Medicinal adulsa helping farmers

Antidote for cold and cough earns Jhenidah villagers extra cash

AZIBOR RAHMAN with ANDREW EAGLE

Many know that winter feeling: rugged up in a blanket feeling sorry for oneself, struggling to overcome a cough or cold. While modern science is yet to discover a definitive cure for the fastmutating viruses that are often behind such basic ailments, an endemic treatment is at hand.

In Mostabapur village of Jhenidah's Kaliganj upazila the plant known in English as either adulsa or Malabar nut, and locally called bashak leaves, is producing extra profits for farmers.

"I started farming adulsa about seven years ago," says Mostabapur inhabitant Shahidul Islam. "I planted the crop on 20 decimals. It's a medicinal plant that's also used in fencing."

"The representatives of medical companies visit our village in search of adulsa," says neighbouring farmer Moksed Khan. "Two years ago I planted it on 15 decimals. One year later I earned Tk 3,000 from the first harvest of the leaves."

There are currently 12 farmers in

Mostabapur who dabble in adulsa, a plant that can be grown along the roadside or on otherwise vacant or fallow land. While the shrub is nondescript for most of the year, in flowering season it produces attractive white blooms. "Adulsa enhances the beauty of household yard," notes Shahidul.

He estimates the small-scale production of the crop already brings around Tk 10,000 into the village per annum. Adulsa is likewise grown in several neighbouring villages, with overall production on the rise.

A plant native to Bangladesh, its curative properties are hardly a mystery to Mostabapur villagers. "The leaves are very useful for patients," says 80-year-old Abbas Mondol. "It's good for cough and cold sufferers."

"I collect the leaves and squeeze out the juice for my children to drink when they get sick in winter," says widow Amena Khatun. "The leaves are a tonic suitable for poor and struggling families like ours, since we can't afford to buy medicines. Adulsa helps the



Eighty-year-old Abbas Mondol of Mastabapur of Kaliganj in Jhenidah plucks adulsa leaves from the plant. The leaves have medicinal value and helps with cough and cold.

MITU MURDER

Police quizzing 'arms supplier' again

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

Detectives in Chittagong yesterday started interrogating in custody Ehteshamul Haque alias Bhola, who allegedly supplied arms used in the sensational killing of Mahmuda Khanam Mitu, wife of former Superintendent of Police Babul Akter.

Bhola, who was reportedly a "source" of Babul, was taken in police custody from the Chittagong Central Jail yesterday afternoon.

Originally, a Chittagong court granted two days' remand for Bhola in August. But police did not question him in custody at the time, said Additional Deputy Commissioner Md Kamruzzaman of DB under

Chittagong Metropolitan Police. Earlier in July last year, police interrogated him in custody for eight

days in two phases. SEE PAGE 11 COL 1

Fate of illegal

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Kartripakkha (Rajuk), said one year might be needed to either demolish the building or for BGMEA to shift from it. BGMEA's lawyer advocate Kamrul

Haque Siddiqui said they needed at least three years as it was a very important structure related to export and import of garments.

Another lawyer, barrister Imtiaz Moinul Islam, told The Daily Star that the SC may grant some time and

they would seek three years. The building's foundation was laid in 1998 by the then prime minister Sheikh Hasina and it was opened in

2006 by the then premier Khaleda

The HC verdict had ordered the government to demolish the building within three months, saying it was built on land acquired through forgery and filled with earth illegally. Later, the Appellate Division

stayed the HC judgement following a BGMEA petition. A four-member Appellate Division

bench headed by Chief Justice Surendra Kumar Sinha passed a short verdict on June 2 last year dismissing the BGMEA appeal and upholding the HC order.

The SC released the full text of the verdict on November 8 ordering BGMEA to immediately demolish the

building at its own cost. Otherwise, Rajuk will do it within 90 days of receiving the order and realise the cost from BGMEA, it said. BGMEA submitted the review petition on December 8.

Killers known, motive clear

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him an olive green jacket and trouser. He was very elated to get the dress. I have still kept the dress, but my son is gone," she said as her voice cracked.

She took a pause trying to choke back tears and said: "My son had a kind of addiction to reading books. He used to write stories, poems, science articles and many other things in Bangla and English. He used to recite poems and sing and play chess with his father and cricket with his younger brother.

"Whenever someone sings, I see Taqi's face as if my boy is singing. If anyone recites a poem, it feels like I'm hearing Taqi's voice."

With tears rolling down her cheeks, she said, "We lost our beloved child in such a cruel way, but still we did not get justice. The killers are not unknown, neither unclear is their motive. But the state is yet to take any action against the killers."

Tanwir Muhammed Taqi, 17, went missing after he had left home for Sudhijon Pathagar, a local library, around 4:00pm on March 6, 2013.

His A-level results were out the next day and he emerged as the highest scorer in the world in physics getting 297 out of 300. In chemistry, he got 294 out of 300, the highest score in the

country in the subject. He was a student of ABC International School. On the morning of March 8, his

Shitalakkhya river. The murder triggered a huge public outcry. People of Narayanganj formed "Santrash Nirmul Taqi Mancha", vowing to fight for justice and against

schoolboy. After Taqi's going missing, his father Rafiur Rabbi filed a general dairy with Narayanganj Sadar Police Station on March 6.

criminal activities, and also to keep

alive the memory of the murdered

On March 8, he filed a murder case with the same police station.

Rabbi also submitted a complaint to the Narayanganj superintendent of police on March 18 that year, accusing seven people, including Shamim Osman and his son Ayon Osman and eight to 10 unnamed others.

gators could not press charges in the

Two years ago, Home Minister (then a state minister) Asaduzzaman Khan Kamal told reporters in Narayanganj that the charge sheets of the seven-murder and Taqi murder tion. cases will be submitted soon.

a Narayanganj court on January 16 handed down death penalty to 26 people and jailed nine other body was found floating in the accused. But the proceedings of Taqi murder,

which took place nearly one year

before the seven-murder, is yet to start in the absence of the charge sheet. A draft of the investigation report was leaked before the first death anniversary of Taqi on March 6, 2014. Different newspapers ran stories based on the draft with quotes from topranking Rab officials about involve-

ment of around a dozen people in the

murder. In March 2014, Rab's the then additional director general Col Ziaul Ahsan told a newspaper that they found involvement of Ajmeri Osman and his 10 accomplices in Taqi murder. He had also said that the charge sheet would be submitted any day.

Ajmeri is the son of ex-Jatiya Party Four years have gone by but investi- MP Nasim Osman and nephew of ruling Awami League MP Shamim Osman.

Talking to The Daily Star yesterday, Kamrul Hasan, commanding officer of Rab-11, said it is not possible to set a deadline for completing the investiga-

Investigation is going on and they The seven-murder trial ended and are submitting progress report before a

Narayanganj court from time to time. There is no bar to probing the case, he added. Talking to this newspaper, Taqi's

father Rabbi alleged that although the

whole nation knew who killed his son and how, the case was stalled. "If the government wants, the trial can be held. The war crimes trial is the

proof," Rabbi said. "Nothing is more painful than carrying the dead body of one's own

child," he said, demanding the culprits be brought to book. Meanwhile, leaders of different socio-political and cultural organisations expressed dissatisfaction over the

delay in completing the murder inves-

tigation and failure to bring the killers to book. Narayanganj City Corporation Mayor Selina Hayat Ivy at a programme on Friday said the law enforcement agencies know everything about those who killed Taqi and

how, but the proceedings got stuck. "We want our prime minister to order the start of trial."

Halim Azad, member-secretary of Taqi Mancha, said, "We don't know why the investigation report has not been submitted yet."

He sought the prime minister's intervention to this end.

First 3rd gen

STAR

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performance testing at 100 percent capacity. The Rooppur power project will

have two power units with Generation 3+ VVER reactors, each with a capacity of 1200MW. The first of the two units is expected to go into operation in 2023, the second one in

Design of generation 3+ power unit includes the most powerful type of the Water-Water Energetic Reactor (VVER reactor) with a capacity of 1200MW, as well as a high-speed turbine designed for new-generation nuclear power plants.

This provides a combination of active and passive safety systems and fully meets all post-Fukushima requirements set by the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), the press release said.

Main features of Generation 3+ reactors include a double contain-

ment shell of the reactor hall and a core catcher located under the reactor vessel, physical protection against natural disasters, industrial accidents and other emergencies, passive residual heat removal system enabling sustained heat removal from the reactor core in the absence of any power sources, among others.

Simple solution



FROM LEFT... Buet student Mehnaz Mursalat, and Buet teachers Mohidus Samad Khan and Nazibul Islam. The trio developed the formalin testing strip.

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The invention would facilitate curbing the unbridled use of the toxic substance in food items.

Mohidus Samad Khan, the lead researcher and assistant professor of the chemical engineering department of the Bangladesh University of Engineering and Technology, said he

had the opportunity to work on bioactive papers during his PhD at Monash University and post-doctoral research at McGill University when he worked with two top research groups.

As part of his PhD and post-doc projects, Samad Khan developed diagnostic papers to detect blood groups, presence of enzymes, viruses,

His blood grouping work, featured in MIT Technology Review, won many national and international awards and secured research funds.

"My team and I have secured patents

of our inventions in the USA, Australia, New Zealand, China and Europe," said Samad Khan who teaches chemical zengineering at Buet. When he came back to Bangladesh

in 2013, formalin in food was a burning ≸issue that prompted him to think of **\$**doing something about it. He began working on this project

Athe next year with small grants from Buet's Committee for Advanced Studies and Research, and Buet Chemical ^oEngineering Forum.

Samad Khan's students, Md Nazibu EIslam and Mehnaz Mursalat, also Scontributed to the research. They are the co-inventors. Eventually, the team succeeded

companies and entrepreneurs showing interests in commercialising the prod-"Developing a paper to detect formalin was my professional commit

Now Samad Khan is in talks with a few

ment. I wanted to apply my experience and expertise in developing a low-cost The focus was also on designing

can be manufactured in Bangladesh, for the people of Bangladesh, the lead researcher added.

Trump doubles down

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to back up Trump's claim that Obama ordered Trump's phones be monitored. Instead, multiple former senior US

officials have dismissed Trump's allegations, calling them "nonsense" and "false." Obama, through a spokesman, also rejected the claim that he ordered Trump's phones tapped.

Former Director of National Intelligence James Clapper, a career intelligence official who had oversight of the US intelligence community in that role, said yesterday that Trump was not wiretapped by intelligence agencies nor did the FBI obtain a court order through the Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Act to monitor Trump's phones. "For the part of the national security

apparatus that I oversaw as DNI, there was no wiretap activity mounted against the President-elect at the time, or as a candidate, or against his campaign," Clapper said yesterday morning on NBC's "Meet the Press." Asked whether he could confirm or

deny whether the FBI could have tapped Trump's phones through a FISA court order, Clapper was unequivocal.

"I can deny it," he said, referring to the existence of a FISA court order of Trump or "anything at Trump Tower." Senate Minority Leader Chuck

Schumer said he believes Trump is "in trouble" whether there was a court order authorizing surveillance of his phones or "if he falsely spread this kind of misinformation."

"If he falsely spread this kind of misinformation, that is so wrong. It's beneath the dignity of the presidency. It Nation." is something that really hurts people's view of government," the New York Democrat said yesterday on "Meet the Press." "On the other hand, if it's true, it's even worse for the President. Because that means that a federal judge, independently elected, has found probable cause that the president, or people on his staff, have probable cause to have broken the law or to have interacted with a foreign agent. Now that's serious stuff."

Schumer said he had no problem with the congressional intelligence committees including Trump's request in their investigation into Russian activity in the 2016 election, but he also

used the call as an opportunity to reiterate Democrats' calls for a special prosecutor to investigate connections between the Trump campaign and

Russian officials. Sen. Marco Rubio, a Republican who sits on the Senate Intelligence Committee, said yesterday on CNN's "State of the Union" that he's "not sure what it is (Trump) is talking about," but added it's possible that "perhaps the President has information that is not yet available to us or to the public."

Rubio pointed out that the Senate Intelligence Committee is already in the process of reviewing Russia's meddling in the US elections last year and will eventually issue a public report.

"But what I think we should do is, everybody needs to take a deep breath and calm down here," the Florida Republican told CNN's Jake Tapper. "And let's go through this as what we are doing. In the Senate Intelligence Committee, we are working in a bipartisan way to collect facts that involve reviewing classified and sometimes unclassified and open-source information."

Sen. Susan Collins, also a member of the Senate Intelligence Committee, said yesterday morning that she has "seen no evidence" to back up Trump's wiretapping allegation and called on the White House to turn over any evidence to the committee.

"What we need to deal with is evidence, not statements," the Maine Republican said on CBS' "Face the

House minority leader Nancy Pelosi accused Trump of using "authoritarian" tactics by making the claim.

"You make up something and then you have the press write about it, and then you say, 'everybody's writing about this charge," Pelosi told CNN's Jake Tapper on "State of the Union." "It's a tool of an authoritarian, to just have you always be talking about what you want to be talking about." Pelosi also questioned the sincerity

of Trump's White House asking Congress to investigate whether Obama wiretapped Trump.

Mobile court cracks down on errant buses

'You will find that only a small number of drivers have driving licence," he told this correspondent around

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2:00pm.

About 30 minutes later, the same mobile court stopped an Uttarabound bus on the Bangabandhu Avenue, and found that a trainee driver was operating the vehicle. The court sentenced him to one

month's imprisonment. Talking to this correspondent, the

trainee driver, Md Jewel, said he would soon get a licence for driving heavy vehicles.

He kept mum when asked why he

The DSCC, Bangladesh Road

Transport Authority (BRTA), Bangladesh Road Transport Corporation (BRTC) and Dhaka Deputy Commissioner's Office jointly conducted a drive yesterday against around 11:00am, DSCC Mayor unfit vehicles and unlicensed drivers in the capital's Gulistan, Motijheel and Dainik Bangla areas. DSCC Estate Officer Debashish

Nag, coordinator of the drive, said three mobile courts yesterday filed 70 cases, and fined transport companies and drivers Tk 79,500 for violating traffic rules.

drove the vehicle without having licence. imprisonment and two were English. sentenced to 15 days in jail." Three buses were sent to dumping

stations for not having valid documents, he said. Earlier, inaugurating the drive

Mohammad Sayeed Khokon said incompetent and uneducated drivers are responsible for most of the accidents and also for traffic jam in the city. According to the Motor Vehicles

Rules, 1984, a person, not being a foreign national, will not be eligible for holding a driving licence under the ordinance if he doesn't know how to "Four were given one month's read and write either in Bangla or added.

A few years back, Shipping Minister

Shajahan Khan, also executive president of Bangladesh Road Transport Workers Federation, said a driver doesn't need to be educated to get a driving licence. Asked about Shajahan's statement Khokon said, "It doesn't matter how

powerful a person is and what he says,

the law will take its own course.

"I am asking transport owners to do business in line with the law, and discard unfit vehicles ... please don't allow uneducated and unlicensed drivers to operate vehicles."

The drive would continue, he

and user-friendly technique." something with higher accuracy that