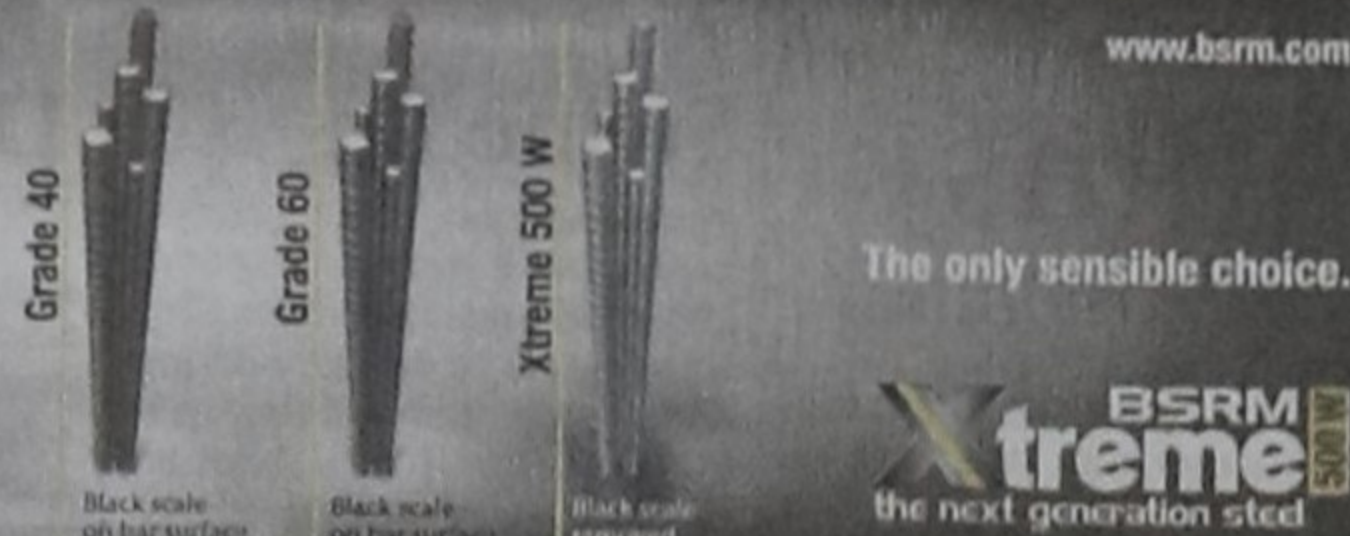


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SCANTY RAIN THREATENS RICE CROP

India to ban food exports fearing output slump

AFP, New Delhi

India warned Friday that patchy monsoon rains were threatening its lifeline rice crop and said it would ban food exports as part of a plan to prevent any crisis.

Agriculture Minister Sharad Pawar told parliament the June-September monsoon had been "deficient" across India, delaying sowing and planting in key agricultural states such as Punjab and

Haryana.

"The monsoon this year has been weak and erratic in its progress, resulting in late sowing of (paddy) crops," Pawar said during a debate on agricultural output.

The minister said rainfall nationwide was down 19 percent on the previous year with a shortfall of 38 percent in the north-west and 43 percent in the northeast.

"Rice area and productivity may be adversely impacted which could be compensated to some extent by cultivating

oilseeds, pulses and cereals," he said, noting the alternative sowing project was part of the emergency plan.

"The (present) coverage under paddy is 115,000 hectares (280,000 acres), compared to 145,000 hectares last year," he said, adding that the shortfall had been mainly reported from four states.

Nearly two-thirds of India's 1.1 billion population still depend on agriculture for their livelihood.

SEE PAGE 15 COL 6

Kachur lati earns forex

15,000 farmers cultivating it in Joypurhat

HASIBUR RAHMAN BILU,
back from Joypurhat

Farmers in Joypurhat earn well from *kachur lati* as the produce is now being exported to several countries including the UK and the US.

More than 15,000 people have been growing *kachur lati* (taro shoots) in Joypurhat Sadar and Panchbibi upazilas for the last six years, said Hashanur Rahman, acting deputy director at the Department of Agriculture Extension in Joypurhat.

They cultivate the crop on 750 hectares of land and sell that at the Bottoli wholesale market in Panchbibi, he continued.

"It takes around Tk 75,000 to grow *kachur lati* on a hectare of land. And the yield fetches on average Tk 3.50 lakh."

Around 28 wholesalers buy at least 100 metric tons of *kachur lati* from the local market every day for export to the UK, US, Saudi Arabia, Abu Dhabi, Singapore, Malaysia and Kuwait.

The crop was first
SEE PAGE 15 COL 3



PHOTO: STAR

A youth piles up bundles of *kachur lati*, now an exportable, at Bottoli wholesale market at Panchbibi upazila in Joypurhat.

Mayors, rabbis detained in US anti-graft sweep

AFP, New York

US law enforcement agents on Thursday arrested dozens of politicians and rabbis in an anti-corruption sweep alleging money laundering, extortion, bribery and even trafficking in human organs.

The stunning New Jersey swoop netted 44 people across a state long seen as one of the most corrupt and crime-ridden in the country.

Five rabbis were among the suspects, along with the mayors of the cities of Hoboken, Secaucus and Ridgefield, the Jersey City deputy mayor and council president, two state assembly members, and numerous other politicians, prosecutors said.

Acting US Attorney Ralph Marra told a press conference the arrests demonstrated "the pervasive nature of public corruption in this state."

The money laundering ring allegedly stretched from New Jersey and New York to Israel and Switzerland, while US politicians easily exploited loopholes in state law to disguise bribes as contributions in bitterly fought campaigns.

SEE PAGE 15 COL 4

Train derails

OUR CORRESPONDENT,
Mymensingh

Train communication on several routes from Mymensingh was disrupted for ten hours as two compartments of a Chittagong bound freight train derailed at Balashpur area in the district town yesterday.

Police and railway sources reported no casualties in the accident.

Railway sources said the train heading for the port city met with the accident when two of its compartments derailed at Balashpur, about three kilometres away from Mymensingh station at around 7:00am.

Rail communication
SEE PAGE 15 COL 2

BNP council likely in December

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The main opposition BNP is likely to hold its national council in December this year.

BNP standing committee member and lawmaker Moudud Ahmed told The Daily Star last night that they are decided to hold the party council at the end of this year no matter whether or not the Election Commission extends the time for submitting political parties' ratified constitutions.

Moudud, who was elected an MP from Bogra-7 constituency in the April 2 by-election, said it would do BNP no harm even if the EC does not extend the time. But he did not elaborate on the matter.

Opposition Chief Whip Zainul Abdin Farroque told The Daily Star that the preparations for holding the party council in December are going on in full swing.

"We applied to the Election Commission for extending the time by six months so that we can wrap up other tasks for reorganising the party's grassroots level," Farroque said.

BNP and nine other political parties sought at least six
SEE PAGE 15 COL 6

Swine flu has spread to almost all countries: WHO

AFP, Geneva

Swine flu has spread to nearly every corner of the globe, the World Health Organisation said Friday, admitting it was still unknown how the virus would mutate in the northern hemisphere's winter.

With the death toll still rising rapidly and countries rushing out new ways to check the spread of A(H1N1), the United Nations agency said it was only a matter of time before the pandemic which began in March affected every country.

"The spread of this virus
SEE PAGE 15 COL 6

Burglary at Kafrul

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A gang of burglars stole valuables, including cash and cellphone sets worth about Tk 15 lakh, from a cellphone outlet in the city's Kafrul area on Thursday night.

Murad Hossain, owner of the shop, said the thieves took away about Tk 2 lakh in cash, some cellphone sets and electronic goods from his shop on the first floor of Sajeda Market.

He said they shut down the shop around 8:00 pm on Thursday but when he along his employees came to open the shop yesterday morning, they found that someone changed the locks.

Later, they entered the
SEE PAGE 15 COL 6

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Water-logging due to heavy pouring yesterday caused immense sufferings to pedestrians and commuters in Jurain-Postagola area. Many other parts of the city experienced similar problem. PHOTO: STAR

Suu Kyi lawyers give final arguments in trial

AFP, Yangon

The trial of Myanmar pro-democracy leader Aung San Suu Kyi entered its final stage yesterday as her lawyers delivered closing arguments in a bid to save her from five years in jail, her party said.

The detained Nobel Peace laureate, 64, faces charges of breaching the terms of her house arrest over a bizarre incident in which an American man swam uninvited to her lakeside home.

The trial resumed on Friday following weeks of delays and fierce international condemnation, with critics saying the ruling junta was using the charges as an excuse to keep Suu Kyi locked up for elections next year.

Nyan Win, one of her lawyers and a spokesman for her National League for Democracy, said the defence team had started giving closing statements to the court at the feared Insein jail but would return on Monday.

"We haven't finished our final arguments today so there will be another hearing on July 27," Nyan Win told AFP.

Myanmar officials speaking on condition of anonymity said
SEE PAGE 15 COL 7



Aung San Suu Kyi

Rab arrests 4 in Mirpur market killing case

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Rapid Action Battalion (Rab) arrested four people Thursday night from Savar on charges of the gun attack on Swadhin Bangla Super Market in the city's Mirpur area that left one person dead and eight others injured.

The arrestees are Rafiqul Islam Rony, 25, and Monir Hossain Mollah, 27, of Monipurpara, Shahin Khan, 30, and Nazrul Islam, 25, of Shah Ali in city's Mirpur area.

Rab-4 sources said on information they intercepted a Dhaka-bound bus of Hanif Paribahan from Satkhira at Savar and arrested them for their alleged involvement in the gun attack.

SEE PAGE 15 COL 2

HSC results today

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The results of the Higher Secondary Certificate (HSC) and its equivalent Alim and Business Management examinations 2009 held under 10 education boards will be published simultaneously today.

The results will be published at 1:00pm through respective examination centres or educational institutions, websites of all education boards and short message services (SMS), said a handout yesterday.

Education Minister Nurul Islam Nahid will hand over the result sheets to Prime Minister

SEE PAGE 15 COL 3

Tipai site visit date yet to be fixed

PALLAB BHATTACHARYA,
New Delhi

The exact date for the visit of Tipaimukh dam site is yet to be finalised and it will be done keeping in view the weather condition in the area in the peak of monsoon that makes journey by road or flight highly unsafe.

The ten-member Bangladeshi parliamentary delegation on Tipaimukh power project issue is expected to meet Indian Power Minister Sushil Kumar Shinde here either on July 29, the day it arrives in the Indian

capital, or the next day.

Besides, the delegation headed by senior Awami League leader and former water resources minister Abdur Razzaq would have a meeting with officials of ministries concerned with the Tipaimukh project on Barak river in the north east Indian state of Manipur.

After their stay in Delhi, the team of lawmakers will be going to Guwahati on its way to Tipaimukh project site.

The visit by the parliamentary delegation from
SEE PAGE 15 COL 1

Cop suspended for snatching money

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A sub-inspector of Motijheel police station was suspended Thursday night on charges of snatching money from an elderly man in the city's Fakirapool.

Police said, Alok Mia along with his son Nazmul came to the city to send his son to Libya. They brought Tk 1 lakh for the purpose and were staying in their relative's house in Fakirapool.

On the night of July 19, SI Mirajul reached the room where Alok and his son were
SEE PAGE 15 COL 5



Jatiya Garment Shramik Federation forms a human chain in the capital yesterday demanding action against the manufacturer of toxic paracetamol syrup that cost lives of 25 children. PHOTO: STAR

The Daily Star Coming out tomorrow - Star Campus

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