

Delay in setting up Nazrul University at Trishal frustrates people

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Mymensingh

Dilly-dally attitude of the authorities concerned to establish a university after the name of national poet Kazi Nazrul Islam at Trishal in Mymensingh has frustrated the local people.

They feel despaired despite their donation of 10 acres of land for the proposed Nazrul University long ago.

Speakers at a discussion arranged in celebration of Nazrul Joyanti (Anniversary of birth of the national poet), from May 25 to 27 at Nazrul Academy, Darirampur under Trishal upazila in the district expressed their anguish for such attitude.

They said every year Trishal wears a festive look to celebrate Nazrul Joyanti, but soon after the celebration no decisions are implemented.

Speakers also deplored for paying any attention to preserve the memory of Kazi Nazrul at Kazir Shimpla, Darirampur and Namapara villages in Trishal upazila where once the poet spent his golden period of life during his boyhood.

Justice Habibur Rahman took part in the discussion meeting on the second day of the three-day national programme as the chief guest with Dr Md Anwarul Islam, vice-chancellor of Bangladesh Agricultural University (BAU) in the chair.

It was attended, among others, by poet Nurul Huda, director general of Nazrul Institute, prof Sumita Naha, Dr Abdus Sattar, local MP Alhaj Hafez Maulana Ruhul Amin Madani and deputy commissioner (DC) Md Mayezuddin

Khan.

Earlier, state minister for health and family welfare prof M Amanullah inaugurated the three-day Nazrul Joyanti programme in the evening of May 25, while local MP Alhaj Ruhul Amin Madani was in the chair.

The inaugural session was addressed, among others, by Dr Karunamoya Goshwami, district Awami League president principal Matirul Rahman, advocate Nazimuddin Ahmed, Trishal UNO Mir Ali Reza and Trishal Municipality chairman Abdur Rashid.

Md Moyezuddin, DC, Mymensingh delivered the welcome address.

Programmes of poetry recital and cultural function were also included. A grand rally was brought out at Trishal on the occasion which was participated by political leaders and district level officials.

The concluding session was presided over by Md Mayezuddin Khan, DC, Mymensingh while, state minister for land Alhaj Rashed Mossaroff was the chief guest.

The function was arranged by local administration.

The concluding ceremony was also participated, among others, by Rahat Khan, acting editor of The Daily Ittefaq, director general of Bangla Academy prof Dr Md Rafiqul Islam, prof Dr Md Muniruzzaman of Bengali Department of Dhaka University, prof Anwarul Hakim Khan and prof Zatin Sarker.

Cultural functions were also arranged every day. Grand daughters of the national poet, Khil Khil Kazi and Misti Kazi were also present.

A fair was also held on the occasion.

935 tubewells out of order in Narail

UNB, Narail

At least 935 hand driven tubewells have been lying out of order for the last few months in three upazilas and two municipalities of Narail district.

As a result, acute scarcity of pure water has been prevailing in the rural and urban areas causing immense sufferings to the people.

Of the total, 302 remained out of order in Sadar, 292 in Lohagara 297 in Kalia upazilas, 50 in Narail Municipality and 44 in Kalia Municipality.

According to officials, there are 8,675 tubewells in the district including 2,576 in Sadar, 2,529 in Lohagara, 2,510 in Kalia upazilas, 460 in Narail Municipality and 500 in Kalia Municipality. The Department of Public Health Engineering (DPHE) and some other agencies installed the tubewells.

DPHE sources said they have taken up a scheme to install 187 new tubewells. Of them 34 will be sunk in Sadar, 88 in Kalia and 67 in Lohagara upazilas in the current fiscal year.

While visiting the upazilas the locals said to this correspondent that the existing tubewells are quite insufficient to meet the requirement of safe water. They said the tubewells with plastic pipe are being choked up just within a few months of their installation.

They said that due to shortage of drinking water they are forced to use contaminated pond and river waters.

NEWS SNAPS

Road accident claims one

UNB, Manikganj

One person was killed and 20 others injured in two separate road accidents on Dhaka-Aricha Highway in Manikganj district late Sunday night.

Witnesses said a truck hit from behind a Gazipur bound coach leaving Sattar, 45, Nazrul, 47, and Selim, 30, severely injured. Sattar died soon after shifting to sadar hospital. Nazrul was sent to Dhaka in a critical condition. Another accident took place at 11 pm when a truck loaded with hides collided head-on with another truck leaving 15 injured including the driver, helper and hides dealers. Of the injured Azhar Ali, 45, Geda, 30, Jitendra Chandra Das, 25, Bhagya Das, 26, Rajendra Chandra Das, 28, Samir Mondal, 14, Anik, 50, Majed, 40, Selim, 35, and Gaziuddin, 50, were admitted to sadar hospital.

Beheaded body of youth found

UNB, Narsingdi

Police recovered the beheaded body of an unidentified youth aged about 24 from a bush at Khariabazar in Sadar upazila of Narsingdi district Tuesday.

Shopkeepers of the bazaar said a group of youths boarding a microbus came here at about 1 am Monday night and stayed for some time. In the morning they found the body in a bush. On information police recovered the body and sent it to Sadar hospital morgue for autopsy. A case was filed.

Indian trespassers produced before court

UNB, Sunamganj

Two Indian nationals trespassed into Bangladesh were produced before the court in Sunamganj on May 27 after interrogation by the police.

Ajit Das, 45, and his daughter Abala Das told police that they are residents of Katatol slum area across the border in Meghalaya. Abala is in advance stage of pregnancy and her father said they crossed the border to seek medical assistance, which are not available in their area. They were apprehended by residents of Sonalchela when moving suspiciously and handed over to Doarabazar police on May 25.

Firearms recovered: 10 persons arrested

BSS, Cox's Bazar

Teknaf police arrested 10 persons from village Harang Khali in Cox's Bazar district and recovered two firearms last week.

According to police, these people were preparing for a dacoity. Acting on a secret information, police raided the Harang Khali village and arrested Jamal Hossain, 26, Rashed Ahmed, 20, Ali Miah, 26, Jafan Ali, 27, Golam Hossain, 29, Faez Ullah, 27, Abdul Hai, 25, Abdul Hossain, 21, Ali Ahmed, 60, and Rashid Ali, 21. Police recovered two pipe guns and five bullets. A case was filed with Teknaf police in this regard.

Sunflower cultivation gains popularity in Panchagarh

UNB, Panchagarh

As farmers of Panchagarh district are increasingly farming sunflower, Department of Agriculture Extension (DAE) has come up with various programmes to help them.

The programmes include ensuring supply of quality seeds, setting up of demonstration plots, bringing more and more lands under sunflower cultivation and extracting more edible oil from sunflower seeds.

A large number of farmers are now cultivating sunflower under the Crop Diversification Programme. The department has set up three demonstration plots in the district to attract more farmers.

An agriculture official said sunflower could be cultivated in both rabi and kharif seasons on loamy and sandy-loamy soils having irrigation facility.

He said the land should be free from weeds and it needs more fertilizer for better harvest. Postaman period is more suitable for sunflower cultivation, he added.

The growers can harvest at least 16 maunds of seeds per acre with local variety while 25 maunds with HYV variety.

Bangladesh produce only 25 per cent edible oil of its total demand while the rest is imported. "So, increased cultivation of sunflower and soybean can help reduce the edible oil import," the official said.

Transplantation method may double sugarcane output

UNB, Thakurgaon

Sugarcane production can be doubled in greater Dinajpur district only by changing the methods of plantation.

Experts say some 4 lakh metric tons of sugar and 1.5 lakh of molasses could be produced annually in Thakurgaon, Panchagarh and Dinajpur districts through transplanting the saplings of sugarcane instead of traditional method.

Former principal of Haji Danesh Agriculture College Yasin Ali said, in traditional method the sprouting rate of sugarcane plant is only 20 to 30 per cent against 60 per cent in transplantation method.

He said under the new method 40 tons sugarcane can easily be produced per acre against 20 tons in

the traditional method.

Under the new methods sprouting would be possible in the seedbeds like paddy seedlings in September and October and then those will be planted in the sugarcane field in October and November.

If only 2 lakh acres of land can be brought under sugarcane cultivation under the new method the annual production will stand at 60 lakh tons", they added.

Yasin Ali said that after establishing the required 13 sugar mills in the region these mills would be able to produce 4 lakh metric tons of sugar and production cost of per kg sugar would be between Tk 16 and Tk 18 per kg.

He said taking the advantage of the new method the local and foreign entrepreneurs could take initiative to make the country self-reliant in sugar production and reduce the import of sugar from abroad.

There are lakhs of acres of sugarcane cultivable land in greater Dinajpur district. There are about 2,000 deep and 80,000 shallow tubewells for boro cultivation, which could be used in sugarcane cultivation. The experts said that at least 4

Babies consume pesticides thru' breast-feeding?

BSS, Chittagong

"There is no alternative to mother's milk for a child," but this worldwide slogan now-a-days is unfounded in Bangladesh where babies consume pesticides in form of Organochlorine used in dry fish and transmitted to children through breast feeding.

According to a research study, nine Organochlorine Pesticides (OCPs) have been detected in 20 samples of milk, collected from coastal mothers of Chittagong in one week of the post natal period during 1998-99.

In comparison with the Chittagong coastal region, the concentrations of Organochlorine Pesticides in Rajbari agricultural region were found to be higher in the breast milk.

The study on "Organochlorine Pesticides residues in the breast milk, especially in coastal region of Chittagong" conducted by researcher Mohammad Selim Uddin, founded that the people of Chittagong consume more OCPs residues into their body both through agricultural food products and dry fish.

These pesticides particularly Organochlorine Pesticides are persistent in the human body and according to an epidemiological survey, various types of fatal diseases like cancer, heart failure, liver and kidney damages, paralysis, a number of disorders like anemia, breathing trouble, congenital deformities, emaciation, insomnia, miscarriages, nervous system breakdown, skin and eye irritation and still birth were more prevalent and widespread among the dry fish consumers compared to the non consumers.

The study, carried out under joint collaboration with Institute of Marine Science, Chittagong University, Atomic Energy Centre, Savar, Dhaka and Institute of Food and Radiation Biology, has shown that maximum and minimum concentrations of total DDT in milk of each woman (age below 25) were recorded as 0.02031 mg per liter (mg/l) and 0.00073 mg/l respectively.

While in age group above 25, maximum and minimum total DDT concentrations in the human milk were recorded as 0.055765 mg/l and 0.00071 mg/l respectively. Though the concentration of total DDT shown in the study was lower than the maximum permissible limit (1.25mg/l), but it will be quite alarming in near future, said eminent marine scientist and supervisor of the study Prof Yusuf Sharif Ahmed Khan.

Children accumulate pesticides from two sources mainly mother's milk and other foods during life time. Thus the concentrations of pesticides are transmitted from generation to generation resulting in fatal diseases.

The highest and lowest concentrations of total DDT and total Organochlorine Pesticides were measured as 0.02031-0.00073 mg/l and 0.00144 mg/l respectively.

In Bangladesh, about 300 types of pesticides have been using for a long

time in various sectors such as agriculture fields and malaria eradication to boost up crop production and to prevent diseases.

But out of all the 300, there are facilities to test only nine pesticides in Bangladesh, researchers said and surprisingly out of the total usage 25 per cent of the pesticides of the country go to the coastal area. These pesticides are accumulated in different organisms particularly in marine fishes.

When fishes are dried and stored for domestic consumption and export, huge quantity of pesticides like DDT, Basudine, Aldrine, Dieldrin, Gamaxine powder, Nogos are used, the study revealed.

It is known that the fishes, which are processed (dried) for keeping germ-free for a long time, commonly suffer from infestation of insects in the tropics and sub-tropics.

Though the presence of DDT in mother's milk across the globe has been reported since 1950, seven organ-chlorine pesticides' residues have been detected for the first time in human milk in the coastal region of Bangladesh in 1998-1999.

Though the production of DDT has been stopped recently in Bangladesh, it is being used indiscriminately, while production of DDT had been absolutely banned in developing countries many years ago due to its prolonged detrimental effect on human body.

"Today the indiscriminate use of pesticides is reflected by the highest concentration of 12.8 to 31.0 parts per million (PPM) of DDT in the subcontinent; whereas the concentration of DDT in human body in the USA, France, Germany and England is 11.0, 5.2, 2.3 and 2.2 PPM respectively, said Prof Yusuf Sharif.

Dried fishes are an important protein source of general people of Bangladesh, but it has now become inedible as it is injurious to human health. In test, man who received DDT at an average rate of 0.5 milligram per kilogram of body weight per day stored concentration of 129-659 PPM in fat.

In 1994, scientists of the Institute of Food and Radiation Biology, a wing of Atomic Energy Research Establishment, Savar, Dhaka surveyed on pesticides used for agriculture and public health purposes. They could not ascertain the degree of environmental problems and health hazards to people.

To control the colossal loss caused by insects during storage, the concerned businessmen and people use different types of insecticides including DDT rampantly and injudiciously though they more or less know about their detrimental effects on human health.

Khan, who has international reputation for research on pesticides, strongly proposed use of herbal method (natural extraction of plant) instead of DDT for prevention of deadly diseases and protection of environment.

OCPs are usually known to be broad-spectrum poison, which is very chronic and acute to human and causes carcinogenic effects. Each component has its individual effect on human body.

These silent killers accumulate in the fatty tissues of human body and gradually pass from generation to generation, Prof Khan said.

Acute shortage of bitumen

UNB, Kishoreganj

Work on the development of different roads in Kishoreganj district has been hampering due to acute shortage of bitumen.

Although the contractors completed all other works investing huge amount of money towards the Tk 8 crore schemes could not be finished for want of bitumen. Local Government Engineering Department admitted the bitumen shortage, but failed to take necessary measures in this regard. A contractor told that it would not be possible to complete the schemes for them with the start of the rainy season. The lone bitumen producing organisation, the Eastern Refinery in Chittagong could not meet 50 per cent demand of the country. The import of bitumen by private organisations remained stopped since long.