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Your Right to Know

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Despite fertile land loss, weather stresses and depleting irrigation water, Bangladesh's agriculture keeps contributing a fifth of the GDP each year. Along with other factors, government's policy support in the form of fertiliser subsidy plays a big part here. But misappropriation of the key agro input by a syndicate involved in shipment and transport, and mismanagement by the authorities, in this case Bangladesh Chemical Industries Corporation, have tainted this otherwise commendable effort. If such large-scale corruption is outrageous, the culture of impunity within the corridors of the BCIC and elsewhere is worrisome. This systematic graft has cost the state about Tk 100 crore each year since 2009. In this four-part report, HASAN JAHID TUSHER exposes the corruption in the fertiliser sector. The last part today.

FERTILISER RIDDLE 4

Farmers in pain as cartels gain

2 syndicates making money by controlling trade, transportation of TSP, DAP; farmers forced to buy these fertilisers at much higher prices

If you were a farmer and went to buy locally produced TSP and DAP, you can't buy it at the government-fixed retail price. You have to pay at least 50 percent more.

It is because two syndicates have been in control of the distribution of these two important fertilisers for around two decades, thanks to a flawed distribution system.

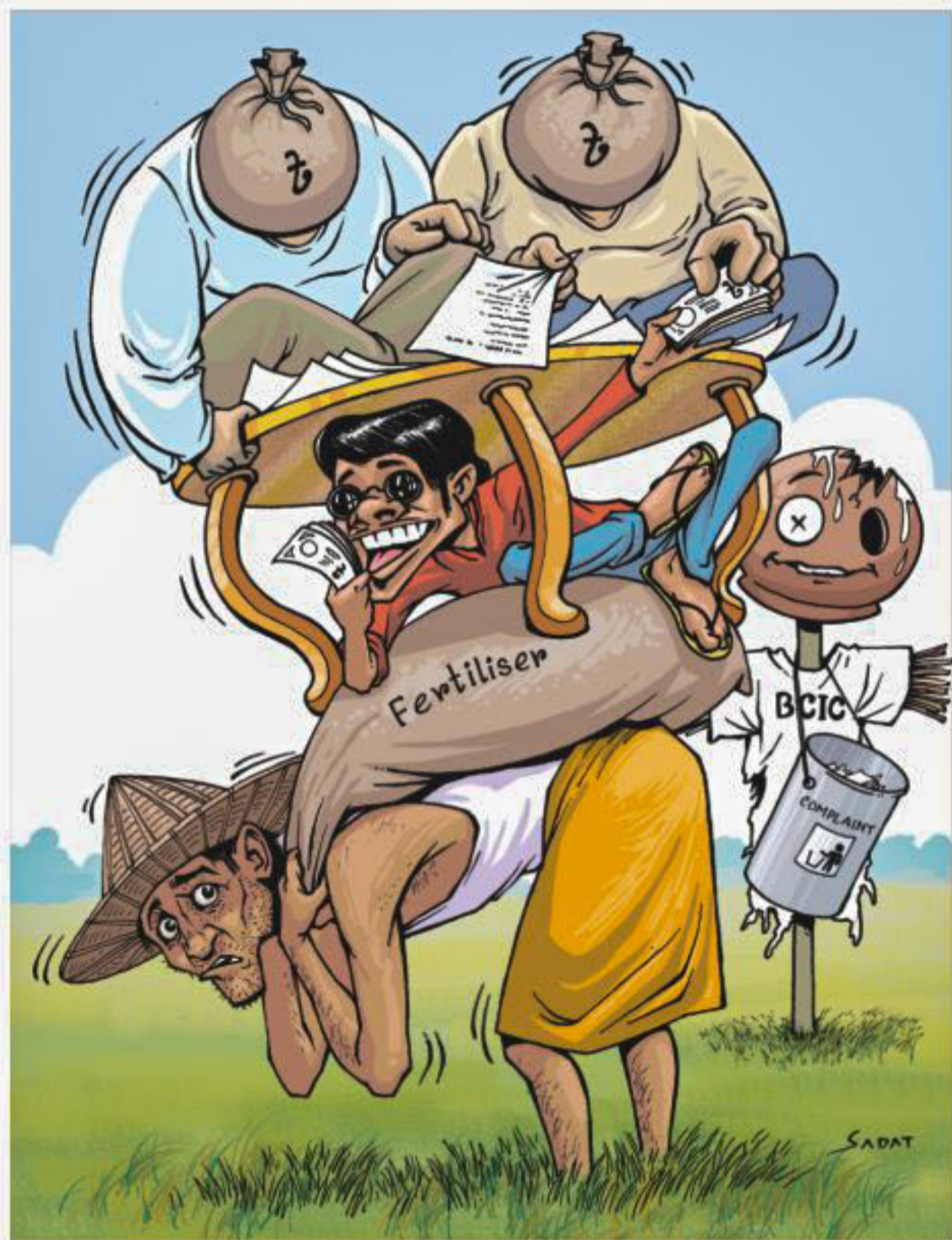
The annual demand for TSP (triple super phosphate) and DAP (diammonium phosphate), two phosphorus fertilisers, is around 15 lakh tonnes, according to the agriculture ministry.

Of this, about 13 lakh tonnes are imported and distributed by the Bangladesh Agriculture Development Corporation. But the distribution of the rest 2 lakh tonnes, produced locally, is in the hands of the syndicates.

The two syndicates in Chittagong have taken the trade and transport of TSP and DAP in their grip, making hefty profits at the expense of farmers, according to a BCIC probe report.

When the official price of a bag of TSP is Tk 1,000 and DAP Tk 1,150, farmers pay at least Tk 1,500 and Tk 1,650. This

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It was quite a different morning for the people of Tungipara in Gopalganj yesterday as they saw none other than Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina enjoying a ride on a rickshaw van. She took a 15-minute trip on the van along with her family members, including grandchildren. The PM went to Gopalganj on Thursday to open the 11th National Rover Moot.

PHOTO: PMO

Trump hosts UK PM as first foreign leader

Russia, UK-US relations, Nato top agenda for talks; Putin-Trump phone call to take place today

AGENCIES

US President Donald Trump yesterday said he wanted to have good relations with Russia and declined to say whether he was ready to lift sanctions on Moscow, which visiting British Prime Minister Theresa May said must stay in place.

Speaking at a news conference after his first meeting with a foreign leader at the White House since becoming president, Trump said he hoped to have a "fantastic relationship" with Russian President Vladimir Putin, but he said it was possible that would not occur, reports Reuters.

Sanction on Russia should stay: Theresa May

Great relations with Russia, China would be positive: Trump

Any move by the White House to lift sanctions against Russia for its actions in Ukraine would likely cause consternation among European allies who believe sanctions should be lifted only if Moscow complies with the West's conditions on Ukraine.

Those concerns would be compounded at home, where many in the US Congress are vehemently opposed to Putin's actions in Ukraine and Syria as well as what US intelligence agencies have concluded was Russian meddling in the US election campaign.

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Railway staffer dies while saving girl

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A railway staffer died while saving a girl from a train accident near Kuril in the capital yesterday.

Badal Mia, 55, was a technical assistant at the engineering department of Bangladesh Railway.

One of his co-workers Sohel Rana, a witness, told The Daily Star that the incident happened around 12:30pm when a group of railway staff was doing maintenance work of the railway tracks near the Kuril Biswa Road.

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Overseas Chinese Association in Bangladesh

恭祝 在孟加拉国工作、生活、学习的全体中国同胞

新春快乐、万事胜意、身体健康

祝福祖国繁荣昌盛、人民幸福，祝愿中孟友谊长存

To all the Chinese compatriots who live, work and study in Bangladesh,
Wishing you and your family a happy new year! May you enjoy joy, success and good health.
Wish our great country prosperous and thriving, people a happy life,
and wish the friendship between China and Bangladesh last forever!

By OCAB (Overseas Chinese Association in Bangladesh)



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