

Toxic chemicals in fruits, vegetables

Public health at great risk

MORSHED ALI KHAN

Some farmers and traders use ethylene oxide, a toxic chemical, excessively to ripen fruits and some vegetables, putting public health at great risk.

Fruits ripened by excessive dose of ethylene oxide can cause various illnesses, doctors and scientists at the Institute of Food Science and Technology (IFST) of Bangladesh Council of Scientific & Industrial Research (BCSIR) said.

They also said most fruits in the market are coated with a thick layer of insecticide and pesticide, as during their growing, maturing and marketing these chemicals are sprayed many times.

"Just by physically verifying the fruit one can see its toxicity... the fruit looks either pale or very bright with the flavour missing," said a scientist at the IFST.

IFST scientists also said in most cases, farmers and traders, who use ethylene oxide to ripen fruits and some vegetables for quick money, do not know how to scientifically use

the chemical, which all the more increases health risks.

They also said most papayas, guavas, melons, mangoes, tomatoes, sapota, pineapple, locally-produced dates and many other fruits available in the markets are ripened by excessive doses of ethylene oxide.

"We have warned the food ministry about the indiscriminate use of this chemical in our food chain but nothing has been done to prevent the practice," said a scientist at the IFST on condition of anonymity.

"When tomatoes are green they cost Tk 3 a kilogram. If the same tomato is ripened in a day the farmer can earn twice as much," said an agriculturist at Khamarbari in the city.

Another scientist at the Public Health Laboratory (PHL) under Dhaka City Corporation said they do not know how to deal with this new phenomenon as the 'primitive' pure food ordinance has no mention of these new adulterating chemicals.

Food Minister Abdullah Al Noman said the matter has just

come to his notice. He said the agriculture ministry with their network of block supervisors around the country should help sensitise the farmers and traders about the health risks.

"Since you have told me, I will also see what measures we can take to stop the practice of using ethylene oxide in our food chain," the minister said.

Agriculture Minister MK Anwar said after the media highlighted the practice, his ministry conducted a survey which found the chemical was used to ripen fruits and some vegetables.

He said ethylene oxide is used commercially all over the world to ripen fruits but the user should know how much they should use so as not to endanger public safety.

"We have asked Bangladesh Agriculture Research Council to look into the matter and if it was found that excessive doses are used, we will start training our block supervisors to disseminate the know-how among farmers," Anwar said.

Minister says 'yes' to film industry's demands

AVIK SANWAR RAHMAN

The Film Industry Protection Council (FIPC) called off strike as Information Minister Tariqul Islam gave the green light to its 12-point demand, including framing of an anti-video piracy law, at a meeting on Thursday.

"The minister agreed with us and promised to help us meet the demand," said Ashrafuddin Ahmed Uzzal, general secretary of the FIPC.

The FIPC members believe that if the government takes steps to turn the charter of demands into reality, the film industry will regain strength.

"The Tk 100 crore industry failed to attract audience and generate more income because of government policy," Uzzal said.

The FIPC suggested that the law on video piracy be included in the intellectual property act and prescribe five years in jail or Tk 5 lakh in fines for video and CD piracy and screening of pirated films on cable television.

The home minister and the inspector general of police will be responsible for the deployment of law enforcers to trace illegal videos and CDs after the law is passed.

The second point of demand is an updated censor code to match the modern taste of the audience. The FIPC will submit a draft of amended censor code in the second week of April to the information ministry that will pass the code in two months since the submission of the draft.

A sample of censor code will be submitted in three days to the information ministry to meet the



Shooting resumes as FDC returns to normalcy

contemporary need of commercial cinemas demanded by film directors and permission from the information ministry for the directors to make commercial movies based on the modern censor code.

The third and fourth points are to prepare a regulatory act for screening Bangla films on terrestrial and satellite television. The minister assured the FIPC of framing regulation in two months.

The fifth point is the demand for an end to the operation of foreign channels that are not suitable to the Bengali culture.

The ministry will try to increase

more facilities for the film industry as it approves the sixth point.

The seventh point is to stop imported foreign unclean films from abroad to be dealt with by the Federation of Bangladesh Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FBCCI) along with the commerce ministry.

The eighth point is to include the president of Bangladesh Producers and Distributors Association in the censor board -- the demand accepted by the minister.

The ninth point is to provide funds for cinema hall renovations, and the 10th point is to give subsidy

to cinema halls on peak-hour electricity rates. FBCCI President Abdul Awal Mintu promised he would talk to the power minister on the issue. The 11th point asks for making good films tax-free.

The 12th point is to establish a film institute. The government already decided to establish a film institute inside the Information Complex that will be constructed in Agargaon.

Initiatives will be taken to start a course on film at Dhaka University. "This time we have a timeframe from the ministry that will help us reach our goal," Uzzal said.

Aluminum wares now pretty pricey

CITY CORRESPONDENT

Aluminum goods saw 25 per cent increase following the hike of raw materials in recent months in the international market, said aluminum traders.

Retailers said that the price hike brought an adverse effect on their business. Some retailers of New Market mentioned that they bought aluminum goods for Tk 145.00 per Kg from wholesalers last year. The price turned to Tk 175.00 a kilogram this year.

"We are making very little profit because of the high price," said Mamtazur Rahman, sales person of

'Baishali Crockery' in Mohammedpur Krishi Market. "Now we sell aluminum goods for Tk 190.00 per kg making a profit of only Tk 15 on a kg," he said.

Sources in the industry said cost of raw material rose by Tk 40,000 a tonne. Last year the price of raw material in the industry was Tk 1,00,000, which went up to Tk 1,05,000. Within a few months the increased to Tk 1,15,000. At present, the price is stationed at Tk 1,42,000 a tonne.

Factory owners commented that the production cost of aluminum items is around Tk 1,75,000 a tonne as the purchase price of the raw material is

very high. They said they are left with no options but to raise the price of their commodities.

Some traders also said aluminum goods are gradually losing its attraction as melamine, steel and stainless steel items flooded the market in the past few years. "There was a time when people used buckets made of aluminum," said Aminul Hauque, an aluminum trader. "Nowadays they use only a few kitchen items like karai and patil or just a kalshi," he added.

Sources said there is an increase in the demand of raw material in aluminum sector in the international market, especially in Europe and China. There is a demand for eight to 10 tonnes of aluminum products in the country annually. But the local aluminum industry owners are hesitating to import raw materials and continue production. They think customers may opt for products other than theirs because of high prices, as production costs cannot be reduced.

Obaidur Rahman, President of Bangladesh Aluminum Manufacturers Association said raw materials are being imported from India, Pakistan, Singapore and Australia. The importers have to pay at least 30 to 32 per cent tax including VAT (value added tax), customs duty and others. "It would be a difficult task to save this sector if we are not exempted from such taxes," he said.



PAINTING CONTEST FOR CHILDREN

Bangladesh National Museum last week organised a painting contest for children to mark the Independence and National Day. Sixteen including eight physically challenged children received awards in four groups.



useful telephone numbers

COURIER SERVICES

International
Air Borne Express- 9561371, 9561372, 9550724
Air Couriers Intl (BD) Ltd.- 8815970
Aramex International Courier- 9558003, 9559582, 9565075
Airspeed Express- 9563494
Asian Courier Services Ltd.- 8313543
Baishakhi Courier Service- 9558606
Banmgladesh Express Co. Ltd.- 9565114
Bangladesh Courier Service- 9563989
Bengal Express- 9560642, 9552666
Bangladesh Intl Courier- 953636
Continental Service Ltd.- 9552948, 9558425
DHL Worldwide Express- 9881703-7, 9886305-9, 9882057
Enem Express- 9330699
Fedex Bangladesh Express Co. Ltd.- 9565114
Modhuban Courier Service-

9550884
Overseas Courier Service- 9352431, 8321169
Pacific Courier- 9568446
Reliance Express Service- 9558515, 7110249
Sky International service- 9660442
Skynet World Wide Express- 9558062, 9560258, 7114787, 7113184
TNT Express- 9566662, 9558239, 8618155
Union Courier Service- 9341722
United Parcel Service Air alliance Ltd.- 8826429, 8810223

National
Asian courier Service Ltd.- 8313543
BAE- 9884851
Central Courier Service- 9881118
Confidence Courier Service Ltd.- 9567036
Chisty Courier- 7110177-9,
Cosmopol Services- 9552793, 9557975
Dhaka Courier Services- 7236222

Dolphin Courier- 9558802
Dreamland Courier Service- 9550326, 9566975
Pioneer Courier Services- 9561727, 9569759
Probashi Courier Services- 9346359
Rainbow Express Parcel Services Ltd.- 8322773, 8315703
Reliance Express Services- 9558515, 7110249
Sundarban Courier Services- 9551984, 9556189, 9551656
Sunrise Courier Services- 9568751
World Runner Express Ltd.- 9112068, Fax - 880-2-9112068

TIPS

Do you know according to Dhaka City Corporation, you must deposit your waste at the collection site between 4pm and 10pm

LIBRARY & INFO-

Libraries, Cultural and Information Centers
Central Public Library- 8626001-4,
Shishu Academy- 9564128
Shilpakala Academy- 8614673
Bangla Academy- 8619550
Islamic Foundation- 9550280, 9556407
Nazrul Institute- 9114602
Ford Foundation- 8116133
Alliance Francaise- 8611557
British Council- 8618867-8, 8618905-7
Community Development Library- 8113769, 8113604
Goethe Institute Int'l- Dhaka- 9126525-6
Indian Information Centre & Cultural Library- 8615096
The Russian Cultural Centre- 9116314, 9118531, 9118314
Drik Photo Gallery- 9120125, 8112954, 8123412

OUTING

Museum and Zoo
National Museum- 8619396-9
Open: 10 am 5 pm, Friday 3 pm- 8 pm, Thursday closed
Muktijuddha Jadughar- 9559091
Open: 10:30 am 6:30 pm, Sunday Closed
Bangabandhu Smiti Jadughar- 8110046
Open: 10 am 5 pm, Wednesday closed
Ahsan Manzil
Open: 10 am 5 pm, Friday: 3 pm - 7 pm, Thursday Closed
Shishu Jadughar- 9666466
Open: 10 am - 6 pm, Sunday Closed

CITY BUS ROUTE

Bus No.	Route	Starts from
1	Gulistan-Shahbagh-Banglamotor-Farmgate-Mirpur 10, 11, 12	Golap Shah Mazar
2	Gulistan-Shahbagh-Banglamotor-Farmgate-Mirpur 1, 2	Phoolbaria bus station
3	Gulistan-Shahbagh-Farmgate-Mahakhali-Airport-Azampur	Phoolbaria bus station
4	Shyampur-Motijheel-Shahbagh-Farmgate-Airport-Tongi	Shyampur
5	Sayedabad-Kamalapur-Motijheel-Airport-Joydebpur-Gazipur	Sayedabad
6A	Kamalapur-Motijheel-Gulistan-Shahbagh-Farmgate-Gulshan 1, 2	Kamalapur
6B	Kamalapur-Motijheel-Gulistan-Maghbazar-Nabisco-Gulshan 1, 2	Kamalapur
6C	Motijheel Shapla chattrar- Malibagh- Farmgate- Gulshan 2	Motijheel Shaplachattrar
7	Sadarghat-Gulistan-Maghbazar-Nabisco-Gulshan 2	Sadarghat
8	Chittagong-Motijheel-Shahbagh-Farmgate-Asad Gate-Kalyanpur-Gabtolli	Chittagong Road
9	Demra Rani mahal-Motijheel-Kalbagan-Shyamoli-Mirpur 1, 10, 11, 12	Demra Ranimahall
10	Sadarghat-Gulistan-Kakrail-Mailbagh-Rampura-Biswa Road-Tongi Bridge	Sadarghat
11	Sayedabad-Motijheel-Fakirapool-Maghbazar-Mohakhali-Tongi Bridge	Sayedabad
11/A	Sayedabad-Khilgoan-Mailbagh-Rampura-Airport-Tongi Bridge	Syedabad
12	Shanir Akhra-Shahbagh-Farmgate-Asadgate-Mohammadpur	Shanir Akhra
13	Motijheel-Shahbagh-New Market-Jhigatola-Shangkar-Mohammedpur	Motijheel
14	Signboard - Motijheel-Shahbagh-New Market-Shyamoli-Mirpur 1, 12	Signboard (Chittagong Road)
15	Chittagong Road-Motijheel-Shahbagh-Farmgate-Mirpur 12	Chittagong Road
24	Gulistan-Maghbazar-Mohakhali-Airport-Uttara-Bipile	Gulistan