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Teesta woes for farmers

Amid sharp decline in water level, farmers forced to go for costly irrigation

PINAKI ROY

Boro farmers in four northern districts are counting the cost of India's massive withdrawal of Teesta water.

There is no water in the irrigation canals in the region at the peak of the Boro season, as the Indian authorities have blocked the water flow at Gajaldoba barrage in West Bengal.

In a predicament, farmers have turned to commercial shallow pump operators to irrigate their croplands, but at a high price -- it is costing them around Tk 3,300 extra per acre.

The operators charge at least Tk 3,600 per acre. It would cost the farmers just Tk 350 if Teesta water was available.

Bangladesh is getting only 10 percent of the water it needs for irrigation under the Teesta barrage irrigation scheme. The water flow stood at over 1,500 cusecs (cubic feet per second) in January, which dropped to 409 cusecs on March 9. The maximum water flow has been recorded at 650 cusecs since.

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IRRIGATION COST PER ACRE

Tk **350** Using river water
Tk **3,600** Using shallow pumps

FALL OF WATER FLOW IN CUSEC

	March 2013	March 2014
First 10 days	2,915	574
2nd 10 days	2,487	553
3rd 10 days	2,952	550

Lowest ever water flow March 9, 2014
409 cusec
Diversion of water by India key reason

Last year's Boro production cost per acre
Tk **25,582**
Cost likely this year
Tk **29,000**



The almost dry Teesta river near the Teesta rail and road bridges in Lalmonirhat. Farmers are now counting the cost of the drop in the water level of the Teesta.

PHOTO: STAR



The Daily Star wishes its valued readers, patrons, well-wishers and advertisers a happy Bangla New Year 1421

The Daily Star offices will remain closed today on the occasion of Pahela Baishakh. Therefore, the newspaper will not come out tomorrow. Star Lifestyle, which was scheduled to be published tomorrow, is coming out with today's issue.

PAHELA BAISHAKH A celebration of heritage

SYED BADRUL AHSAN

Shubho Nababarsha!

It is that season of colour and magic when the Bangalee celebrates his heritage and, through that celebration, attempts an understanding of his place in the universal scheme of things.

For the Bangalee, like millions of others across the globe, has a claim on history based on the cultural tradition his ancestors shaped for him, one that he renews annually through Baishakh. There are the currents and cross-currents of history which have given Baishakh

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Muggers in action in city

2 more bKash cash collectors robbed of Tk 16 lakh

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

In broad daylight, muggers in Bashabo and Turag in the capital yesterday stabbed two sales agents of distributors of bKash, a money transfer service provider, to rob Tk 16.5 lakh. They also shot another person who came forward to help.

According to bKash officials, employees of its distributor collect money of transfers made by people via mobile phones and deposit the cash in banks.

In Bashabo, three to four robbers armed with sharp weapons attacked Enamul Islam, 40, on Kadamtala Wasa Road around 2:30pm and took around Tk 8.5 lakh, claimed his

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GRAFT CASES Khaleda challenges indictment

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia yesterday challenged the indictment issued against her in Zia Orphanage Trust and Zia Charitable Trust corruption cases.

The Dhaka Special Judge's Court-3 framed charges against her on March 19 in both graft cases. It also charged Tarique Rahman, her son and senior vice-chairman of the party, in the Orphanage case.

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So, what's next? Star talks to Imran, Kamal on Gonojagoron Mancha

TAMANNA KHAN and PROTIK CHAKRABORTY



Imran Sarkar Kamal Pasha

The decision to "relieve" Imran H Sarkar of the post of Gonojagoron Mancha spokesperson through Saturday's press conference was not based on consensus among all involved in the Shabbagh movement.

Kamal Pasha Chowdhury, one of the pro-Awami League activists who organised the conference, admitted this to The Daily Star yesterday. He did not talk to Imran on this either.

A statement read out by Kamal at the press conference said a five-member panel will soon be announced and it will speak on behalf of the platform.

No statement by Imran will be regarded as the Mancha's, it added.

A senior cultural activist, Kamal said he does not want to

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Dirty war of words

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Senior political leaders have of late been engaged in a war of words over BNP leader Tarique Rahman's recent remarks. They have persisted in using vulgar and abusive verbal language against one another.

Tarique Rahman's recent claims that his father Gen Ziaur Rahman was the first president of Bangladesh and that Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman took over as prime minister "illegally" in 1972 have triggered the unhealthy situation in the political arena.

We reproduce here some of the remarks our senior politicians have made recently in and outside parliament on the controversy the elder child of General Zia and Khaleda Zia has raised.

"Shaheed Ziaur Rahman was the first president of Bangladesh."

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NEWS ANALYSIS

Tarique & two collaborators

SHAKHAWAT LITON

BNP Senior Vice Chairman Tarique Rahman is not the first person to have questioned the legality of the assumption of prime ministerial office by Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman in newly independent Bangladesh.

Before him, two individuals facing trial on charges of collaborating with Pakistan occupation army during Bangladesh's Liberation War in 1971 had done it on extensive grounds by launching a legal battle with the Supreme Court more than four decades ago.

In their move, they had questioned, among others, the legality of introduction of the parliamentary form of government under which Bangabandhu was sworn in as premier in 1972.

Four decades on, Tarique Rahman, who has been living for more than five years now in exile in the UK, on Tuesday claimed that Sheikh Mujib had become prime minister "illegally" in 1972 following the switchover to the parliamentary form of government from the presidential one.

In support of his argument, he quoted the Proclamation of Independence and said according to it Sheikh Mujib was to remain president and Syed Nazrul Islam vice-president until a constitution was adopted.

Tarique also questioned the legality of introduction of

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বৈশাখী উত্তাপে



আনন্দ ছড়িয়ে, বনি i feel UP

