

'Pesticides from Mahogani better than chemical insecticides'

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Mahogani dust and oil extracted from this tree are being widely used as pesticides to save crops and livestock in the southern part of the country.

This was stated by Md Abdul Matin, sub-assistant agricultural officer of Rampal upazila, at a seminar titled 'Herbal pesticides from Mahogani tree and its multiple uses' at the auditorium of the Agricultural Information Service at Khamarbari in the city yesterday.

He said hundreds of farmers of the upazila in Bagerhat district have got benefits from the use of the dust and oil in their field as pesticides.

Matin claimed that the oil and dust are more effective than chemical insecticides.

"These not only help farmers save their crops from pests but also combat environmental degradation," he said urging the authorities concerned to take necessary steps for its wide dissemination so that the country can take its patent rights.

"Since 2001, I have been encouraging the farmers to use the pesticides in their fields and I am getting huge response from them," Matin added.

"I have used Mahogani oil and dust in my paddy field and I am getting good result. When I used chemical insecticides, I could not

save the fishes. But now I can save them," said Shahadat Hossain, a farmer from Bagerhat who attended the seminar, while talking to The Daily Star.

Dr Parvin Noor, principal scientific officer of Biological Research Division at Bangladesh Council of Science and Industrial Research (BCSIR), said, "More research is needed to ensure the safety of people and we have to observe that it will not be harmful for water, soil and air also."

Md Shamsul Alam, director general of Agricultural Extension Department, was the chief guest at the seminar which was attended by agricultural scientists, officers and farmers.

Eight high govt officials injured in construction site accident

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

At least eight high officials, including the Public Works Department (PWD) Secretary ASM Rashidul Hai, were injured in a construction site accident yesterday when they went to visit the construction of Kazi Nazrul Islam Avenue-Tongi Division Road link road.

Of the injured, Rajuk official Joyal Abedin Bhuiyan and PWD secretary's bodyguard Constable Sirajul Islam were admitted to Dhaka Medical College Hospital as their conditions were critical.

Among the other injured, Rajuk Executive Engineer Uzzal Malik, Project Director Anwar Hossain, Sub-assistant Engineer Bijon Kumar Das and three others were admitted to different clinics in the city.

Sources said they were injured around 9:45pm when they fell into a 10-12 feet deep pit in the construction site. They said the steel bar on which they were standing slipped and caused the accident.

ARMS CASE

Ex-BNP MP Shahidul Alam acquitted

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The High Court yesterday acquitted former BNP lawmaker Shahidul Alam Talukder of Patuakhali, who was earlier sentenced to 10 years' imprisonment in a case filed against him on charges of possessing illegal arms.

After hearing an appeal filed by Shahidul against the conviction order by the trial court in Patuakhali, an HC bench of Justice Syed Muhammad Dastagir Husain and Justice Farid Ahmed passed the order.

The case had been filed by Baupol Police Station in Patuakhali on 17 February this year.

RE-DEMARCATION OF CONSTITUENCIES

Hearing on petition to vacate HC order today

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The High Court yesterday fixed today for hearing a petition filed by the Election Commission (EC) for vacating the HC order staying the EC's recent re-demarcation of parliamentary constituencies.

Endorsing a time prayer moved by EC's counsel Dr Shahdeen Malik, the HC bench comprising Justice Mir Hasmat Ali and Justice Shamim Hasnain, which was set to hear the petition yesterday, deferred the hearing.

Dr Shahdeen Malik yesterday prayed to the HC bench for deferring the hearing for one day, saying that the principal counsel for EC Advocate Mahmudul Islam would present submissions on behalf of the EC before the court on Tuesday.

Upon a writ petition filed by former BNP state minister Abdul Mannan, the HC on August 7 stayed for three months the EC's re-demarcation of parliamentary constituencies directed the government and the EC to explain why the notification on re-demarcation should not be declared unconstitutional and illegal.

The EC on September 29 submitted to an HC bench of Justice Syed Mahmud Hossain and Justice Quamrul Islam Siddiqui a petition for vacating the HC order.

The EC withdrew this petition from the HC bench on October 14 and again submitted the same petition on October 19 to the HC bench of Justice Mir Hasmat Ali and Justice Shamim Hasnain, which is also now set to hear the writ petition.



A massive traffic congestion was created from Asad Gate to Science Laboratory in the city yesterday during a clash between the students of Dhaka College and Dhaka City College. (Story on Page 16)

UN REPORT

Asia should see migrants as help, not hindrance

AFP, Bangkok

Asian governments should look at the 15 to 20 million migrants in the region as a workforce to be tapped rather than convenient scapegoats for politicians, said a UN report released yesterday.

The report urges Asian leaders to set aside their own countries' concerns and come up with a unified scheme for fighting illegal migration and human trafficking, exploitation and the spread of HIV/AIDS that sometimes follows.

"Governments are still thinking of this as something that needs to be fixed rather than an ongoing process that needs to be managed," said Federico Soda, a co-author of the report from the UN's International Organisation for Migration.

The report on international migration in East and Southeast Asia covers 16 separate countries with varying viewpoints on immigrants.

They range from the Singapore, where foreigners now make up 25 percent of the popu-

lation and 30 percent of the workforce, to fledgling East Timor, where immigrants must give up any other passport and pay a daily foreigner tax.

More migrant workers will likely be needed in countries like Singapore and Malaysia, where growth is outpacing the workforce, the report states.

"You have large economies growing at the speed of light and they need workers," said Irena Vojackova-Sollorano, regional representative of IOM.

But the foreign-born worker can

also be a powerful scapegoat when countries have trouble employing their own citizens, said Soda.

"I think it will become especially so if the economic downturn is as sharp as some people think it will be," he said, referring to the current global financial crisis.

One popular destination point for Asian migration is Thailand.

About 91 percent of the 532,000 low-skilled migrants who came over on work permits in 2007 were from Myanmar, the report said, while four percent were from Laos and five percent were from

Cambodia.

There are also believed to be up to two million illegal migrant workers from impoverished Myanmar in Thailand, many of whom can find themselves forced into sweatshop labour, domestic servitude or the high-risk sex trade.

"Migrant policy is determined with only national interests in mind, but migration is by nature a trans-national problem," said Keiko Osaki of the UN's Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific, which co-chaired the report.



Artists, students and other people pay their last respects to artist Camelia Shishir when her body was brought to the Institute of Fine Art on the Dhaka University campus yesterday. Camelia, wife of eminent painter and cartoonist Prof Shishir Bhattacharjee, passed away on Sunday night.

Woman stabbed to death by stepson

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A woman, who was stabbed by her alleged drug-addicted stepson, succumbed to her injuries at the Chest Disease Hospital at Mohakhali yesterday.

The deceased was identified as Morsheda Begum, 32, wife of Abdul Rashid, sub-inspector of Rajarbagh Police Line, residing at Mainerbagh in North Badda area.

Brother of the victim Alamgir Hossain told reporters at Dhaka Medical College morgue that Redwan Hossain, 20, stabbed his stepmother in the chest with a knife on Sunday as she refused to give him Tk 100 to buy drugs.

Morsheda was rushed to a local hospital and then was referred to the chest hospital.

Alamgir alleged that Redwan is a drug addict and he often asked for money to buy drugs from his sister.

Badda police said the reason behind the murder could not be known immediately.

The victim's husband filed a murder case with Badda Police Station in this connection.

Akbar 'security coordinator' to Khaleda

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Maj Gen (ret'd) Fazle Elahi Akbar has been appointed 'security and defence coordinator' to BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia.

Maj Gen (ret'd) Akbar, who retired from the armed forces in 2006, has already taken over the charge.

'FP programme hampered in urban slum areas'

UPHCP-2 logo 'Rainbow' launched

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

LGRD and Cooperatives Adviser Anwarul Iqbal yesterday said the 2nd phase of Urban Primary Health Care Project (UPHCP) is in operation to reach health services to the poor living in urban slums after the successful completion of its first phase.

The adviser was speaking as the chief guest at the inaugural function of the service brand logo 'Rainbow' of UPHCP-2 at Bangladesh-China Friendship Conference Centre in the city.

UPHCP-2 and Bangladesh Centre for Communication Programme (BCCP) jointly organised the programme with UPHCP Project Director Jamal A Naser Chowdhury in the chair.

The local government department and LGRD ministry are implementing the 2nd phase of the project with the help of 13 non-government organisations.

The adviser said poor people in rural areas are flocking to urban areas due to river erosion and scarcity of employment opportunities, but the infrastructures and health services at urban hospitals are not increased leaving them more vulnerable to different diseases.

Family planning (FP) programme is greatly hampered in urban slum areas, as birth rate in the areas is 5 or 6 percent while nationally it is only 1.41 percent, he added.

Speakers at the programme said

the UPHCP-2 is trying to reach primary health service on the doorstep of the poor people and 'Rainbow' will help the target group as their guide in this effort.

The project will mainly address malnutrition, unhygienic and reproductive health problems among the urban poor, they added.

They said 85 percent of poor mothers give birth to babies at home, and that 80 percent of them die during childbirth a year.

The health services of the project are available at 24 urban maternity centres, 161 urban healthcare centres and 644 satellite centres in six city corporations and five municipalities across the country.

The speakers stressed on making familiar the service brand logo so that illiterate people can easily detect the location of UPHCP-2, adding that urban poor cannot avail services of private clinics, hospitals and even of the government hospitals as they are not conscious.

Public representatives of city corporations and municipalities of the respective areas, NGO workers and people from cross sections of the society attended the programme.

Health and Family Welfare Secretary AMM Nasir Uddin, BCCP Director and CEO Md Shajahan and Director General of Directorate General of Family Planning Begum Quamrun Nessa Khanam also spoke.

Ensuring safe water, installing toilets can help fight poverty

AFP, Washington

Installing toilets and ensuring safe water supplies where needed throughout the world would do more to end poverty and improve world health than any other possible measure, according to a new UN study.

"Water problems, caused largely by an appalling absence of adequate toilets in many places, contribute tremendously to some of the world's most punishing problems, foremost among them the inter-related afflictions of poor health and chronic poverty," said Zafar Adeel, director of the UN University's Canadian-based International Network on Water, Environment

and Health, which released the study on Sunday.

Almost 900 million people around the world lack access to safe water supplies, and 2.5 billion people live without access to improved sanitation, according to UN figures.

Diseases due to poor water, sanitation and hygiene account for an estimated 10 percent of the total global burden of illness, and the total number of deaths attributed to poor water, sanitation and hygiene was over 3.5 million in 2002.

Simply improving domestic water supply, sanitation and hand washing with soap can reduce illness rates by more than 25 percent, researchers said.



Chief of Air Staff Air Marshal SM Ziaur Rahman pays a courtesy call on Deputy Minister Martin Bartak during his recent visit to the Czech Republic. The air chief returned home on Sunday night after the four-day visit.



US Pacific Air Forces Commander General Carrol H Chandler calls on Chief of Army Staff General Moeen U Ahmed at Army Headquarters in Dhaka Cantonment on Thursday.

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