



PHOTO: STAR
Huge quantity of fertiliser is kept under the open sky on the premises of BCIC buffer stock at Shibganj village in Thakurgaon Sadar upazila as the 7,500 tonne-capacity warehouse now has to maintain 25,000 tonnes of urea and potash during the ongoing IRRI-Boro season.

Fertiliser stacked in the open as godown space too scanty

Rain, dew cause damage to the agri input

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Thakurgaon

Huge urea and potash fertilisers have been kept under the open sky at the buffer stock of Banbladesh Chemical Industries Corporation (BCIC) at Shibganj village and BADC godown at Madarganj village in Thakurgaon Sadar upazila due to shortage of space in the warehouses.

Exposed to melting by rain and dew, the fertiliser often decreases in amount, making farmers unwilling to receive it, dealers said.

"Now 25,000 tonnes of fertiliser is reserved at Shibganj Buffer Stock although its godown has the capacity to keep only 7,500-tonne. Shortage of space in the godown forces us to pile up huge fertiliser sacks

under the open sky," said Asaduzzaman Khan, in charge of the godown.

There is demand of at least 40,000 tonnes of fertiliser for three months from January to March for cultivation of IRRI-Boro and rabi crops in Thakurgaon and Panchagarh districts, he said.

Admitting to damage of fertiliser due to melting by rainwater, Asaduzzaman said we have informed the higher authorities of the necessity to build new godowns.

During a visit on Thursday afternoon, this correspondent saw about 30 fertiliser-laden trucks stranded outside the godown as the unloading activities was being delayed due to space crisis.

Truck driver Md Samsul Haque and Azam Ali said they were staying in front of

the buffer stock for 24 hours as fertiliser unloading was being delayed due to space shortage there.

Similar scene was also seen at two godowns of Bangladesh Agriculture Development Corporation (BADC) at Madarganj village in the same upzila.

"The two godowns can keep 1,800 tonnes of fertiliser while the current stock is 4,300 tonnes. Sacks of fertiliser have been kept under the open sky since December due to the space shortage," BADC godown in charge Md Nurul Amin said.

As the tin-sheds of the godowns have become older, the fertiliser sacks get wet and damaged when it rains, he added.

Modasser Hossain, a fertiliser dealer in the district, said sub-dealers often

decline to receive dampened fertiliser sacks as the farmers do not want to take such fertiliser.

"We have to count losses as farmers do not want to take dampened sacks of fertiliser that decreases in amount due to melting by rain and dew. They also think the damp fertiliser loses its effectiveness," said Mahbubur Rahman, sub-dealer of Bokosher Hat in Akcha union under Thakurgaon Sadar upazila.

When contacted, Belayet Hossain, deputy director of the Department of Agriculture Extension in Thakurgaon, told this correspondent over cell phone, "It is true that urea fertiliser decreases in amount when it melts in rain. But it does not lose its quality."

Wife set afire for dowry, husband arrested

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Jhenidah

A man set his wife afire allegedly for dowry at Ramchandrapur village in Sadar upazila on Sunday night.

The victim, Mazeda Khatun, 25, is the second wife of Shahidul Islam, son of Abdul Gani Biswas of the village.

Despite having first wife named Champa Khatun and four children, Shahidul, a rickshaw-van puller married Mazeda, daughter of Babar Ali of Palashbari village in Kurigram district about a year ago, Sadar police station SI Azizur Rahman said.

After marriage, he demanded Tk 50,000 in dowry from Mazeda. As she refused to comply with his demand, both Shahidul and Champa tortured her off and on.

On the night, the two poured kerosene on Mazeda and set her on fire. Then they took her to Jhenidah Sadar Hospital.

On information, police rushed to the hospital and arrested Shahidul. But his first wife fled the scene. Police also took deposition of Mazeda under Section 164.

Contacted, the Resident Medical Officer (RMO) of Jhenidah Sadar Hospital, Dr Rashed AL-Mamun said Mazeda sustained grievous burn injuries.

As her condition worsened, she was referred to Dhaka Medical College and Hospital (DMCH).

Human rights activists shifted Mazeda to DMCH burn unit yesterday noon where her condition is stated to be critical.

Female banker commits suicide

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Barisal

A female banker committed suicide by hanging herself from the ceiling fan of her house near BM College in the city on Saturday.

The deceased, Sumana Sultana, 44, was senior principal officer of Barisal zonal office of Rupali Bank and mother of two children. Her husband Monirul Islam works at Rahamatpur Agriculture Research Office as an officer of its mushroom project. She left behind a son studying in class V and a daughter studying in class II.

Family sources said Sumana had a mental illness and was under treatment of a psychiatrist.

On return from a coaching centre along with her children, she went to the bedroom asking a domestic help to bring clothes from the roof of her house.

When the domestic help came back from the roof, she found the body hanging from a ceiling fan.

Hearing screams, children and neighbours rushed to the spot and took her to Sher-e-Bangla Medical College and Hospital where the attending doctors declared her dead.

Sumana's husband was not present at the house during the incident.

Fire kills boy

UNB, Comilla

A five-year-old boy was burnt alive at their house at Debpur in Burichong upazila early Sunday.

The deceased, Mehedi Hasan, was son of Abdul Awal, a worker of Comilla Spinning Mill. Fire service sources said the fire originated from an electric short circuit at the house at around 3:00am.

Mehedi was burnt alive as he could not come out of the house. He was staying alone in his room as his father was not present while his mother, also a worker at the mill, was on duty during the incident.

ASI, constable sued on extortion charge

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Dinajpur

An assistant sub-inspector (ASI) and a constable of Hakimpur police station in this regard and submit report before the court by February 19.

The accused are ASI Shah Alam, and constable Enamul Haque.

Sadiya Begum, wife of Bazlur Rahman of Uttar Basudevpur village in Hakimpur upazila under Dinajpur filed the case against them with the Court of Chief Judicial Magistrate Sohag Talukdar on Sunday afternoon, court source said.

The court took the case into cognizance and asked

Biman Karmaker, ASP (Phulbari Circle) of Dinajpur, to register a case, conduct an investigation in this regard and submit report before the court by February 19.

"Some policemen of Hakimpur upazila of Dinajpur picked up my son Md Saju on December 4 last year," Sadiya Begum mentioned in her case.

"ASI Shah Alam and constable Enamul Haque came to my residence on the same night and demanded Tk 1 lakh, threatening to send my son to jail after implicating him in various cases if I do not meet the demand. Scared, I gave Tk 32,000 in cash and a cheque worth Tk 50,000 to them," she said.

"Next day, I verbally informed the officer in charge of Hakimpur police station and he assured me of taking action against the two police men. But the OC has not taken any action against them still now. And so, I filed the case with the Chief Judicial Magistrate's Court of Dinajpur seeking justice," Sadiya Begum said.

When contacted, Hakimpur police station OC Helal Uddin said, "I have taken action against the ASI and the constable following the complaint of the woman. An investigation is pending in this regard. I am yet to know about filing of any case against the two policemen."

SEXUAL HARASSMENT

Madrasa girls demand removal of teacher

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Khulna

Students of Khan A Sabur Mahila Madrasa run by Khulna City Corporation (KCC) formed human chains followed by protest demonstrations in front of the madrasa on Sunday and yesterday demanding removal of and legal action against their teacher Moulana Mizanur Rahman for his alleged sexual harassment.

Demanding the same, they have continued boycotting classes since January 13.

Guardians and other teachers have also warned of joining the movement of students demanding removal of the alleged teacher.

Moulana Mizanur Rahman, an Arabic teacher of the madrasa, was placed under suspension on the basis of a probe report submitted by the additional

deputy commissioner (Education) of Khulna on March 13 last year.

This action was taken as allegations of sexual harassment and other malpractices against Mizanur Rahman were found true during investigation.

The probe into allegations against Mizanur Rahman was ordered following a petition submitted by 20 teachers of the madrasa on November 1 in 2009.

The teachers also wrote several letters to the chairman of Madrasa Education Board demanding Mizanur Rahman's removal from service.

Students started boycotting their classes on January 13 this year as the suspended teacher was reinstated in his service on January 12 by order of madrasa Principal Moulana Abdus Sobhan, ignoring recommendations of the probe report.

Besides, Principal Abdus Sobhan and Chairman of

madrasa governing body Mostajabul Huq Mostafa are reported to have threatened students of stern action for boycotting of classes.

When contacted, KCC Mayor Talukder Abdul Khaleque admitted to the allegations of sexual harassment against Mizanur Rahman and students' movement by them.

"I have taken the matter seriously as the madrasa is being run by Khulna City Corporation. The crisis would be resolved properly," the mayor said.

Asked about the matter, Principal Moulana Abdus Sobhan said, "Members of the managing committee will sit in a meeting shortly to take final decision about whether the accused teacher should be removed from service or reinstated."

Mizanur Rahman termed the allegations against him as false and refused to comment on recommendations of the probe report.



PHOTO: STAR

Police seize an AK-47 Rifle and 22 bullets at Panihata village in Nalitabari upazila of Sherpur district yesterday.

Arms, ammo found in 3 districts, 2 held

STAR NATIONAL DESK

Law enforcers recovered firearms, including an AK-47, and 32 bullets from Sherpur, Rangpur and Gaibandha districts yesterday and on Sunday night.

Acting on a tip-off, Nalitabari police in Sherpur raided the house of Nibash Marak, member of an ethnic community, at bordering Panihata village in the upazila, at around 6:00am yesterday and recovered an AK-47 rifle and 22 bullets, reports our Mymensingh correspondent.

Sensing the presence of a police team, Nibash Marak fled the house.

Sherpur Police Superintendent Anisur Rahman quoted locals as saying that a commander of united Liberation Front of Assam (Ulfa) was arrested from the house in 2008.

A case was lodged with Nalitabari Police Station in connection with the recovery.

In Rangpur, members of the Rapid Action Battalion (Rab) recovered one Chinese pistol and five bullets at Anantaram Uchapara village in Pirgacha upazila on Sunday night, according to our correspondent.

On secret information, a team of Rab-5 conducted a

special drive at the village and recovered the pistol and bullets from the house of one Shafiullah. The house owner, however, managed to flee.

Our Gaibandha correspondent adds: Rab recovered one revolver and five bullets from Rajosh village in Gobindagnaj upazila on Sunday night and arrested two people.

Rab members arrested Bulu Mia, 30, and Sanaul Hoq, 28, from a paddy field of the village and recovered the revolver and bullets from their possession.

The arrestees are members of an organised gang of arms peddlers, police said.

SYLHET SHRINE BLAST CASE

No headway in 8 years, IO changed 7 times

IQBAL SIDDIQUEE, Sylhet

Investigation into the case for bomb attack on the premises of Hazrat Shahjalal's shrine on the night of January 12 in 2004 is yet to see any progress, although the case was revived early 2010, a year after the present Awami League-led government took over.

Five people were killed and 40 others sustained injuries in the bomb blast during the annual Urs (religious congregation) at the shrine premises where thousands of people from across the country attended.

Earlier in December 2008, police filed 'final report' in the case as the investigators

failed to find any clue to the tragic incident.

"I was given the task in mid 2008. During the four years before that, six officers ran the job one after another but there had been no clue to the incident," said the then investigation officer (IO) of the case -- inspector of Criminal

Investigation Department (CID) Gopal Chakravarty (now additional superintendent of police, Sylhet).

"With the passage of a long time, things got a little troublesome. None of the arrestees admitted complicity with the blast and no evidence against any of them could be established. And so, I submitted the final report to the Chief Judicial Magistrate's Court in Sylhet," he said.

Meanwhile, Moulana Abu Sayeed, of Harkat ul Jihad, caught from Uttara in the capital in 2007, was included as an accused in the case in late 2008 while 13 others, arrested for suspected involvement with the blast, are on bail, said an official.

After revival of the case in 2010, the CID was again entrusted with the investigation.

Contacted on Friday last, CID Inspector Shamimur Rahman Pir, the present IO of the case, told this correspondent, "I was given the charge of investigation in February 2010. The job is really tough as there has been no significant development during the long time after the bomb attack. However, we are trying our best."



PHOTO: STAR

Unauthorised three-wheelers, locally called votvoti, ply different roads in Tangail district, causing nuisance for other vehicles and posing risk of accidents. The photo was taken from Ghatail upazila a couple of days ago.