

Benefits of a mango tree worth Taka 30 lakh

By Staff Correspondent

Incredible it may sound though, the value of a 40-year-old mango tree totals about Taka 30 lakh (16 lakh Indian rupees) in terms of the benefits derived during its life cycle, a recent research conducted by Indian scientists shows.

Disclosing this at a seminar on environment organised by the Nagorik Committee in Dhaka on Friday Dr Nawajesh Ahmed said researchers have calculated that a mango tree produces two lakh tonnes of oxygen and purifies one lakh ton of carbon dioxide in 40 years.

Through a cooling effect such a tree significantly improves its surrounding environment. A 40-year-old mango tree transpires one hundred gallons of water a day, he said.

An environmentalist, Dr Nawajesh Ahmed said a tree reduces velocity of wind around it, besides giving fruits and timber.

The research was conducted at the Indian Forest Research Institute, Dehradun, he said.

Dr Ahmed was delivering his keynote speech at the seminar presided over by Dr Khan Sarwar Murshid of the Nagorik Committee.

Prof K Ikhtyar Omar of Engineering University (BUET), Mueyedul Hasan and Sheikh Muhammad Shahidullah of the Nagorik Committee, Nurul Islam, Director, Botanical Garden, Deepa Sen of Comilla Proshika, Mahbubur Rahman of Bangladesh Bank, Dr Hafiz, Prof Anisur Rahman, Rahat Ahmed and Shamim Sultana took part in the discussion among others.

Trees give the maximum protection to soil from erosion. Annual per square kilometre soil erosion is 370 pounds in forests, compared to 1700 pounds in grassland and 2220 pounds in paddy field, Dr Ahmed said.

Showing satellite pictures, Dr Ahmed said the forest cover in Bangladesh has come down from 25 per cent in the 40s to less than nine per cent now. The Chakarta-Sundarbans have disappeared. The main Sundarbans was also encroached for shrimp and paddy farming. The state forests in Dhaka, Mymensingh and Tangail regions were mostly cleared. Unsustainable farming practices is causing serious soil erosion in the hills in Sylhet region, he said.

Dr Nawajesh Ahmed called for concerted efforts to increase forest cover, reduce industrial pollution, check un-planned use of agrochemicals, and guard against over-exploitation of land to conserve the environment. He emphasised the need for green movement taking lessons from other countries.

Prof Ikhtyar Omar called for making treatment of effluents from industries compulsory, if necessary, by granting soft loans. Environmental impact assessment should also be made compulsory at the planning and design stage of each industrial project, he said adding Bangladesh should take lessons from mistakes made in industrialised countries and prefer less polluting industries and promote the practice of waste reduction, recycling and reuse.

Sheikh Muhammad Shahidullah called for some mechanism to apportion responsibilities for global warming, and to collect compensation from the worst polluters for the developing countries which pollute less but are destined to face the worst environmental impacts.

He cautioned against efforts to contain floods by constructing embankments on riverbanks. We should also assess importance of rivers and their contribution to the environment, he suggested that people of flood prone areas should, instead, be motivated to live in clustered settlements protected from flood by ring embankments. Due importance should be given to river transportation, he added.

Mueyedul Hasan called for proper energy planning to reduce the dependence of people on trees to cook food.

Dr Hafiz drew attention to diseases associated with deterioration of environment.

Prof Anisur Rahman said that many innovations of our scientists which could be useful for conserving the environment were lying unutilised due to lack of attention. In his presidential address Dr Khan Sarwar Murshid said global environmental situation and its adverse impact on Bangladesh gave one a grim picture. But there were also ways of averting environmental disasters. He suggested the preparation of a plan on the basis of which citizens' groups could be mobilised to create general awareness for the purpose.



Islamic Constitution Movement brought out a procession following a rally at the northern gate of Baitul Mukarram in the city Friday evening. — Star photo

Mandela backs multiparty talks on interim govt

THOHOYANDOU, Aug 9: Nelson Mandela on Friday opened the first conference in South Africa of the African National Congress military wing with a call for the government's resignation, says AP.

Mandela reiterated that President F W de Klerk's National Party government must resign. But in a sign of flexibility, he said the ANC was willing to discuss with other political parties how to form an interim government representing all races.

His statement narrowed the positions of the ANC and government on negotiating a new constitution that would give voting rights to the nation's 30 million blacks.

De Klerk also has said discussion on some form of transitional leadership could top the agenda of a proposed multiparty conference, which would precede constitutional talks. But the government has rejected ANC calls for it to resign in place of an interim government.

Mandela hailed the ANC's military accomplishments in a speech at the start of the conference of "Spear of the Nation," attended by some 250 delegates, including ex-guerrilla fighters.

"It is thanks to the achievements of this army... that we are able to meet, discuss and plan our future not as fugitives but a recognised military wing of the ANC," he told the delegates.

The conference showed

how things are changing in South Africa as apartheid crumbles. The white government for years fought a bitter campaign to try to crush the ANC and its military wing.

Delegates stood in silence, some with raised fists, as Mandela read aloud a list of ANC fighters killed in action. There was a huge ovation for Mandela, a former commander of the military wing.

Business Day newspaper reported Friday that government ministers said a multiparty conference could take place in October. It said the ANC demand for a "sovereign interim government" remained a major obstacle.

Constitutional Development Minister Gerrit Viljoen said Friday he welcomed a statement this week by ANC Secretary-General Cyril Ramaphosa that the black opposition group was ready for a multiparty conference.

In his speech, Mandela said recent disclosures that the government secretly gave money to the rival Inkatha Freedom Party showed the need for an interim government during negotiations.

Such a government must include all parties and be formed to oversee a "definite and unambiguous time frame," Mandela said.

"For an interim government to assume office will require that the incumbent government resign and hand over power to the transitional administration," which would

take charge of all military and security forces, adopt a bill of rights and hold elections for a constituent assembly to draft a non-racial constitution, Mandela said.

Police gave money to the Inkatha Freedom Party until last February, 11 months after the government says it halted the payments, a newspaper reported Friday.

Another newspaper reported, police in the Kwa Zulu homeland, which is closely tied to Inkatha, were trained by the South African military to assassinate political rivals.

The reports apparently contradicted statements by President F W de Klerk regarding the scandal, which has damaged his government's credibility with the anti-apartheid opposition.

There was no immediate government response Friday. The African National Congress, the largest black opposition group and a bitter rival of Inkatha, said the disclosures corroborated its long-standing allegations that the government favoured Inkatha and used it to foment violence among black groups.

Five years of black faction fighting, mostly between supporters of Inkatha and the ANC, has killed more than 6,000 people.

The government has denied the allegations and said the money given Inkatha was to promote the group's opposition to international sanctions against South Africa.

Plea for Islamic laws

By Staff Correspondent

Islamic Shasantantra Andolon on Friday demanded of the government to introduce Islamic laws in the country.

Only introduction of Islamic laws and adherence to the edicts of Islam could establish peace and discipline in the present strife-torn society and ensure progress, the Andolon leaders told a rally in front of the Baitul Mukarram mosque.

Barrister Korban Ali, Maulana Atzul Hoq, Maulana Abdur Rashid, Noor Mohammed Akan, Prof ATM Hemayetuddin addressed the rally presided over by Maulana Abdul Khaer, Maulana Syed Mohammed Fazlul Karim (Peer-Charmonal) was the chief guest.

Speakers said that anarchy has been overthrown but anarchy and lawlessness remained in all strata of social life. Corruption, bribery and immoral acts have become the order of the day, they observed and exhorted the democratically elected government to take actions to stop them.

They said the Islamic Shasantantra Andolon would continue to fight for establishing Islamic laws in the country to remove all the vices from the society.

They also criticised the introduction of Value Added Tax saying it has rushed prices higher and demanded its withdrawal.

Expressing concern at the terrorist activities on the educational institutions, they alleged that neither the government nor the major opposition parties were eager to stop it. They also urged appropriate steps to stop it.

Govt indecision blamed for CU incidents

By Staff Correspondent

CHITTAGONG, Aug 9: The Chittagong University Sadharan Sikkhak Samaj today said the Vice-Chancellor of the university still remained hostage of a section of armed students due to "indecision" of the authorities, reports UNB.

Convener of the Sikkhak Samaj Dr. Manzur Morshed Mahmud in a written statement disagreed with the Education Minister and said the Syndicate in its April 4 meeting empowered the law enforcing agencies to intervene in curbing violence on the campus.

Islamic Chhatra Shibir, backed Sangrami Chhatra Oikkya continued its programme of gherao for the ninth day today demanding removal of VC Prof Alamgir Mohammad Sirajuddin.

Radio tower collapses in Poland

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WARSAW, Aug 9: A 646-metre (710-yard) radio tower, among the tallest such constructions in the world, toppled during renovation work, Polish radio reported Friday, says AP.

A small fire broke out after the Thursday evening collapse when pieces of the tower fell on a trailer where acetylene containers were stored, said Col Adam Kasprzyk of the provincial fire brigade.

A crane also was buried by the falling metal, and overall damage was estimated at 300 billion zlotys (27 million dollars), according to the radio report.

The tower was used for Polish radio transmissions in the country and abroad. However, transmissions were rerouted and not seriously disrupted by the collapse, the report said.

Campus terrorism

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Ordinance remained in force. Sheikh Hasina was addressing a group of students of the Dhaka University FH Hall at the Bangabandhu Bhaban. The students joined Chhatra League (S-A) under the leadership of Mostaqur Rahman, the AGS of hall students union.

Welcoming the students, Sheikh Hasina said their joining BCL would strengthen the anti-terrorist movement of the organisation.

The AL chief said her party would cooperate with the Government for ending terrorism in the campus. "But the Government will have to be sincere in this regard," she maintained.

She mentioned that AL had placed two bills in parliament for the repeal of the Indemnity Ordinance and for ensuring independence of the judiciary. She expressed the hope that

these bills would be passed unanimously as happened in the case of the Constitution 12th Amendment Bill for switching over to parliamentary system.

The Leader of the Opposition pointed out that the establishment of parliamentary democracy was Awami League's commitment during the parliament election. "We fulfilled that commitment even remaining in opposition and it is the victory of the people," she added.

Sheikh Hasina deplored that the major educational institutions of the country remained closed due to conspiracy of a certain quarter which hampered education of the country. She said mass education was essential for increased production which would bring economic emancipation of the people.

BCCI depositors to get advances

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that the facilities for interest-free advances would be available to those BCCI operators whose balances or actual deposits with the Bank stood at Taka 50,000 or less as on July 4.

He added that there would be no limit on such interest-free advances for those maintaining non-resident foreign currency deposit (NFC) accounts with the BCCI. But, no advances will be made in those cases where there were liens involving deposits (meaning deposits used as security or collateral against any credits).

Saifur Rahman further said that the NFC account holders with the BCCI would also get the renewal facilities for their deposits. Such renewal facilities would be extended through Agrani Bank.

Replying to a question, the Minister said that there were 640 NFC account holders with the BCCI in Bangladesh as on July 4 with their deposits totalling about Taka 56 crore.

Saifur Rahman said that arrangements had already been taken to recover the outstanding credits from the concerned borrowers in accordance with the repayment terms, conditions and schedule in each specific cases of outstanding credits. Efforts for credit recoveries will be stepped up further, he added.

Replying to a question, he said that Agrani Bank had also been designated by Bangladesh Bank for credit recovery operations relating to the BCCI borrowers. This arrangement is perfectly in order with the provisions of Bank Company Act 1991, he stated.

Explaining the new arrangements for interest-free advances for the BCCI depositors, Saifur Rahman said that such advances would be the first lien on the BCCI's statutory deposits with Bangladesh Bank as the central bank.

About Taka seventy to eighty crore will be involved for the purpose and the amount will be adjusted against the deposits of individual account holders with the BCCI as and

when the Bank's affairs will be settled, he added.

Replying to a question, he said that the BCCI's cash deposits and other statutory reserves in the forms of government bonds and securities stood at about 28 per cent of its total deposits of about Taka 500 crore in Bangladesh, as on July 4. The normal requirement for such reserves of any operational bank is 23 per cent of total deposits.

There were 29,700 clients of BCCI in the country at the time of its temporary suspension of transactions. Of them, 25,000 were local Bangladeshis clients.

The Finance Minister said that the new arrangements for advances would facilitate the release of the entire amount of deposits of about 15,000 BCCI clients in Bangladesh, he added.

He said that the decision to extend interest-free advances to the BCCI depositors was taken at the directive of Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia given on consideration of the plight of the small depositors

with the Bank.

Replying to a question, the Finance Minister said that the BCCI operations in Bangladesh were relatively better than many other banks. "It has been a good going banking concern," he added.

Saifur Rahman said, the government is considering several alternatives or options to untangle the BCCI knot. "We are also in contact with the majority shareholders of the Bank in the UAE," he added while noting that Foreign Minister Mostafizur Rahman would be discussing the issue with the concerned authorities in Abu Dhabi during his current visit to the UAE. The Foreign Secretary had also earlier discussed the matter with the authorities there, he stated.

The Finance Minister said that the deposits of the Bangladesh missions in Republic of Korea, France and Canada were stuck up because of the liquidation process involving the global operations of the BCCI.

The Midnight File

Soviet gold miners threaten strike

MOSCOW, Aug 9: Workers at the largest gold mining and processing centre in eastern Siberia have formed a strike committee and are demanding better working and living conditions. Workers at the Baikalokolomb mining complex also want a share of the foreign currency earnings from Soviet gold sales. If their demands are not met, they threatened to suspend gold deliveries to the state, Interfax reported Friday, says AP.

US, S Korea agree on withdrawal of nuclear bomb

SEOUL, Aug 9: U.S. and South Korean officials have agreed to consider removing nuclear weapons allegedly kept in the southern part of the Korean peninsula if North Korea renounces its nuclear arms development programme, a newspaper reported Friday. The agreement came in secret security talks in Honolulu Tuesday and Wednesday. South Korea's influential Chosun Ilbo quoted government sources as saying, reports AP.

16 killed in Nanning blast

BEIJING, Aug 9: An explosion killed 16 people and injured more than 80 others today when a store of homemade ammunition ignited in the downtown of a southern Chinese city. The blast occurred in the afternoon in the heart of Nanning, capital of Guangxi autonomous region, and also damaged 29 houses, the state television said, reports AFP.

Colon cancer gene isolated

WASHINGTON, Aug 9:

Researchers have isolated a mutated gene that causes an inherited colon cancer and may play a key role in other forms of the killer disease, reports AP.

The discovery may lead to screening tests in families where colon cancer is common and the development of drugs to treat the disease, the researchers said.

In separate studies to be published Friday, researchers at Johns Hopkins University Medical School and the University of Utah report they have found that a gene is mutated or missing in patients with familial adenomatous polyposis coli, a condition that nearly always leads to colon cancer at an early age.

Ken Kinzler of the Hopkins team said the studies strongly suggest that the gene, dubbed APC, must be flawed or missing to start development of most colon cancers. That means that finding a drug to compensate for the mutated, non-working gene may prevent or cure colon cancer, he said.

The hope is that if we understand how this thing (mutated gene) works, then we can take an intelligent approach in designing drugs to

It was due to Col (ret) Shawkat

By Staff Correspondent

Col (ret) Shawkat Ali MP of Awami League made the difference in division vote counting in the Jatiya Sangsad when the Constitution 11th and 12th Amendment Bills were passed on August 6 night.

It is gathered that he was late in coming to parliament and could not cast his vote when division votes on the amendments to the two bills were taken. He was attending a wedding reception of his son.

Col Shawkat Ali rushed to the House when he got the message that voting had started and finally succeeded in casting vote in the second round of division votes.

Thus while in the first division vote on amendments to the 12th Amendment Bill showed 306 votes in favour, the second division vote on the bill itself showed 307.

Out of the 219 existing members of the parliament (11 seats lying vacant) ten MPs — four each from AL and Jatiya Party, one from BNP and one independent member — were not present in the House during the voting. Deputy Speaker Sheikh Razzak Ali who presided over the sitting, and Speaker Abdur Rahman Biswas did not have to cast votes.

AL, BKSAL merger now Aug 14

By Staff Correspondent

Formal merger of BKSAL with Awami League will now be on 14 August.

The Executive Committee of BKSAL has already decided to merge the party with AL which will be endorsed at its special council session, the merger will be announced at the same session after the endorsement where Awami League Chief Sheikh Hasina has been invited to attend.

The council session was scheduled for August 13 at the Institute of Engineers, but the date was shifted to August 14 for some unavoidable reasons, says a party source.

Vietnam

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ers who seized control of the watershed sixth Communist Party congress in December 1986, ousted the hardliners and began the difficult transition from highly centralized socialism to a more market-oriented economy.

help defeat the cancer," Kinzler said in an interview. "If you don't know what's broken, you can't fix it."

Cancer of the colon and rectum is the second leading form of lethal cancer, annually killing about 60,000 Americans. Only lung cancer is more lethal.

The report on the Hopkins study is to be published in the journal Science. The study by the Utah and Howard Hughes Medical Institute team led by Dr Raymond White is to be published in the journal Cell.

White said the simultaneous publication was by "prearrangement." The Utah and Hopkins researchers "are part of a coalition that has collaborated for several years now," he said.

Both teams studied the genetic makeup in cells taken from patients in families with inherited familial adenomatous polyposis coli, or FAP. The scientists concentrated on chromosome 5, a genetic location that previous studies suggested could hold a mutation.

The mutation was isolated to a single gene that was either missing or mutated in FAP patients. The gene was normal in unaffected patients.

In families with FAP, children who inherit the flawed gene develop thousands of colon polyps at a very young age. In almost all such cases, the polyps later become cancerous.

Kinzler said it was common practice to surgically remove the colon from patients known to have inherited FAP as soon as the polyps appear. FAP occurs in one in 5,000 Americans.

Kinzler and White said APC seems to act as a cancer suppressor gene.

Gunfight

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said a large number of workers including Bablu of BNP, Swapan and Biplab of Chhatra Dal and Khalequ of Jubo Dal had been injured in the attack.

Talukdar said BNP had no connection at all with the attack on the house of upazila chairman Nuruzzaman Biswas.

He called upon the local administration to take legal action against the miscreants who had attacked leaders of BNP, Chhatra Dal, Jubo Dal after a neutral inquiry of the incident.

Tamil

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the camp controlling the causeway that is the only land link between the mainland and the Jaffna peninsula where the Tigers are based.

The officials said that according to radio intercepts, 150 Tiger rebels were killed on Thursday when the army moved against bunkers surrounding the camp in a bid to extend and secure the perimeters.

Six soldiers were killed and 52 injured in Thursday's operation, they said, revising an earlier report to eight dead.

Since the battle began July 10, the government says 2,250 rebels and 179 soldiers have died. The Tigers dispute those figures, but have given none of their own since last week.

At least 7,000 people have been killed since June 1989 when the Tigers resumed their armed campaign for independence.

Pamila make up 18 per cent of Sri Lanka's 17 million people. They claim discrimination by the Sinhalese who account for 75 per cent of the people.

The Muslim community, about 7 per cent of the population, is concentrated in the troubled eastern province and has been caught up in the fighting between government troops and the rebels.

Mostafiz off to Iran, UAE

Foreign Minister A S M Mostafizur Rahman left Dhaka Friday on a five-day visit to Iran and the United Arab Emirates for talks on bilateral and other issues of common interest.

"Regional situation in the Gulf and the Middle East will come up for discussions with my counterparts in two countries in addition to different bilateral subjects," he told BSS prior to his departure.

The Foreign Minister will stay in Teheran for two days and visit the UAE on the second leg of the tour.

The visit to Iran would help strengthen the friendly ties that should normally mark the Dhaka-Teheran relationship, he said adding that trade, export of manpower and how best Bangladesh could participate in the reconstruction work of Iran would figure in the discussions.

In the UAE, the Foreign Minister said, different matters of bilateral interest including exchange of expertise will come up for talks.

"UAE is a very friendly country of Bangladesh and an important partner of our developmental efforts," Rahman said.

The Foreign Minister said a large number of Bangladesh nationals are working in the UAE and he would see if more Bangladesh nationals could be sent there.

"I shall also discuss the BCCI crisis there," he said adding that many Bangladesh depositors and creditors had been affected.

The Foreign Minister said he was carrying verbal messages from Prime Minister Begum Zia for Iranian President Rafsanjani and UAE President Zayed Al-Nahayan.

Soviet troops

BERLIN, Aug 9: The Soviet army is cracking down on its deserters in East Germany, prompting Bonn to relocate them in West Germany, reports AFP.

On Thursday, between 1,000 and 1,500 Red Army troops, backed by a helicopter, were mobilised to track down a 19-year-old recruit

OIC meet

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not adopted because time ran out, but Arab diplomats said the text, which was drafted by the host country, contained "unacceptable" praise of democracy.

Most of the Arab states in the OIC are monarchies.

At their first meeting since the start of the Gulf crisis, the OIC condemned Iraq's invasion of Kuwait and agreed to continue supporting the U N embargo against Iraq. It urged Baghdad to respect all relevant U N resolutions.

Iraq and Kuwait are both members of the organization, diplomatic sources said that Jordan, Yemen, Libya and, at times Iran opposed several resolutions condemning Iraq.

The Iraqi delegation, which left before the end of the final session, called the condemnations a demonstration of Washington's influence in the Islamic world.

German minister steps down for Stasi past

MAGDEBURG, Aug 9:

German minister resigned late Thursday after acknowledging he had been an informer for the former Stasi secret police, officials said today, reports AFP.

The resignation of Gerd Brunner, Deputy Prime Minister of the state of Saxony-Anhalt, brings to seven the number of top eastern German politicians whose careers since the 1989 revolution have been wrecked by alleged links with the Stasi.

Brunner, a 63-year-old liberal, who was also state minister for federal German and European matters, stepped down six days after the local press accused him of having worked with the Stasi since the 1950s.

He at first angrily denied the charges, but he announced his resignation after consulting Stasi files that showed a "statement of commitment" to working for the organisation, the sources said.

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