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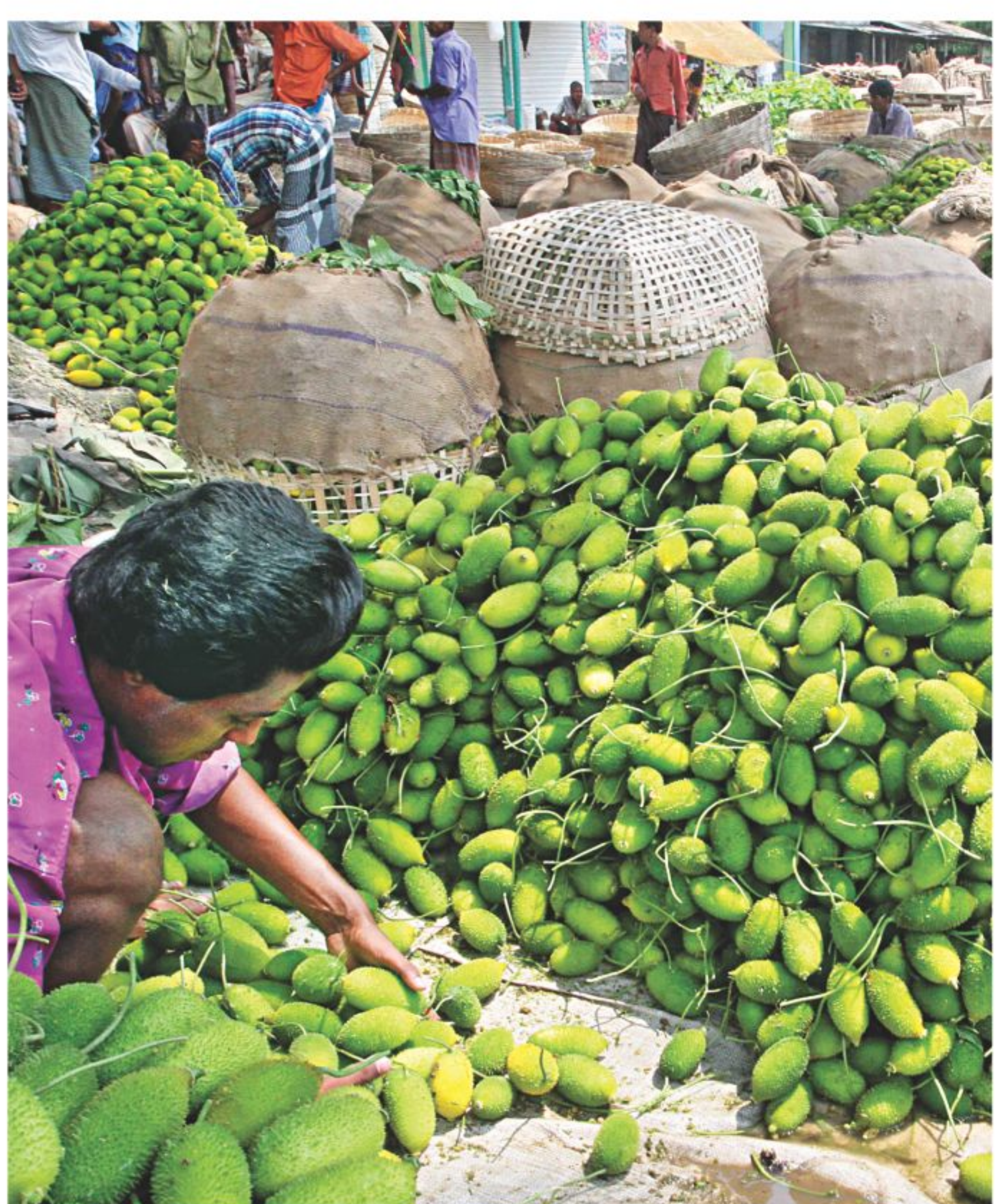
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PHEROMONE TRAP FOR PESTICIDE-FREE VEGETABLES

A farmer is seen walking through a brinjal field where a pheromone trap is set as a substitute for highly toxic pesticides. It is a small chemical capsule in a plastic bottle half-filled with water. But it works wonders - insects flock to the bottle to drown. Farmers, who earlier used to apply heavy doses of pesticides in their vegetable fields, now only need the pheromone -- the female sex hormone of insects -- that attracts the male. Thanks to awareness building from the part of agriculture extension services, the growers at Narsingdhi's Raipura are now making plenty of pesticide-free vegetables available for the buyers in the village markets.

PHOTO: ANISUR RAHMAN



JS budget session starts today

BNP ready to join

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Jatiya Sangsad goes into budget session today, and MPs from the opposition BNP may join the inaugural sitting, ending their long boycott of the House.

Talking to The Daily Star yesterday, some BNP lawmakers said they were making preparations to return to the House today. However, the BNP Parliamentary Party will take the final decision at a meeting this afternoon.

"Most probably, we will join the House proceedings tomorrow [today]," Moudud Ahmed, BNP standing committee member, told The Daily Star yesterday.

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BISHWAJIT MURDER

21 BCL men indicted

13 of the accused on the run; trial starts June 13

COURT CORRESPONDENT

Almost six months into the killing of Biswajit Das, a Dhaka court yesterday indicted 21 Bangladesh Chhatra League activists of Jagannath University for the gruesome murder.

Of the accused, seven BCL men, detained after being identified from still photographs and video footages of the December 9 murder, pleaded not guilty before the court.

Three of them -- Mahfuzur Rahman Nahid, Kaiyyum Miah and Md Saiful Islam -- sought bail only to be denied.

While indicting the 21 men, Md Zahirul Haque of the Metropolitan Sessions Judge's Court read out the charges highlighting the brutality of the murder, which shook the nation to its core.

The trial of the seven, along with another Jagannath student, Golam Mostofa, arrested at his village home in Manikganj on May 26, is set to begin on June 13.

Four of them have already made judicial statements confessing their role in the murder.

But police still have a major task to accomplish: arresting the rest 13 Chhatra League men who went into hiding.

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FILE PHOTO

TELCOS, REGULATOR GP for end to all disputes, uncertainties

ABDULLAH MAMUN

Grameenphone Chairman Sigve Brekke, referring to some disputed telecom issues including VAT rebate on the 2G spectrum charges and 3G licensing guidelines, said there is a "dark cloud in the sky".

"But the government seemed to be positive about resolving the problems," he told some journalists last night at Sonargaon Hotel, Dhaka.

The GP boss said the operators were prepared to pay the 2G spectrum prices but suddenly the BTRC imposed an extra 15 percent VAT. This extra payment caused a major crisis for the operators and they went to the court to resolve it.

He mentioned the finance minister in July last year assured the operators of an out-of-court settlement of the VAT issue.

"We are still ready to withdraw the court cases and if the

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Anwar, Bulu granted bail for joining JS

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

BNP lawmakers MK Anwar and Barkatullah Bulu were granted bail by a Metropolitan Sessions Judge's Court of Dhaka yesterday.

Judge Zahirul Haque granted BNP's standing committee member Anwar and Joint Secretary Bulu bails so that they could join the budget session beginning today.

Anwar was sent to jail on May 27 after he

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ANTI-ISLAM COMMENTS

Charges against four bloggers accepted

Hearing on charge framing starts June 27

COURT CORRESPONDENT

A Dhaka court yesterday accepted charges against four bloggers in two cases filed for making "derogatory comments about Islam and Prophet Muhammad [pbuh]" on social media.

The four are Subrata Adhikari Shuvo, 24, a master's student at Dhaka University; Russel Parvez, 36, a teacher at an English medium school; Mashiur Rahman Biplob, 42; and Asif Mohiuddin, 28, an ex-student

of a private university.

Judge Md Zahirul Haque of the Metropolitan Sessions Judge's Court passed the order in the presence of the four and fixed June 27 for starting to hear the charge framing against them.

The court granted bail to Biplob but rejected Asif's bail petition.

Earlier on May 12, Asif was denied bail while Shuvo and Parvez were released on bail by the same court.

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Meher Afroz Chumki made state minister

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Awami League lawmaker Meher Afroz Chumki was sworn in as state minister for women and children affairs yesterday.

President Abdul Hamid administered the oath to her at Darbar Hall of the Bangabhaban at 5:00pm.

The position fell vacant after Shirin Sharmin Choudhury was elected Speaker of parliament on April 30.

Meher Afroz, daughter of AL leader Mayejuddin Ahmad who was killed during a demonstration against the autocratic rule of HM Ershad, was elected MP from Gazipur-5 constituency in the last general election.

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Agonised, she kills herself

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

She at last succumbed to her self-inflicted burns at Dhaka Medical College Hospital yesterday.

Years of mental torture and humiliation at the in-laws place in Patuakhali culminated in 28-year-old Mitu Akhter attempting to commit suicide Friday afternoon, her family alleged.

Her agony lasted for another two days as she breathed her last yesterday at 5:15pm at the hospital.

Before Mitu, a housewife, set herself on fire, she had a quarrel with her mother-in-law, Halima Begum over a trivial matter and at one stage Halima hurled abuse at Mitu for having dark complexion as she had done before on many occasions, Mitu's family members said.

Mitu's in-laws also used to rebuke her for her family's failure to fulfil their ever increasing demand for dowry.

The father-in-law had demanded Tk1 lakh during her marriage. Of the amount, Tk 50,000 was given along with furniture just after the ceremony. Later, her family gave the rest of the money and other expensive gifts, said the victim's brother, Masud Rana.

"Even though we fulfilled all the demands of her in-laws, she had to bear insults from her mother-in-law and finally that is what made Mitu take her own life," said Rana with a sigh.

Rana also said Mitu had confided to her mother that Halima often used to bring up the matter of her complexion while giving a reason for demanding dowry.

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Omar Borkan Al Gala

Too handsome

METRO, UK

The man reportedly told to leave Saudi Arabia for being 'too handsome' made a return to the headlines this week after revealing he is set to tell all in a new film about the incident.

Dubai actor and photographer Omar Borkan Al Gala became famous around the world after he was given his marching orders over concerns he might corrupt impressionable women.

Since then, he has gained nearly one million fans on Facebook and has also received a brand new Mercedes G55 as a gift from an admirer.

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