

Fruit bagging

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checks latex burns and fungal spots on fruits, they added.

The new methods, said the officials, come as a blessing to farmers against the backdrop of widespread use of pesticides and fungicides that threaten ecological balance and public health. They also help farmers have a more reliable estimate of their harvest prospects.

"By protecting mangoes from diseases and pests, the new methods would boost the production of export quality mangoes. They would also ensure protection of mangoes from scratches and scars, making the fruits spotless," said Sorof Uddin, senior scientific officer at the research station.

When the mangoes are 40 to 55 days old, each of them are bagged until harvest. No pesticide sprays are needed for the fruits once the bags are put on them.

Mango growers usually spray pesticides 15 to 25 times in their orchards in a season. But if they adopted the bagging method, they would require spraying pesticides for only two to three times at the early stage of farming, the official said.

All the leading mango-producing countries have been using this method to have better yields, he noted.

Over 16 lakh bags, costing about Tk 5 each, have already been used in the mango orchards in the district this year, including 11 lakh in Shibganj upazila alone. The number might go up to 25 lakh. Last year orchard owners used only 5 lakh bags, said officials.

US warns

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amounted to an early extension of the previous one.

"We took the opportunity, because it's the beginning of summer, to make our concerns known," he told a press briefing, noting several high-profile events in Europe in June and July.

"I'm not aware of any specific, credible, terrorist event around these events or in any particular place in Europe. This was issued ... based on an accumulation of information," Kirby said.

Responding to the US alert, the head of Italy's anti-terrorism police unit, Lamberto Giannini, said there were "no specific warnings or particular evidence." But he told Italian media the situation across Europe "requires maximum attention."

The British Foreign Office declined to comment but pointed to its own guidance advising of a "high threat" of terrorism in some European countries.

The State Department alert noted France will host the June 10-July 10 UEFA Euro 2016 soccer championship and had extended its state of emergency, imposed after the Nov 13 Paris attacks, through July 26 to cover the July 2-24 Tour de France race.

"Euro Cup stadiums, fan zones, and unaffiliated entertainment venues broadcasting the tournaments in France and across Europe represent potential targets for terrorists, as do other large-scale sporting events and public gathering places throughout Europe," the department said.

Airtel network

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Gopalganj, Madaripur, Munshiganj, Narsingdi, Manikganj and Narayanganj were badly affected following the network disruption, according to an Airtel letter to the Bangladesh Telecommunication Regulatory Commission (BTRC).

The disruption affected 40 percent of Airtel's 2G and 3G network, according to the letter.

Thinking that the network disruption was a consequence of the expiration of deadline for the biometric SIM re-registration that coincidentally ended on Tuesday, subscribers became agitated.

Some Airtel subscribers also staged a demonstration in front of its Dhanmondi office around 10:30am.

They later left the scene following assurance from Airtel officials and police.

A subscriber, Rafiul Islam, told The Daily Star that he became worried after his mobile phone set displayed the sign of "no network coverage" around 6:30am.

"I wondered why my Airtel SIM has been blocked even though it is biometrically verified," he said.

Meanwhile, subscribers of different carriers complained that some SIMs were blocked even after going through the re-registration process, while some have had their connections still alive even though those had not been re-registered.

BTRC officials said as the issue was a technical one, it would take a while for everything to get normal.



The three Habiganj brothers, convicted of crimes against humanity, being taken into a police van yesterday. The war crimes tribunal handed down death penalty to one of them and jail until death to the others.

PHOTO: PALASH KHAN

3 brothers convicted

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The other two participated in facilitating the murder. The criminal activities and unlawful acts of the three brothers did not happen in seclusion. Those were carried out in broad daylight but nobody resisted the attacks, given the context and the notoriety of Razakar Bahini, according to the judgment.

"Accused persons had acted deliberately as part of 'collective criminality' in accomplishing the purpose of attacks, being aware of consequence of their acts," said the International Crimes Tribunal-1, with two other judges -- Justice Md Shahinur Islam and Justice Md Shohrwardi, in presence of the convicts, their family members, prosecutors, defence lawyers and journalists.

Prosecutor Sultan Mahmud Simon said, "We are happy and hope that the victim's family members will get some solace following the verdict."

Defence counsel Masud Rana said his clients did not get justice. The defence will challenge the verdict at the Supreme Court, he said, expressing the hope of getting justice there.

According to law, a war crimes convict can file an appeal with the SC within 30 days from the date of the verdict's pronouncement.

Meanwhile, the judges expressed discontent as none from the prosecution appeared in the court before they took seat at 10:30am. Prosecutor Simon turned up at 10:33am.

CASE PROCEEDINGS, CHARGES AND PUNISHMENT

The prosecution in May last year pressed the four charges against Muhibur and Mujibur, of Kumurshana village, who had been elected as chairman of Khagaura Union Parishad in Baniachang upazila of Habiganj after independence.

Razzak, of Hossainpur village, was implicated later.

The three were indicted in September.

During the trial, the prosecution produced 12 witnesses, including the case's investigation officer, and submitted several documents while seven witnesses testified in favour of the accused.

According to the first charge, the convicts were involved in the killing of Rajab Ali and abduction of another freedom fighter, Akal Ali.

The convicts along with other Razakars and Pakistani army men looted and torched the houses of Maj Gen (ret'd) MA Rob, Liberation War's deputy commander-in-chief, according to the second charge. The tribunal handed down 10 years' rigorous imprisonment to all the three for these crimes.

The third charge reads the brothers

identified two women before Pakistani army men who then raped them. The court gave them 20 years' rigorous imprisonment in this connection.

The three convicts were also given seven-year imprisonment in connection with the fourth charge -- for involvement in the abduction, confinement and torture of an unarmed civilian during the 1971 war of independence.

The sentences of imprisonment shall run concurrently, and other sentences will be merged with the execution of death penalty, the tribunal said.

With the latest verdict, two war crimes tribunal so far delivered 24 judgments. Thirty-four people were convicted, including 24 sentenced to death, of the crimes they committed during the Liberation War.

Fahim Munaim passes away

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The decision on his burial will be made after two of his sons return from abroad. Till then, the body will be kept at the Square Hospital's mortuary, according to Maasranga Television.

Fahim served as managing editor of The Daily Star from 1996 to 2007.

He joined The Daily Star on June 10, 1996 as deputy managing editor and was promoted to the post of managing editor on December 1 the following year.

Fahim became executive editor of the newspaper on February 1, 2010.

A well-known TV personality, Fahim joined Maasranga Television, a concern of Square Group, as the chief executive officer and chief editor in March 2010.

He became press secretary to the then chief adviser of the caretaker government in 2007 and the ambassador to Indonesia the following year.

Fahim, son of journalist Syed Nuruddin, was born on July 4, 1953. He studied at Mirzapur Cadet College, and later completed his bachelor's and master's degrees in Public Administration from George Mason University in the US.

In his professional career, he was executive director at the Daily Sangbad and managing editor at the Morning Sun, news agency UNB and weekly Dhaka Courier. He earned huge popularity among journalists during his stint there.

He also worked as press councillor at the Bangladesh Embassy in Tokyo, Japan.

As the news of his death broke, tributes began pouring in from his well-wishers and colleagues and admirers.

Mahfuz Anam, editor and publisher of The Daily Star, said, "Fahim joined us when we were still a small and struggling newspaper. As the managing editor, he played a crucial role in introducing modern and dynamic management system making, The Daily Star financially viable."

The Star editor said it was a privilege to work with Fahim whose ever cheerful disposition and positive outlook on life made working with him a constant pleasure. He devoted his whole life to building professional and ethical journalism.

"He was a very dependable colleague and a more dependable friend," said Anam.

Expressing profound shock, Fakhruddin Ahmed, former chief adviser to the caretaker government, said Fahim contributed immensely to the public life of Bangladesh during his long and successful journalistic career.

When Fahim was called upon by the council of advisers to serve as press secretary to the chief adviser of the non-party caretaker government in 2007, he welcomed the opportunity to serve his country, and did so effectively and with deep integrity, Fakhruddin said in a condolence message.

"I spoke with him virtually every morning during my tenure as chief adviser, and I always found his counsel to be immensely valuable, on topics

ranging far beyond his immediate purview as press secretary."

"We shall all, as a nation, miss his deeply-held commitment to the freedom of the press. And I will remember him always as a man of honesty and openness, who maintained calm and a sense of humour in every situation," Fakhruddin said, expressing deep sympathy to the bereaved family members.

In a condolence message, Dhaka University Vice-Chancellor AAMS Arefin Siddique said Fahim's contribution to the flourishing of journalism in the country would always be remembered.

Mizanur Rahman Khan, a journalist of BBC Bangla Service, said on his Facebook profile, "Hard to believe. I had a good time with him at The Daily Star. This terrible news tells us again that there is no serial number to die."

Zafar Sobhan, editor of Dhaka Tribune, wrote, "... I can't believe that you are gone so young. You were a friend, mentor and role model, and we are all the poorer for your passing."

Eminent personalities and government high-ups also offered their condolences. They include Finance Minister AMA Muhiith, Information Minister Hasanul Haq Inu, Jatiya Press Club President Shafiqur Rahman and its General Secretary Kamrul Islam Chowdhury, and Inspector General of Police AKM Shahidul Hoque.

MPs can't be at helm

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ad-hoc committee which would hold an election and form a regular governing body in the institution in six months.

The court said the members of existing governing bodies of other such institutions can retain their posts until their tenure expires, Deputy Attorney General Israt Jahan told reporters.

She said the government would move an appeal before the Appellate Division of the Supreme Court (SC), challenging the HC verdict.

The HC bench of Justice Zinat Ara and Justice AKM Zahirul Hoque delivered the verdict hearing two separate writ petitions filed by SC lawyer Eunos Ali Akond.

The petitions challenged the legality of Sections 5 and 50 of Non-government School College Governing Body Regulation-2009 which permitted formation of special governing bodies in educational institutions and the lawmakers to hold the posts of chairman.

Eunos told The Daily Star that the HC declared the two sections of the regulation illegal and unconstitutional as "they are against the constitution."

The lawmakers can neither hold such posts nor nominate anybody for them following the HC verdict, he said, adding that such special governing bodies could no longer operate now.

The authorities concerned of the government would now create ad hoc committees for holding elections and forming regular governing bodies in such institutions, Eunos said.

He said the HC declared the two sections of the 2009 regulation illegal as they were against articles 11 and 65 of the constitution.

As per article 11, the representatives of any forum of administration will be picked through elections.

The article says, "The Republic shall be a democracy in which fundamental human rights and freedoms and respect for the dignity and worth of the human person shall be guaranteed and in which effective participation by the people through their elected representatives in administration at all levels shall be ensured."

Under Article 65, the lawmakers are permitted to formulate laws, but they cannot do that properly as they keep holding posts of chairman of governing bodies of four separate institutions, he said.

The lawyer said the section 5 of the 2009 regulation is also against the Secondary and Higher Secondary Ordinance, 1961.

The ordinance under which the regulation was formulated did not allow formation of special committee at any school and college, said Eunos.

In January, a writ petition was filed with the HC, challenging the legality of

His troubles

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Sonu, about half a decade ago into Bangladesh, filed a case on Sunday against him and his family members, bringing charges of assaulting a woman, said Musa.

They are influential people. That is why police were favouring them, he alleged.

Musa, hailing from Betagi upazila of Barguna, urged the authorities concerned, including the National Human Rights Commission, to take initiatives to end his sufferings.

Sonu, now 12, was tricked and brought to Bangladesh allegedly by Musa's neighbours Aklima Begum and Rahima Begum in 2010.

The boy is now staying at Jessore Kishore Unnayan Kendra. He talked to his parents in New Delhi over the phone, said Musa.

After the news of Musa's noble initiative made headlines in the Bangladesh media, Hasi Begum, sister of Aklima and Rahima, filed the case against Musa and six of his family members with Betagi Police Station.

He left home and is now living in the capital city to avoid harassment and, more importantly, to complete his mission of reuniting Sonu with his parents, said Musa.

Earlier, Musa spent 41 days in jail after the abductor's family members filed cases against him.

After getting released on bail, he went to New Delhi and traced Sonu's parents there.

In December last year, Musa ran into Sonu on the Barguna court premises. He then took the boy under his custody and brought him to Dhaka, and spoke with police officials and rights activists about sending the boy back home.

On their advice, he took the boy to Barguna. There, with the help of the wife of a local lawmaker, he produced Sonu before a court on December 22.

The court then sent the boy to the juvenile correction centre.

Contacted yesterday, Rafiqul Islam, officer-in-charge of Betagi Police Station, refuted allegations of harassing Musa and his family members.

A case was filed and police were investigating the incident as per law, he told The Daily Star over the phone.

The OC further said a police team went to Musa's home as part of their investigation.

Nothing wrong in Tonu's

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Salma Ali, on behalf of Tonu's father Yaar Hossain, sent the notices to the three doctors on May 25, asking why legal action would not be taken against them for not finding any evidence of rape in the first autopsy and for making delay in revealing the second autopsy report.

The two other recipients of the notice are Comilla Medical College Principal Mohsin-uz-Zaman Chowdhury, and Dr Kamoda Proshad Saha, head of the forensic department of the hospital.

Mohsin said they sent the replies in three separate envelopes to the Agargaon office of BNWLA yesterday.

In the reply, Sharmin Sultana said she conducted the autopsy on Tonu's body following rules prevailing in all medical colleges of the country and scrutinised the inquest report properly.

She said Sub-inspector Saiful Islam mentioned in the inquest report that the anal and vagina were seen normal. "I reviewed the inquest report and checked the injuries on Tonu's body

and prepared the autopsy report in a proper way," Sharmin said.

She said there were no sign of struggle and marks of violence, the vagina was healthy and no spermatozoa were seen in the microbiological test -- High Vaginal Swab -- for detection of spermatozoa.

"I made the comment that no sign of forceful sexual intercourse before death was found after considering all aspects, including chemical analysis of inquest, histopathological examination of heart and autopsy findings," the lecturer said, adding that she mentioned in the autopsy report that no definite opinion as to the cause of death could be given following the chemical analysis.

She also said the issue of differences in the two autopsies as mentioned in the legal notice was not right as the second post-mortem report was yet to be published.

In his reply, principal Mohsin said he was not involved in the autopsy, so he

had no scope of giving any false report.

On the other hand, Kamoda Proshad said Sharmin conducted the first autopsy and he had no scope for giving any directive in this regard.

He also said the three-member medical board would prepare the second autopsy report once it gets the DNA test from the Criminal Investigation Department (CID).

Tonu, a student of history at Comilla Victoria College, was found dead in a bush inside Comilla Cantonment on 20 March.

Police suspected that she had been raped before being killed.

Tonu was buried at a grave at Mirzapur in Muradnagar upazila on March 21.

On March 29, Tonu's body was exhumed for second autopsy, as the doctors didn't find any evidence of rape in the first autopsy.

On May 17, the CID disclosed that it found evidence of rape on Tonu's body in its DNA test.

the Viharunnisa Noon School and College's special governing body led by Rashed Khan Menon.

The HC following another writ petition on February 17, 2013 issued a rule asking the government and Menon to explain why the formation of the special governing body led by the minister should not be declared illegal, said the lawyer.

Eunos in April submitted another writ petition with the SC, challenging the legality of Sections 5 and 50 of Non-government School College Governing Body Regulation, 2009, saying the statutes were against the constitution.

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In Narsingdi, a youth was killed and 10 people were injured and 10 houses were vandalised during a clash between supporters of a defeated chairman candidate and newly elected chairman of Nilakkyia union in Raipura upazila yesterday.

The dead is Liton Miah, 28, of Amirabad village in the same union.

The clash broke when supporters of Chairman Tajul Islam attacked the supporters of Abdul Haque Sarker at Atoshali Bazar area around noon.

A supporter of Sarker, Liton died on the spot when a crude bomb went off, said witnesses.

Azaharul Islam, officer-in-charge of Raipura Police Station, said additional law enforcers were deployed there to avoid further clashes.

Election to the UP was held on May 7.

In Bogra, at least four BNP men were injured in an attack allegedly by some Awami League men in Gohali Bazar of Gohali union in Shahjahanpur upazila on Tuesday afternoon.

The attack took place when some BNP men were electioneering for the party chairman candidate.

In Manikganj, some Hindus formed human chain in front of the district press club yesterday demanding punishment of attackers of Ananda Saha, a defeated independent chairman aspirant at Bhararia union under Manikganj Sadar upazila.

They alleged that supporters of AL candidate Anwar Hossain Angur launched an attack on Ananda, his brother Chandan Saha and some of his supporters around 11:45pm on Monday when they were taking tea at Amar Kanon tea stall at Bhararia Bazar.

Armed with iron rods, bamboo sticks and sharp weapons, the attackers beat them up and looted gold jewellery worth about Tk 3.45 lakh and mobile handsets worth around Tk 60,000 from them, alleged the protesters.

The May 28 polls to the UP saw independent candidate Abdul Kader unofficially elected chairman.

[Our correspondents in Narsingdi, Bogra and Manikganj contributed to this report.]