

Ten lakh tonnes of potatoes may remain unsold

BSS, Dhaka

Growers and traders are apprehending that about ten lakh tonnes of stored potatoes may remain unsold this year in the country due to over production and less consumption ratio.

The loss from potato dealings could only be minimised by taking up extensive campaign drive for consumption, reactivating the potato flex industries and using the product as relief materials among the victims of the calamity.

At present 313 cold storages across the country have about 17 lakh tonnes of potatoes in stock, and according to the normal consumption ratio, more or less seven lakh tonnes could be sold before the month of November, the cold storage association sources said.

They said the country achieved a bumper production of about one crore tonnes of the much used vegetables due to agriculture friendly policy of the present government, which reduced prices of seeds, fertilisers and pesticides. The weather of the Rabi season also helped to increase the production.

The reasons also increased production of other vegetables that declined pressure on potatoes, and as a result the price of the potato remained stable through out the year, they added.

Commerce Minister Faruk Khan yesterday told the news agency that the government had taken initiatives to export potatoes immediately after harvesting the yield and increased cash incentives for the exporters from 10 to 20 percent.

Bangladesh exports potatoes to Singapore, Malaysia, Thailand, Sri Lanka, and Indonesia and 20 thousand tonnes have been sent to those countries so far this year, he said.

M Belayet Hossain, managing director of Global Agro Resources, a potato exporting company, said there is a good demand of the Bangladesh potato in many countries.

We could not make proper arrangements for exporting it in the past due to non-cooperation of the previous administrations but the present government has showed their sincerity by increasing cash incentives and extending other helps," he added.

The best time for exporting potatoes is February to May as the foreign buyers are keener to import fresh items than those are of stored, he said adding still that five to seven companies are sending potatoes abroad but quantities are very small.

Regarding the less interest of the foreign buyers about stored potatoes, A R Malik, the leading private sector potato seed importer and expert, said there are some deformations happen in the potato tubers after a certain period of its harvest. These deformations decline the food value of the products that the foreign buyers make disinterested to import it, he added.

Major (ret'd) Jashim Uddin, President of Bangladesh Cold Storage Association, said a very poor quantity of potatoes was being released from the stores everyday which made the stakeholders frustrated. At the same period in last year, the storages had released at least 50 percent of stored potatoes, but this year it is not more than 15 percent, he said.

Anwar Hossain, a grower and stocker in Munshiganj district, expressed his apprehension as saying "We will be in trouble with the stocked potatoes after the month of November if the present consumption ratio continues as fresh vegetables including potatoes will capture the markets then,".

According to the stakeholders, the problem could be solved, at least a little bit.



Law Minister Shafique Ahmed addresses the inaugural session of a 25-day long training course for the newly appointed assistant judges and judicial magistrates at the Judicial Administration Training Institute (JATI) in the city yesterday.

PHOTO: FOCUS BANGLA

Malaysian-Indian admits links with serial killers

IANS, Kuala Lumpur

In a new twist to the probe into a series of killings -- including of four ethnic Indians here, a Malaysian Indian businessman, whose wife was murdered last year, has admitted to having business ties with the two prime suspects.

P. Balasandram, a motor workshop owner from Kuala Langat, Selangor state, said he is still being haunted by his 'grave mistake' of having links with the lawyer brothers arrested for the killing of a businesswoman and three others last month.

Balasandram's wife T. Selvi was slashed to death by two men in front of their Banting home in April last year. But the man said he did not pursue his wife's killers because he feared for his own and his sons' safety.

Balasandram said his biggest mistake was being part of a negotiation on lending money to the lawyer brothers now facing probe into the murder of cosmetic tycoon Sosilawati Lawiya. Sosilawati, 47, and her three male companions were allegedly beaten and murdered last month.

"Not only did I lose money in the venture but my wife's life became the ultimate sacrifice," Balasandram told The Star newspaper.

80,000 (\$27,777) lent to a woman who was 'protected' by the lawyer brothers. "The woman who borrowed the RM80,000 was there. They threatened to harm my family if I continued to pressure them for my money," he said.

The sensational murder of the cosmetic millionaire is being linked to the killings of 17 people, including four ethnic Indians, which took place in the country between 1992 and last year.

300 road deaths in Indonesia Eid exodus

AFP, Jakarta

More than 300 people have been killed on Indonesian roads during a mass exodus to celebrate the Muslim holiday of Eid al-Fitr, police said yesterday. "Our latest data showed that 311 people died in 1,397 road accidents," national police spokesman I Ketut Untung Yoga Ana told AFP, using data collected since September 3.

"About 70 percent of those killed were riding motorcycles," he said.

At least 418 others were seriously injured, he added. Indonesians traditionally celebrate the holiday with their parents and relatives in their home towns.

Motorcycles, readily available through cheap credit schemes, have become one of the most popular means of travel during the annual exodus.



Children at Monipur High School gather at an assembly in the morning ahead of classes yesterday nearly one month after a government order to keep all schools closed during Ramadan to avoid traffic congestion in the city.

PHOTO: ANISUR RAHMAN

14 killed, 26 injured in road accidents

METRO DESK

Fourteen people were killed and 26 others injured in separate road accidents in Comilla, Tangail, Gopalganj, Brahmanbaria, Manikganj, Gaibandha Narayanganj and Laxmipur districts yesterday.

A Correspondent from Comilla reports: A woman and her daughter were killed and five other people were injured in a road accident at Zinglatoli on Dhaka-Chittagong Highway in Daukandi upazila early yesterday.

Aysa Akter, 28, wife of Abdul Karim and her daughter Karima, 4, of Ratanur village of the upazila, died instantly.

Police said the accident took place early in the morning when a driver of a tempo coming from the district lost control over the steering due to his reckless driving. The tempo turned turtle and fell into a roadside ditch.

Of them, condition of an unidentified person was stated to be critical. The injured were admitted to Daukandi Health Complex.

Our Tangail correspondent adds: Two people were killed and another was injured in a road accident on Dhaka-Tangail Road at Dubai in Delduar upazila yesterday morning.

Mizanur Rahman, 26, of Sabalia area and Mohamad Alauddin, 27, of Kodalia of Tangail town died on the spot.

Police and witnesses said the accident occurred around 6:00am when a

Dhaka bound private car from Tangail collided-on with a passenger bus coming from opposite direction.

The injured private car driver was admitted to the Tangail General Hospital.

Abu Bakar Siddique, officer-in-charge of Delduar Police Station, said police seized the bus but its driver managed to flee.

Our Gopalganj Correspondent reports: Two people were killed and five others injured in two road accidents in the district yesterday.

In an accident, Rokeya Begum, 35, was hit by a microbus when she was getting into a rickshaw van at Bhomar village in Maksudpur upazila at noon. The microbus also hit the van, leaving its five passengers injured.

Rokeya was rushed to the Upazila Health Complex where she died on arrival.

In another incident, Iyub Ali, 38, was killed when a bus hit him while he was crossing the Dhaka-Khulna Highway at Gazaria in the upazila yesterday.

Our Correspondent from Brahmanbaria adds: A motorbike rider was killed in a road accident while a pickup van hit him from behind on Dhaka-Sylhet Highway at Kamaura village in Ashuganj upazila at 10:00am yesterday.

Police said Taufiqur Rahman Master, 60, of the village was injured when the pickup van hit his motorbike

at Kamaura Turning Point of the highway.

He was rushed to Brahmanbaria Modern Hospital where doctors declared him dead.

Our Manikganj Correspondent reports: A car driver was killed in a road accident on Dhaka-Aricha Highway at Bathuli in Dhamrai upazila of Dhaka yesterday.

Officer-in-Charge of Dhamrai Police Station said the accident occurred around 11:00 am when a Dhaka bound goods-laden truck collided head-on with the car. Car driver Helal, 32, died on the spot.

Our Correspondent from Gaibandha adds: Two persons were killed and 11 others injured when a three-wheeler turned turtle and fell into a ditch beside a road at Jumarbari yesterday evening.

Police and locals said the accident occurred when the driver of the three-wheeler from Sonatola bound for Bharatkhal market in Shaghata upazila lost control over the steering while overtaking a rickshaw van.

The three-wheeler skidded off the road and fell into the roadside ditch, killing two persons--Hukum Ali, 60, and Fajrul Huq, 35, on the spot and injuring 11 others. The injured were rushed to Shaghata Health Complex.

UNB from Narayanganj reports: Two people, including a minor girl, were killed and three others injured in

separate road crashes in Fatullah upazila yesterday afternoon.

Police said Izzat Ali, an autorickshaw driver, of Jamalpur district, was killed and three others were injured when a Dhaka-bound bus of "Utshab Paribahan" rammed into the autorickshaw on Dhaka-Narayanganj Link road at Jalkuri Koritala.

The injured were rushed to Khanpur 200-bed hospital in critical condition.

Police seized the bus but could not arrest anyone as the driver and his helper managed to escape.

In another incident, Khushbu, 4, daughter of Khairul Islam, was killed as a truck knocked her down while she was playing on the road near her house at Dharmaganj Bhangarpar in the same upazila.

BSS from Laxmipur adds: Two people were killed and another was injured in a road accident near Bangkhan school bridge in the district yesterday.

Police said the accident occurred when a passenger bus hit a motorcycle carrying three riders. Of the riders, two died on the spot.

The deceased were identified as Md Rashed, 22, of Ramanandi village and Md Rubel, 21, of Khejurtoli village of in Sadar upazila.

The injured was admitted to Laxmipur Sadar Hospital in a critical condition.

Togolese journo wins Wash award

BSS, Dhaka

A radio journalist of African Togo won the prestigious water, sanitation and hygiene media award for 2009-10, according to a message received here yesterday.

Francois Koami, a presenter of an environmental programme on Radio Zephyr, won the award in French category for his series reports on sanitation and hygiene as well as water condition of villages in Togo.

The 34-year-old Francois has also won the 1st prize of "Wash Media Prize" in 2008, offered in Togo by CREPA-TOGO. He is also the Chairman of The Association of Journalists for Environment, Togo (AJE-Togo).

His first report realised in the area of Dagbati, a place of south-eastern prefecture of Vo and about 90 km off capital Lom, was about sanitation and hygiene condition in this village. The second report focused on the problematic of water in the village of Avetonou, about 100 km off the south-west from Lom.

A total of 140 journalists of 40 countries from all over the world submitted their video footage for the competition.

WASH Media Award is co-sponsored by the Water Supply and Sanitation Collaborative Council (WSSCC) and the Stockholm International Water Institute (SIWI).

The main objective of the award is to highlight the role of media in creating awareness about the importance of water, sanitation and hygiene services.

The award, introduced in 2002, is given in every alternative year. The award, given for the third time, for journalists. It includes cash and citation.

Production at Ashuganj fertiliser factory suspended

UNB, Brahmanbaria

Production at Ashuganj Fertiliser and Chemical Company Limited remained suspended since yesterday morning due to some mechanical faults at its Urea plant. Officials said they are working hard to resume production as soon as possible after repairing the plant.

Production capacity of the factory is 1600 metric tons and at present it produces 1400 metric tons fertilizer per day.

600 tolas of gold, Tk 5.5 lakh looted in Ctg

BSS, Chittagong

Miscreants looted 600 tolas of gold ornaments and about Taka 5.5 lakh in cash from a jewellery shop at city's Reazuddin Bazar during Eid-ul-Fitr vacation.

The incident of burglary came into light when Siraj Alam, owner of 'Universal Jewellery', opened his shop yesterday.

Alam told police that he had shut 'Universal Jewellery' keeping 600 tolas of gold and Taka 5.5 lakh in cash inside the shop on the night of September 10, but when he opened the shop today he found the gold and money missing.

"When we reopened the shop, we found the main lockers of the shop broken and the money and gold missing", he said.

On duty night guards remained absconding after the incident.

Officer in Charge of Kotwali Thana Shakawat Hossain said the night guards might be involved in the incident as they did not resume their duty after Eid vacation.

An FIR was filed with Kotwali police station in this connection.



Artists paint pictures on eight-point of Millennium Development Goals (MDG) in front of Faculty of Fine Arts in Dhaka University yesterday arranged by Institute for Environment and Development ahead of the 10th anniversary of MDG declaration.

PHOTO: STAR

Dipu for united efforts to attain MDG

BSS, Dhaka

Foreign Minister Dipu Moni yesterday observed that an integrated and united effort need to be adopted for attaining Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) by the stipulated timeframe, 2015.

She made the remark while speaking at a painting exhibition of country's noted artists at Fine Arts Institute of Dhaka University organised by Institute of Environment and Development (IED) marking the 10th anniversary of declaration of MDGs by the United Nations.

The foreign minister said though 10 years have passed, most of the developed countries didn't keep their words of providing assistance to the developing countries for attaining MDGs to build a

hunger and poverty free world.

She laid emphasis on reminding the issue to the developed countries as well as creating a global awareness about necessity of achieving the MDGs.

Noting that the Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina is working for attaining MDGs through implementing the 'vision-2021', the Foreign Minister urged countrymen from all walks of life to cooperate in this regards.

Vice-chancellor of Dhaka University Prof Dr AAMS Arefin Siddique, Mahub Ara Gini, MP, Dean of Fine Arts Institute Motlub Ali, Artist Prof Rafiqunnabi (Ranabi) and Executive Director of IED Numan Ahmed Khan also spoke on the occasion.

Woman leader Rokyea Kabir administered the oath of attaining MDGs and Joti

Chattopadhy recited the memorandum.

Prof Arefin said attainment of MDGs is very important for eliminating existing discrimination in the society. "We should achieve all the targets of MDGs by the 2015," he added.

The MDGs are eight international development goals that 189 United Nations member states have agreed to achieve by the year 2015. The representatives of 189 member states including 147 heads of state and heads of country signed at Millennium Declaration on September 2000 in the Headquarters of United Nations.

The MDGs include eradicating extreme poverty, reducing child mortality rates, fighting disease epidemics such as AIDS, and developing a global partnership for development.