

OPEN-MARKET SALE OF ONIONS

A first-time experience for many Ctg residents

|| ARUN BIKASH DEY ||



PORT CITY CHRONICLES

People of Chattogram city line up to buy onions from Trading Corporation of Bangladesh (TCB) trucks at a fair price. PHOTO: STAR

It is not that open-market sales (OMS) of essentials at lower than market prices are unforeseen in the port city. Trucks of Trading Corporation of Bangladesh (TCB) often sell rice, lentils and other daily groceries at various points of the city. However, there has been a marked difference in their latest stint of sales than previous times.

Sanjida Akter, a master's student of Government Hazi Muhammad Mohsin College, is not used to shopping for groceries. Her father, a schoolteacher, usually buys daily essentials from kitchen markets, while her mother sometimes takes it upon her to do so. Sanjida never thought she would stand in queue on a street to buy essentials sold out of a truck, but then again, not many limited-income families like hers had thought they would have to bear the brunt of astronomical

prices of onions.

Sanjida was seen standing in a queue to buy onion from the truck of TCB in front of Parade Corner on Chattogram College Road yesterday.

"I came to my college to attend classes and was returning home when I saw the truck of TCB selling onions at Tk 45 per kg," said Sanjida, adding, "I instantly decided to stand in the queue."

"My family needs 3.5 to 4kg onion per month, but when the price crossed Tk 200, my father could not afford it, and my mother has to face challenges to cook food everyday managing the deficit," she said. "I never thought of buying daily essentials standing in a queue on the road, but I had to do it today."

Like Sanjida, a group of students from Chattogram College and Hazi Muhammad Mohsin College were seen in the queue to buy onion at the lucrative price.

Tripti Barua, a fourth-year honour's student of Chattogram College, said seeing her friends in the queue, she also stood in line to buy onions.

"At first, it felt awkward to stand in a queue, but when I saw many of my friends standing in line, I thought to myself I had no reason to be shy," she said.

Salesman Selim said every customer was being given one kg onion at Tk 45. This correspondent visited different kitchen markets in the port city yesterday, and found a kg of onion was being sold for Tk 180 to Tk 200.

Another long queue was seen in Jamal Khan intersection in front of a TCB truck from which emerged

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WATER TRANSPORT WORKERS' STRIKE

32 lakh tonnes of goods stranded at Ctg port

DWAIPAYAN BARUA, Ctg

Unloading of imported bulk cargo from the outer anchorage of Chattogram port and different private jetties (ghats) across the country, as well as transport of previously-unloaded goods by lighter vessels through inland water routes remained suspended since early hours of yesterday, due to a wildcat work abstention enforced by a section of water transport workers.

The strike, however, was called off last night.

Yesterday, around 1,343 cargo vessels from across the country, including 57 large mother vessels at the outer anchorage of Chattogram port remained stranded with some 32 lakh tonnes of imported goods.

The goods include coal, stone, industrial raw materials like cement clinker, slag, fertiliser and different commodities.

Import goods brought by large vessels are usually unloaded to lighter ones at the outer anchorage of Chattogram port, and then transported to 37 private ghats and several other jetties, owned by industrial plants across the country.

According to Chattogram Port Authority (CPA), unloading of around 13.63 lakh tonnes of imported cargo from 57 mother vessels, anchored at the premier sea port's outer anchorage, remained stopped since midnight, immediately after lighter vessel workers stopped operating the vessels in support of the strike.

Transport and unloading of another 12.89 lakh tonnes of imported goods loaded at 986 lighter vessels, which are now staying at 37 different ghats at destinations including Majhirghat at Chattogram, Narayanganj, Mirpur, Khulna, Noapara, Baghabari, Barishal, Patuakhali and other areas came to a halt since midnight due to non-operation of the vessels, according to the data collected from Water Transport Cell (WTC), a private organisation that controls a big fraction of these lighter vessels.

Apart from these, around 5.40 lakh tonnes of industrial raw materials remained stuck at around 300 lighter vessels, owned and operated by 11 industrial groups like Meghna, City, S Alam, Premier cement and others.

Expressing concern over the stagnation of goods, Chattogram

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Don't compromise with ideals for personal gain

President urges teachers at RU convocation

UNB, Rajshahi

President Abdul Hamid yesterday called upon teachers not to compromise with ideals and principles for personal gain.

"A teacher must be a symbol of ethics and principles. As the chancellor, I get shocked seeing all the reports published in various media these days," the president said.

In different universities, he said, teachers are busy lobbying for various positions in the administration without attending their regular activities.

The president said this while addressing the 11th convocation of Rajshahi University at RU's Sheikh Kamal Stadium in the afternoon. Hamid also presided over the event.

He said many teachers do not even hesitate to use students for their own gain.

The president expressed his disappointment that students and teachers have forgotten about their ideal relationship and are now involved in transactions of mutual interest.

"This is disgraceful," he mentioned.

Hamid also reminded the teachers of their role and what people expect from them. The president asked teachers to uphold their dignity.

"You're very much aware politically. Political ideology and thoughts can vary, but don't let any of its negative effects fall

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President Abdul Hamid presents a crest to West Bengal's Vidyasagar University Vice Chancellor Prof Ranjan Chakrabarti at the 11th convocation of Rajshahi University yesterday. Education Minister Dr Dipu Moni was also present at the event as special guest.

PHOTO: PID

MIZMIZI HIGH SCHOOL IN N'GANJ

Final exam postponed for AL leader's programme

OUR CORRESPONDENT, N'ganj

A local Awami League leader of Narayanganj's Siddhirganj yesterday arranged a "doa mahfil" and feast on a high school premises, halting the final exams scheduled for the day.

The incident took place at the Mizmizi Paschim Para High School and Primary School of Narayanganj, where councillors of various wards of Narayaganj City Corporation, along with hundreds of leaders and activists of local Awami League, Jubo League and Chhatra League attended, said witnesses.

According to an invitation card obtained by this newspaper, Yasin Mia, the Siddhirganj thana unit general secretary of AL and also president of the school's management committee, organised the programme -- seeking eternal peace for "Bangabandhu and his martyred family members, martyrs of the Liberation War, deceased leaders and activists of Awami League, and my late parents and relatives".

School sources said organisers took over the school premises from Friday night in preparation of the event, with cooking arrangements starting from yesterday dawn.

Preferring anonymity, guardian of a sixth-grader said, "Today was the final exam of English first paper, scheduled to be held from 11am."

"Me and my son came to the school at about 10am and heard that the school authorities have cancelled the exam as a doa mahfil was being held that time," he added.

On the same day, English first paper exams for seventh and ninth grades were also scheduled, according to a copy of the final exam schedule of the school obtained by this newspaper.

Guardians expressed grievance as the school authorities cancelled the scheduled examinations without any prior notice.

Father of a ninth-grader said, "There was no need to cancel the final examination. Open places, community centres and fields were available to hold such kinds of events. They could have chosen any other place. It is unexpected."

Seeking anonymity, a teacher of the school

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'Serve people in a way that the recipient feels dignified'

Speakers urge at Lion's Club International seminar in port city

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Chattogram

Speakers at a seminar yesterday said one should serve people in a way that the person receiving the service feels dignified.

They were speaking at the District Governor's Call "Serve for Smile", organised by Lion's Club International, District 315-B4, Bangladesh at Chittagong Club in the port city.

Dr SM Shameem Reza, professor of the Department of Mass Communication and Journalism at Dhaka University, presented the keynote at the seminar.

He said every person should have the value of humanity.

He said members of Lion's Club through their service bring smiles to the faces of underprivileged people in the society.

"We should emphasise on humanity while planning for development. Development should not be justified with numbers," he said.

Prof Md Sekandar Khan and Ferdous Ara Aleem were honoured with gold medals at the event, for their contributions to social services.

Kamrun Malek, district governor of the club, presided over the seminar. "There are hundreds of languages around the world, but a smile speaks for all, she said.

"At a time when the country is developing, a single hungry person is a matter of shame for us," she said.

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1 killed, 11 injured in Madaripur road crash

CITY DESK

A man was killed and 11 were injured in a road accident on Dhaka-Khulna Highway at Doulatpur area under Shibchar upazila in Madaripur yesterday.

The deceased was Abdul Rouf Matabbar, 50, of Bhadrasan area under the same upazila. He was a former member of Bhadrasan union parishad.

Quoting locals, Abul Kalam Azad, officer in-charge of Shibchar Police Station said, "The accident took place when the driver of a Dhaka-bound bus of Sarbik Paribahan lost control over the vehicle and hit a motorbike around 11:30am. The motorbike passenger Abdul Rouf Matabbar and his son were severely injured and the bus fell into a roadside ditch. Ten bus passengers were also injured."

Locals rushed Rouf and his son to Faridpur Medical College Hospital, were an on-duty doctor declared the elderly man's death around 1:45 pm.

The other injured were taken to Shibchar upazila health complex, said the OC. Police seized the bus but the driver fled.

MUNSHIGANJ ROAD CRASH VICTIM DIES

Meanwhile, a man who was injured in a tragic road accident that killed nine people in Munshiganj, yesterday breathed his last at a hospital in the capital.

The deceased was identified as Jahangir, 42, a resident of Chonbari area under Sreenagar upazila of Munshiganj.

He was severely injured in the accident. He was rushed to a hospital in the capital and was kept on life support

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In preparation of Sylhet city and district Awami League's triennial rally, billboards and posters have covered seemingly every inch of the city. The photos were taken at the city's Chowhatta area yesterday.

PHOTO: SHEIKH NASIR

ANOMALY IN B-UNIT ENTRY TEST RESULTS

Cumilla University suspends admission, forms probe body

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Cumilla

All admission activities of B-unit were postponed and a three-member probe committee was formed yesterday by Cumilla University authorities, after a student placed 12th in the unit's admission test despite being absent during the exam.

The committee consists Dean of Engineering Faculty Dr Mohammad Syedur Rahman, Associate Professor of Physics Dr Sajol Chandra Mazumder, and Assistant Professor of Finance Md Emdadul Haque.

The probe committee has been asked to submit their report within the next three days to the university's vice chancellor.

Dr Abu Taher, registrar (in-charge) of Cumilla University, confirmed this.

One Sazzatul Islam placed 12th in the merit list, despite not appearing in the admission test of B-unit, held on November 8.

His name could not be found in the attendance sheet of his exam centre at Cumilla Teachers' Training College. All other examinees' signatures were on the sheet.

B-unit admission test committee's convener Professor Masuda Kamal declined to comment on the matter over phone.