Sunned rice discourages buyers at OMS outlets

Prisoners, ansar members also raise objection

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Patuakhali

Open market sale (OMS) of rice meant for the lowincome people has apparently failed to attract the target group here as sunned rice, not generally liked by locals, has been supplied to OMS dealers in the district.

Not habituated to eating sunned rice, inmates of Patuakhali Jail and Ansar members in the district town have already raised objection to its supply as their food.

"Local people are not used to having sunned rice and so, the numbers of buyers at our shops is very low. Now we can't sell 100 kg of rice the whole day whereas earlier we sold 1,000 kg (one tonne) of boiled rice in a few hours. We told the authority not to allocate sunned rice," said Siddiqur Rahman, an OMS dealer in Kalikapur area in Patuakhali town.

"There is no crowd in the shop as local people are not interested to take sunned rice that is allocated for us to sell as OMS rice. We sold some boiled rice in the morning but the quantity was too small," said Forkan Mahmud, an OMS dealer at Kalatala Bazar.

"We are not taking cheap rice from OMS shops as our children do not want to eat sunned rice. And so, we have to buy boiled rice from local market for high prices. But it is burdensome for us," said Lal Bibi, 50, a buyer from Kalikapur area. Taslima Begum, 45, of the

same area said, "We cannot take the sunned rice as we

are not habituated. We have to cook this rice three times daily as it gets rotten in a few hours. In case of boiled rice, cooking once a day is

enough,' Food control department is selling nine tonnes of rice under OMS programme in different places in the district town, said Mahbubur Rahman, district controller of food.

Urging not to supply sunned rice for the inmates of Patuakhali jail, authorities sent a letter to the food official on February 28.

to taking sunned rice. Many of them have already warned the jail authorities not to supply sunned rice. The matter may lead to dissatisfaction among the inmates. There are over 400 prisoners and 80 jail policemen here," goes the letter signed by Patuakhali jail superintendent.

"Prisoners are not used

The Ansar Battalion office in Patuakhali also sent letter to the food department on the same issue. A letter

signed by its company commander Abdul Maleq Biswas on March 2 requested supplying boiled rice as Ansar members objected to taking sunned rice.

When contacted, Mahbubur Rahman, district controller of food, said, "We informed our higher authority of the matter, quoting letters from Patuakhali Jail and Ansar Battalion. In this regard, we sent a letter narrating local situation on March 2."



Only a few people come to buy cheaper rice at OMS (open market sale) shops in Patuakhali town as locals are not habituated to eating sunned rice that is being supplied for the programme meant for low-income people.

AL leader beats up RCC engr

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Rajshahi

The superintending engineer (SE) of Rajshahi City Corporation (RCC) was assaulted allegedly by a local Awami League (AL) leader and his aide on Wednesday for refusing to sign a bill.

Victim Ashraful Haque alleged that Rajpara unit AL president Hafizur Rahman Babu and his aide Golam Akbor Khokon beat him up entering into his office at Nagar Bhaban at around 5:00pm.

The AL men got angry as he and his subordinate engineers refused to entertain their request for signing a bill for a construction work before completing the project, sources said.

Babu, also a contractor, was given the work for constructing a 2000-feet drain and doing some repairs in the city's Chandipur area at a cost of Tk 12 lakh last year.

On Wednesday, he along with an aide stormed into the office room of the SE and attacked him. Later some councilors and other officials rushed to the scene and rescued Ashraful. Contacted, Hafizur

Rahman Babu, however, denied assaulting the SE and said he had an exchange of hot words with Ashraful. He also claimed that he

had completed the work last year. Talking to The Daily Star, Mayor AHM Khairuzzaman Liton said he already directed the city unit AL

leaders to take action

against the responsible

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persons.



yellow and red bags when they were unloaded in Chittagong and Mongla ports upon its import from China, is being repacked in attractive white plastic bags on the premises of Gaibangdha buffer stock godown in a bid to make the damaged fertiliser 'acceptable' to farmers.

Gaibandha dealers stop taking low-quality urea

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Gaibandha

Fertiliser dealers at a meeting here on Wednesday decided not to take urea for the month of March, as the buffer stock authorities still continued to supply 'solidified, discoloured and sand contaminated fertiliser for sale among the farmers.

Contacted, Gaibandha district fertiliser traders' association president Kazi Hamidul Haq said most urea fertiliser imported from China are found in damaged sacks at Chittagong and Mongla ports. The transport agencies supply those to buffer stock and a large quantity of fertiliser fall from sacks during loading and unloading.

As the farmers refused to

take those low quality fertiliser, we are facing a great difficulty in taking the quota for the month of March fearing possibility of remaining unsold, he added. Anyway, we are repacking

the fertiliser of the damaged bags in white plastic bags, as the farmers refuse to take yellow or red bags other than the white one, said Haider Ali, in-charge of the buffer stock.

Bangladesh Chemical Industries Corporation (BCIC) has allocated 9,600 metric tons of urea in Gaibandha for the month of March, but the dealers are yet to lift the quota because of damaged sacks and discoloured fertiliser. Despite all, such bags are still coming from the ports, he said.

About one lakh 18 thou-

sand 985 hectares of land will be brought under boro cultivation in Gaibandha this season. Over 90 percent of the targeted areas have already been brought under cultivation, sources said.

Earlier, the buffer stock authorities supplied 7,900 metric tons of urea for distribution through 102 dealers in Gaibandha district. Of those, over 3,000 tonnes were imported from China in December and most of the bags were damaged, they said.

Although the district administration stopped selling those fertiliser in the first week of February, but the buffer stock officials are still supplying the fertiliser to the dealers, said Mahbub Alam Ripon, secretary of district fertiliser traders' association.

SUNDARBANS

Second incident of fire in 3 days

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Khulna

Fire broke out again in Nangli Camp area of the Sundarbans Wednesday afternoon. This is the second incident of fire in the mangrove forest within a span of three days.

On Tuesday, a fire broke out in the compartment No-25 at Napitkhali under Chandpai Range. The blaze could not be tamed as of 6:00pm yesterday despite hectic efforts by firemen and forest keepers.

The first fire incident took place in Nangli Camp area on February 28, damaging trees on over three acres of

Fire fighters from Khulna and Morrelganj with the help of forest staff are trying to extinguish the Wednesday's fire at Nangli camp area.

A three-member committee was formed on Wednesday to probe three fire incidents in the Sundarbans since February 28. Headed by Assistant Conservator of Forests (ACF)

Md Khalilur Rahman, the probe committee has been asked to submit its report within seven days.

Both Conservator of Forests Akbar Hossain and Divisional Forest Officer (DFO) of the east wing of Sundarban Forest Division Mihir Kumar Dey smell sabotage in such incidents of fire taking place in the forest one after another.

"We will have to unveil the mystery behind the fire incidents at any cost to protect resources of the forest and stop its recurrence," DFO Mihir Kumar

He said Tuesday fire at Napitkhali under Chandpai Range originated from cigarette butts of the tree fellers.

Shajahan Howladar, a fisherman of Dakkhin Rajapur village adjacent to the forest, saw the fire at around 5:00pm on Tuesday. He and rushed to Dhanshagor station to inform the station Officer Abdul Khaleque about the fire incident.

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'They threatened me to burn with acid, and they did it'

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Rajshahi

Victim of acid attack by divorced husband and his two accomplices, a young woman is groaning in pain at the surgery ward of Rajshahi Medical College Hospital (RMCH). On Wednesday evening,

Shamim Reza, ex-husband of Shirin Akhtar, 20, daughter of Hasen Ali of Gopalpara village in Bagmara, along with Shamsur Rahman and Masum of Puthia upazila entered Shirin's father's house and threw acid on her, causing serious burn injuries on her face and other parts of body.

Locals caught Shamim Reza, 25, of Durgapur, and his accomplice Shamsur Rahman, 25, of Puthia upazila, and handed them over to police while another accomplice Masum, 26, of Puthia upazila managed to flee, said Harunur Rashid, officer-in-charge of Bagmara police station.

"Shamim and the two Durgapur.

others with a bottle of acid and two syringes entered our house and poured it on Shirin when she was cooking at the kitchen-shed at around 7:00pm," said her brother Helal Uddin at the hospital.

"My face, eyes started burning as they threw something on me. I thought I was dying," said Shirin.

While studying intermediate at Bhawaniganj College, Shirin developed relation with Shamim of Durgapur upazila and married him without consent of her family members in November 2009, said her family members.

Three months later when her parents accepted the marriage, Shamim and his family members began to create pressure on her for a piece of land and Tk 2 lakh as dowry, they said, adding that her in-laws would torture her often and one day in May or June in 2010, they beat her up and drove her out from their house in

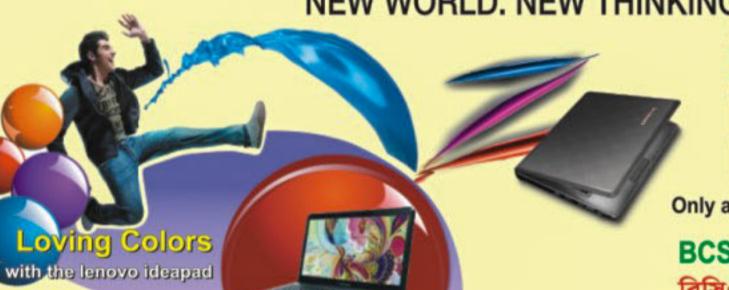
She went to her father's house in Bagmara and started living there.

In November 2010, Shirin divorced Shamim but he and his family members started making cell phone calls, threatening her to burn with acid, even kill if she does not return to his house, she said.

Her elder brother Nurul Islam filed a case with Bagmara police station accusing the three acid

attackers. "Now our main concern is to ensure best treatment for my sister and punishment of the attackers," he said.





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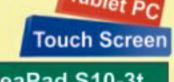
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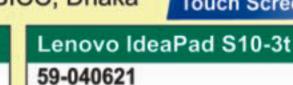
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