

OMS flour in black market

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Lalmonirhat

Authorised dealers in Sadar upazila of the district are allegedly selling fifty percent allocated *ata* (flour) meant for Open Market Sale (OMS) on the black market, depriving the ultra poor beneficiaries of the programme.

Although some of the beneficiaries manage to purchase the *ata* from the government authorised outlets but a good number of people return empty handed everyday.

A number of beneficiaries alleged that one kg *ata* is priced Tk 17 at OMS outlets, but the dealers sell it at Tk 23-24 on the black market which earned them an additional profit of Tk 5-6 illegally.

Asgar Ali, 45, a day labourer of Nayarhat area in the town, alleged that he went to purchase *ata* at an OMS outlet yesterday noon but returned home empty handed as the dealer stopped its sales, saying that the stock for the day was finished.

Sources at the district food office said the government launched open market sale of *ata* through 11 OMS outlets in the district.

Each dealer gets 1,000 kg *ata* every day to sell it among the beneficiaries. Every card holder can buy 5 kg of the item.

Abdur Rahim, a dealer in Banbhasa area of the town, said as the ultra poor people gathered in front of his OMS outlet early in the morning every day. There is no scope to sale the item on the black market before everyone's eyes.

Besides, the officials of the district food department monitor the outlet throughout the day, he said.



This newly built Shaheed Minar at Demra Kaderia Tayeba Dakhil Madrasa in Faridpur upazila of Pabna is one of the 2,800 Shaheed Minars to be built in educational institutions in the district by the end of the month.

Murder accused killed in 'gunfight'

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Dinaipur

An accused of six murder cases, who was sentenced to death by a Joypurhat court five years ago, was killed in a "gunfight" between his cohorts and Rapid Action Battalion (Rab) in Joypurhat Sadar upazila early yesterday.

The deceased is Mohammad Safin, 29, of Dewanpara area in the upazila.

Major Hasan Arafat, commander of Crime Prevention Company (CPC) of Rab-5, said they arrested Safin from the district headquarters on Tuesday evening.

Later, Rab members along with Safin raided Dadra-Jointigram village to recover firearms around 3:40am.

Sensing their presence, Safin's associates opened fire towards the law enforcers prompting them to retaliate, triggering a "gunfight".

Safin was caught in the line of fire and died on the spot, Major Arafat said.

CHEAP RATED RICE FOR THE POOR 2,194 solvent men made to return special cards

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Thakurgaon

Illegal recipients have returned to the authorities at least 2,194 special cards, meant for providing cheap rate rice for the ultra-poor people, in 21 unions under Thakurgaon Sadar upazila till Tuesday.

On September 7, Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina formally inaugurated "Food-Friendly Programme" in Chilmari upazila of Kurigram.

Under the programme, selected poor people who have the special cards would get 30 kg of rice a month from local ration dealers at Tk 10 per kg during September-November and March-April when work opportunities are thin for poor people.

The beneficiary ultra-poor families were supposed to be listed by the local public representatives.

As in other areas, the cards were gradually distributed in all 21 unions of Thakurgaon Sadar upazila. As many as 27,244 cards were distributed in the upazila.

But many solvent people of the area received cards, and the matter drew criticism from cross section of the society.

A number of local influential people including ruling party activists started selling the rice, meant to be sold to the poor for Tk 10 per kg, to their well-off relatives or in the black market.

Some were even stockpiling the rice.

Against the backdrop, Thakurgaon Sadar upazila administration arranged announcement through megaphones, asking solvent recipients to submit their cards to local union parishad chairmen by Tuesday, or face stern action.

"The chairmen of the union parishads got the chance to make correction to the lists of beneficiaries under the programme meant for the poor. Accordingly, the cards were taken back from those who were not eligible," said Upazila Food Officer Hafiz Uddin.

Shaheed Minar in all Pabna educational instts by October

AHMED HUMAYUN KABIR TOPU, Pabna

Ninth-grader Sharmin Khatun is very happy as the authorities have built a Shaheed Minar at her madrasa and the students can place flowers there on Language Martyrs' Day.

The authorities of Bonwarinagar Senior Dakhil Madrasa in Faridpur upazila headquarters have erected the Shaheed Minar as part of a project to build one in every educational institution of the district.

"To arouse the spirit of the Language Movement among the students, we have ordered the upazila nirbahi officers (UNO) of nine upazilas to take steps so that all the educational institutions build Shaheed Minars on their premises," said Pabna Deputy Commissioner (DC) Rekha Rani Balo.

The district administration has fixed October 31 to complete construction of Shaheed Minars in 2,800 educational institutions, the DC added.

A month ago there were only four permanent Shaheed Minars in Faridpur upazila, and now there are 118, thanks to the local administration.

Faridpur UNO Md Tofayel Hossain said, "Each institution spent between Tk 25,000 to Tk 50,000, which came from the school fund and contributions by local people. Construction is finished, now decoration is going on. We expect to inaugurate all the newly built Shaheed Minars next month."

Faridpur Upazila Parishad Chairman Md Khalilur Rahman, also president of the upazila education committee, said most of the students in his upazila could not pay homage to the martyrs of the Language Movement due to the absence of Shaheed Minars, but that has changed.

Khalilur said the village students are happy now as they will be able to place flowers on the Shaheed Minars to commemorate the martyrs of the Language Movement.

Headmaster of Kashipur Government Primary School Rehana Parvin said the children observe February 21 at the temporary Shaheed Minar in the village, but now they can place flowers on the Shaheed Minar in the school.

This is the lone Shaheed Minar in Kashipur village, and the villagers feel proud that they have built it, she added.

Md Saidul Islam of Rautnagar village said the Shaheed Minar built in the primary school of the village highlights the spirit of the Language Movement, the first democratic movement that led to our independence, so they feel proud of it.

80-year-old woman burnt to death

A CORRESPONDENT, Faridpur

An 80-year-old woman was burnt to death when a fire broke out at her house in Sadar upazila of the district early yesterday.

The deceased is Buri Khatun, wife of Hanif Bepari of Diraj Mattabardangi village.

Deceased's son Selim Bepari said his mother, who had been suffering from mental disorder for long, used to stay at a room beside the kitchen which usually remains locked from outside.

Senior Station Officer Saifuzzaman of Faridpur Fire Station said the fire might have originated from the earthen oven of the kitchen and soon engulfed the adjacent room.

The fire fighters entered Buri's room by breaking open the door and found her dead inside, he added.



Locals caught two Rakhaine youths from Jainkathi area of Patuakhali town along with 13 monitor lizards (guisap) yesterday and handed them over to the police. Later they were produced before Sadar upazila nirbahi officer (UNO) who released the duo after learning that lizards are Rakhaine community's favourite food item.

Two children drown

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Lalmonirhat

Two children drowned in the Sangli river while bathing with their parents and villagers near no-man's land in Pachabhandar border area on Tuesday.

Their bodies were found floating in the river about two hours after they went missing, locals said.

They were identified as Arif Hossain, 6, son of Sirajul Islam, and Samiul Islam, 7, son of Maqbul Hossain, of Pachabhandar village under Patgram upazila of the district.

Family members said the two children were bathing in the river with their parents when they went missing.

Patgram Upazila Nirbahi Officer Noor Qutubul Alam said the children drowned due to carelessness of their parents.

DINESHCHANDRA'S 150TH BIRTH ANNIVERSARY Int'l literary conference begins in Manikganj today

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Manikganj

A three-day international literary and cultural conference will begin in Manikganj today.

Manikganj Sahitya O Sangskritik Parishad in Dhaka and Manikganj district administration are jointly organising the conference at Manikganj Government Boys' High School playground marking the 150th birth anniversary of Dr Dineshchandra Sen, a writer, educationist, researcher of Bengali folklore and Bengali literature.

Cultural functions will be held in the evening every day. Renowned singers Kiron Chandra Roy, Yasmin Mushtari, Rumana Islam, Malobika Roy, Jharna Rahman and Afroza Sultana Rubi will render songs.

Finance Minister Abul Mal Abdul Muhit will be present at the inaugural function as the chief guest while journalist Abul Moksud as main speaker.


Cultural Affairs Minister Asaduzzaman Noor will be present as the chief guest on the second day.

Dr Dineshchandra Sen was born in Bagjuri village of Manikganj on November 3 in 1866. His parental house was at Suapur village under Dhamrai upazila of Dhaka. His father Iswarachandra Sen practised at Manikganj court as a lawyer.

For his contribution to literature and research, Dineshchandra Sen was awarded the title of 'Raibahadur' by the then British Government in India in 1921. The same year, Kolkata University conferred upon him the degree of D. Litt (Doctor of Literature). In 1931, he received 'Jagattarini' gold medal. He died at Behala in Kolkata of India on November 20 in 1939.

Dr Dineshchandra Sen's first book "Kumar Bhupendra Singha", a narrative poem, was published from Comilla in 1890. While in Comilla, he started touring villages and collecting manuscripts of old Bengali writings.





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