Ezab Group, told this correspondent over cell phone that a record 83 lakh tonnes of potato was produced in the country in 2008 while the production may reach 90 lakh tonnes this season.

If the farmers fail to preserve seed potatoes, cultivation will definitely be hampered next season, said Dalil Uddin, deputy director of Thakurgaon DAE.

College student stabbed by muggers dies

STAR NATIONAL DESK

Muggers have stabbed to death a college student in Bogra and took away Tk five lakh from a rice trader in Narayanganj.

Our Staff Correspondent in Bogra reports: A college student who was critically stabbed by criminals in Seujari area in the town on Tuesday evening died at Ziaur Rahman Medical College and Hospital yesterday morning. The muggers also stabbed Zulfikar Ali, 22, and Zakirul Islam, 24, who are now under treatment at the same hospital. All the three are students of Bogra Azizul Haque College.

Sub-inspector (SI) Khairul Bashar at Sadar police station said, Mehedi Hasan, 23, succumbed to his injuries at around 7-45. No case was lodged till filing this report at 4:30 pm yesterday.

In Narayanganj, muggers snatched Tk five lakh from a rice trader in broad daylight near Narayanganj Club on Tuesday. At around 10:30 in the morning, a gang intercepted the trader at Bangabandhu Road and took away the amount at gun point.

Trader Ramzan Ali after drawing the money from nearby Grindlays Bank was going to his business firm at Nitaiganj.



A large amount of fertiliser is getting damaged in foggy weather as it is kept under the open sky on the premises of the buffer stock in Gaibandha town due to lack of accommodation in the storage.

Criminals attack magistrate's house, give death threat

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Netrakona

Armed criminals on Tuesday night stormed into the official residence of Durgapur judicial magistrate Abdur Rahman and gave him death threat.

Claiming themselves activists of the ruling party, they warned that the magistrate will face the dire consequence within next few days for recording a criminal case in his court against the officer-in-charge (OC) of Durgapur police station, court sources said.

Sources said, advocate Abdur Razzak, joint convener of Durgapur upazila BNP on Monday last filed a criminal case with Durgapur Judicial Magistrate's Court against OC Abdul Karim.

Contacted, judicial magistrate Abdur Rahman said he has already informed the matter to the Netrakona

District and Sessions Judge, superintendent of police and law ministry. A General Dairy (GD) has also been filed with Durgapur police station in this regard.

OC Abdul Karim, however, said Durgapur BCL brought out a procession in Durgapur municipal area on the day but the processionists did not enter or attack any residence.

Contacted, superintendent of police (SP) Sheikh Nazmul Alam told this correspondent that the judicial magistrate informed him about the matter over mobile phone. The allegations are being looked into, he said.

Former lawmaker Jalaluddin Talukder, president of Durgapur upazila Awami League said, the criminals who entered the house of the magistrate are outsiders and not the activists of his party.

SNAPS AND SNIPPETS

Saraswati idol damaged

UNB, Pirojpur

Criminals yesterday damaged the idol of 'goddess Saraswati' at Sheikh Hasina Academy in Sadar upazila. Academy president Ruhul Amin Nobin told the news agency that a gang entered the puja mandop inside the academy in the early hours and vandalised the mandop erected for Saraswati puja. Since its inception in 1985, the Hindu community here has been observing Saraswati puja at the academy puja mandop every year.

Two abductors get life

BSS, Rangpur

The Women and Children Repression Prevention Special Tribunal Court of Panchagarh on Tuesday sentenced two people to life term rigorous imprisonment (RI) for abducting an NGO worker. District and Sessions Judge of Panchagarh M Abdus Salek delivered the judgement acquitting two others as the charges brought against them could not be proved. According to the prosecution, accused Bashirul Islam and Abdus Sattar along with their associates abducted NGO worker Parboti Rani Singh of BRAC from Nulpukuri point and took her to Mirgarh area in Atoari upazila of Panchagarh on June 22 in 2009. Sensing the matter, local people rescued Parboti Rani and caught Bashirul Islam and Abdus Sattar and handed them over to the local union parishad chairman. Later, Atoari police arrested the two abductors.



Delegates visit a stall at the pitha utsab (festival of home-made cakes) arranged by students of Haji Abul Hossain Institute in Tangail at Shaheed Smriti Poura Udyan in the town yesterday.

SUSTTA polls result

UNB, Sylhet

Pro-Awami League (AL) and left leaning panel has swept the election to Shahjalal University of Science and Technology Teachers' Association (SUSTTA). AL backed panel won all top posts including the posts of president, general secretary and treasurer. Out of six executive members posts, the panel also secured five posts while rival pro-BNP-Jamaat panel got only one post. Prof Anwarul Islam Dipu, Prof Mohammad Faruq Uddin and Prof Dr Niaz Ahmed were elected president, general secretary and treasurer respectively. Dr Maksudur Rahman Khan and Dr M Kamruzzaman Chowdhury were elected vice president and joint secretary.

Woman killed, one held

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Sathkha

An old woman was killed as a man hit on her head with a piece of brick at village Dhulihar in Sadar upazila on Monday evening. Victim Rizia Begum, 65, was wife of Anwar Hossain of the village. Police arrested Mofazzel Hossain of village Brahmmarajpur in Sadar upazila in connection with the murder. Quoting locals police said, Rizia's son Nurul Islam fell in love with Hajera Begum, wife of Mofazzel of village Brahmmarajpur. Hajera came to Nurul Islam's house to see him about three months ago and since then she did not return. Mofazzel went to local headmen to get back his wife but in vain. On January 18 evening, he went to Nurul's house in search of his wife and locked in a quarrel with Rizia. At one stage he hit the old woman with a brick resulting in her instant death.

Foundation of jute mills

PRESS RELEASE

Foundation of a new jute mills was laid in Faridpur on Friday. Al-Hajj Md Lokman Hossain, managing director of Panna Group opened the construction base of the group's sister concern "Altu Khan Jute Mills Ltd". Syed Mahmud Jubair, chief operating officer of Panna Group, GM (marketing) of Panna Distribution Ltd, GM (renewable energy) of Panna Powertech Ltd., DGM of Panna Plastic Ltd and GM (finance) and financial consultant of Panna Group were present.



Chandramoni Sangha, an association of Hindu students, organises Swaraswati Puja at Sagarpara in Rajshahi city as the festival welcoming the Hindu goddess of wisdom was celebrated throughout the country yesterday.

Poverty forces fishermen to catch jatka defying ban

UNB, Barisal

Poverty and unemployment are pushing poor fishermen in the southern coastal districts to catch 'jatka' (hilsa fry) defying government ban.

Fisheries department sources said hilsa production could be increased by around 2 lakh metric tonnes worth about several hundred crore taka in the country every year if only 10-20 per cent of 'jatka' could be saved from catching.

The government imposed ban on catching 'jatka' for seven months from November 1 to May 31 to increase hilsa production.

Visiting different hilsa fishing areas, it was found that hundreds of poor fishermen are catching hilsa fry with banned current nets in the Kirtonkhola, Meghna, Arialkha, Paira, Ramnabad, Biskhali,

Andharmanik, Tetulia, Kacha, Baleswar and Agunmukha rivers.

Moslem, who depends only on fishing to feed his six-member family, was found catching 'jatka' despite the prohibition on the Kirtonkhola River on Friday.

Protesting the ban on catching 'jatka' he said, "We have to starve if we cannot catch fish as we borrow money from the village moneylenders on condition of giving them a large portion of the fish we catch."

If we cannot get fair price of the hilsa, we have to face difficulties in repaying the loan money, he said.

Moslem said, a magistrate seized his fishing net and boat, belonged to his moneylender, and also fined him Tk 500 during a raid on the river last year.

He had to take Tk 10,000 loan to pay all the penalties. "Now I am repaying that

loan with high rate of interest."

In this situation, the plight of the fishermen in Barisal division have been deepening following the ban on fishing of hilsa fry.

Rapid Action Battalion (RAB), Coastguards and the department of fisheries with the help of local administration have been carrying out raids everyday in the water bodies seizing 'jatka' and current nets and destroying or burning those to enforce the ban.

Leaders of local fishermen organisation regretted that government allotment for fishermen as compensation for not catching 'jatka' is quite insignificant.

They said without creating alternative employment opportunities, the ban on catching jatka will not be effective.

JMB-RELATED CASE

Warrants for arrest of 4 cop witnesses for skipping court

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Dinajpur

A Dinajpur court on Tuesday issued arrest warrants against five people, including four police officials, as they were absent in the court as witnesses to a case for bomb explosion at a JMB-rented house at Chhotogurgola in the district town on February 13, 2003.

Four of the five witnesses are Police Inspector Md Jamiruddin, ASP Narayan Chandra Hore, retired ASP Syed Anwar Hossain, and retired ASP Amulla Chandra Das. The name of another witness could not be known.

The Special Judge's Court fixed next date for final argument in the case on February 8, court sources said.

Immediately after the

bomb blast, police arrested three JMB members at the house and seized leaflets and bomb making materials from there.

They are JMB regional commander Md Anwar Shahadat alias Obaidullah, 32, JMB cadres Saidur Rahman, 30, of Haldibari village under Parbatipur upazila of Dinajpur, and Hafez Habibul Rahman, 28, of Bhobainagar under Dinajpur Sadar upzila. They were produced in the court amid tight security.

After the incident, the then officer-in-charge (OC) of Dinajpur Sadar Police Station Ohiduzzaman filed two separate cases--one under Arms Act and the other under Explosives Substances--against the JMB men.

Prayer for remand of top Ahle Hadith man turned down

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Rajshahi

A Rajshahi court on Tuesday rejected prayer for ten days' remand for Jamaat-e Ahle Hadith Secretary General Rezaul Karim in a JMB torture victim's case.

The Court of Senior Judicial Magistrate Morium-un Nesa, however, allowed police to interrogate him at the jail gate. Rezaul Karim, who was arrested two months ago by the Detective Branch of Rajshahi Metropolitan Police on charge of giving death threat to Attorney General Mahubey Alam, was implicated in the case filed by Amir Ali, a JMB victim of Bagmara on Monday.

During hearing on remand prayer, police said they need to interrogate Karim as he was

involved with JMB politics in 2004. Karim's lawyer Abu Bakar argued that the (Karim) was not among the 38 accused mentioned in the case filed by JMB torture victim Amir Ali of Bagmara.

He said Karim is a victim of a conspiracy as he was shown arrested in a JMB victim's case despite he had a role against the JMB's militant activities.

The lawyer told the court that a section of people and police in the district are making money by accusing a huge number of people in cases filed by JMB torture victims and releasing some of the accused through affidavits.

According to Amir Ali's case, armed JMB cadres abducted him on April 7, 2004 and extorted Tk 35,000 from him. Ali also stated that he was tortured by JMB operatives.