

SPACE SHORTAGE IN GOVT GODOWNS

Rice procurement drive in Thakurgaon suspended

QUAMRUL ISLAM RUBAIYAT, Thakurgaon

All the 12 LSD godowns of the district have temporarily suspended receiving rice under the government's procurement drive in the current Iri-boro season due to space shortage, much to the worry of the farmers and rice mill owners.

The procurement drive that was scheduled to officially start on May 1 practically began on May 25 with a target to procure 67,622 tonnes of rice and 1,259 tonnes of paddy.

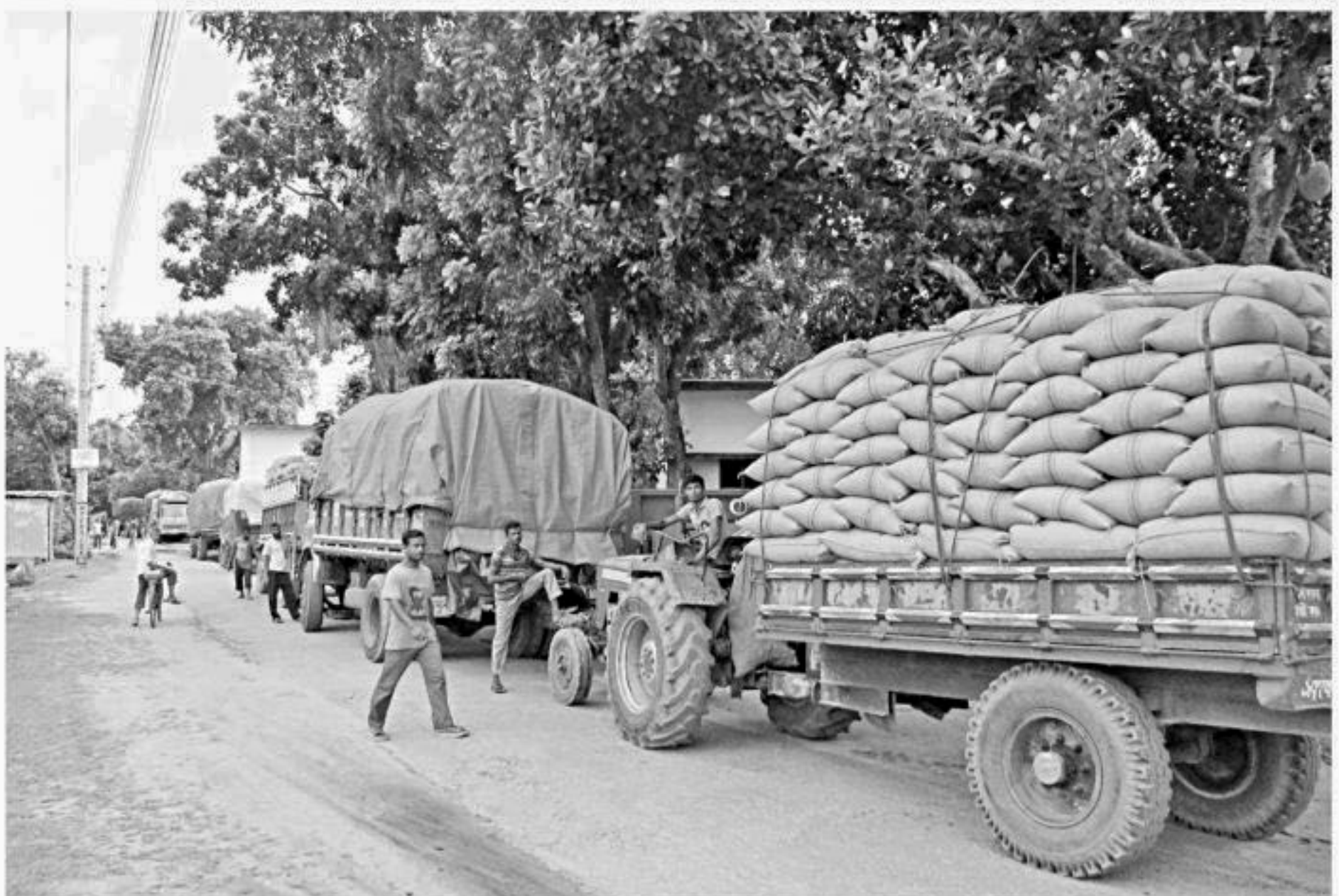
The procurement drive will continue till October 31.

Only 15,168 tonnes of rice has been procured till June 23 and it has been temporarily suspended due to space crisis, District Food Controller Chowdhury Mosabber Hossain said.

The 12 LSD godowns in the district have a capacity to preserve 42,000 tonnes of food grains, official sources said.

Besides, additional 25 per cent food grain can be preserved in urgent situations, they said.

The Iri-boro farmers of Thakurgaon district were deprived of fair prices during the last harvesting sea-



A long queue of rice-laden trucks remains stranded in front of a government-owned LSD godown in Thakurgaon Rail Station area of the town yesterday as all the 12 LSD godowns in the district have suspended receiving the food grain under the government's ongoing Iri-boro procurement drive due to shortage of space.

PHOTO: STAR

son of the crop.

Now the slow procurement drive has added to the situation, several farmers said.

Rice mill owners who signed contact with the food department to supply rice are also worried about counting losses due to the

slow progress in the rice procurement drive.

"If rice procurement is not expedited by making early arrangement of space we will have to count loss for additional preservation cost as well as keeping our cash idle for long," Mahmud

Hasan Raju, president of Thakurgaon Rice Mills Owners' Association.

District Food Controller Chowdhury Mosabber Hossain said the procurement drive will resume soon by freeing space of the godowns.

Drug addicts stab 3 of a family

UNB, Manikganj

A woman and her two children sustained stab injuries in an attack allegedly by some local drug addicts at Baimael Pashchimpara village in Singair upazila early yesterday.

Injured Rokeya Begum, 35, wife of Kohinur Islam, and her two kids Farida Akter, 15, and Farid Hossain, 12, are now undergoing treatment at Dhaka Medical College Hospital.

Quoting locals, police said Kohinur's nephew Mohsin and his three friends stabbed Rokeya with sharp weapons when she tried to prevent them from taking drugs near her house.

The attackers also stabbed Farida and Farid when they tried to save their mother from the attackers.

Police arrested Mohsin and Ashutosh from the spot, Sayeduzzaman, officer-in-charge of Singair Police Station, said.

Abducted Benapole AL leader traceless for 4 days

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Benapole, Jessore

An Awami League leader of Benapole municipality unit, who was 'abducted' four days ago, still remains traceless.

The victim is Mahtab Uddin, joint secretary of the unit, said party sources.

A gang abducted Mahtab from Aricha Ferry terminal in Manikganj district on

June 24 while he was returning to Benapole from Dhaka by a bus around 2:00am.

The family came up with the allegation at a press conference held at Benapole land port the following day.

Earlier on the day, Shahjalal Shohel, son of the victim, filed a case with Shibalaya Police Station in

Manikganj in this connection.

Shohel's sister Sadia Afrin Rima at the conference sought the prime minister's intervention to take steps in this regard.

Sirajul Haque Manju, president of Sharsha upazila unit of AL, Ahmad Ali, president of Benapole municipality unit of AL, and its general secretary Nasir Uddin, among others, were present at the programme.

3 fishermen drown as trawler sinks in Meghna

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Noakhali

Three fishermen drowned as a trawler with 10 fishermen on board capsized in the Meghna River in Hatiya upazila of the district yesterday.

The deceased were identified as Jamal Majhi, 50, Abdul Motin, 25, and

Mohammad Rakib, 19. They all hailed from Sunnerchar village under Burirchar union in the upazila.

The remaining seven were rescued by local fishermen and admitted to Hatiya Upazila Health Complex and other private clinics in the upazila.

Nurul Huda, officer-in-

charge of Hatiya Police Station, quoted trawler owner Ruhul Amin as saying that the trawler carrying 10 fishermen sank near the Surjamukhi Canal during a storm around 8:00am.

The bodies of the three fishermen were found floating in the river around 11:00am, the OC added.



The premises of Chandpur University College remain flooded as a consequence of the last three days' downpour, thanks to the poor drainage system in the area.

PHOTO: STAR

Clash over capture of khas land leaves one dead, 5 injured

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Gaibandha

A man was killed and five others were injured in a clash between two rival groups over possession of khas land at Jamudanga village in Sadullapur upazila yesterday.

Locals said there had been a long-standing dispute between village doctor Anil Kumar Monglu, 50, of Jamudanga and Siddique Mia of the same village over possession of a piece

of khas land.

Siddique Mia, accompanied by some other people, started construction of a house on the land at around 11:00am yesterday.

Being informed, Anil Kumar and his men rushed to the spot and asked Siddique to stop the work.

There ensued an exchange of hot words and at one stage, the two groups locked in a clash, leaving six people from both sides injured.

Locals rushed critically injured Anil Kumar to Sadullapur Upazila Health Complex where the doctors declared him dead.

The injured are Ajit Kumar Sarker, 45, Sumon Chandra Sarker, 48, Sanjoy Kumar Sarker, 18, Liton Kumar, 20 and Susanto Kumar, 35. They are undergoing treatment at the health complex.

Ajit Kumar was later shifted to Rangpur Medical College Hospital as his condition deteriorated.



Midwifery led Maternal Health Care and Ending Obstetric Fistula

Dr. Salahuddin Ahmed, Professor, IUB I am not a doctor, but as a layman I understand fistula is preventable and treatable but many of the women do not know where to go to avail the services. Trained health workers and midwives can contribute to the improvement of the maternal health in the country.

Dr. Md. Azad Rahman, Field Officer, UNFPA, Sylhet

A skilled and trained midwife not only assures safe motherhood but also provides advocacy and counselling for pre- and post-delivery conditions. Therefore, every woman deserves to get services from a midwife. In the 65th session of the UN General Assembly, our Prime Minister stated that work is being done to double the trained health workers through training an additional 3000 midwives and staff all 427 sub-district health centers to provide round-the-clock midwifery service. At present, we have six-month long post-nursing course for existing diploma nurses and three-year long midwifery training starting from 2013.

Obstetric fistula is one of the most serious injuries that can occur during childbirth due to prolonged delivery pain and unskilled delivery. This situation also leads to severe socio-cultural stigmatisation. It is estimated that more than 73,000 women in Bangladesh are living with this injury, and some 2,000 new cases develop each year.

A number of strategies to eradicate obstetric fistula and programs like Community Fistula Advocate Initiative could help in this regard. Under this program, women after going through a fistula repair surgery go back to their community and can spread awareness.

Dr. Murshed Ahmed Chowdhury, Prof. of Sociology, SUST Sylhet Today I will talk on three subjects--maternal health, midwife crisis and Obstetric Fistula. The maternal mortality and infant mortality situation has improved considerably which is good news for us, as both maternal mortality and infant mortality contribute to the overall development parameter. If we could diagnose high-risk pregnancy at the right time, the situation would improve.

In terms of midwife, in our student life we saw that specified one year midwifery training was a part of the four-year-long nursing courses, which

was removed from the course afterwards. Unfortunately, here in Bangladesh we don't have the facility to carry out 100 percent deliveries in hospitals. Thus, a huge number of deliveries take place at home. We need a number of skilled and trained birth attendants who will ensure safe motherhood through screening of complicated & high risk cases, delivery and postnatal care.

Obstetric fistula is a traumatic and debilitating childbirth injury. There are a number of UNFPA supported government medical institutes around the country that provide treatment and knowledge for Obstetric Fistula. However, many people are unaware of this service. Different stakeholders like the media, public representatives, MPs and religious leaders need to inform the community regarding safe maternal health and emergency obstetric services to prevent this injury from occurring in the first place.

Dr. Abdus Sabur, Head of the department of Obstetrics & Gynecology, Jalalabad Ragib-Rabeya Medical College & Hospital

Midwife is an important component for maternal healthcare. They can play a much better role to understand the problems of a pregnant woman. In the country, around 50 percent of medical college students are women but unfortunately, they do not wish to work in the rural and remote areas. On the contrary, in rural areas, housewives prefer female gynecologist. So female doctors need to be motivated to work in the rural and peripheral areas. It is not possible to give comprehensive maternal services in all hospitals unless we have donors aid or corporate investments. It will probably take another twenty years to arrange all the maternal facilities in all the hospitals.

Sabera Akther, ADC, DC office, Sylhet Population growth of Sylhet is higher than the other divisions. But unfortunately we also have a shortage of trained midwives. Due to lack of training, midwives are not able to guide pregnant women for routine diagnosis. In most cases, a pregnant woman doesn't know what to do during pregnancy. To improve this situation, we have to focus on training midwives. The Department of Family Planning with the support of local government office could do the registration of



PARTICIPANTS



midwives. We could engage Imams because they are important components in the society, they can play a vital role in awareness-building programmes. I personally emphasise on training modules for midwives and organising training programmes.

Dr. Subhamay Majumdar, Chief Health Officer, Sylhet City Corporation One of the major causes of maternal death is bleeding. We could reduce 80 percent of maternal mortality if we can stop the problem of bleeding. If we want to address the complexity of maternal health, we have to concentrate on Antenatal Care (ANC) and Postnatal Care (PNC) services. We need to train our midwives and paramedics. We have

we have women police personnel on duty. We know that the rate of maternal mortality is very high in Sylhet.

Monita Sinha, Aysha Siddika, Trainee Midwife/Nurse

When we joined the midwife training programme, we find out that our working area will be villages and our target group is mothers who are living in remote areas. What we found, mainly, is that many women living in rural areas also suffer from Fistula. They have a lesser understanding of hygiene. If we could reach them with the service, then we can minimise Fistula. We have to organize counselling of mothers in every village and provide incentive care for those who have pregnancy complexities. We believe prevention is better than cure. We could do counseling for prevention. It will help us reduce the maternal mortality rate. We are proud of supporting those mothers who are deprived from services. Neighbours and fellow villagers are more comfortable in sharing their problems with us in our villages than other people. We could serve better in our native village or area rather than elsewhere. It would be a struggle to serve people in other areas. We request the government to recruit three midwives in every union and urge for homogenous posting. It will create a better chance to improve maternal healthcare.

Brigadier General (Dr.) Md. Abdus Sabur Miah, Director Sylhet MAG Osmani Medical College Hospital, Sylhet Bangladesh has experienced a dramatic decrease in maternity mortality rate and credit must be given to the government for giving this issue importance. There has been a tremendous decrease in the number of child marriages and the overall improvement of our education system especially for women. What we need to do is work together as a single force and concentrate our effort on improving maternal, neonatal and child mortality in both the urban and rural areas.

We need to ensure standardization of district and upazilla health complex and should well equip these centers with trained health workers and skilled community-based birth attendants to improve deliveries in birth clinics. These health workers should be able to increase maternal care awareness in remote areas as well.

Women need to be educated and empowered about maternal health issues. Most importantly the pregnant woman's husband and family should be supportive and concerned about her condition. They should support in improving nutrition, ante and post natal checkups and should not encourage early marriage.

Kamal Ahmed Chowdhury, Professor of Sociology, Shahjalal University of Science and Technology

It is multilateral, multi-dimensional and multi-depth issue. It could not be solved by medical services alone. Bangladesh is a success story in child and mother healthcare. Thousands of people are going abroad as migrant workers and most of them are married. We have to concentrate on our maternal healthcare services especially for those women whose husbands are living abroad. The Government is trying to reduce the age of marriage from 18 to 16 years. This is unacceptable. There are many people who are unwilling to go to schools, colleges, universities in Sylhet. People of Sylhet have to change their perception towards maternal health issues and I believe education can help to reduce the problem. We have community clinics and community healthcare providers. We need to engage them with midwifery training programmes and services. Thousands of people now depend on the healthcare services of clinics. Community healthcare volunteers should have the training of midwifery. We have to focus on institutional deliveries.

Mahfuz-ul Hasib Chowdhury, Senior Lecturer, Metropolitan University, Sylhet Corruption has to be addressed in this roundtable. In the last few days, I came across the news that most parents, who want their daughters married off before they turn 18, manage to get false birth certificates after bribing concerned authorities. Both child marriage and maternal health are interlinked. Child marriage is a common phenomenon in the countryside. Due to financial crisis, many parents mentioned that they are forced to marry off their daughters when they are very young. This is not the right way to overcome your financial vulnerability. If the government wants to achieve no child marriage within 2041, dispersing of illegal birth certificates must be stopped.