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SHAH CEMENT

# New onion variety ushers in hope

AHMED HUMAYUN KABIR TOPI, *Pabna*

When the country was coping with the soaring price of onion because of Indian export ban earlier this month, vegetables farmer Shahinur Rahman was seeing bumper production of a new variety of local onion he planted two months ago.

Shahinur, from Mohadebpur village in Pabna's Ishwardi upazila, thanks the Spices Research Center, Bogura, for giving him the opportunity to participate in test cultivation of BARI-5 variety of onion on his land.

"I used to cultivate vegetables in my field. Recently, I came to know

that this new variety of onion is ready in 90 to 100 days. I was interested and so made seed beds in the middle of June and planted seedlings in the last week of July."

"While the country is worried about the rising price of onion, my fields are full of onions," Shahinur, who is set to harvest next month, said about a week back.

The Spices Research Center, a wing of the Bangladesh Agriculture Research Institute (BARI), is now at the final stage of research on BARI-5 onion cultivation.

BARI-5 is expected to be ready for commercial cultivation next year onwards, which will lead to production of onion in

the months of September and October -- usually around the time of the year when onion import crises and price hikes hit the country.

"Traditionally, farmers in the country cultivate onions in January and February and get the production in by April or May before the floods," Dr Hamim Reza, chief scientific officer of the Spices Research Center, Bogura told the Daily Star.

"After the floodwaters go down, farmers also undertake winter onion cultivation -- popularly named 'mulkata piazi' -- in November and December, harvesting before the start of the main crop season."

The Spices Research Center has already started research on six high-yielding varieties of onion, with BARI-1, 3, 5 for the summer season. Of these, BARI-5 is showing success all year-around in their research, he said.

"After long-term research, we have undertaken experimental cultivation of BARI-5 this year. For test cultivation, we have already selected 10 districts across the country, including the hill districts and districts which are the biggest producers of onion," Dr Hamim said.

Fifty bighas of land in the selected districts



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Fourth grader Mum's elder brother teaches her to swim at Crescent Lake in the capital's Sher-e-Bangla Nagar yesterday. The brother gives his sibling swimming lessons at the weekends. Although there is a lack of facilities for swimming in the city, guardians are becoming more aware of the necessity to train their children.

PHOTO: PRABIR DAS

# US Covid-19 cases surpass 7 million

France sees record cases as India nears 6m mark

AGENCIES

The number of coronavirus cases in the United States topped 7 million - more than 20% of the world's total - as governments across the globe struggle to contain a surge in coronavirus infections.

The virus has killed at least 984,068 people globally since the outbreak emerged in China last December. At least 32,298,410 cases have been registered worldwide. On Thursday, 5,730 new deaths and 312,068 new cases were recorded worldwide.

After the US, the hardest-hit countries are Brazil with 139,808 deaths from 4,657,702 cases, India with 92,290 deaths from 5,818,570 cases, Mexico with 75,439 deaths from 715,457 cases, and Britain with 41,902 deaths from 416,363 cases.

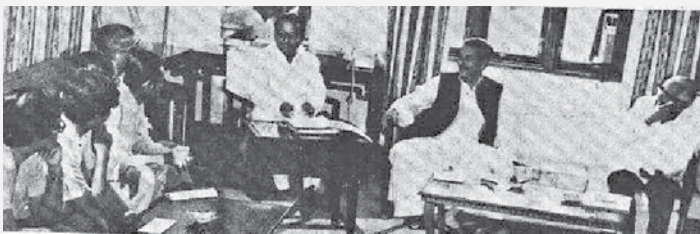
With scientists still racing to develop a vaccine, governments are being forced to reimpose crippling lockdown measures that slowed the virus spread earlier this year but sent much of the world economy into a tailspin.

France reported a new record for daily infections on Thursday after the

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FIRST YEAR OF BANGLADESH BANGABANDHU'S NATION-BUILDING CHALLENGES

# Allow Bangalees to perform Hajj



The chairman and members of the Service Reorganisation Committee and National Pay Commission are seen with Prime Minister Sheikh Mujibur Rahman at the Gono Bhaban on September 26, 1972.

September 26, 1972

SHAMSUDDOZA SAJEN

BANGABANDHU'S CABLE TO KING FAISAL

Prime Minister Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman has sent a telegram to His Majesty King Faisal Ibn Abdul Aziz Al Saud, sovereign of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, requesting him to allow prospective Hajj pilgrims from Bangladesh to visit Saudi Arabia during the forthcoming Hajj season, says a press release of the government.

The following is an extract of Bangabandhu's telegram to King Faisal: "As Your Majesty is aware most of my countrymen are devout Muslims and strictly adhere to the tenets of Islam. Many of them who are able and resourceful have made it the cherished

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# Pabna-4 goes to by-election today amid pandemic

Three candidates vying for JS membership

OUR CORRESPONDENT, *Pabna*

By-election to Pabna-4 (Ishwardi-Atghoria) is going to be held today.

Three candidates, including from the Awami League and the BNP, are contesting the by-polls to this parliamentary seat, which fell vacant after the death of AL lawmaker and former minister Shamsur Rahman Sherif Dilu on April 2.

According to the district election office, there are 3,81,112 voters in 12 unions and two municipalities of Ishwardi and Atghoria upazilas.

Voting will be held at 129 polling centres, said Abdul Latif, district election officer and also the returning officer of the polls.

"The Election

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# Helsinki Airport deploys dogs to sniff out Covid



CNN ONLINE

A group of sniffer dogs trained to detect Covid-19 have begun working at Helsinki Airport in Finland in an effort to identify those who have contracted the virus.

Finnish start-up Wise Nose has trained a total of 10 dogs, which will work in shifts of four to sniff out coronavirus.

The process involves those being tested swiping their skin with a test wipe and dropping it into a cup, which is then given to the dog that sniffs it. The dog and its handler are held in a separate booth

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# TORTURE OF JOURNO 19 sued for helping OC Pradeep

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Cox's Bazar

Nineteen people were sued yesterday for assisting Pradeep Kumar Das, suspended officer-in-charge of Teknaf Police Station, in filing a fabricated case and torturing journalist Faridul Islam.

The victim's younger sister Fatima Khanam filed the case with Teknaf Police Station. Seven accused were named on the case statement whereas 12 others were unknown.

The named accused are Abul Kalam alias Alam, Mofij Ahmed Iqbal, Jahirul Islam, Dalilur Rahman, Sarwar Kamal, Nurul Absar and Rafiqul Islam.

According to the plaintiff, the named accused designed the plot on how to torture her brother in collusion with Pradeep and picked up the journalist from his hideout in Dhaka.

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# CONTROVERSIAL FARM BILL Indian farmers block roads, railways as anger mounts

REUTERS, *Shambhu*

Thousands of farmers in India yesterday blocked roads and railway tracks in a protest against new legislation that they say could pave the way for the government to stop buying grain at guaranteed prices, leaving them at the mercy of private buyers.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi's government has defended the bills - recently approved by parliament - as reforms to help rid India's vast agriculture sector of antiquated laws and allow farmers to sell to institutional buyers and big retailers such as Walmart.

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# PRAYER TIMING SEPTEMBER 26

Fajr Zohr Asr Maghrib Esha  
AZAN 4:35 12:45 4:15 6:00 7:30  
JAMAT 5:10 1:15 4:30 6:05 8:00

SOURCE: ISLAMIC FOUNDATION



Some locals ride on a raft made of banana trunks to go to a dry place in Chowraha village of Lalmonirhat's Aditmari upazila yesterday. The village went under water a week ago as all five upazilas of the district have been hit by flood due to onrush of water from upstream and heavy rains. About 70,000 people have been affected by the flood in the district so far.

PHOTO: S DILIP ROY

# Flood ravages North for 4th time this year

STAR REPORT

Many areas in the country's northern region have again been submerged by flash flood due to incessant rain and the onrushing water from the upstream.

The flood victims are suffering immensely as they could yet recover their losses caused by floods in previous phases. With this, flash floods have ravaged the areas four times this year.

In Lalmonirhat and Kurigram, around 3,00,00 families have been waterlogged on the Teesta and Dharla basins. Some families have left their homes and taken shelter on roads and embankments.

Floodwater has also washed away cattle and furniture of some flood-hit families. Aman paddy and vegetable fields on vast areas of land are now under water.

The flood victims in the char areas are in dire need of food and drinking water.

"My crops had been damaged by flood. Then I took loan to grow crops to recover my losses. But my crops have again been flooded," said Mubarak Hossain, a farmer of Shimulbari village in Kurigram's Phulbari upazila.

According to officials in Lalmonirhat and Kurigram, Dharla has been flowing 39cm above the danger level since Thursday night due to the onrushing water from the upstream.

In Sirajganj, water level of the Jamuna has increased as it has constantly been raining for the last couple of days at Chowhali, Enayetpur and Kazipur upazilas.

River erosion has taken a serious turn in these areas, said locals.

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