

IMPACT OF VAT LAW

Prices of goods won't rise in general once the new law comes into effect: NBR

PAGE B1

TIGERS TO LEAVE TONIGHT

The Bangladesh team head to Sussex for a 10-day camp ahead of Champions Trophy

PAGE 14

HE 'ENABLED ME TO THRIVE'

Ivanka Trump is forced to defend her father's attitude towards women

PAGE 8



Big blow to Boro

Flashfloods, early rain, fungal disease inflict extensive damage

REAZ AHMAD

For the first time in recent years, Bangladesh is set to experience a less productive rice season owing to a huge loss of Boro crops.

Back-to-back disasters -- flashfloods, intense rainfall and fungal disease blast attacks -- have come as a blow to Boro, the biggest of the country's three rice seasons. The other two seasons are Aus and Aman.

Following the first strike of flashflood in Sunamganj and few other adjoining haor-rich districts, the Department of Agricultural Extension estimated a crop loss of six lakh tonnes with Boro on two lakh hectares gone under water.

The DAE, however, is reassessing the Boro losses as reports on new areas being submerged after haor embankments gave way to flashfloods continue to come, officials from the agriculture ministry and the DAE told The Daily Star yesterday.

After an unusually early flashflood struck the backswamp of the northeastern regions late last month, the government had said Boro output would be some 4.5 lakh tonnes less than the 1.91 crore tonnes production target.

- At least 6 lakh tonnes crop loss projected
- North-eastern districts worst affected
- Rice price in April hits three-year high
- Rice stock comes down to six-year low

But with flashfloods inundating fresh haor areas and incessant and early rainfalls submerging many other parts of the country, the probable gap now also required to be rechecked. DAE Field Services Wing Director Chaitanya Kumar Das yesterday acknowledged reports also came in from some other parts of the country other than the haor zones that farmers were harvesting Boro ahead of the full-ripening stage to save the crop from completely being submerged in rain water.

He said fungal disease blast also struck rice in some districts but, "to what extent it would hamper the production is yet to be assessed."

Prof M Bahadur Meah, a preeminent plant pathologist, told The Daily Star yesterday that crops were getting sterile due to neck blast attacks on different Boro growing regions of the northern, southern and central districts.

"Early and intense rainfalls in late March and in April created a favorable atmosphere for fungi to attack the necks of rice plants during the grain formative stage. Through

SEE PAGE 2 COL 5



A farmer piling up unripe paddy at Shanir Haor in Sunamganj's Tahirpur upazila on Sunday, a day after the haor went under water due to incessant rain and onrush of water from hilly areas upstream. Farmers were desperately trying to save some Boro crop to get some rice and sell the rest as fodder. *Inset*, a paddy field damaged in downpours in Jhalakathi's Nalchity upazila.

PHOTO: STAR

Judiciary treated unfairly by all governments

Says chief justice
OUR CORRESPONDENT,
Moulvibazar

Successive governments treated the judiciary unfairly and the administration never wanted the judiciary to run independently, Chief Justice Surendra Kumar Sinha said yesterday.

The judiciary provided

SEE PAGE 11 COL 3

Fatal negligence

Frequent boiler explosions killing workers amid slack inspection; only 6 inspectors for over 5,000 boilers

MOHAMMAD AL-MASUM MOLLA

The government inspection system for factory boilers is meant to fail by design, hence boiler explosions have been claiming lives all too frequently.

For the 5,000 odd authorised boilers in the country, there are six inspectors designated to examine them once a year.

It usually takes an inspector a day to complete inspection of a single boiler, which means, with best of their efforts and no day-offs, it would take them 840 days to complete one round of inspections. And that is not taking into account about 20,000 more boilers that are unauthorised.

SEE PAGE 2 COL 2

- Approved boilers 5,035
- Unauthorised boilers 20,000
- 17 killed in 3 incidents this year
- Country lacks skilled boiler operators

TEESTA DEAL
Mamata still 'reluctant'

OUR CORRESPONDENT,
New Delhi

West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee apparently won't budge on a Teesta water sharing deal despite Prime Minister Narendra Modi's assurance to his Bangladesh counterpart that his government would find a solution to that end.

During a visit to Cooch
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TOP! QUOTE
"Wasa is not working properly to solve the waterlogging problem. Rather, they are busy with projects involving hundreds of crores of taka."

DSCC MAYER SAYEED KHOKON
AT A PROGRAMME ON
DHAKA UNIVERSITY CAMPUS

Fishing ban in haors lifted

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Moulvibazar

The fisheries department yesterday lifted the ban on fishing in the haors of Moulvibazar and Sunamganj.

The decision came a day after Bangladesh Atomic Energy Commission confirmed that the radiation levels in the water and the dead fish and ducks collected from the flashflood-hit haor region were within the permissible limits.

Talking to The Daily Star, Mosharaf Hossain, deputy director of fisheries department of Sylhet division, said the decision to withdraw the ban was effective yesterday.

The ban on fishing in the haors was imposed on April 17 after dead fish were seen in the haors.

This correspondent found that the fishermen were catching fish in different areas of Hakaluki Haor yesterday morning.

Monir Mia, a fisherman of Pusainagar village near Hakaluki Haor of Moulvibazar's Kulaura upazila, said after a huge loss, he saw a ray of hope for his livelihood when he heard that the ban was withdrawn.

Mohammad Shipon, a farmer of Begbanpur village under the same upazila, said his catch was small.

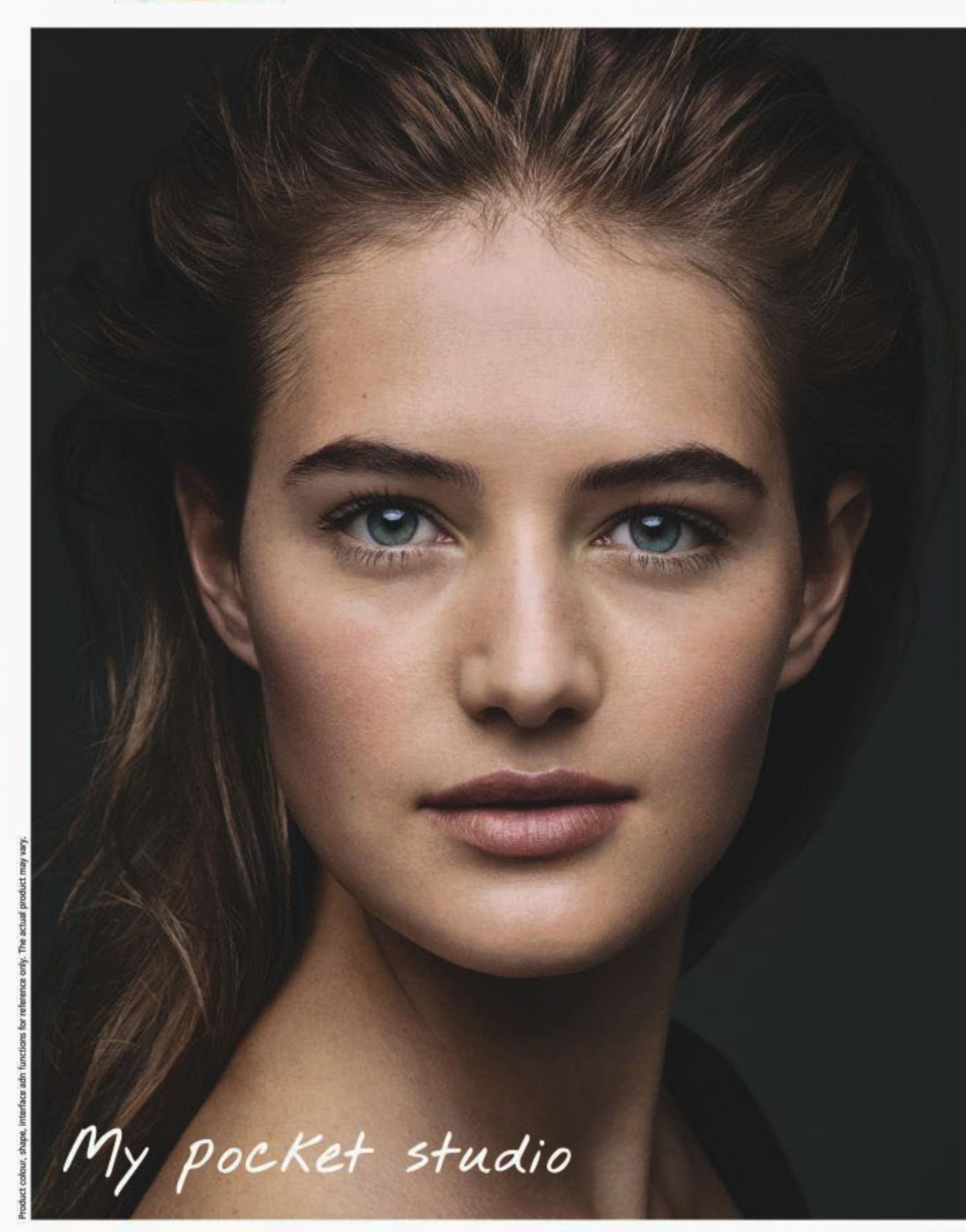
Abdul Hadi, a farmer of Radhapur village, said despite their attempts, they failed to protect the embankment along Shanir Haor in Sunamganj's Tahirpur upazila. The crops would not have gone under water if the embankment had been repaired in time.

As he lost his paddy crop, now his six-member family would have to depend only on fishing, he said.

The annual production of fish from Hakaluki Haor is

SEE PAGE 11 COL 4

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