

BUET study reveals

Rubber dams can help increase rice output

Production of rice could be increased significantly by using rubber dams as the relatively new technology is more viable compared to other options, said a recent study of BUET, reports BSS.

In terms of economy rubber dam is much viable than the barrages or other structures or water pumps as its operation and management (O&M) cost is very low, said Dr. Abul Fazal M Saleh of BUET, who conducted the study on two existing pilot rubber dam projects.

The study recommended introduction of the technology in large-scale irrigation projects in view of the excellent performance of the existing two dams on Bakkhali river and Idgaon Khal of Cox's Bazar.

The Water Development Board officials earlier said they were examining the technical and economic viability of rubber dams to promote surface water irrigation reducing dependence on ground water for environmental reasons.

The surface water accounted for 30 per cent of total irrigated area (3.8 million hectares) in the country during dry season, an official irrigation census stated.

Local Government Engineering Department (LGED) with technical assistance from the Institute of Water Conservancy and Hydro-electric Power Research of China in 1995 set up the two dams for

impounding surface water for irrigation in the region. The third dam was recently constructed on the Bhogai River of Sherpur.

Considering technical and economic viability, the government was planning to install ten more rubber dams by the year 2003, sources at the LGED said.

There are at least 2000 rubber dams across the globe.

The study carried out by Prof. Saleh along with his colleague from the Institute of Flood Control and Drainage Research of BUET, said the existing two dams performed significant growth in high yielding rice varieties compared to other irrigation projects run by traditional means.

"Growing of HYV Boro rice with irrigation was also profitable for farmers of both the projects," the study said presenting data collected from the farmers.

Farmers at Chandpur Irrigation Project, a government initiative with traditional technology, usually spend around Taka 39,000 per hectare cultivation (including the capital cost, O&M cost and irrigation fee) while it was Taka 19,000 for the farmers of the Idgaon Rubber Dam project.

Meanwhile, the O&M system of the projects was being done entirely by the beneficiaries (farmers) through their democratically elected committees.

These committees also collect irrigation fees and the average realisation of fees under Idgaon project was 97 per cent but it was only about 62 per cent at Bakkhali project.



Battalion Ansars sacked in 1994 and their families staged a demonstration in the city yesterday demanding their reinstatement. -- Star photo

Consumer response towards irradiated food items increasing: Study

Consumer response towards irradiated food items have been increasing gradually in different countries, including Bangladesh, a study conducted by the International Consultative Group on Food Irradiation (ICGFI) said, reports BSS.

The ICGFI was established in 1984 under the aegis of United Nations systems like Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO), World Health Organisation (WHO) and International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) to evaluate global development in the field of food irradiation and other related matters.

According to the data made available to ICGFI up to July, 1997, irradiated food items processed for commercial purposes in Bangladesh and 28 other countries, including the USA, Canada, France, Germany, China, Britain and Indonesia, have received positive response from the consumers. The study reveals that people of Bangladesh prefer irradiated items like dried fish, onion, potatoes and pulses.

The study found that in the case of irradiated processed food

items, nutrient losses are small and often significantly less than the losses associated with other methods of food preservation like canning, drying and heat pasteurisation and at the same time palatability of the food treated by irradiation remains unchanged. Besides, the process reduces dependence on chemical preservatives like pesticides which are harmful for health.

Since the food irradiation technology introduced in a limited way during the early 20th century, an ever increasing number of countries have approved the irradiation of a long and growing list of different foods including meat, poultry, sea food, grain and flour, fruit and vegetables, nuts and spices.

The study said one of the greatest health benefits of food irradiation is its ability to destroy the micro-organisms and parasites that cause food-borne illness and even death. Even in the US, pathogenic bacteria like Salmonella, E Coli, Listeria, Campylobacter, the Vibrios, Trichinella and other parasites claim an estimated 10,000 lives a

year and cause between 24 and 81 million cases of diarrhoeal diseases.

Brushing aside the fear that irradiation of food items might induce radioactivity and make them toxic, the ICGFI study said the radioactivity contamination is totally unrelated to irradiated food which has been processed for preservation and other purposes by using certain types of harmless radiation energy.

The study pointed out that everything in the environment, including food, contains traces of natural radioactivity not harmful for health and made it clear that harmful radioactive foods are those that have become accidentally contaminated by radioactive substance from weapons testing or nuclear reactor accidents.

On the cost of irradiation process, the study said considering the consumer benefits in terms of storage life, convenience and improved hygiene of the food, irradiation treatment cost less compared to other kinds of preservation technique.

Sacked Ansars

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days with great hardship, they said.

The rally was presided over by Mohammad Farid Hossain Khan, Convener of the committee. Badrul Alam, General Secretary of Bangladesh Krishak Federation, Prof Abdul Hakim, Vice-President of Bangladesh Grameen Buddhijib Front, Zayed Iqbal Khan, General Secretary of Bangladesh Floating Workers Union also addressed the rally expressing solidarity with the movement of sacked Battalion Ansars.

A total of 1,332 Battalion Ansars were sacked in 1994 for allegedly launching a movement.

Green Channel

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the idea was not 'bad' but success of the system will depend on how the facility is availed of.

Meanwhile, in the system, the customs authorities preserved the right to spot checking of five per cent of the imported consignments and pass it for delivery if the irregularity concerns two per cent of the total or less. To monitor such irregularities, a four-member committee headed by a joint secretary of shipping ministry has been formed.

When asked, Chairman of Local Fabrics & Accessories Committee of BGMEA SM Nurul Haq did not rule out the possibility of forgery even through the Green Channel. If necessary, steps like installation of scanner machines can be taken, but the facility should not be withdrawn, he said.

Bangladesh Master Stevedoring Association Chairman Manjor Alam also expressed doubt about success of the system.

C&F Association President M Salimullah said the Green Channel has been introduced at the behest of an influential circle and the facility may be misused.



Yusuf Abdullah Harun



M Mohammad Ali

Final results of FBCCI polls

By Staff Correspondent
The Election Board of Federation of Bangladesh Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FBCCI) has published final results of the election of FBCCI executive body held on October 21.

M Mohammad Ali has been elected vice president. The elected executive members are Professor Masuda M Rashid Chowdhury, M A Rouf Chowdhury, Enayet Hossain Chowdhury, Khandaker Ruhul Amin, Selima Ahmad, Tareq Ahmad, Obaidur Rahman, Abu Motealeb, Dr M Perves Shazzad Akter, Al-Haj Harun-Ar-Rashid, Nagibul Islam Dipu, ASM Kamal Uddin, Al-Haj M Kalim Ullah, M Akhteruzzaman Manju and Abdur Razzaque.

Earlier on October 20, Yusuf Abdullah Harun was declared president unopposed along with 15 other executive committee members for the term of 2000-2001.

Amit

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Professor Islam, however, did not specify when Amit would start relying on the device to breath assisted by constant mild electric stimulus from the electrodes which is connected to phrenic nerves that control movement of the diaphragm.

"There is no sign of infection and Amit is doing fine," Prof Islam said. "He is on normal diet and he has no complaints of pain."

Amit suffered one of the worst forms of rare wild poliovirus infection that destroyed his limb movement and also breathing mechanism.

Amit, 12, has been connected to a ventilator at the Intensive Care Unit of BSMMUH for nearly 14 months now. The breathing pacemaker (a bipolar receiver and two electrodes) was implanted in Amit's chest on October 10 after a five-hour operation at the BSMMUH. Total expenditure (Tk 43 lakh) was borne by donation from the public including his schoolmates and teachers, doctors, university students, housewives, small businessmen and private organisations.

Security tightened on DU campus

By Staff Correspondent

Security was tightened on the Dhaka University campus following the recovery of a mugger's body from the Institute of Business Administration (IBA) Building premises on Thursday night.

The DU authorities have asked both law enforcing agencies and night guards of the university to keep vigil and perform their duties more consciously.

Police on Thursday night recovered the body of Abul Kashem alias Kaisha, 38, a member of 'Kohi Group' involved in mugging on the Dhaka University campus.

He was chopped to death near IBA Building. His rivals forcibly took him to the IBA Building at dead of night and killed him over sharing booty.

He was also allegedly involved in the killing of Nikunja Bihari Debnath, Joint Secretary of LGRD Ministry on the campus on January 11, police said earlier.

University authorities had suspended four night guards of the IBA Building who were on duty on the night of killing and formed a four-member probe body headed by Pro-Vice Chancellor Prof. M Shahadat Ali to investigate into the incident.

Sources said that several well-organised gangs are involved in mugging in and around the DU campus. Incidents of mugging are a common phenomenon on the campus nowadays.

Muggers and abductors are choosing the DU campus taking the advantage of its present peaceful atmosphere. "As there is

no terrorist on the campus, the outsider terrorists are choosing the campus for their criminal activities," said a DU high official, preferring anonymity.

The probe body yesterday recorded statements of the night guards of Lecture Theatre and Arts Building. The probe body will also sit for a meeting with the guards of IBA Building today.

When contacted, member secretary of the probe body DU Proctor Prof. A K M Nurun Nabi said that the campus is not isolated from the rest of the country. He said Thursday's incident was a proof of deteriorating law and order situation.

Replying to query, Prof. Nabi said they were trying to find out why the criminals chosen DU campus for the incident. He however failed to say whether Kashem was killed or his dead body was left on the campus.

Kashem came to the DU campus from his village home of Golapganj 20 years ago but involved himself in snatching in and around the campus six years back. Father of two sons and a daughter, Kashem began his life as a taker and used to collect papers on the campus areas for living.

Kashem continued mugging on the campus even though he was arrested two times on charges of mugging and once for possessing crackers at TSC two years ago. He was released on bail on September 11 and involved himself again in snatching.

TV performers Khaled Khan, Tania hurt in road accident

At least 10 people including TV performers Khaled Khan and Tania were injured in a road accident at Nawabpur Bazar while returning from Aralharar after their shootings, reports BSS.

Relatives of the injured stars said the accident occurred in the afternoon when the microbus carrying them skidded off the road and fell into a ditch.

Local people rushed to the spot and rescued them. The injured are Khaled Khan, Tania, Sabita Benarjee, Satirtha Rahman, Manjurul Alam, Mujib, Jibon, Sabuj Rahman, Alamin and Tutul.

AAPP confce

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"It may be deferred for some time as the host country is affected by heavy floods at present," he said. Bangladesh delegation is yet to get prepared to attend the assembly.

Sources at the AAPP Secretariat in Dhaka said the Cambodian authorities have informed the situation over telephone but they have not yet sent any official letter in this regard. "The general assembly may take place sometime in December depending on the improvement of flood situation," one source said.

Some sources said the Cambodian authorities were strongly criticised by the opposition political parties for such an assembly at the time of deluge. That is why they might reconsider the matter.

The AAPP was formed at a conference attended by 31 countries in Dhaka last year.

Double murder

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frequently but police are not arresting him as he is the son of a leader of ruling Awami League.

"So many mothers have lost their sons in Sutrapur and Gendaria area in the last few years," said the father of Saem, one of victims. "We want to ensure that such incidents are not repeated."

"If police arrest Sumon, the area will be free from murder and other crimes," he added.

The speakers said Sutrapur is the most crime prone area in the city because police are playing in the hands of criminals.

They said a greater movement will be launched if action is not taken.

Mohsin, 18, son of Amin Mian and Saem, 19, son of Mahatabuddin of SK Das Lane under Sutrapur thana were murdered inside the club.

Their mutilated bodies were recovered from a manhole at Loharpool under Sutrapur thana in the morning September 16.

An official of Sutrapur thana was suspended and the OC was withdrawn for their negligence in rescuing the boys from the hand of miscreants.

Later, the case was transferred to the Detective Branch of police but they failed to bring the culprits to book.

Several newspapers reported that Sumon is hiding in the capital and visits Sutrapur frequently.

But the DB investigation officer claimed that several places were raided in Comilla, Narail and in the capital to arrest Sumon.

Depression

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AFP adds: The Indian Meteorological Department (IMD) yesterday warned that the storm might hit the two eastern states of West Bengal and Orissa in the next 24 hours.

"Strong winds with speeds reaching 60 kilometers per hour followed by heavy rains are likely to hit coastal West Bengal and Orissa within the next 24 hours," a statement released by the IMD said.

AL meeting on Jail Killing Day

A meeting of Bangladesh Awami League was held at its central office in the city yesterday to make the Jail Killing Day programme on November 3 a success, reports BSS.

Awami League Presidium member and Commerce Minister Abdul Jalil presided over the meeting.

Presidents and general secretaries of different units of Dhaka City Awami League and its front organisations, and adjoining districts of Dhaka attended the meeting, among others.

Shamsi murder

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arrested three of the accused -- Alamgir, Bappi and Salaudinn -- from different parts of the old city on that night. The CMM's Court placed them on a two-day remand on Thursday.

Zia had gone to Nachol in Chapai Nawabganj with a group of preachers from Kakrail mosque in the city on October 23. He was arrested from a mosque there.

DB sources said yesterday that they were interrogating the four to ascertain the motive behind the killing of Ammar. "We have to know if there are other reasons, except the greed for ransom, behind the killing of the student", one source said.

"It is likely that Ammar was abducted, killed and left at the National Park not only for money," A senior DB official said.

Dacoits

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brother Jasim Mollah, 35, and Noor Mohammad, 50. The identity of another aged about 40 could not be known.

The injured were businessman Khalil Sardar, travler labourers Musa Shahid and Belal.

Police and witnesses said the accident occurred when the driver of the truck coming to Aguljharna of Barisal from Rajbari lost control over the steering on Bhurghata bridge.

The truck driver and the helper fled the scene after the accident.

Congratulations



From Our Correspondent

Afroz Nazreen of Rajshahi College has stood first class second in her MSE final exam 1996 (Psychology) under National University (held in 1999).

She is the eldest daughter of Journalist Mohamad Anwarul Quadir of Naogaon. Afroz's grand father is late Khan Shahib Muhammad Afzal a local writer and founder president of Naogaon Journalists' Association.

Sutrapur mosque

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scheduled to be completed in June 1999. The project work has become uncertain as the authorities are yet to gain possession of lands for which they have spent Tk 7.89 crore separately.

Under the project, a box culvert would be built from Mill Barrack Lohar Pool to Dayaganj Bazar Bridge and from Begumganj to Narinda Pump House. The total length of the culvert is estimated at about two kilometres (1758 metres).

The DIP's open channel component from Dayaganj to Dholapal and from Dayaganj to Dhalpal has been abandoned by the authorities. The project officials reported to the government that local people rejected the idea of open channel and demanded that a box culvert with road over it be built there. The whole idea is now gathering dust at the ministry concerned.

Meanwhile the delay in completion of DIP has contributed to an alarming rise in crime rate and mounting sufferings of thousands of people in Sutrapur, the most densely populated urban area in the world.

Scores of local people, police officials of Sutrapur thana and public representatives said that the long stretch of the box culvert has become a den of criminals, drug peddlers and prostitutes. They said most of the culvert areas remain dark at night and become spots of criminal activities where even police fear to go.

"School going children and people are suffering because roads have been dug and half-finished structures left for years," said Sollaiman Mallik, a businessman of the area.

Explaining the delay in implementation of the DIP, Project Director Shahab Ullah said they were facing stiff resistance from illegal occupiers of project lands. Moreover, the government is not releasing funds in time, he alleged.

US serial killer

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holding up victims' pictures and in one case, a wooden box of cremated remains.

"You will rot in hell," said Ondraya Smith, mother of Sunny Oster, a drug addict and known prostitute whose body was found in 1998.

Yates was unemotional until his eldest daughter, Sasha, 33, and his father, Robert Yates, Sr. apologised to the victims' families and to the community.

"I love you, dad, even though you did this," said Sasha Yates. Yates family members were hugged by several of the victims' families as they left the courtroom.

Yates tearfully apologised in court to his victims' families and was booed and shouted at by grieving families.

"I have turned to God," he said. He avoided a possible death penalty by admitting to 13 murders. Prosecutor Steve Tucker has defended his decision to cut a plea bargain, saying he had only weak evidence to use in arguing for the death sentence.

Yates, a 48-year-old father of five, was remanded by Spokane Superior court judge Richard Schroeder to Pierce County, near Seattle, where he is charged with two additional slayings and could still face the death penalty.

Pierce County Prosecutor John Ladenberg has said he will not plea bargain the death penalty with Yates.

Manpower export

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Although the volume of trade between the two countries is not encouraging, it inclines towards Kuwait. In 1999-2000, exports from Bangladesh fetched US \$2.41 million against import of US \$26.29 million.

In 1979, the two countries signed a trade and economic cooperation agreement, but it has not yet been enforced. Dhaka may propose early holding of the joint commission meeting under the accord to boost cooperation in trade and economy.

Official sources said during the visit Bangladesh might ask for signing an extradition treaty with Kuwait for exchange of wanted criminals. The proposition came up when the Kuwaiti authorities were pressing Dhaka to hand them one Bellal who allegedly murdered his Kuwaiti employer last year.

Police recently arrested Bellal. The Kuwaiti authorities want that Bellal should be handed over for trial before the Prime Minister's visit, but Bangladesh cannot do that without any legal framework like extradition treaty.

During the trip, Kuwait's Defense Minister, Interior Minister and Minister for State of Cabinet Affairs will call on Prime Minister Hasina at Bayan Palace where she will be staying.

The Prime Minister is expected to address Bangladeshi soldiers who are policing the post-Gulf War Kuwait under UN aegis and members of Bangladeshi community.

She will return home on November 1.

PM: Trains

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The Chilahati Express in Chilahati-Parbatipur route will start from Chilahati two hours behind schedule. On its return journey, it will again start three hours behind schedule.

The schedule of the North Bengal Mail in Balashighat-Dinajpur-Balashighat route has also been revised.

Titumir Intercity Train in Rajshahi-Parbatipur will have four more compartments today.

Earlier, on October 11, a passenger train in the Jamalpur-Dhaka route was 'hijacked' at Gafargaoon station at 7 am by 'people' to attend the 'freedom fighter-people grand rally', held in Mymensingh. Dhaka-bound passengers of the train were 'dragged out' of the train and it was redirected towards Mymensingh, they said.

"We informed the government about the train hijacking," said one high official.

Neither the Communication Minister nor the State Minister could be reached for comments. The former is at Barisal and the latter is at Dinajpur, sources said.

Boy rescued

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Monir was brought to the city on Wednesday from his native village Jhuna of Sujaganar in Pabna district. The child told newsmen that he was being taken to Dubai to work as a camel jockey and in return, his mother would be given Tk 1000 per month.

Monir's mother is a housemaid.



Washermen in the city have been using the bank of the river Buriganga as the common place of washing clothes for long without ever trying to feel that they are polluting river water greatly. -- Star photo