



PHOTO: STAR

The Daily Star and BUETAA jointly organise a roundtable on "Light Engineering, Electrical and Electronic Industries in Bangladesh: What Prevents us from a Takeoff" at The Daily Star office yesterday. (Story on Page 1)

2 salinity tolerant varieties of T-Aman paddy soon

BSS, Dhaka

Two salinity tolerant varieties of T-Aman paddy innovated by Bangladesh Rice Research Institute (BRRI) are expected to be released very soon. Administration Director of the BRRI Dr AKG Md Enamul Haque told BSS yesterday that the varieties BRRI-53 and BRRI-54 might be released within a month or two. He said field level evaluations of the BRRI and Seed Certification Agency have been completed successfully

and the varieties will be placed at the National Seed Board (NSB) for final approval to be cultivated at farmer's level. The BRRI had earlier developed two salinity tolerant varieties, BRRI-40 and BRRI-41, said Dr Enamul adding that the lifetime of the latest varieties is two weeks less than that of the previous ones. He said production rate, salinity tolerant capacity and other characteristics of the new varieties are identical with the earlier varieties. The immediate past direc-

tor for research of BRRI Dr MA Salam said the production rate of BRRI-40 and BRRI-41 is 4.5 tonnes per hectare with a lifetime of 145 and 148 days, he added. Dr Salam said farmers of the coastal region are losing interest to cultivate existing varieties because of their long lifespan. They do not get enough time for shrimp cultivation after the harvest. BRRI has developed the two varieties with that in mind, he added. Adding this as a step forward in the history of the country's innovated salinity tolerant varieties, Dr Salam said farmers could minimise losses as the new varieties are less vulnera-

ble to natural calamities due to short lifespan. He said the varieties are expected to contribute significantly to boost Aman production ensuring further food security in the country. Dr Salam said, "We expect the latest BRRI varieties would gain popularity among the farmers because of its short lifetime." BRRI sources said the country's coastal region has nearly 10 lakh hectares for paddy cultivation. They said the newly developed salinity tolerant varieties of Aman paddy would greatly help to bring this tract of land under cultivation to give a boost to rice production.

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Take joint efforts to eradicate poverty

PM tells Thai envoy

UNB, Dhaka

Thai Ambassador in Dhaka Tasanwadee Miancharoen paid a courtesy call on Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina at Gono Bhavan in the city yesterday. During the meeting, they exchanged views on education system of the two countries, Prime Minister's press secretary Abul Kalam Azad

told journalists. Hasina, during the discussion, identified poverty as common enemy for the Southeast Asian region and called for joint efforts to eradicate poverty from the region. While discussing on how to increase food production, the prime minister emphasised the need for best farmlands to increase food production for meeting the demand of increasing population. She also mentioned Bangladesh's efforts to introduce flood-, salinity- and drought-resilient crop varieties to attain food security for the people of all walks of life. The meeting also featured discussion on bilateral trade and business issues, including mutual cooperation in power sector. Ambassador at-large M Ziauddin, PM's private secretary Nazrul Islam Khan and Special Assistant Abdus Sobhan Golap were present.

College student electrocuted

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

A college student was electrocuted in the city's Bohoddharhat area yesterday. The deceased identified as Mohammad Jafar, 20, son of one Nurus Safa of Boalkhali upazila in the district, was a first year student of Bangla department in Chittagong Government College. His classmate Mizanur Rahman said Jafar was electrocuted when he was hanging his wet Lungi on a wire in front of his mess at Khawja Road at around 2:00pm.

CUSTODIAL DEATHS Action to be taken against persons responsible: IGP

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Sylhet

The recent incidents of custodial deaths would be investigated properly and action would be taken against the persons responsible, said the Inspector General of Police Nur Mohammad. He said this while he was replying to queries from journalists at the Sylhet Metropolitan Police (SMP) commissioner's office yesterday. SMP Commissioner Aftab Uddin Ahmed, Deputy Inspector General of Police Mosharraf Hossain Bhuiyan, Rapid Action Battalion (Rab-9) Commanding Officer Syed Anagh and other officials were present on the occasion. Earlier Nur Mohammad held meetings with the police and other law enforcement agencies. A major reform in the police administration would take place after the government approves the proposed reform programme, he said. He said the government has a plan to recruit 32,000 police personnel. Of them, 13,000 have already been appointed and they would be posted soon, he added. Replying to a query, he said holistic approach and social resistance are needed for resolving the drug problem country-wide. He assured of taking immediate and stern action against the police officials responsible for harassing innocent people. He asked the SMP commissioner to check the matter and inform him by Saturday night. Replying to a question, he said the law enforcement agencies, including the police, are on alert so that the alleged war criminals cannot leave the country. The IGP said steps would be taken for ensuring security of the visitors and tourists in the country's tourist spots, including Jafflong, Lawachhera National Park and Madhabkunda Eco Park. He visited Jafflong, Lawachhera National Park and Madhabkunda Eco Park on Thursday and Friday.

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