

The Daily Star

SECOND EDITION

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"His pace dropped off as he played a bit more Test cricket, but he's still an outstanding bowler who has the ability to swing it..."
 AUSTRALIA CRICKETER
GLEN MAXWELL
 ABOUT MUSTAFIZUR RAHMAN'S BOWLING



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WITH TODAY'S ISSUE

SHOUT

SCIENTIFIC STUDIES FOR DUMMIES

EID ON SEPT 2

Zilhaj moon sighted yesterday

PAGE 2

7TH FLEET COMMANDER FIRED

The sacking comes after deadly collision between US destroyer and a tanker

PAGE 8

Farm growth slows down

New tech, investment, agri-land protection required to increase production further

REAZ AHMAD

The growth of the country's farm sector has slowed down over the last five years and an expert from the International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI) attributed this largely to the fall in rice production growth.

The sector registered a yearly growth of 2.3 percent in 2012-16, down from 4.7 percent in 2007-11.

In the past decade, the yearly rice output growth was 2.5 percent. Whereas, the growth was 4.1 percent between mid '90s and 2005-06.

Akhter Ahmed, who heads the Washington-based food policy think-tank's country operation, told a workshop in the capital yesterday, "The slowdown in agricultural growth needs attention."

IFPRI along with the Agricultural Policy Support Unit of the agriculture ministry and the USAID hosted the workshop to discuss

Landless peasants	36%
Owners of farmland	37%
Small and marginal farmers	27%

the role of policies in developing Bangladesh's seed sector.

Agriculture Minister Begum Matia Chowdhury, top ministry officials along with scientists, academics, development partners and private sector representatives attended the workshop.

The farm sector contributes about 17 percent to the country's Gross Domestic Product (GDP) and employs more than 45 percent of the total labour force.

Currently, nearly 75 percent of the total 7.84 million hectares of arable land is being used to produce rice, thanks to land scarcity and people's rice-centric dietary habit.

Farmers grow two to three different crops from same land a year in different favourable agro-ecological zones and the total crop lands expand to over 14 million hectares.

Yesterday, experts told The Daily Star that with nearly no fallow land available for

SEE PAGE 2 COL 2



Piling work for a second bridge going on next to the Meghna Bridge on Dhaka-Chittagong highway. There is a possibility the new, wider bridge would be finished by December 2018, earlier than planned, said the project director. The photo was taken a few days ago. PHOTO: ANISUR RAHMAN

STAR WEEKEND

70 YEARS OF PARTITION

Commemorating the 70th anniversary of the Partition, *Star Weekend* is bringing out its special 72-page magazine tomorrow with articles contributed by eminent scholars from Bangladesh, India and Pakistan, and the stories of those who witnessed and survived the Partition.

Make sure you get a copy of this collector's item free of charge from your hawkers.

NEWS ANALYSIS

Justice Khairul's dubious distinction

SHAKHAWAT LITON

Justice ABM Khairul Haque has become the lone former chief justice who has strongly criticised a Supreme Court verdict to defend the parliament's power to remove SC judges and the government's authority to have control over the lower judiciary.

The SC unanimously scrapped the 16th constitutional amendment as it found the changes went against the principles of the separation of powers and the independence of the judiciary. It also restored the Supreme Judicial Council (SJC).

After release of the full verdict on the 16th amendment case on August 1, Justice Haque, chairman of Bangladesh Law Commission, has strongly criticised the judgement several times.

In a press conference at his office on August 9, he termed the verdict "misconceived, undemocratic and immature."

He said he didn't agree with the opinion that independence of the judiciary would be curbed in the absence of the SJC.

"I think the Supreme Judicial Council doesn't have much to do with independence of the judiciary," he claimed.

The former chief justice said people are the owners of the

SEE PAGE 2 COL 2

This also happens

3 major bridges being built ahead of time with cost less than estimated



M ABUL KALAM AZAD

When all major infrastructure projects are facing delays and cost escalation, the venture to build three new bridges on the Shitalakkhya, Meghna and Gumti rivers is making good progress.

All of them are expected to be completed by the December 2018 deadline, and setting an example, will cost less than what was estimated



Several Japanese firms building a new Meghna-Gumti bridge, left, and a new Kanchpur bridge, right, on the Dhaka-Chittagong highway. The photos were taken recently.

PHOTO: ANISUR RAHMAN

in the development project proforma (DPP).

Under the project, the existing Kanchpur, Meghna and Meghna-Gumti bridges would also be refurbished, officials of the road transport and bridges ministry said.

The four-lane bridges being built parallel to the old ones would cut short the travel time between Dhaka and Chittagong. The Dhaka-Chittagong highway was expanded into four-

lanes last year.

After feasibility study, the cost of the project was estimated at Tk 8,487 crore, of which Japan International Cooperation Agency (Jica) was supposed to provide Tk 6,430 crore.

Before signing deals with four Japanese firms in November 2015, the total cost came down to

SEE PAGE 10 COL 2

13 teachers sent to jail

They face lawsuit over defaming Bangabandhu

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, CG

A Chittagong court yesterday sent 13 schoolteachers to jail in a seditious case filed for "defaming" Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman in a question paper.

Senior Judicial Magistrate Md Sazzad Hossain of Banskhali passed the order after the accused had appeared before the court. The magistrate rejected the bail prayers of the accused.

Alamgir Hossain, officer-in-charge of Banskhali Police Station, told The Daily Star.

On July 19 last year, Bangabandhu was compared with a local union parishad chairman in a question in the Bangladesh O Bishwa Porichoy examination of class nine. The seditious case was filed with the police station on April 12 this year, the OC said.

According to Alamgir, the filing of the case was delayed as it took time to get permission from the government.

SEE PAGE 10 COL 4



Lalmoinhat farmer Khoda Bux inspects the devastation to aman paddy on his 13 bigha land in Dhairkhat on Monday. The receding floodwater has left a ruined field of crop for him and many others like him. PHOTO: S DILIP ROY

Irregularities rule climate projects

Influential people stepped in to ensure 4 of 6 BWDB projects go to their men, finds TIB

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A group of powerful men, including lawmakers, were meddling in four out of six climate projects from the Water Development Board to have the contracts awarded to their men, a Transparency International Bangladesh study has found.

The group involves a secretary, two local lawmakers, a central leader of the ruling Awami League and a relative of a former minister.

The names were not disclosed as part of the Berlin-based corruption watchdog's global policy.

The study report, launched at TIB's Dhammondi office yesterday, said these powerful men recommended their men and influenced the WDB to approve the projects funded by Bangladesh Climate Change Trust Fund over the last five years.

"These anomalies massively exposed Bangladesh Water Development Board's [BWDB] lack of good governance mainly caused due to the absence of accountability at policymaking level and because of approval of projects in political consideration instead of on grounds of climate risk," the report said.

In one instance, construction work of a 3.3 kilometre river embankment under a project was done poorly with damages clearly noticeable even when the project was underway.

Information for the survey was collected from 600 people, including project directors, WDB officials and employees, locals and contractors between March 2015 and July 2017.

SEE PAGE 2 COL 2