

No hazardous chemicals in fruits: BSTI report to HC

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Bangladesh Standards and Testing Institution (BSTI) yesterday submitted a report to the High Court, saying it has recently tested seasonal fruits and found no hazardous chemicals in them.

In the report, BSTI said it collected 40 samples of fruits from different areas of Dhaka on June 19 and 20, and did not find formalin or any other toxic chemical in those.

Earlier this month, the institution had tested 265 samples of seasonal fruits from across the country and found no harmful chemical, BSTI said in the report.

BSTI submitted the report to HC through its lawyer Barrister Sarkar MR Hassan as per the court's June 18 order.

Expressing satisfaction with BSTI's report, the HC directed the authorities concerned of the government to continuously monitor the fruit markets and warehouses across the country so that toxic chemicals cannot be applied to them.

While hearing a writ petition, the court asked BSTI and Bangladesh Food Safety Authority (BFSA) to submit separate monitoring reports before it every two months.

The HC also ordered the chairman of National Board

of Revenue and the customs department to submit a report in three months on the progress of setting up chemical detection machines at all land and sea ports to monitor whether chemical-laced fruits are imported into the country.

The HC bench of Justice FRM Nazmul Ahasan and Justice KM Kamrul Kader came up with the order.

On June 18, the HC refused to accept a BSTI report on their action against the use of chemicals in fruits, as it did not conduct drives in fruit markets and warehouses across the country in a comprehensive manner.

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Fulfil promise of forming Minority Commission

Oikya Parishad urges govt

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Bangladesh Hindu Bouddha Christian Oikya Parishad yesterday demanded that the government form a "National Minority Commission" to ensure justice over incidents of violence against and persecution of the country's minorities.

The Awami League government in its election manifesto vowed to form such a commission.

"National Minority Commission" will be formed and special law will be enacted for effective protection of the rights of the minority," says the AL manifesto.

The minority commission should operate like National

Human Rights Commission, Rana Dasgupta, general secretary of the Oikya Parishad, said during a press conference at Jatiya Press Club.

"It cannot be under any ministry. It has to be an independent body working to address torture, harassment and persecution of people from minority groups," Dasgupta said in response to a query.

He added that AL had promised to form the commission and formulate minority protection law, following their long demand.

He also demanded that the government form a separate ministry to deal with minority issues, similar

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16,400km waterways lost in 60 years

State minister for shipping tells JS

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Bangladesh lost 16,400 kilometres of waterways in the last 60-odd years, state minister for shipping Khalid Mahmud Chowdhury informed the parliament yesterday.

The state minister said there was 24,000 kilometres of waterways in 1960, but now it stands at 7,600 kilometres, while replying to a query from lawmaker Abdul Latif.

Concerned authorities' negligence, absence of proper planning and supervision as well as natural changes were some reasons for shrinking of riverways in the country, Khalid Mahmud said.

He said the government has recovered 1,600 kilometres of riverways by dredging river and waterbodies. "We have plans to increase another 10,000 kilometres of waterways by dredging 178 rivers," he said.

Authorities have knocked down 15,175 illegal structures and recovered 566 acres of land along Buriganga, Turag,

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PHOTO OF THE DAY

FIROZ AHMED



Eminent actor Dilara Zaman joins a human chain in front of Jatiya Press Club, demanding increased and effective taxation on tobacco products. Anti-Tobacco Women's Alliance and Ubinig organised the event.

Overall security being reformed

Says home minister

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Home Minister Asaduzzaman Khan Kamal yesterday said the country's overall security is being reformed keeping up with the world, to cope up with security challenges.

"We are expanding our capability to deal with any sort of challenge smoothly," Kamal told reporters after signing the "Annual Performance Agreement (APA)" for 2019-20 financial year at the Secretariat.

Responding to a query, the minister said corruption has always been there in the country, but the ministry is working to bring it down. "An independent Anti-Corruption Commission has been formed and anyone is being summoned by the commission based on information of corruption."

"We are seeing a trend of growing cyber crimes, and thus have strengthened the cyber crime unit to deal with it," he said.

Public Security Division Secretary Mostafa Kamal Uddin and heads of six subordinate organisations signed the APAs for 2019-2020 fiscal, under the home ministry's purview to inspire them to deliver "result-oriented" activities as part of the government's target to materialise Vision-2021.

Ensure Hindu women's right to property

Speakers tell Mahila Parishad discussion

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Rights activists yesterday claimed that many Hindu women in the country are being deprived of their legitimate right to property due to existing Hindu law which is discriminatory.

They called upon the government to enact a uniform family law to establish the rights of women, irrespective of religion, caste, and creed.

The call came at a discussion organised by Bangladesh Mahila Parishad on "Equal right to property and reformation in the Hindu family law in light of proposed uniform family code" at Anwara Begum, Munira Khan Auditorium in the capital's Segunbagicha.

In her speech, Mahila Parishad President Ayesha Khanam said her organisation had proposed the code to eliminate discrimination and limitation of religion-based laws.

"The law reform proposals regarding Hindu women's right

to property were submitted to the government in 1992 but it is yet to be implemented" she said.

She said that despite ensuring equal rights for men and women in the constitution of 1972, the reality is different as women are deprived of their due rights in the decision-making process and property.

"Divorce law must be implemented for Hindus to eliminate issues over family life."

Speaking at the meeting, General Secretary of Hindu-Bouddha-Christian Oikya Parishad Rana Das Gupta said the government should get rid of discriminatory laws to provide women with equal social, legal status and opportunities.

Mahila Parishad's general secretary Maleka Banu; economist Dr Debapriya Bhattacharya; Bhorer Kagoj editor Shyamal Dutta, and representatives of different religious-based rights organisations were present at the meeting.

Opposition MPs censure proposed budget at House

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Opposition lawmakers yesterday censured the proposed budget, especially for keeping scope for whitening undisclosed money, while members of the treasury bench hailed it.

The two sides came face to face while taking part in the discussion on proposed budget for 2019-20 fiscal year at the parliament.

Awami League lawmaker Abdus Salam Murshedi said the proposed budget was good for countrymen as well as businessmen.

"Keeping scope of whitening undisclosed money in the real estate sector was a timely and positive step," he said, adding that the sector will get a boost as a result of the decision.

"You cannot have development keeping money idle," said Salam.

About an hour later, Jatiya Party MP Rowshan Ara Mannan censured the government for the proposal.

She alleged that the government has kept the scope to legalise undisclosed money in favour of the rich black money holders.

About the top 300 loan defaulters' names disclosed in parliament, she said names of many large loan defaulters were missing on the list, as they managed to

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'My life is all about writing'

Prof Serajul Islam's birthday celebrated at DU

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Prof Serajul Islam Choudhury could have died during the Liberation War, but fortune and a little "trickery" saved life of the eminent writer and academician.

After the war had started, the then Pakistan army prepared a list of Bangladeshi intellectuals, who seemed a threat. The erstwhile professor of English at Dhaka University was one of them.

The Pakistan army then collected information and addresses of those personalities. Sensing that something was about to take place, Prof Serajul provided a false address.

In addition, about three months before December 14, 1971 [Martyred Intellectuals Day], he and six other DU teachers -- including Munier Choudhury -- were warned by the Pakistan government, but fortune favoured the professor.

"I somehow survived. Those who gave correct addresses, Pakistan army and their aides took them away from home and murdered them. I might have been dead if I didn't trick them," said Prof Serajul.

The emeritus professor of DU shared his story of survival during the Liberation War at a ceremony at DU yesterday. Samaj Rupantar Adhyayan Kendra

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