

PESTICIDE USE

Experts call for balanced farming approach

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Excessive use of pesticides and chemical fertilisers in farmlands is causing severe health hazards and must be curtailed, said speakers at a seminar yesterday.

While organic farming can mitigate such risks, a balanced approach incorporating proper use of chemicals is essential for ensuring food security, they emphasised.

The seminar, titled Environment, Agriculture, and Food Security, was organised by the Bangladesh Environmental Lawyers Association (BELA) at The Daily Star Centre.

Delowar Jahan, a farmer and coordinator of Organic Farming, said 70 percent of deaths in Bangladesh result from non-communicable diseases, with four out of five elderly people affected annually. He said organic farming can ensure agricultural sustainability and reduce health risks.

Rehmuna Nurain, BELA's coordinator for research, advocacy, and campaigns, cited a 2022 WHO report revealing 1.5 million cancer patients in Bangladesh.

She reiterated that 70 percent of NCD-related deaths are linked to food adulteration, referencing icddr,b data. Rehmuna called for sustainable agriculture policies, highlighting unclear farmland protection laws and the lack of restrictions on topsoil use.

Farmers from Savar and Manikganj shared their experiences with organic farming. However, they said it produces only one-third of conventional yields despite its benefits.

SEE PAGE 4 COL 6



Timor-Leste President José Ramos-Horta and Bangladesh Chief Adviser Prof Muhammad Yunus oversee the signing of agreements to strengthen bilateral ties, including a visa exemption deal and an MoU on bilateral consultations, during a meeting at the chief adviser's office in the capital's Tejgaon yesterday.

PHOTO: PTI

Yunus for a prosperous Bangladesh

BSS, Dhaka

Chief Adviser Prof Muhammad Yunus has pledged to work together towards a prosperous, well-governed Bangladesh, recognising the interim government as a product of the mass uprising by students, workers, and the people.

In a message on the eve of Victory Day, he said, "Victory Day is not only our source of pride but also a day to reaffirm our oath to protect sovereignty and uphold the Liberation War's spirit."

Recalling the sacrifices of martyrs, he added, "On December 16, 1971, we achieved freedom and self-identity as a nation."

Prof Yunus urged unity in safeguarding the country's achievements and wished success for Victory Day 2024.

Meanwhile, the chief adviser yesterday unveiled a commemorative postage stamp worth Tk 10 in celebration of the Victory Day.

Probe report on 'some' HC judges sent to president

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Supreme Judicial Council completed an investigation on some High Court judges and sent its report to the president last week for a decision, Supreme Court Spokesperson Muajjem Hussain told The Daily Star yesterday.

He, however, could not reveal the contents of the report.

The president has yet to give any feedback on the report, he also said.

The three-member committee is led by Chief Justice Syed Refaat Ahmed.

The other members are senior judges of the Appellate Division Justice Md Ashfaqul Islam and Justice Zubayer Rahman Chowdhury.

Twelve High Court judges are currently without benches after over a thousand students demonstrated on the SC premises on October 16 demanding the removal of the "pro-Awami League fascist judges."

On that day, SC Registrar General Aziz Ahmed told the protesters that 12 judges would not be assigned benches. Following this statement, the agitating students postponed their demonstrations.

SEE PAGE 4 COL 6

Bangladesh far from achieving equality

Says Rizwana at MJF event, blames lack of true democracy



PHOTO: RASHED SHUMON

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The country is far from establishing equality and justice in society as it has never truly experienced democracy, said Environment Adviser Syeda Rizwana Hasan, at a discussion yesterday, marking Human Rights Day.

"Though human rights are recognised on paper, the understanding of these rights differs greatly between the privileged and the underprivileged classes," she said at the event organised by Manusher Jonno Foundation at the NGO Affairs Bureau auditorium in Agargaon, Dhaka.

People from indigenous communities, persons with disabilities, NGO workers, and numerous others participated in the discussion, raising various human rights concerns.

Rizwana, the chief guest, said, "While the masses are aware of their rights, we are far from having a responsive system."

She pointed out that the National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) lacks the

empowerment to operate effectively.

"Our governments have always displayed an authoritarian tendency, showing reluctance to empower institutions or make them inclusive," she said.

Civil society, too, has been fragmented, hindering united resistance to oppression, she added.

Referring to violations of civil and political rights, including abductions and wrongful arrests, she said, "We have not been able to respond uniformly to such cases."

Rizwana also questioned the legitimacy of three consecutive elections, calling them fraudulent.

The adviser emphasised the need for constitutional safeguards to balance power and prevent one class from enjoying exclusive privileges while others are deprived.

She vowed to push for amendments to laws and policies to prevent activities harmful to the environment or human rights. "To achieve

SEE PAGE 4 COL 4

BR launches Dhaka-Gazipur commuter trains

BRTC introduces 10 AC buses

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Bangladesh Railway yesterday launched two pairs of commuter trains on the Dhaka-Gazipur route.

In a separate development, Bangladesh Road Transport Corporation (BRTC) introduced 10 air-conditioned buses on the Gazipur-Gulistan route, utilising the Bus Rapid Transit infrastructure built between Airport and Shibbari in Gazipur.

Md Fouzul Kabir Khan, adviser to the railways, road transport, and bridges ministries, inaugurated the services at two programmes in Gazipur.

"The interim government is working to alleviate people's sufferings... The new trains will enable quicker travel to Dhaka," he said while inaugurating the Joydebpur commuter train service at Joydebpur Railway Station.

The adviser also announced plans to launch a commuter train on the Dhaka-Narsingdi route and additional trains on the Dhaka-Narayanganj route by March 26 next year.

BR has adjusted the schedule of Turag commuter trains to align with the timings of the new Joydebpur commuter trains.

Both services will now make four daily round trips on the Dhaka-Gazipur route. Turag commuter trains will have Fridays as their weekly holiday, while Joydebpur commuter trains will have Saturdays off.

Passengers can travel from Joydebpur to Kamalapur for a fare of Tk 20.

SEE PAGE 4 COL 4

BTI-Star STELLAR WOMEN Nomrota, Mouri honoured

STAR REPORT

Building Technology and Ideas Ltd (bti) and The Daily Star honoured two exemplary women for their exemplary contributions to nation-building as part of the "bti The Daily Star Stellar Women" initiative at an informal event recently.

The event took place at bti Celebration Point, Gulshan-2 in the capital. The awardees were Nomrota Sarker and Mouri Morium. Nomrota received the award for her unique idea of "Saus



Taus" in the "Entrepreneur" category, while Mouri received it the award in the "Writer" category for her book "Naiori".

Emerging young women from a all walks of life need to be recognised and celebrated for their contributions to society. It is from this idea that bti and The Daily Star first collaborated in 2023 for the "bti The Daily Star Stellar Women".

This year, the first two awards for the second season where given to Nomrota and Mouri recently.

Additionally, some of the categories this year

SEE PAGE 4 COL 4

ROCKET, Credit Card & e-Toll
Services will remain available during downtime.

ATM booths will remain open for Rocket customers.

For any inquiries, contact any branch, sub-branch fast track of Dutch-Bangla Bank or Dial **16216** anytime, 24/7 from any operator

NOTICE

Respected Customers, over the past two years, the core team of Dutch-Bangla Bank, in collaboration with expert programmers from Oracle Financial Services Software Limited (OFSS), has successfully upgraded our core banking and agent banking software systems to provide even better and more secure banking services to our large customer base.

To launch this upgraded version, the core banking and agent banking systems of Dutch-Bangla Bank will be temporarily unavailable during the following schedule:

System Name	Downtime Period
Core Banking System	01-01-2025 to 05-01-2025 3 Working Days (January 01, 02 & 05, 2025)
Agent Banking System	30-12-2024 to 05-01-2025

We sincerely regret for the inconvenience.

Dutch-Bangla Bank

YOUR TRUSTED PARTNER