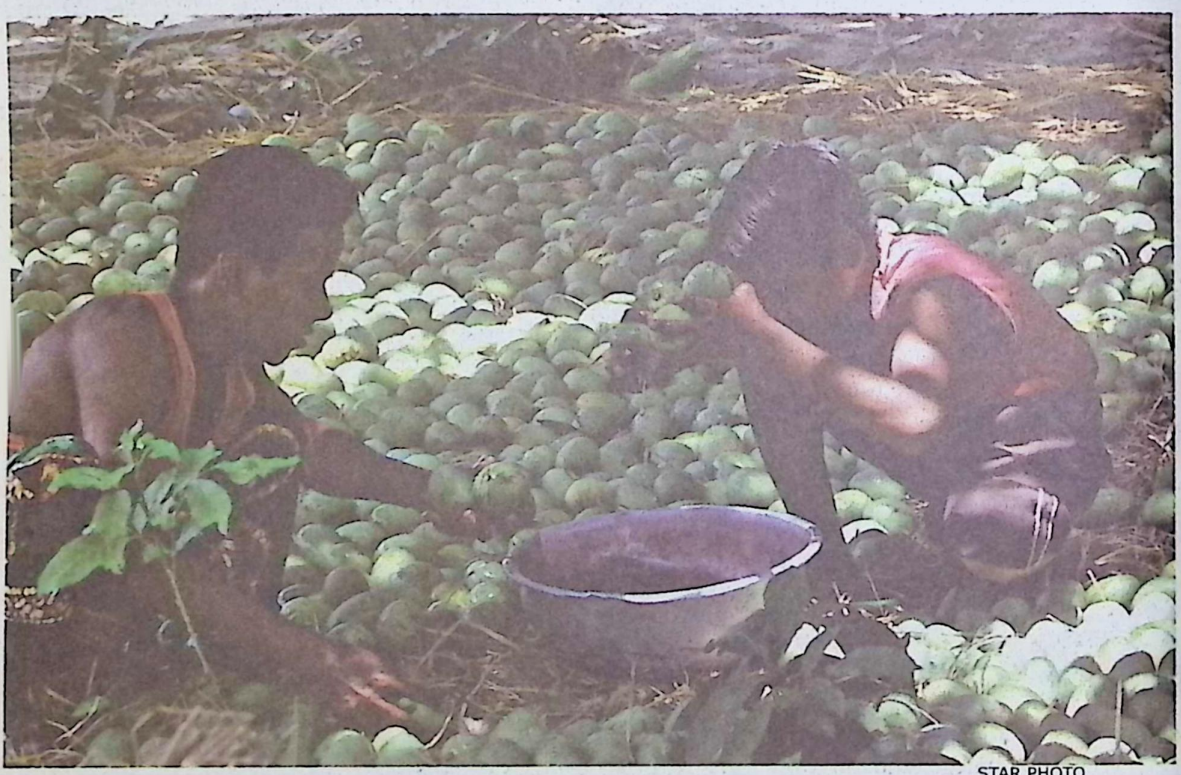
over-enthusiastic about going to court. "Others, however, are forced to, due to the failure of different bodies to deliver and fulfil their responsibilities. The courts, rather than always dealing with them directly, must create pressure on the relevant organs to make them perform," he says.

This failure to deliver not only causes unnecessary agitation but also puts lives at risk. Fish containing formalin, fruits and vegetables containing chemicals, water contaminated by bacteria, are some of the most basic concerns of ordinary citizens. There are government bodies whose duty is to regulate and monitor these processes, but with people having to take legal recourse, their effectiveness has become highly questionable. It is the courts that had to order the Bangladesh Standards and Testing Institute (BSTI) as well as law-enforcing agencies to monitor fruit depots in Dhaka to prevent the storage and selling of adulterated fruits, while the National Board of Revenue was ordered to stop the import of contaminated fruits. The courts also directed the government to set up food courts and appoint food analysts and inspectors in every district in order to check adulteration of food.

Manzill Murshed, an advocate of the Supreme Court, has been going to court continuously demanding basic services. His belief is that if government and administrative bodies fail to do what they are legally bound to do, people or organisations can go to court in the interest of the public to make them perform their duties.

In terms of filing the cases, one thing led to another, says Murshid. Contaminated drinking water is a common problem, against which he filed a case. This made him think about the source of the water, leading to the waste disposal which pollutes the Buriganga river, on which another case was filed. Contamination is not the only problem with Dhaka's rivers, however. Saving Dhaka's lifeline of four rivers has become an issue in itself, requiring serious intervention of the courts. Encroachment, construction of illegal structures on the banks and even in the middle of the rivers and pollution have all put them at risk, causing the court to order the deployment of police to guard the banks of the Buriganga. Not only rivers but even the seaside is having to be saved by the courts, with the cancellation of plot allotments on the beaches of Cox's Bazaar in order to maintain ecological balance. Environmental concerns have also been raised in the ship-breaking yards in Chittagong where the activities are not only a threat to the workers but also to the ecosystem. Environmental groups have had to go to court repeatedly to compel the authorities to take measures to protect the environment.



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Neither water, nor land is safe in our country. It