



## New rice yields high hopes

Researchers expect BRRI dhan81 to be the most productive variety

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Release of a new rice variety brings in high hopes as scientists expect it to break the long stagnation in the production growth of the staple.

Breeders at Bangladesh Rice Research Institute have developed the variety -- BRRI dhan81 -- whose per hectare output would be half a tonne more than BRRI dhan28, which is currently the most productive rice variety in the country.

There are 86 modern rice varieties in Bangladesh but the farmers plant BRRI dhan28 in an overwhelming 45 percent of the rice lands during the Boro season. Because of its high growth potential and huge acreage, scientists call BRRI dhan28 a mega variety.

Yesterday, the National Seed Board approved the new variety BRRI dhan81, which scientists hope would eventually replace BRRI dhan28 and increase the country's overall rice output significantly.

Against the BRRI dhan28's per hectare yield of 6 tonnes, the BRRI dhan81 would give farmers an output of 6.5 tonnes and the rice will also be richer in protein (10.3 parts per mil-



lion comparing to 8.6 ppm in BRRI dhan28).

On average, Bangladeshi consumers depend on rice for over 50 percent of their daily calorie and protein requirements.

It took 15 years for the scientists at Bangladesh Rice Research Institute (BRI) to come up with the new variety since Agriculture Minister Matia Chowdhury brought in some seeds of Amol-3 rice variety from Iran.

Wee BRII dhan81 through successful crosses between Iran's Amol-3 and our mega variety -- BRRI dhan28. The process of crossing, lab and field tests continued for the past 15 years and finally the seed board

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## War crimes court reconstituted

Govt appoints chairman, two members for ICT-1 three months after tribunal became inoperative

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The government yesterday reconstituted the International Crimes Tribunal-1 by appointing its chairman and two members after three months of stalemate in war crimes trial.

Justice Md Shabirul Islam, a High Court judge and member of the tribunal, has been appointed as the chairman of the tribunal.

Justice Amir Hossain, another HC judge, and Abu Ahmed Jomader, a retired district judge who is now on post-retirement leave (PRL), have been appointed as members.

The law ministry yesterday issued a gazette notification in this regard. Law Secretary ASSM Zahirul Haque Dula told The Daily Star.

The tribunal reached an impasse since July 13 when its chairman, Justice Anwarul Haque, passed away. Another member Justice Md Shohrawardi was sent back to the HC.

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Justice Shabirul Islam

## UN's Bosnia promise 'Systematic bid' to expel Rohingyas

New UN report says Rakhine army operation meant to prevent the Muslim minority from returning

DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT

military offensive against the Serbs, Nations which did not commit a enough wanted military intervention. In the end, no action was taken and Srebrenica happened.

Yet, Myanmar happened because the big nations on both sides of the East-West divide have rendered the UN an ineffective organisation, a platform to talk and not to take actions.

When in July 1995, the Christian Serbs raided the Bosnian Muslim "safe zone" in Srebrenica and killed thousands of men and boys, the world remained a spectator with voices to speak but no will to act.

They were vocal even before the Bosnian tragedy unfolded. The UN Security Council between April 1992 and October 1993, adopted 14 resolutions and 42 statements. Yet, two years later, the Srebrenica massacre was unleashed as the nations in the UN could not decide what actions to take to stop the atrocities thrust upon the Muslims.

Those nations who had their troops in Bosnia with Blue Helmets did not want any

military offensive against the Serbs, Nations which did not commit a enough wanted military intervention. In the end, no action was taken and Srebrenica happened.

The events in the heart of Europe shook many a conscience. UN Secretary General Kofi Annan in a report concluded, "the tragedy of Srebrenica will haunt our history forever".

And at the opening session of 1999 General Assembly, he showed his resolve when he said that national borders would no longer protect leaders who abuse people under their control.

Eight years down the line and eight years after the butcher of Serbia Slobodan Milosevic was arrested by the Yugoslav authorities for genocide, the International Court of Justice issued an important judgment in the case of Bosnia and Herzegovina versus Serbia and Montenegro.

The court echoed what Kofi Annan had said and announced that the obligation to prevent genocide cannot be

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PHOTO: AFP

A Rohingya child uses a bowl to shelter himself from the scorching sun at the Palangkhali refugee camp in Ukhia of Cox's Bazar yesterday.

## UN's Bosnia promise 'Systematic bid' to expel Rohingyas

New UN report says Rakhine army operation meant to prevent the Muslim minority from returning

DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT

Myanmar's army is involved in a "systematic" effort to rid the country of Rohingyas and has torched homes, crops, villages of the minority community to prevent them from returning, rape of children, and attacks on places of worship.

The UN team, which interviewed 65 Rohingyas in Cox's Bazar between September 14 and September 24, stated that Myanmar security forces often in concert with armed Rakhine Buddhist individuals committed human rights violations against the Rohingyas and caused over 5 lakh of them to leave the Rakhine state.

"Brutal attacks against the Rohingyas in northern Rakhine state have been well-organised, coordinated and systematic, with the intent of not only driving the population out of Myanmar but preventing them from returning to their homes," read the report released in Geneva yesterday.

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## The gritty girls

Six schoolgirls honoured for their fight against child marriage

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Shabana Akhter was a student of class eight when her father arranged her marriage with a complete stranger, but she could not let anyone mess with her childhood and education.

At first, she tried to stop it through talks with her parents, informing them of negative consequences of early marriage but in vain. Upset, yet determined to pursue her studies, she came up with a unique idea to foil the marriage.

"I shaved off my hair and appeared with my bald head when the suitor and his family came to see me. The marriage did not take place," said Shabana, of Gangachar in Dhaka, while sharing the story of her fight against her own early marriage before the audience at a programme at Krishibid Institution Bangladesh in the capital yesterday.

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## IN THE SHADOW OF VIOLENCE

Approaching the persecution of the Rohingyas from various aspects, Star Weekend is bringing out its special 64-page magazine tomorrow with articles by renowned scholars from home and abroad.

We cover the crisis from historical, economic and political perspectives, as well as look at the gaps in the way we have dealt with Rohingya refugees thus far and suggest ways forward.

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People, oblivious to or careless about air pollution, burn garbage on Shyamoli Ring Road in the capital late at night. Many do this across the capital. The photo was taken recently.



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