

Metropolitan

A high quality protein to combat malnutrition in Bangladesh

The people of Bangladesh may soon expect a new source of protein, reports UNB.

The country's scientists have developed an indigenous technique to grow the "future food," spirulina, a kind of very tiny algae, being used around the world as a high quality edible protein.

A group of scientists of Bangladesh Council for Scientific and Industrial Research (BCSIR), who developed the technique, believe that it could combat malnutrition as the country suffers chronic shortage of fish, meat and vegetable.

The microscopic algae is considered to be the highest source of protein with a relatively high amount of iron, Vitamins A and B-12, the BCSIR scientists say.

They hope that besides combating malnutrition, the algae can also fight diabetes

and prevent 30,000 children of the country going blind every year.

You can grow the plant in a 100-square-meter pond in your garden and its yields provide the necessary daily requirements of vitamin A for about 2,000 infants or five hundred adults.

Have it as health drink, or mix in tea and soft drinks. You can also prepare cake, biscuit, noodles, soup, icecream, dessert and other culinary delights out of this microscopic stuff.

Those suffering from anaemia or rheumatism or are shy of being obese, start taking spirulina, the BCSIR scientists prescribe.

Spirulina won the title "The best food of tomorrow" during a 1974 FAO Conference for its exceptional food value.

The tasteless blue-green algae grows in the high alkaline

water and is commercially produced as food in many countries in Europe, South East Asia and Latin America.

In the developed nations, business executives take spirulina to relax from stress, joggers and athletes take it for quick energy synthesis, and trekkers and back-packers carry it as a survival food.

Opening a seminar on spirulina here at the Alliance Francaise today, Education Minister Zamruddin Sircar suggested that besides being a nutrient, an emergency stock of the algae could be used to tackle unwarranted natural disasters like flood, drought and cyclone.

Malnutrition and night blindness, the major health problems confronting the country, could be minimised by largescale consumption of the plant, he said.

Organised by the Centre for

Scientific and Technological Information (CESTI), the seminar was also addressed, among others, by Deputy Leader of Jatiya Sangsad Prof Badruddoza Chowdhury, French Ambassador Serge Degallaix and Alliance Francaise Director Andre Raynourard.

Badruddoza Chowdhury said consumption of spirulina should be made popular to reduce child and maternal mortality in the country.

Himself a physician, Dr Chowdhury told UNB that doctors of the country could play a vital role in popularising the use of spirulina.

A host of scientists, representatives of donor agencies and NGOs attended the day-long seminar titled "Use of algae - A means to combat malnutrition."

AMIE exams from Nov 11

The postponed examinations of AMIE sections 'A' and 'B' have been rescheduled and will commence from November 11, says an Institution of Engineers press release on Sunday.

The revised programme of the examination has been published and sent to all examination centres. All examinees have been requested to contact their respective centres.

Birthday Greetings

4th Nov, 1991
To our beloved little Cousin Roshni, who lives far away in Toronto, Canada. Many happy returns of the day.

Shena & Sheahan Bhaiya

Dhaka Day by Day

A parliamentary watchdog

By Sabir Mustafa

It is pretty well accepted in the international community that the idea of independent civic rights groups successfully monitoring national elections received a decisive boost during the 1986 presidential elections in the Philippines.

In fact, so successful was a previously unknown organisation called NAMFREL or the National Citizens Movement for Free Elections in the Philippines, that Ferdinand E Marcos eventually found it impossible to hoodwink the world into believing he had won the election against Corason Aquino, when he had actually lost. The rest, as they say, is history.

The Philippines is scheduled to hold its first presidential polls in the post-Marcos era early next year, and NAMFREL is gearing up for yet another monumental task. To assess just how monumental the task is and whether any outside assistance is required to effectively monitor the polls, a six-member pre-poll survey team from the Washington-based National Democratic Institute went to Manila yesterday.

In addition to four Americans and one New Zealander, the NDI team also includes one civic rights campaigner from Bangladesh, Feroz M Hassan, who runs a business house when he is not worrying about elections or the democratic process.

turnout testifying to the mood of optimism among the electorate.

"Political parties, civic organisations and also government officials felt the role of international observers was essential in promoting confidence and participation in this year's Bulgarian elections", Hassan said, adding, "the presence of international observers and local independent monitors can validate election results in a country".

One of the main features of the Bulgarian polls was the parallel vote counts conducted by independent groups, Hassan said. The tally sheets from each polling centre was totalled up by those groups and later compared with officially-announced results. To everyone's relief, there was hardly any discrepancy between official and independent counts. In other words, there had been no "media coup".

Organising parallel vote counts has been set as one of the major aims of a new civic group called the Study and Research Group on Democracy and Socio-democratic Development (SRG), which is a broad-based offshoot of RBFR coordinated by Hassan.

"Parallel vote counts was one of the methods with which NAMFREL exposed Ferdinand Marcos's huge fraud in 1986, and we think such counts can help deter



Mr. Feroz M. Hassan of Bangladesh (2nd from right) with other international delegates visiting Bulgarian election officials.

"The main aim of this mission is to find out how the coming elections in the Philippines will be run, and whether local monitor groups will need any assistance from NDI or other international observers during the polls", Hassan, who heads the Remians Business and Professional Forum (RBPF), an association of old boys of the Residential Model School engaged in commerce or professions, said before flying off yesterday.

Feroz Hassan and other members of the NDI team will meet and discuss polls prospects with leading members of Filipino society, such as government leaders including Vice-President Salvador Laurel, media personalities, members of the Election Commission and parliament members. And of course, Marcos's nemesis, NAMFREL.

With the talking done and assessment made, NDI will still require an invitation from the Filipino government before following up the current visit with an observer team next year.

Feroz Hassan, who along with his RBFR colleagues and other poll monitoring organisations helped the NDI monitor our won parliamentary polls last February, already has one foreign poll monitoring under his belt.

He was Bangladesh's sole representative in the International Election Observer Mission sent to oversee the Bulgarian general elections Oct. 13 last, by the NDI and the National Republican Institute (NRI) jointly. The NDI and the NRI are affiliated bodies of the Democratic and Republican parties of the United States respectively.

After 45 years of one-party rule, the first multi-party elections in Bulgaria in July, 1990 did not live up to everybody's expectations, and certainly not of the opposition Union of Democratic Forces (UDF), which accused the ruling Socialist Party of massive rigging. But, Hassan said, the Oct 13 polls were held remarkably fairly and without much fear of intimidation, with an 80 per cent

fraud in future polls in Bangladesh too", Hassan said.

As yet, our Election Commission is not too keen on the idea, and is not willing to instruct presiding officers at polling centres to provide independent monitors with copies of tally sheets.

"But we will be trying to persuade the EC to allow independent groups to conduct parallel counts", Hassan said optimistically.

Things will not be easy here, Hassan admits. In the Philippines, NAMFREL was able to mobilise over 500,000 volunteers in 1986 to keep a close watch on polling centres. Whenever there was any report of intimidation at any centre, NAMFREL despatched truckloads of women chanting and singing. It worked. Not even the automatic gun-toting hoodlums could fire on singing women.

The SRG is also planning to undertake another piece of monitoring that Hassan views as essential in post-election Bangladesh: parliament watch.

"How does one know how one's member of parliament is performing?", he asks. So, the SRG will monitor who is doing what in parliament, what kind of legislations are being proposed and enacted, what role individual members are playing in the legislative process etc.

"A minister is accountable to parliament, and MPs are supposed to be accountable to their constituents. We will try and make it easier for people to understand who is doing what in parliament, and thus help people hold their MPs accountable for their actions in the House", Hassan said.

Before that can happen, the SRG will have to recruit young graduates and train them in the process of parliament watch. After that, Hassan said, SRG will bring out regular bulletins in plain language which everybody can understand.

Two Qatari painters due in city tomorrow

By Staff Correspondent

Two world famous Qatari painters Ali Hasan Al-Jaber, and Salman Ibrahim Al-Maleki arrive in Dhaka tomorrow (Tuesday) to attend the on-going fifth Asian biennial art exhibition.

Jaber is the head of the Exhibitions Department and Maleki the chief of Decoration Department of the Qatar National Museum. The two Qatari painters have made their mark in the world of painting.

The Qatari Charge d' Affaires Mr Mohammed Abdulla Al-Sabate told this correspondent on Sunday that his country's participation in the Asian art exhibition reflected deep bonds of brotherhood and friendship with Bangladesh. "Cultural and other relations of Qatar with Bangladesh will continue to grow in the coming days," Mr Abdulla Al-Sabate firmly said.

The Qatari envoy said his country has earned finesse in art and culture across the world. "We will be keen to share our experiences with the brotherly people of Bangladesh," he added.

CPB reiterates call for consensus on national issues

By Staff Correspondent

Effective party initiatives to check terrorism, price-hike of essentials and deterioration of law and order were emphasised at a central committee meeting the CPB yesterday.

Party General Secretary Nurul Islam Nahid in his report placed at the meeting also reiterated the CPB's call for consensus on the national issues and the acute problems.

The two-day meeting began at the party central office with Saifuddin Ahmed Manik, president of the CPB, in the chair.

The General Secretary's report also observed that such a consensus was an imperative for establishing democracy, social justice and ensuring national development as mentioned in the recently held fifth congress of the party.

The meeting also elected five presidium members of the party. They are: Ajoy Roy, Mujahidul Islam Selim, Md Nurul Islam, Dr Wajedul Islam Khan and Abul Kalam Azad. Besides, six members of the party secretariat elected in the meeting are: Mukul Choudhury, Lutfar Rahman, Mozammel Hossain Manju, Abul Kashem, MM Akash and Shamsunnahar.

Plea for compulsory fine arts in pry school level

The two-day international seminar on Asian Arts concluded in Dhaka Sunday with recommendations for compulsory incorporation of Fine Arts in the primary level education curricula of the countries in the region, reports UNB.

The seminar, held in connection with the inaugural of the 5th Asian Art Biennale Bangladesh 1991 in the capital, also suggested setting up of an Asian Artist Foundation in Dhaka.

Artists from 13 Asian countries and representatives from France and Soviet Union participated in the seminar held at the Shilpakala Academy auditorium.

They observed that Asian Arts regained its prestigious legacy using indigenous format and style and hoped that it would flourish further off-set

ting its backlash in the context of contemporary world art.

The seminar, split in to three sessions, were chaired by Paritosh Sen of India, Mulaidee Mahmood of Malaysia and Syed Jahangir of Bangladesh.

Gerard Jurigera of France, Kim Ar Bhang of North Korea, Hu Jin Ju of China, Kuruda Rajee of Japan, Anna Mohammad Zaripov of Soviet Union, Mukesh Malla of Nepal, Gazala Mesbah of Pakistan and Rabiul Hussain, Dr Syed Manjurul Islam and others from the home side participated in the discussion, said a press release.

German expert speaks on democracy today

Prof. E.O. Czempel of the Department of International Relations of J.W. Goethe University, Frankfurt will deliver a speech today (Monday) at 4.30 pm at the German Cultural Centre on "Democracy and Federalism as Organising Principles of Modern Government".

Prof Czempel came to Dhaka for three days on invitation of German Cultural Centre, Goethe Institute, Dhaka.

He will deliver another speech tomorrow (Tuesday) at 4 pm at the same venue for the teachers and students of International Relations of Dhaka University on "World Policy of the Federal Republic of Germany".

Earlier on Sunday Prof Czempel spoke on the same topic at the Bangladesh Institute of International and Strategic Studies (BISS).

Release of Suu Kyi demanded

Bangladesh Human Rights Commission Sunday demanded release of Nobel Peace Prize Winner Burmese leader Aung San Suu Kyi who is critically ill in Rangoon after going on hunger strike, reports UNB.

The Commission in a statement expressed indignation in her unlawful arrest by the ruling military junta State Law and Order Restoration Council (SLORC) and termed it as flagrant violation of human rights.

It called upon the United Nations and United States to intervene in the matter relating to transgression of human rights by the Myanmar ruling clique.

In a signed statement Secretary General of the Commission M Saiful Islam Dildar demanded mobilisation of world public opinion in favour of release of the detained Burmese leader Suu Kyi and an end to torture and oppression allegedly being perpetrated upon the people's leader.

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Weather

Dry spell to prevail

Light rain or drizzle is likely at one or two places over Khulna and Chittagong divisions during the next 24 hours till 6 pm today, reports UNB.

Met office says weather is, however, may remain mainly dry elsewhere across the country.

Night temperature is likely to remain nearly unchanged over the country.

Sunday's maximum temperature in Dhaka was 28.5 degree Celsius and the minimum 22.1 degrees. Country's lowest temperature 16.5 degree Celsius was recorded at Dinajpur.

Percentage of humidity was 78 in the morning and 70 in the evening.

Sun sets today (Monday) at 5.18 pm and rises tomorrow (Tuesday) at 6.07 am.

Temperature and humidity in some cities and towns on Sunday were:

Cities/Towns	Temperature		Humidity	
	Max	Min	9 am	6 pm
Dhaka	28.5	22.1	78	70
Chittagong	27.7	22.9	85	-
Khulna	30.5	21.0	76	89
Barisal	28.2	23.5	86	91
Sylhet	30.0	19.1	72	82
Rangpur	29.4	17.0	80	80

GOLD LEAF

ITF MEN'S SATELLITE CIRCUIT, DHAKA '91

Date : November 02 - 08, 1991
Venue : Tennis Complex Ramna Green, Dhaka

Participating Countries:
Canada, Italy, Germany, U.S.A., Ireland, Japan, Sweden, Switzerland, Holland, Macau, Pakistan, Oman and host Bangladesh.

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