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New rice to withstand drought

RAFIQUE SARKER, Rangpur

The International Rice Research Institute (IRRI) with the help of two organisations has successfully field-tested a drought-tolerant rice variety in the northern part of the country.

The IRRI in collaboration with Bangladesh Rice Research Institute (BRRI) and Rangpur-Dinajpur Rural Service (RDRS) had been experimenting on the rice variety over the last two years and grown the rice this Aman season in northern districts.

The Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation provided the funds for the experiment under the IRRI project, Stress-Tolerant Rice for Poor Farmers in Africa and South Asia (STRASA).

Thirty-six farmers of eight districts in Rangpur division cultivated the rice developed by the IRRI. Many of them have already harvested the crop and are satisfied with the yield.

Kafil Uddin from Panchagarh said he harvested nearly 4,000 kilograms of rice from one hectare of land this season.

The farmer said he usually had to irrigate paddy fields from

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Bangladesh left-arm spinner Abdur Razzak (top) is the toast of his team-mates as he removes Zimbabwe tail-ender Christopher Mpfu (not in picture) to complete a hat-trick in the 47th over of the second ODI at the Sher-e-Bangla National Cricket Stadium yesterday in the second one-day of the five-match series.

The left-arm spinner first removed Prosper Utseya off the last ball of the 45th over, his ninth, before trapping Ray Price leg-before with the first ball of his next over, the 47th of the innings. Chris Mpfu then offered only his pads and the umpire obliged, to not only

Razzak hat-trick levels series

MOHAMMAD ISAM

Abdur Razzak's hat-trick, only the second in ODI history by a spinner, inspired Bangladesh to a series-leveling six-wicket victory over Zimbabwe at the Sher-e-Bangla National Cricket Stadium yesterday in the second one-day of the five-match series.

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SEE PAGE 15 COL 4

Khaleda collects effects from cantt house

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Representatives of BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia yesterday started collecting her possessions from the Dhaka cantonment house she lost in a legal battle. It might take another day to remove all her belongings from there.

Her personal secretary and two sisters-in-law received furniture and other household items of the former prime minister in presence of officials of cantonment board, military intelligence agencies

SEE PAGE 15 COL 7

Reports baseless

Grameen Bank responds to allegations of fund anomalies

Here is the full text of Grameen Bank's response to press reports:

We are sorry that many friends and well-wishers of Professor Yunus and Grameen Bank around the world were subject to mental agony because of the inaccurate and misleading news report published globally regarding an alleged "siphoning off" of a large amount of money by Professor Yunus through one of his organisations, or "Stashing of \$100 million by Nobel Laureate Professor Yunus", as one news organisation put it. The media reports were triggered by the documentary "Fanget I Mikrogjeld" shown on Norwegian TV on Tuesday (November 30) and by a report that appeared on bdnews24.com on December 1.

We wish to assure all readers that these reports are a total

SEE PAGE 15 COL 1

Yunus' letter to ambassador

Following is the letter Grameen Bank Managing Director Prof Muhammad Yunus wrote to the then Norwegian ambassador in Dhaka on January 8, 1998 about the agreement between Grameen Bank and Grameen Kalyan:

SEE PAGE 6 COL 1

Notice

Yesterday we published the verbatim transcript of the Norwegian documentary on Grameen Bank without editing for the sake of authenticity.

CJ may place wealth report to president

Likely to ask SC judges to follow

ASHUTOSH SARKAR

Chief Justice ABM Khairul Haque is planning to submit his wealth statement to the president within the first week of January.

After submitting his own wealth statement, the chief justice will ask other judges of the Appellate Division and High Court Division of the Supreme Court to submit their wealth statements to his office, sources at his office told The Daily Star yesterday.

Bangladesh's lower court judges give their

wealth statements every year in their annual confidential reports to the Supreme Court, as it is mandatory for them.

Sources said the chief justice feels that if he submits his own wealth report to the president, other judges would be encouraged to submit theirs to him.

Justice Khairul Haque has not placed his assets statement to the president so far since he is busy with work related to the urgent reforms to the judiciary.

SEE PAGE 15 COL 3

4 held at DU for harassing female students

DU CORRESPONDENT

Police yesterday arrested four bike-riding youths from Dhaka University campus for harassing a number of female students of the university.

The arrestees were identified as Sohan, Ripon, Sonny and Tareq of Old Dhaka.

Witnesses said the youths riding on three motorbikes behaved "indecently" with a group of female students of

SEE PAGE 15 COL 5



Trucks with BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia's belongings exit Dhaka Cantonment through Jahangir Gate yesterday.

PHOTO: STAR

MUNICIPAL POLLS

Grand alliance to back candidates

Govt mulls making local govt polls political

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The ruling Awami League-led grand alliance will back a single candidate in every municipality in the polls to the local bodies next January, said Awami League General Secretary Syed Ashraf Islam yesterday.

"According to the law, there is no opportunity to nominate a candidate under the banner of a political party or party's symbol to contest in the local government polls. That is why, we will back a single candidate selected on behalf of the alliance," he said while briefing reporters after a meeting of the Awami League Central Working Committee at Gono Bhavan last night.

The Awami League will back its candidate or the candidate of its allies to secure victory, he said.

The Election Commission the day before yesterday announced that the polls would be held on January 12, 13, 17 and 18 to 269 out of 310 municipalities in seven divisions.

Ashraf said, "In the past autocratic rulers used the local government elections to strengthen their base. We want the local government elections to be held with party candidates and we need to change laws in this connection. That is why we will amend the rule through negotiations during this government's tenure."

SEE PAGE 15 COL 8

3 killed in Rab 'shootouts'

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Three 'gunfights' between members of Rapid Action Battalion (Rab) and criminal gangs left three offenders dead in the capital, Meherpur and Barisal districts early yesterday.

The deceased are Abdullah Mohammad Nazimuddin alias Honda Babu, 30, of the city's Malibagh Chowdhurypara, Durjoy Babu alias Bachchu, 36, of Gangni upazila in Meherpur and Al Amin, 35, of Bakerganj upazila in Barisal.

Honda Babu was a top listed criminal while Bachchu was a regional leader of outlawed Purbo Banglar Communist Party (PBCP Marxist-Leninist) Lal Pataka faction and Al Amin was a suspected robber, stated Rab officials.

Rab-3 officials said a team of the force signalled three youths on a motorbike to halt at a check post near Outer Circular Road in the city's Malibagh area around 4:00am.

Defying the signal, the youths opened fire on the law enforcers, compelling them to retaliate that left Babu dead on the spot.

The other two, however, fled the scene on the bike, they added.

Rab officials claimed Babu was a listed criminal of the area and also a close aide of fugitive top criminal Zisan.

He was accused in several cases, including killing and extortion, filed with different police stations. Several general diaries were also lodged against him.

His body was sent to Dhaka Medical College Hospital morgue for an autopsy.

Family members and relatives of Babu declined to make any comment on his death.

SEE PAGE 15 COL 3

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