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# PINEAPPLE IN MADHUPUR

## Ripe, risky

MIRZA SHAKIL, Tangail

Growers and traders in Madhupur Garh region are excessively using growth hormones and artificial ripening agents in pineapples to make them bigger and to hasten the ripening process, posing serious health hazard.

They have also been using formalin to increase the shelf life of the popular summer fruit.

Markets of this region are deluged with different chemicals and hormones and trading of these chemicals is going unabated due to the lack of proper government monitoring.

Madhupur Garh is famous for producing Honey Queen and Giant Q varieties of pineapples and this year, the fruit was cultivated on around 10,000 hectares of land, agriculture officials said.

The orchard owners use different growth hormones including planofix and superfix in the fruit during the budding stage and before harvest. Then they use ethephon (or ethylene) after harvest for fast ripening and to make the fruits yellow, they added.

Later, formalin is sprayed on the fruits just before transportation, local pineapple growers said.

Farmer Abdul Aziz of Garobazar of Ghtail upazila, a recipient of Channel i agriculture award, said most farmers are unaware of the correct amount of chemicals to be applied as they did not have any training. They cannot even read the directions on the labels.

"Chemicals and hormones of different companies are

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Pineapples stacked up in vans at a wholesale market at Jalchhatra in Madhupur, Tangail. The upazila sees a bumper yield of the juicy summer fruit this season. *Inset, farmers spraying chemicals on a pineapple orchard at Jangalia of Madhupur. The photos were taken recently.*

PHOTO: MIRZA SHAKIL



# Two lakh people marooned

## Rain, water from rivers inundate five districts

STAFF REPORT

Incessant rains and the onrush of water from rivers upstream in India over the last few days flooded several northern and north-eastern districts in the country.

Around two lakh people in six districts -- Lalmonirhat, Nilphamari, Rangpur, Sunamganj, Feni and Sherpur -- have been marooned. Many of them are living on the rooftops in helpless condition.

The situation may not improve in one or two days, said an official of the Flood Forecasting and Warning Centre (FFWC), adding that new areas might go under water if the rain continued.

The water level of the rivers upstream has been rising and may continue for another two to three days, resulting in the rise of water levels on this side in Bangladesh, said Ripon Karmaker, an officer of FFWC, yesterday.

Several major rivers like Jamuna will flow at a higher level, which may cause floods in low-lying areas of Sirajganj, Bogra and Faridpur, he added.

Flash floods in north-east (Sylhet, Sunamganj, Netrakona) and south-east (Parbatya Chittagong) areas are mainly caused by continuous rains. The situation in these areas may deteriorate further as the weather office has forecast more rain in the next two to three days, Ripon said.

According to a bulletin issued by FFWC, Teesta, Surma and Kangsha rivers were flowing above the danger level yesterday. The water levels at 63 measuring points out of 83 of the rivers across the country showed a rising trend while the levels fell at 17 points and remained steady at two points while one point was unreported.

LALMONIRHAT

More than one lakh people of Patgram, Kaliganj, Hatibandha, Aditmari and sadar upazilas of the

district have been marooned, as the areas have been submerged by rising water.

Both Teesta and Dharla rivers were flowing above the danger level, officials of the Water Development Board (WDB) told our Lalmonirhat correspondent.

Teesta Barrage area was on red alert yesterday and the people living in adjoining areas were evacuated to a safe zone, said Mahbubur Rahman, executive engineer of WDB, Lalmonirhat.

India has kept all the gates of Teesta Barrage on its side at Gajoldoba point open, prompting WDB to keep all 52 gates of Teesta Barrage here open since yesterday morning to release the extra water, he said.

Mahbubur added that if rain and water flow continued, WDB officials would cut the by-pass of the barrage to save it.

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Water is rushing in yesterday through cracks of Laxmipur dyke in Doarabazar upazila of Sunamganj district. *Inset, water at Teesta Barrage point in Nilphamari yesterday swelled to 52.78 metres, 0.38 metres above the danger level.*



PHOTO: STAR

## NON-PAYMENT OF BILLS

# Hospital won't release body

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The management of a private hospital in the capital's Gulshan refused to discharge the body of a patient who had died at the hospital Friday afternoon.

The hospital authority has refused to release the body until the full payment of Tk 31 lakh is made, said members of the patient's family.

The deceased, Mohammad Aslam, 58, was admitted to the United Hospital on July 3 with lung infection. Since his admission he had been on life support at the Coronary Care Unit (CCU) of the hospital. He died around 3:00pm on Friday, said family sources.

The hospital did not release his body as of filing this report around 1:00 am today.

Sadia Islam, Aslam's daughter, said when they approached the hospital authority with the request of

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## Janmashtami today

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Hindus in the country will celebrate Janmashtami, the birthday of Lord Krishna, today with due festivity and religious fervour.

Different socio-cultural and religious organisations have chalked out elaborate programmes that include worship of Lord Krishna, Geeta Jagna, Kirtan and dance, discussion, drama and processions to observe the festival.

President Abdul Hamid and Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina in separate messages have greeted the Hindus on the occasion.

The day is a public holiday.

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# IS insurgents 'massacre' 80 Yazidis in Iraq

## US strikes jihadists as Kurds battle to retake key dam

AGENCIES

Islamic State militants "massacred" some 80 members of Iraq's Yazidi minority in a village in the country's north, a Yazidi lawmaker said as Kurdish troops backed by US warplanes yesterday launched a bid to recapture Mosul dam.

"They arrived in vehicles and they started their killing this afternoon," senior Kurdish official Hoshiyar Zebari told Reuters. "We believe it's because of their creed: convert or be killed."

A Yazidi lawmaker and another senior Kurdish official also said the killings had taken place and that the women of the village were kidnapped.

A push by Islamic State militants through northern Iraq to the border with the Kurdish region has alarmed the Baghdad government, drawn the first US air strikes since the end of American occupation in 2001 and sent tens of thousands of Yazidis and Christians fleeing for their lives.

Yazidi parliamentarian Mahama Khalil said he had spoken to villagers who had survived the attack. They said the killings took place during a one-hour period.

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## CREST SCAM, FORGERY Secy to be made OSD

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The government has decided to make Liberation War Affairs Secretary KH Masud Siddiqui an Officer on Special Duty (OSD).

He faces allegations of obtaining freedom fighters' certificate through fake documents and anomalies in purchasing sub-par shields given to foreign friends in recognition of their contribution to the 1971 Liberation War.

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina approved the move on Thursday and the public administration ministry is likely to issue a gazette in this regard in a day or two. Making someone an OSD is

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PRAYER TIMING August 17		
	Azan	Jamaat
Fazr	4-25	5-00
Zohr	12-45	1-15
Asr	4-45	5-00
Maghrib	6-38	6-41
Esha	8-00	8-30
Source: Islamic Foundation		

The Daily Star

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ONLINE POLL

Do you agree with some educationalists that the number of GPA-5 achievers is rising but the quality of the education is not improving?

Yes

92%

No

8%

TOTAL VOTES: 205

TODAY'S POLL

Do you think Health Minister Mohammad Nasim's claim that BNP is hatching conspiracy so that Sheikh Hasina fails to materialise Bangabandhu's dream of 'Sonar Bangla' is justified?

PLEASE CAST YOUR VOTE AT [www.thedailystar.net](http://www.thedailystar.net)

# Tension boils over Ukraine

## Russia assures US over aid convoy, demands access; separatists claim arms reinforcement from Russia despite Moscow's denial

AFP, Kamensk-shakhtinsky

Diplomatic efforts to douse an international firestorm over claims that Ukraine's forces destroyed Russian military vehicles ratcheted up yesterday as Moscow demanded that Kiev allow its mammoth aid convoy to cross the volatile border.

Moscow and Kiev's foreign ministers prepared for an urgent meeting with their French and German counterparts Sunday

after the United States blasted Russia for its "extremely dangerous" escalation of the crisis in Ukraine.

French President Francois Hollande meanwhile urged Ukraine to show "restraint and good judgement" as it pushed on with a brutal offensive to oust insurgents after four months of fighting that has killed over 2,000 people and left the region facing a humanitarian disaster.

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## Google under shark attack!

IFLSCIENCE.COM

Just when you thought it was safe to run internet cables in the water, it appears sharks have developed the taste for data.

A Google project manager, Dan Belcher, told attendees at a company marketing event in Boston last week that sharks like to chomp on the fiber optic internet cables Google runs along the

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