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Fertiliser under open sky as godown lacks space

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Lalmonirhat

At least 8,100 tonnes of urea fertiliser have been kept under the open sky for more than a week due to space shortage at Mohendranagar buffer godown in Lalmonirhat Sadar upazila, making it vulnerable to damage if there is any sudden rain or storm.

Authorities stocked the imported fertiliser here before supplying it to Sadar, Aditmari, Kaliganj, Hatibandha and Patgram upazilas in Lalmonirhat, Fulbari, Rajarhat, Nageshwari, Bhuburungamari, Ulipur and

Sadar upazilas in Kurigram, and Kawnia upazila in Rangpur district during the ongoing boro season.

The land has been prepared for planting boro paddy and plantation has already started at many places.

To help better cultivation and good yield in the area, the government has arranged about 26,100 tonnes of fertilisers this year but the buffer godown at Mohendranagar in Lalmonirhat Sadar has a capacity to preserve around 9,000 tonnes of fertilisers.

With special measures, the

godown authority stocked 18,000 tonnes of fertilisers.

"The godown authority has to keep the remaining 8,100 tonnes of fertilisers under the open sky due to space shortage. The problem arose as the fertiliser dealers have so far withdrawn much less quantities of fertiliser against their allotments," said Mohammad Hanif, in-charge of the godown.

Abdul Hakim, president of Lalmonirhat Fertiliser Association, said the unwanted situation appeared as paddy plantation is yet to

begin in full swing.

The problem will be solved, when the plantation starts in full swing within two weeks, he hoped.

Fertiliser dealers urged the government to build more buffer godowns in Lalmonirhat for urea as early as possible to meet the space shortage.

Several farmers, on the other hand, said the dealers can easily lift their allocated amounts and stock it in their own godowns. Otherwise huge quantity of urea fertiliser kept under the open sky may be damaged if it rains, they said.



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Withdraw Yunus' removal order Demand Grameen Bank staff, borrowers in human chains across country

STAR REPORT

Grameen Bank staff, borrowers as well as general people under the banner of 'conscious citizens' yesterday formed human chains in upazila and district headquarters across the country protesting the move to remove Professor Muhammad Yunus from the bank's managing director (MD) post.

The programmes were observed peacefully, reports our correspondents from districts.

Several hundred people including staff and depositors of Grameen Bank (GB) and common people joined a human chain and peaceful demonstration in front of Chittagong Press Club at around 10:00am.

Speakers at the programme urged the government not to take any decision that would harass Nobel laureate Professor Yunus, also the founder of GB and a pioneer of micro-credit.

"The participation of people at the programme proves that the people related with Grameen Bank want Professor Yunus, not any other person, as the managing director," said Jamil Akhter, zonal manager of Grameen Bank.

In Dinajpur, people formed a two-kilometre-long human chain demanding a respectful reinstatement of Professor Yunus as the MD of Grameen Bank.

A couple of thousands people, including officials, workers, beneficiaries, borrowers, account holders of GB, and students and teachers of different educational institutions (mostly beneficiaries of GB education loan) and their family members took part in the programme.

After the hour-long human chain programme, they brought out a silent procession that paraded different streets of Dinajpur town and later ended in front of the deputy commissioner's office.

On behalf of the participants, Tasmira Begum, a borrower belonging to Sarkerpara unit under Grameen Bank in Dinajpur Sadar upazila handed over a memorandum to Dinajpur deputy commissioner.

"Professor Dr Yunus, a pioneer of micro-credit and founder of Grameen Bank, was conferred the Nobel Prize for his contribution to the rural population of the country," goes the memorandum.

"We are protesting the step to remove the pioneer, and we want a respectful solution of the issue of managing director post of Grameen Bank which created scope for access to banking facilities to more than 8.3 million people of the country," it adds.

Similar programmes were held in 13 upazila headquarters under the district.

In Lalmonirhat district, Gramen Bank staff, members, borrowers and

common people formed human chains in Aditmari, Hatibandha and Patgram upazilas beside the Lalmonirhat-Burimari highway yesterday noon.

They demanded that the government review its decision and allow Professor Yunus to run the microlender for the sake of the poor.

"Yunus feels the sorrow of poor people and so, he extended his hands for us. If he is finally removed, Grameen Bank will face closure and we the poor people will not achieve our goal," Abeda Begum, 55, a borrower of Grameen Bank Aditmari branch, said.

Later the participants in the human chains placed memorandum to the upazila nirbahi officers of Aditmari, Hatibandha and Patgram demanding that the government allows continuation of Muhammad Yunus' service as the MD of Grameen Bank.

Edruk workers down tools for pay rise

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Pabna

Workers of Edruk Limited, the oldest pharmaceutical factory of the country, yesterday stopped work to press home their demand for increase in wages and making their jobs permanent.

Over 500 agitated workers besieged the company gate in Anonto area of the district town at about 11:00 am yesterday and staged a demonstration to realise their demand. They also held a protest meeting in front of the company.

Striking workers alleged that the company has been paying Tk 60-70.40 to male workers daily as wage while female workers receive Tk 40 as daily wage which is not rational considering high price of essentials.

Earlier, the agitating workers claimed that they have long been demanding for increase in wages but the management paid no heed to their demand.

Later at noon, the workers' association leaders, district unit Shramik league leaders and the ruling party leaders rushed to the spot and held a meeting with the managing board of the company. The company authorities assured them to resolve the problems after talking with the workers within 10 days, the workers' association leaders said.

Later, the workers called off their strike for 10 days, they added.

Additional police and Rab have been deployed at the factory to avert untoward incidents.

Schoolteacher Arifa's killer still at large

Van puller sent to jail on expiry of remand

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Pabna

Van puller Rabiul Islam, arrested after murder of schoolteacher Arifa Khatun on Saturday last, was sent to jail on expiry of his five days remand yesterday.

Arifa Khatun, a teacher of Bhainapara Government Primary School in Santhia upazila of Pabna district, was hacked to death by a criminal inside her classroom on February 27. The killer fled the area soon after the incident on the three-wheeler van.

Police could not arrest the killer as of filing of this report at 6:00pm yesterday. Police claimed that Rabiul gave them some important information about the killing during remand. But they refused to disclose those.

Arifa's murder sparked

protests in the district. Teachers and student formed human chains and staged demonstration in Santhia upazila and in the district town demanding arrest and punishment of the killer.

Primary schoolteachers in nine upazilas of Pabna district held separate programmes. Bangladesh Primary Teachers Association Pabna district unit also submitted a memorandum to the prime minister through the deputy commissioner in this regard.

In a condolence meeting at Bhainapara Government Primary School, on March 1, Mass Education Minister Dr Afsarul Amin assured punishment of the killer. The minister also visited Arifa's paternal residence in Sirajganj district to condole the bereaved family.

Attack on upazila chairman's house in Netrakona

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Netrakona

The residence of Kalmakanda Upazila Chairma came under attack allegedly by local Jubo League activists on Friday night.

Upazila Chairman Golam Rabbani filed a general diary (GD) with Kalmakanda Police Station yesterday.

Rabbani alleged that at least 40 to 50 Jubo League activists led by Mustafizur Rahaman, Anjan Sarker and Haradhan Karmakar attacked his residence at the upazila headquarters at

around 8:00pm as he had earlier refused to lease Kalmakanda Bazar to them.

The UZ chairman further alleged that the Jubo League men damaged furniture, doors and windowpanes of his house. He sought security of his life.

Contacted, Police Superintendent Sheikh Nazmul Alam said Golam Robbani and Officer-in-charge (OC) Khan Mohammad Humayun Kabir informed him about the incident. Necessary step will be taken against the attackers, he added.

150 injured as villagers clash

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Sylhet

At least 150 people were injured in a clash between the inhabitants of two adjacent villages in Baniachang upazila over purchase of a land for a local mosque.

Of the injured, 55 were admitted to Habiganj Sadar Hospital while the rest given first aid.

Police quoted locals as saying that some villagers of Kushiartola had an altercation with one Abdul Ali Nishchintapur village over purchase of the land at around 8:00am.

At around 8:30am, people of the two villages equipped with lethal weapons attacked each others, leaving at least 150 from both sides injured.

SNAPS AND SNIPPETS

PCP leader arrested

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Rangamati

Security forces yesterday arrested the Rangamati unit president of Pahari Chhatra Parishad (PCP), student front of United People's Democratic Front (UPDF), from Naniachar upazila headquarters. The arrestee is Bilas Chakma. Naniachar Police Station officer-in-charge (OC) Mostafa Kamal said, on a tip-off, security personnel conducted a raid in T & T area and arrested Bilas. There was warrant of arrest against him, the OC added.

Spurious liquor kills 2

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Lalmonirhat

Two sweepers died yesterday following intake of spurious liquor at Sorkarerhat village in Patgram upazila. Police recovered the bodies and sent to Lalmonirhat Sadar Hospital morgue for autopsy. The dead were identified as Mukul Lal, 28, son of Moti Chand and Madon Lal, 32, son of Rango Lal, both hailing from Sorkarerhat village of Jongra union in Patgram upazila. Police said, the two became sick following intake of spurious liquor at their houses. As their condition deteriorated, they were being taken to Patgram upazila health complex but they died on the way to the hospital. Hearing the news, panic gripped among the members of sweeper community. Contacted, Patgram Police Station officer-in-charge (OC) Murshikul Karim said the bottles of liquor will be sent to the authorities concerned for examination.



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4 held with arms

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Narail

Detective Branch (DB) of police arrested four criminals for possessing a shutter gun and bullets from Egaronoli village of Lahuria union under Lohagara upazila on Friday. The arrestees are Abdul Alim, 38, son of Hannan Sheikh of Baroipara village under Noldi union of the upazila, Sarwar Mollah, 30, son of Abdul Salam Mollah, Raju Mollah, 21, son of Mohammad Akbar Mollah both from Noapara village under the same union Md Nazrul Islam, 28, son of late Tobbibor Rahman, also of Noapara village. On suspicion, police arrested Alim, Sarwar and Raju from near a gambling party at a fair and recovered the firearm and bullets from their possession. Later, the arrestees confessed to police that Nazrul was the actual owner of the gun. Following their confession, police arrested Nazrul from his house at Noapara village.

Outlaw arrested

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Kushtia

Police on Friday arrested a regional leader of the outlawed Gono Bahini and recovered firearms and bombs from his possession. The arrestee was identified as Raju Ahmed, 28, of Abdulpur in Sadar upazila. Acting on a tip-off, a police team raided the house of Raju at about 3:30 pm and arrested him. On his confessional statement, police later recovered a foreign made revolver and two bombs from his house. Police produced Raju to a Kushtia court yesterday noon and sought five days remand. The court sent him to jail. Hearing of remand prayer will be held on Monday. Police said, Raju is an accused in three extortion cases.

Neonatal unit opens

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Thakurgaon

Water resources minister Ramesh Chandra Sen inaugurated the neonatal unit of Thakurgaon Sadar Hospital on Saturday afternoon. The unit was set up at joint initiative of GoB and UN MNH initiative (Maternal and Neonatal Health initiative) to render better services to mother and children to reduce mortality during child birth. The opening ceremony was followed by a discussion at the civil surgeon's (CS) office. Acting civil surgeon Dr Abu Mohammad Khairul Kabir chaired the occasion. Deputy director of District Family Planning Directorate Dr Paritosh Kumer Paul delivered welcome address.



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