

এসআইবিএল রিটেইল ব্যাংকিং
জীবনের জন্য, জীবন যাপনের জন্য

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যে কোন প্রয়োজনে ০৯৬৯২০০৯২২

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Star BUSINESS

DHAKA SUNDAY MAY 22, 2016

Food grain yield to fall short of target

Food ministry report says

SOHEL PARVEZ

Food grain production is likely to fall short of the target of 3.64 crore tonnes this fiscal year, for a drop in acreage during the aus and boro crop seasons and a spread of wheat diseases in the southwest districts.

The projection was made in a recently published report of the Food Planning and Monitoring Unit (FPMU) under the food ministry.

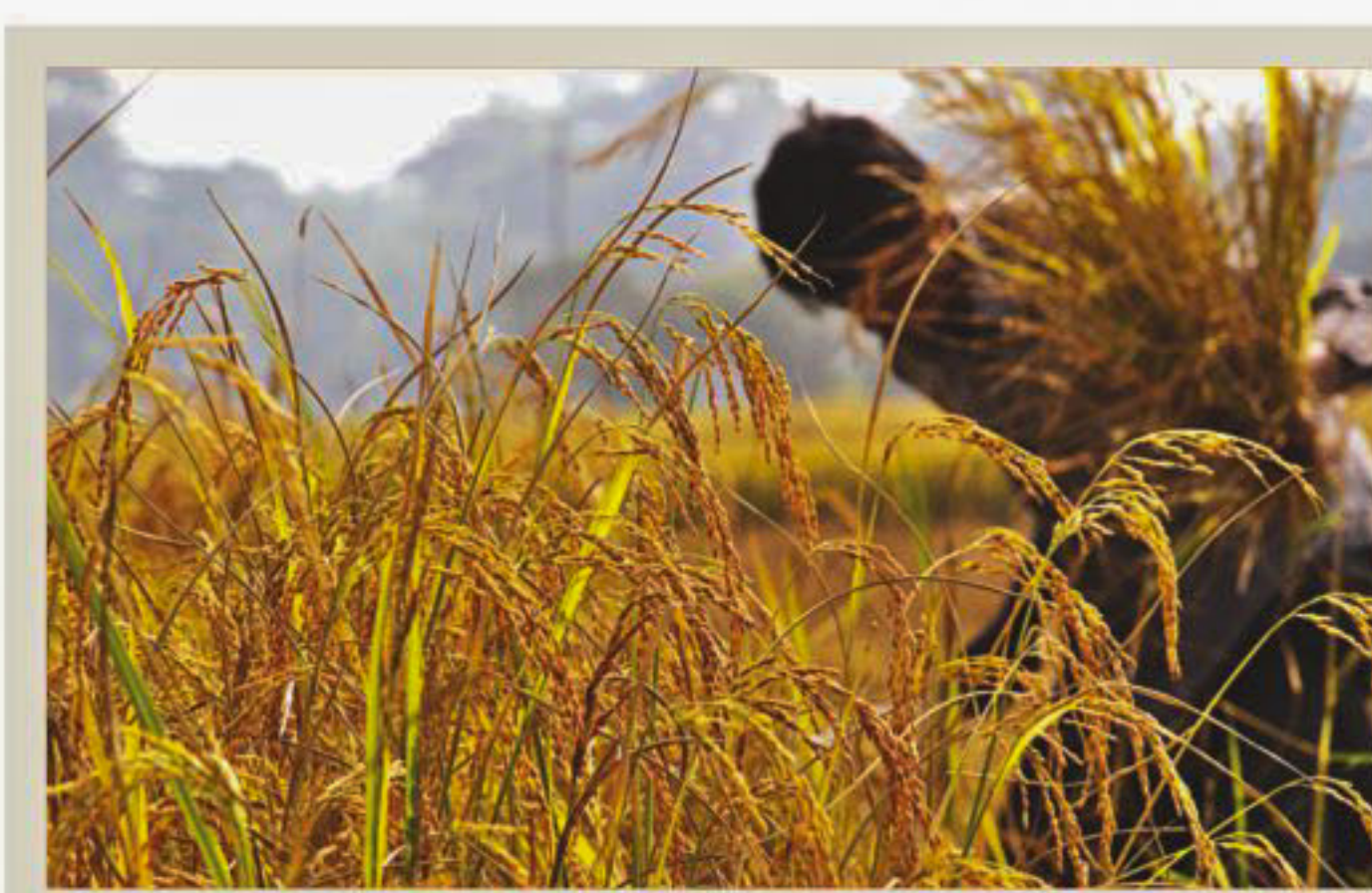
Total cereal production will be slightly lower than last year's production of 3.6 crore tonnes, said FPMU in its Bangladesh Food Situation Report, a quarterly publication.

The FPMU's prediction comes after boro acreage fell short of the Department of Agricultural Extension's (DAE) target by 1.15 lakh hectares to 46.85 lakh hectares, the lowest since fiscal 2008-09, according to the DAE and Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics (BBS) data.

The DAE targeted to ensure cultivation of boro, which accounts for more than half of total annual cereal production, on 48 lakh hectares for production of 1.9 crore tonnes of rice during the current harvesting season.

The FPMU, citing a fall in the area under cultivation from the DAE's target, said: "Assuming that last year's yield rate will be maintained, the boro production target may not be achieved."

Agricultural officials and seed sellers earlier said many farmers switched to other crops, such as wheat, potato and maize, frustrated by low



FOOD GRAIN SCENARIO
Food grain production to fall due to a drop in acreage

Boro was cultivated on **46.85** lakh hectares, the lowest since 2008-09

Aus output fell to **22.89** lakh tonnes this fiscal year against the target of **24.75** lakh tonnes

Farmers switch to wheat, potato and maize due to low rice prices

Only aman output and production area increased

rice prices in the past couple of seasons.

Farmers failed to recover their costs of production owing to low paddy prices.

The US Department of Agriculture (USDA) last month said boro acreage might decline, and farmers will switch to more profitable crops.

The USDA said the total boro output may be 1.86 crore tonnes in the current season, down from 1.91 crore tonnes last year.

It also said, although the government provides subsidy on various inputs, such as seeds and fertilisers to encourage farmers to grow more aus rice, many farmers prefer to grow jute because of higher profit margins.

Boro is the second rice crop after aus that registered a decline in acreage as farmers shifted to other summer vegetables for higher profits.

The area under aus declined to 10.18 lakh hectares in the current fiscal year, down from 10.45 lakh hectares in 2014-15. Aus output fell to 22.89 lakh tonnes this fiscal year against the target of 24.75 lakh tonnes.

Total rice production during the aus season last year was 23.28 lakh tonnes, according to the BBS.

The only exception was for the aman rice crop. Both area and rice output rose in the immediate past season owing to increased plantation, particularly of high-yield varieties, said officials of BBS earlier.

Total rice production during the aman season rose 2 percent to a new high of nearly 1.35 crore tonnes but remained lower than the DAE's target.

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Banks cut back only 17pc of written-off loans in 13 years

REJAUL KARIM BYRON

Banks cut back only about 17 percent of their written-off loans in the last 13 years despite several initiatives to recover the sums.

Between 2003 and 2015, the banks wrote off a total of Tk 40,361 crore, according to central bank statistics. Of the amount, Tk 33,581 crore remains outstanding.

Bank officials said they have made some cash recovery of the loans and gave interest waiver facility to some others. This resulted in the reduction of written-off loans.

"On several occasions, customers had to be provided with interest waiver to recover the loans," said Pradip Kumar Dutta, managing director of Sonali Bank, adding that the whole amount being realised is not cash recovery.

The banks took various initiatives, including appointing private recovery agents, to realise their written-off loans but the result was not satisfactory.

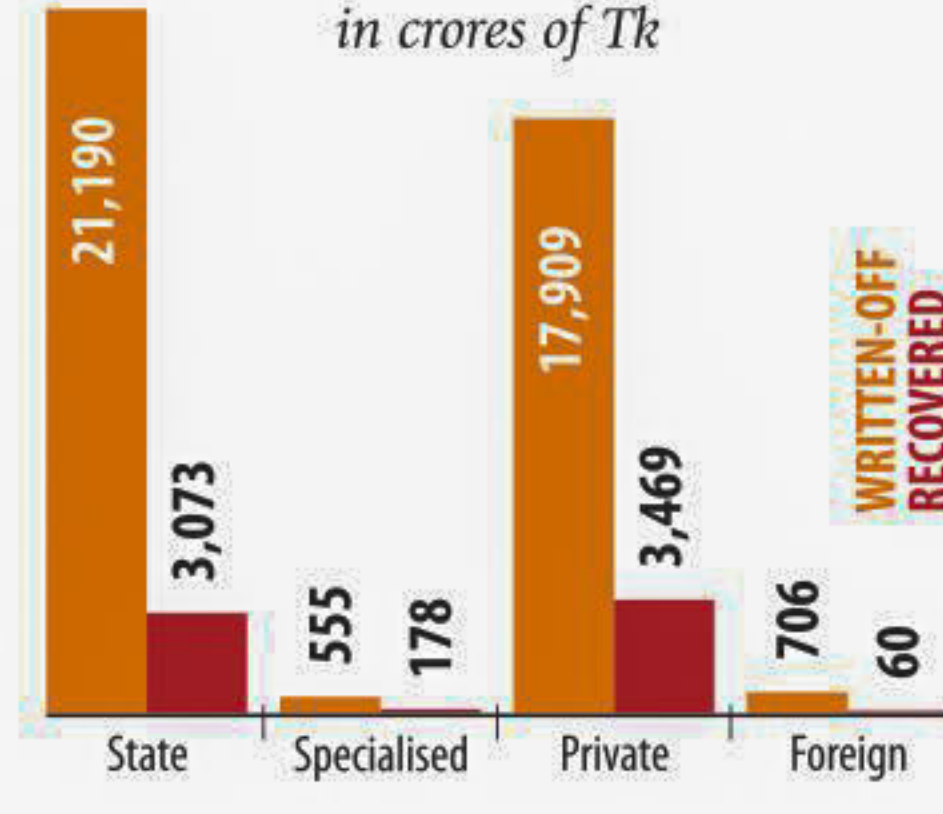
"Every year we are recovering some amount of the written-off loans," said MA Salam, managing director of Janata Bank, adding that officials are given target in this regard.

Both Sonali and Janata have stopped appointing private recovery agents now following dismal results.

Khondkar Ibrahim Khaled, a former deputy governor of Bangladesh Bank, said: "My experience is that the banks do not properly handle the private recovery agents."

Mentioning a state bank, Khaled said a private recovery agent managed to realise Tk 60 crore of written-off loans, but the bank did

BANKS' WRITTEN-OFF LOANS
AS OF DEC 31, 2015
in crores of Tk



not pay the agent any money for his service.

Nazrul Huda, another former deputy governor, said the banks should create a dedicated department for recovering the written-off loans.

Another option is appointing professional recovery agents, he said, adding that either the government or the BB can prepare a policy for the purpose.

"Globally, such loans are recovered through professional recovery agents," he added.

The policy for writing off loans was introduced in 2003, when Fakhruddin Ahmed, a former chief adviser to the caretaker government, was the BB governor, with a view to cleaning up banks' balance sheet.

If the loans remain defaulted for five years, they will be written off, as per the policy.

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Seated from left, Zahida Fizza Kabir, a member of the screening committee of Citi Microentrepreneurship Awards; Rokia Afzal Rahman, a member of the advisory council for the awards; Wahiduddin Mahmud, chairperson of the advisory panel; Moinul Huq, acting Citi country officer for Bangladesh, and Md Abdul Awal, a member of the screening committee, pose with the winners at the award ceremony at Bangabandhu International Conference Centre in Dhaka yesterday.

Small businesses honoured

Citi Foundation awards microentrepreneurs

STAR BUSINESS REPORT

Citi Foundation, the philanthropic arm of Citigroup, yesterday awarded three microentrepreneurs and two microfinance institutions for their contributions to the economy.

Wahiduddin Mahmud and Rokia A Rahman, former advisers to the caretaker government, handed the 11th Citi Microentrepreneurship Awards, at a programme at Bangabandhu International Conference Centre in Dhaka.

Israt Jahan from Meherpur won the best microentrepreneur of the year award for establishing a successful fish feed production firm and for producing fish.

A postgraduate in botany, Jahan in 2002 found that the two ponds her husband used for fish farming were not enough to meet the expenses of her large family. She then started producing fish feed.

She now cultivates 15 tonnes of fish a month in 15 ponds. Besides, her feed is bought by pond owners in the neighbouring areas. She has employed 100 people, directly and indirectly. She earns Tk 2 lakh a month.

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H&M recycles 28,000 tonnes of garment

Swedish retail giant collects used T-shirts as part of sustainability strategy

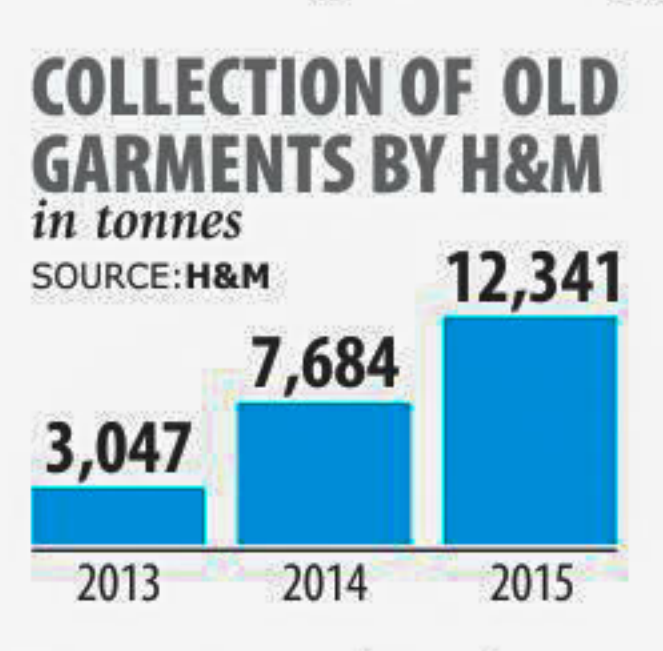
REFAYET ULLAH MIRDHA

Swedish retail giant H&M began a revolutionary practice in February 2013: it started collecting old garment items from its stores worldwide to reuse them to save water and ensure environmental sustainability.

To date, the company has collected 28,000 tonnes of old garment items for reuse and recycling, which is as much fabric as in at least 100 million T-shirts, according to company data.

"In the short term, we have a clear vision to avoid waste and minimise the waste that goes to landfill. In the long term, we want to find a solution for reusing and recycling all textile fibres for new use," Anna Eriksson, spokesperson for H&M, told The Daily Star in an interview earlier this week.

In February 2014, H&M launched the first products made of recycled textile fibres from items collected under the Garment Collecting Initiative. The garments, made



from recycled cotton, included five classic denim pieces for men and women.

It serves as an example of how H&M is closing the loop on textiles and the aim is to use more recycled material in future, Eriksson said.

"Our long-term aim is to find a solution for reusing and recycling all textile fibres for new use and to use yarn made out of collected textiles in our products."

The company is currently investing in 'close the loop' innovation and are involved in a number of different promising initiatives and projects. For example, along with French luxury-goods maker Kering, H&M has teamed up with UK-based innovation company Worn Again, which is developing technology for textile-to-textile recycling.

Once the garments are collected in the stores, they are sent off to the company's sorting plant, where the items are evaluated against almost 400 different criteria, Eriksson said.

READ MORE ON B3

SIM sales rise for first time in four months

MUHAMMAD ZAHIDUL ISLAM

Telecom operators added 10.68 lakh new mobile connections to their networks in April for the first time in four months after the government launched biometric re-registration of SIMs.

Bangladesh has recorded 13.2 crore active SIMs as of April, according to data from Bangladesh Telecommunication Regulatory Commission.

The industry also added 7.17 lakh new internet connections in April, BTRC said in a report, which will be published this week. The number of internet connections rose 1.19 percent to an all-time high of 6.2 crore in April from the previous month.

In April, Grameenphone, the largest carrier, signed up 6.65 lakh new connections, the highest number among six operators. It has 5.69 crore active subscribers now.

Banglalink, the second largest operator by subscribers, added 2.16 lakh new connections to its network in April to reach 3.22 crore.

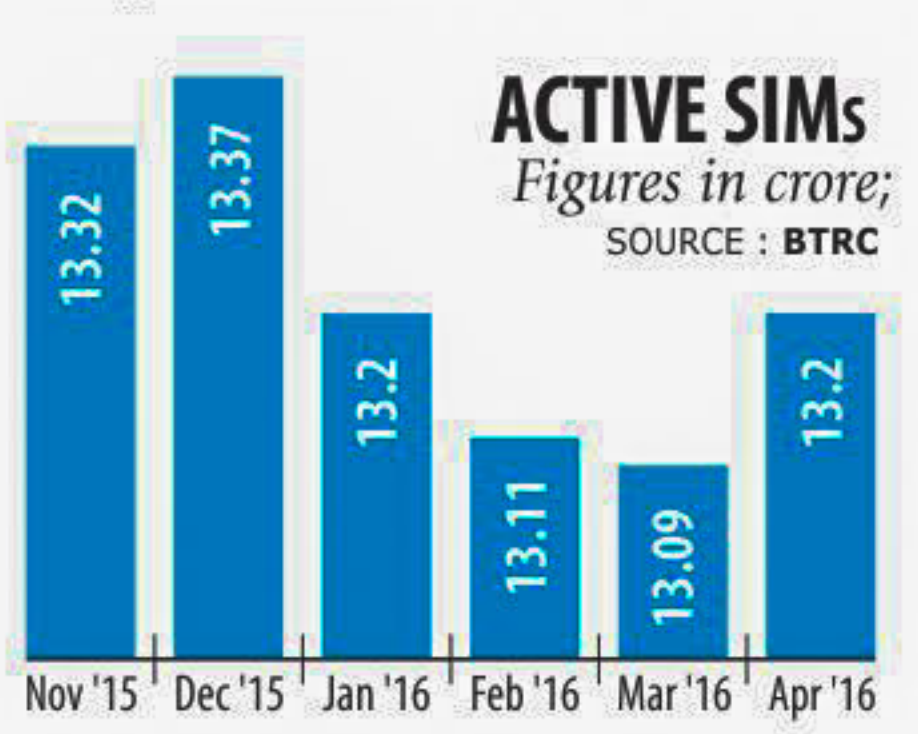
Robi now has 2.76 crore active SIMs, as it also added 1.64 lakh new connections in April.

Airtel, the fourth largest operator, lost 58,000 active SIMs in April while Citycell continued to lose subscribers to end up with 7.68 lakh users.

State-owned operator Teletalk did not lose any customer due to biometric re-registration that started in December last year. In April, 43.65 lakh SIMs were active on its network.

As of May 15, only 9.47 crore SIMs have been re-registered and the total number is unlikely to cross 11 crore by the May 31 deadline, said a senior official of the telecom regulator.

"The number of active mobile connections will decrease after May 31, as all unregistered SIMs will be blocked on June 1."



Best time for business: Muhith

STAR BUSINESS REPORT

The next two years are going to be the best time for investment as the interest rate on loans has come down to a single digit, Finance Minister AMA Muhith said on Friday.

"I believe the rate will stay at this level for some time. We should make the best use of it," he said at a discussion on the upcoming budget for fiscal 2016-17.

The Federation of Bangladesh Chambers of Commerce and Industry and private broadcaster NTV jointly organised the event at Sonargaon Hotel.

Commerce Minister Tofail Ahmed, former caretaker government advisers AB Mirza Azizul Islam and Wahiduddin Mahmud and businessmen attended the event moderated by FBCCI President Abdul Matlub Ahmad.

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ফিস দেওয়ার টেনশন
ভুলে যাবেন এবার

সহজ
সুইচডেট মোবাইল ব্যাংকিং

ফাস্ট সিকিউরিটি ইসলামী ব্যাংক লি:
বিস্তারিত জানতে
০২-৯৮৯২২২২

আগর ফলসহ স্বাস্থ্যসার
FSIB
ISLAMIC BANK