

Chinese scientist says Integrated farming to boost production

By Staff Correspondent

A Chinese scientist said in Dhaka yesterday that integrated farming by using wastes as fertilizer and fish feed could improve agricultural production in Bangladesh despite the decline in its soil fertility.

He said it was possible to cultivate paddy in water and produce 28 tonnes of rice per hectare without any fertilizer and much investment.

The integrated approach of farming means one has to utilise crop cultivation, forestry, livestock and fisheries simultaneously, said Prof George L Chan at a seminar held at the Green Bank head office in the city.

By systematic management of wastes, fish feed can be produced from manures of livestock, which can also be utilised as fertilizer. Under this system, crops, forestry, fisheries and livestock will supplement each other's production level.

The whole system of such integrated farming, he said, is being termed as 'sustainable agriculture production system', which is totally environment-friendly and could also raise the soil fertility level of Bangladesh.

The seminar was also addressed by Deputy Managing Director of the Bank, Muhammad Khaled Shams, Managing Director Muhammad Yunus was also present.

Chan observed that thousands of ponds in Bangladesh could be utilised as part of the integrated farming.

He also called for setting up biogas plants, utilizing the wastes, for cheap fuel.



George L Chan

"Under the integrated farming system in Vietnam, one earns as much as US 400 dollars from the fishes of one pond a year," he pointed out.

Senator Harkin welcomes MOU on child labour

US Senator Tom Harkin has welcomed the memorandum of understanding MOU on elimination of child labour from Bangladesh's garments industry and hoped other developing countries would follow it, reports UNB.

"As this agreement is implemented and enforced, it will be a historic step toward the elimination of child labour," Harkin said in a statement made available in the city yesterday.

"I am hopeful that soon other developing countries will take note and soon follow Bangladesh's lead," said the American lawmaker who had introduced the much-talked-about Harkin Bill to the Congress seeking ban on goods produced with child labour.

He also commended Bangladesh Garments Manufacturers and Exporters Association (BGMEA), United Nations Children Fund (UNICEF) and International Labour Organisation (ILO) for signing the MOU.

Death penalty

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The President was read out by the Speaker, the Deputy Leader of the House, Prof Badruddoza Chowdhury, regretted the continued boycott of the two budget sessions by the Opposition MPs and said the present political impasse was created by the opposition parties.

Speaker Shaikh Razzak Ali said the Business Advisory Committee had earlier decided to continue the session till July 16. But at a meeting yesterday, the committee revised its earlier decision as a large number of MPs had left the capital for their constituencies affected by sudden flooding.

At around 9:50 pm, the Speaker read out the prorogation order. Leader of the House and Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia was not present at the House as she was on a visit to the flood-hit areas.

The budget session which began on June 15, had 17 working days during which eight bills were passed. A total of 18 notices on matters of public importance were disposed of and some 200 questions were asked by treasury bench members. The budget for 1995-96 financial year was passed on June 29.

The other important part of the 20th session was that more than 140 opposition MPs crossed the constitutional limit of absence on the second sitting day on June 19. According to the Constitution, a member will vacate his seat if he remains absent for 90 consecutive sitting days without the leave of the House.

President Abdur Rahman Biswas had last week referred the matter to the Appellate Division of the Supreme Court for interpretation of the relevant provisions of the Constitution. He had also requested the Speaker, through the Law Minister, to refrain from informing the House about the consecutive 90-day absence until the Supreme Court gives its decision on the matter.

Hasina donates Tk 2 lakh for flood victims

By Staff Correspondent

Awami League chief Sheikh Hasina yesterday handed over Taka two lakh to the party's sub-committee on social welfare for carrying out relief operations in the flood-hit districts.

She instructed the sub-committee to gear up relief work.

The meeting called for "starting" relief operations in all the affected areas immediately.

PM visits

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ability of pure drinking water to the flood affected people to save them from post-flood diseases.

The Prime Minister later visited a flood shelter at the district collectorate office.

About 2.33 lakh flood affected people have taken shelter in 95 flood shelters opened by the district administration.

The Prime Minister told the local political leaders that none of the flood-hit districts would be declared disaster area. She urged the local MPs to stay in their constituencies and look after the flood victims.

She directed the police administration to take necessary measures to check the incidence of theft and dacoity in the flood affected areas.

Earlier, Begum Khaleda Zia addressed a gathering at Sirajganj University College ground in the town and assured all-out assistance to the flood affected people of the district.

At the Gaibandha Circuit House, the Prime Minister held a meeting with the officials of the district administration.

The Prime Minister also addressed a gathering here.



Cooking on despite knee deep water inside a kitchen at Gaibandha town. — Star photo by Rezaul Haque

The very poor as poor as ever

By Staff Correspondent

In 1994 the moderate poor made some improvement in their material condition over the previous year's while the state of the extreme poor remained unchanged. So observed yesterday the Rural Poverty Update, a monitoring report made annually since 1990.

However, there has been distinct improvement in some areas of extreme poverty such as vulnerable housing, access to clothes and footwear.

Disclosing the highlights of the Rural Poverty Update 1994, at a seminar yesterday Hossain Zilur Rahman, a research fellow of Bangladesh Institute of Development Studies (BIDS) said, rural poverty is still the single most important development challenge facing Bangladesh.

The BIDS has been monitoring the rural poverty in the country, under the Analysis of Poverty Trends Project, since 1990.

The present report is the third in the series of annual updates on rural poverty.

Representatives from different development agencies and non-governmental organisations (NGOs) attended the meeting held at BIDS conference room. Mr Abu Abdullah presided.

The survey was conducted on 62 villages situated in different parts of the country.

The report said, the females are the worst victim among the rural poor, as "the burden of poverty falls disproportionately on the female half of the population."

Though rural poverty is a general

Floods

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thana. Some 10,000 flood victims have taken shelter in 32 centres.

One of the six groins built along the western bank of Brahmaputra under a Taka 200 crore FAP programme has been washed away. These groins were built at Gadari union to check erosion and to control flood. Portions of Gaibandha-Sadullapur and Gaibandha-Balashi roads were inundated as the Brahmaputra and Ghagot rivers continued to rise.

Flood situation in Sherpur district worsened further yesterday following more breaches in Brahmaputra Flood Control Embankment. Road link between the capital and Sherpur remained snapped for the fourth day yesterday.

Huzur Ali, a minor boy of Tangalpara in Sriberdhi thana drowned. About 80 per cent houses in Sadar thana have gone under water partially or completely.

Our Sirajganj correspondent reports: With the fall of water level in mighty Jamuna by a nominal two cm, the flood situation in Sirajganj remained unchanged yesterday.

About two and a half lakh affected people have taken shelter in 33 temporary centres in the district. Over 90 per cent areas in the town is now under water.

The flood situation in Lalmonirhat improved a little with water receding slowly from some areas.

Fresh areas in Netrokona district went under water as the flood situation deteriorated further following heavy rainfall yesterday.

Rail communication between Netrokona and Mohanganj remained cut off as the track was under water at some points.

The Midnight File

Fresh fighting in Afghanistan

KABUL, July 11: Government forces battled a rival faction in central Afghanistan today in an offensive aimed at capturing a strategic northern supply route. Security Ministry officials said. Government troops had advanced to within a few kilometres of the town of Yakawlang and were fighting for control of the outlying areas, the sources said, speaking on condition of anonymity. Reports AP.

Shamsul Huq's writ against Rouf

President to peon — all serve republic: Amirul

From the President to a peon, everyone serves the Republic and all are in the services of the Republic, the High Court was told yesterday, reports UNB.

The office of judges is in the service of the Republic as they also hold office, argued barrister Amirul Islam while making his final submission on the writ challenging under what authority Justice Md Abdur Rouf is holding the office of a judge in the Appellate Division.

The writ petition was filed by Governor of the Coordination Council for Lawyers Advocate Shamsul Huq (howdhury on June 11. A High Court division bench comprising Justice Habibur Rahman Khan and Justice M M Rubul Amin issued rule on Justice Rouf, the Law Secretary and the Registrar of the Supreme Court.

Earlier, on June 29, Additional Attorney General Abdul Wadud Khan-daker concluded his submission in a bid to prove that service of judges is not in the service of the Republic.

Barrister Islam said, "Having served as the Chief Election Commissioner one should not be eligible for appointment to another office in the service of the Republic. Framers of the Constitution put a bar to it."

This bar, he said, is with regard to four distinct offices — the Election Commissioners, judges of the Supreme Court, the Auditor and Comptroller General and members of the Public Service Commission (PSC).

He submitted that the bar had been created to ensure that holders of such offices monitoring the corridors of power were not amenable to any influence in the future promises.

In this document, the prime urge for struggle for liberation is stated to be for framing a Constitution and for the people to give themselves a government.

This, being the genesis of Bangladesh Constitution, led the people to the victory in order to give themselves a government by adopting the Constitution, the lawyer said.

He said whoever exercises sovereign authority under Article 7 of the Constitution is government.

Further, referring to Article 146, he said, government can sue and can be sued in the name of Bangladesh and Bangladesh is synonymous with the Republic and authority of that Republic is government.

Power of our government is divided into the judiciary, executive and legislature, he said adding executive's function is performed in the name of the President, but by the authority of the Prime Minister.

The judicial power is vested in the Supreme Court being the apex body of the judicial organ while the legislature functions in Parliament.

Under the Constitution, Barrister Islam said, there is no difficulties in reading service of the Republic in respect of the service of the government.

The hearing will resume today.

Monsoon

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Monsoon break occurs when "monsoon axis" runs across the foothill of the Himalayas.

Under the influence of the active monsoon, heavy rainfall occurred in different places of the country. Rangpur recorded 592 mm rain during the first week of July against its normal rainfall 453 mm during the month of July.

Sylhet had 472 mm rain during the week against 719 mm normal for the month. Mymensingh recorded 340 mm against 381 mm normal for the month. Dhaka recorded 151 mm against normal 386 mm for the month and Bogra recorded 318 mm against normal 378 mm for the month.

Heavy rainfall occurred over Dhaka, Chittagong, Rajshahi and Barisal divisions — the prime region for drainage congestion.

UNFPA report

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"Knowledge is not automatically translated into practice, unless efforts are made."

Stressing the need for collective action, the resident coordinator of the UN system in Bangladesh said that efforts by all including NGOs and the media was essential to achieve the objectives of downsizing the rate of population growth, as well as ensuring gender equity and reproductive health.

Asked about regional action, Nurul Ameen of UNFPA, said that UNFPA would convene a ministerial level meeting of SAARC countries in Dhaka soon to work out a common strategy for the countries of the region.

According to the report, world population is now 5.7 billion and annual population increments are likely to remain above 86 million until the year 2015.

Maternal death rates are 15 to 90 times greater in the developing countries than in most developed countries. Half a million women die each year during pregnancy and childbirth, says the report.

Though levels of education have risen and the gap between males and

NATO launches airstrikes Srebrenica falls to Serbs

SARAJEVO, July 11: The UN "safe area" of Srebrenica fell Tuesday to the Bosnian Serbs despite a NATO airstrike designed to end a five-day offensive against the eastern enclave, reports AP.

The Bosnian Serb army is now in control of Srebrenica, "setting off a mass flight of thousands of residents, said UN spokesman Alexander Ivankov.

Srebrenica is the first of six UN designated "safe areas" to fall to the Serbs. The United Nations established the zones two years ago to protect civilians, but the designation did not stop Serbs from targeting them.

While the setback raised questions about the UN role in Bosnia, US Defense Secretary William Perry said he hoped it would not be necessary to withdraw UN forces from Bosnia, "because I continue to believe that UN forces are providing valuable services in the country."

Ivankov said the eastern Bosnian town had been overrun and that Dutch peacekeepers who had set up a line south of the town to defend it against a rebel assault had abandoned their post. They were attempting to re-establish a similar defense line outside the main peacekeeping base in Potocari, north of the town, he said.

Govt to stock urea at abandoned BADC godowns

By Staff Correspondent

The government has no plan to stock fertilizer in every thana to meet future requirements, State Minister for Industries Lutfar Rahman Khan told the Jatiya Sangsad yesterday.

However, he said, there are plans to stock urea fertilizer at the BADC's abandoned godowns to face fertilizer crisis in the future. If required, the number of godowns might be increased in different districts, he said while replying to a question by Advocate Khairul Enam.

The government has taken up a project to set up a new cement factory in Tahripur thana of Sunamganj district. The feasibility study for the project has already been started, the minister said answering a question from Abdur Rouf Chowdhury.

The annual average production of the BCIC-run Chhatak Cement Factory was now 1,08,455 metric tons which meets five per cent of the country's total requirements, he added.

Suu Kyi at press confce

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house with supporters carrying bunches of flowers jostling with reporters trying to enter the lakeside compound of her home.

She said the main items on her agenda in any negotiations with the SEORC would be: "The establishment of certain principles, recognition of critical objectives to be achieved and joint approaches to the ills besetting the country".

Meanwhile reliable sources said, Suu Kyi held fresh talks with political allies in Yangon today.

Shortly after her release she met separately with three key figures in the National League for Democracy (NLD). A second meeting with one NLD leader was reported underway today.

Sources here said she was apparently conferring with NLD colleagues to decide how to proceed.

Suu Kyi said she had been unable to contact her husband, British academic Michael Aris, since her release because she had no telephone in her house.

Asked about how the international community should view her release, she said: "I would like them to see it as a good sign, a hopeful sign, but I would like them to regard it with caution, cautious optimism I think."

She said Myanmar's democracy movement was still strong and dedicated. "I do know that democracy will come to Myanmar because it is something that people want."

The government has said it would not yield power to civilians until a

Biswas' call to ensure empowerment of women

President Abdur Rahman Biswas yesterday called upon the people to work unitedly for ensuring empowerment of women and controlling the population growth, reports UNB.

"A suitable plan and united efforts can accelerate the development activities to build up a happy and prosperous Bangladesh," he said addressing a function at the Osmani Memorial Hall on the occasion of World Population Day.

Health and Family Welfare Minister Chowdhury Kamal Ibne Yusuf, Deputy Minister for Health Sirajul Huq, State Minister for Women and Children Affairs Begum Sarwar Rahman, UNFPA Representative Eimi Watanabe and Health Secretary Syed Ahmed also spoke.

The Health and Family Welfare Ministry organised the function. This year's theme of the day is: "Development, Empowerment of Women and Reproductive Health."

President Biswas said the population of the country is now 12 crore. Besides this large population, the lack of resource, illiteracy and poverty have made the total situation more complicated, he said.

The achievement obtained by the government and its development programmes came under pressure for the continuous growth of population which is hampering the social and ecological balance of the country, said the President.

About 50 per cent of our population are women, he said adding that overall development is not possible without the development of women and without their active participation.

Cases against Moazzem, Chand HC vacates stay order of proceedings

A High Court division bench yesterday rejected petitions of former deputy prime minister Shah Moazzem Hossain and former state minister for food Nurun Nabi Chand for cancelling the orders to frame charges against them in two corruption cases, reports BSS.

The bench comprising Justice Mohammad Golam Rabbani and Justice Mohammad Tofazzal Islam also vacated the stay order of the proceedings granted earlier when the rule was issued on their applications.

Moazzem and Chand filed two applications before the High Court division bench against the order of framing charges by the special tribunal and Additional Sessions Judge, Dhaka against them.

The case, in brief, is that Nurul Islam, an officer of the Bureau of Anti-corruption lodged two cases against former deputy prime minister in charge of food ministry Shah Moazzem Hossain and former state minister for food under Ershad regime with the Ramna police station alleging that without requirement and

Attempt to brand Farida Rahman as anti-Islamic condemned

By Staff Correspondent

Some 111 professionals, development workers, journalists and woman activists of 67 organisations yesterday condemned the attempt to brand Farida Rahman MP as anti-Islam for her remarks against the fundamentalists.

In a joint statement, they said there was a growing trend to brand the persons speaking for the protection of women and human rights as *marwad* or opponents of Islam. They called for resisting such attempts which are detrimental to democracy and human rights.

Magsaysay Award for Pak lawyer

MANILA, July 11: A Pakistani human rights lawyer who fought to ease her nation's harsh Islamic laws has been chosen to receive the Ramon Magsaysay Award for public service, the award foundation announced today, reports AFP.

Asma Jahangir, founding Secretary General of the Human Rights Commission of Pakistan.