

## Give khas land to landless farmers

Land minister directs officials  
UNB, Dhaka

Land Minister Shamsur Rahman Sherif yesterday directed the officials concerned to allocate agricultural khas land among the real landless farmers.

The minister came up with the direction while speaking at the 34th meeting of the National Agricultural Khas Land Management Executive Committee at his ministry.

Sherif also asked the officials to provide the landless framers with Duplicate Carbon Receipt (DCR) of the khas land after carrying out investigations through field visits.

He said some farmers get affected both financially and mentally as a section of land grabbers try to occupy their croplands during harvesting season misusing DCR.

To check it, the meeting decided that the DCR of the khas land will be issued after the land officials' report on the land condition through field visits.

## Drivers

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passengers should be alert," he said, adding it would be unwise to blame only one section.

"The government, law enforcement agencies, drivers, passengers, pedestrians and all the authorities concerned have some responsibilities. If we all perform our responsibilities properly, roads will surely become safe."

The professor also demanded proper compensation for the victims of road accidents.

Jewel Mia, a teacher of DU's disaster management and vulnerability studies department, also spoke at the programme.

Later, convener of the platform Shakhawat Al Amin placed a 11-point charter of demands including repairing all highways before Eid and identifying the accident-prone spots on the highways.

Their other demands include taking action against the unfit vehicles, deploying more traffic police and punishing the pedestrians who would not use the foot-bridge or underpass.



An aerial view of Barisal Colony. The photo was taken yesterday.

PHOTO: RAJIB RAIHAN

# A classic tale of gang rivalry

*The infamous Barisal Colony, near the Chittagong Railway Station, has been a narcotics hotspot of the port city for the better part of three decades. Two groups have been taking turns controlling the business here, in a classic tale of gang rivalry and organised crime. After yesterday's first part on the drug trade scene amid the nationwide drive, the second installment of the special report looks into the 'history' of the clashes and whereabouts of the gangs' current top dogs.*

FM MIZANUR RAHAMAN, Ctg

According to sources, one Rafiq introduced the illicit business in the Barisal Colony area in 1990 and controlled the drug trade, in a syndicate with Monir, Faruk, Salamat, Yusuf, "Honda" Bahar and "CNG" Jasim.

Yusuf was the manager of the drug cartel, said the sources. Around a decade ago, Monir and Faruk ousted Rafiq to take over the drug business. After a few years, conflicts ensued between Monir and Faruk's factions.

During that time, drug dealers Belal, Bahar and Nayon joined the Monir gang, while Salamat and Nasir joined the Faruk gang.

Nayon was murdered as a result of the conflict in 2012.

Taking charge, manager Yusuf made his own syndicate and took control of a portion of the colony. In 2016, one of the group chiefs, Monir, "disappeared"

from the colony mysteriously while Faruk drove out his men and took the charge of the whole area.

There were no visible tensions between the groups of Yusuf and Faruk, but that changed when both gangs tried to bring one Khusru to their respective gang.



Faruk, an importer of "yellow yaba", a new kind of yaba pills, was killed in a shootout with Rab on October 20 last year. After Faruk's killing, Yusuf again took the charge of the area.

Faruk's brother Sukkur has taken over his brother's business, in cooperation with Khusru.

Police officials said internal conflict has ensued among Faruk's wife Nilufar Aktar Nila, brother-in-law Md Rana and his brother Sukkur, to take control over the business.

Khasru is now behind the bar in Sylhet since November last year, said a police official, adding that Faruk's wife and Rana have joined Yusuf's syndicate, while Khusru and Sukkur have formed an alliance against them.

"Faruk's wife Nilufar is an accused of Monir murder case filed with Sadarghat Police Station," the police station's Officer-in-Charge (OC) Nezam Uddin told The Daily Star.

Nezam said the trio arrested on Sunday -- Khokon Kumar Das, Md Hanif and Kazi Abdullah, are the men of Sukkur, and they were in Barisal Colony area with firearms, to take control of a portion of the area.

"We have information that Yusuf is now in India, and trying to control the business from there," said OC Nezam.

Mosharraf, who was killed in a gunfight with Rab on last Thursday worked on behalf of Yusuf, Nasir and Salamat, said locals, adding that Nasir and Salamat fled the area after shootout.

OC Nezam said, "We came to learn that Khusru and Sukkur have taken control of the area with help of their men named Siraj, Raju, Malek, Shahjahan and others after the gunfight with Rab."

Department of Narcotics Control and police officials said Yusuf is a top drug lord in the city; he is accused in at least 15 cases filed with different police stations.

"A team of 50 police personnel are deployed at Barisal Colony, so that no one can enter the area to take visible control."

## NEWS IN brief

### Boy goes missing in Bongshi River

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Savar

A boy went missing in the river Bongshi in Namabazar area of Savar outside the capital on Wednesday evening.

Asad Miah 13, son of furniture businessman Alamin Miah and a fourth-grader, along with several of his friends went to the river to bath, said police.

Mohshinul Kadir, officer in-charge of Savar Model Police Station, said firefighters were conducting a drive to rescue Asad, said the OC.

### Two die from electrocution in Ctg

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

Two youths died from electrocution in Sitakunda upazila in Chittagong on Wednesday night.

Ubaching Marma and Kepaching Marma were making an electric fence to hunt wild animals at a dumping yard near Bhatiyari Golf Club, said police.

They came in touch with a live electric wire while setting an electricity line, said Mozammel Haque, Inspector (Investigation) of Sitakunda Police Station.

In the hilly area, such animals used to go to the dumping ground in search of food, he said.

The deceased were guards of a private company in the upazila, he added.

### Two die after falling from buildings

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

Two people died after falling off buildings in Chittagong city yesterday, said police.

Mohammad Belal, 18, a mechanic, fell from the fourth floor of building while he was repairing an air conditioner sitting on its platform in Patharghata area, said Ismail Hossen, sub-inspector of Kotwali Police Station.

He died at Chittagong Medical College Hospital (CMCH) on arrival, he said.

In Double Mooring area, Sahabuddin, 52, fell off the roof of a five storey building where he lived, said Jahir Uddin, inspector (investigation) of Double Mooring Police Station.

Like other mornings, he was walking on the roof of which one portion has no demarcation wall, he quoted the family as saying.

Although they filed an unnatural death (UID) case, they are investigating the incident, he added.

### Workshop on child abuse at UIU

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Children's Association against Child Abuse (CACA) in collaboration with United International University (UIU) organised a workshop for students and their parents on the UIU campus in Dhaka on May 19.

Twenty students, including a few from underprivileged section, from different schools in the capital and several of their parents took part in the workshop, said a press release.

UIU Prof Abul Hasnat Golam Azzam, its Assistant Professor Mokammel Karim Toufique and CACA founder Akter Jahan Mim spoke.

### Three killed in road accidents

STAR REPORT

Road accidents killed three people and injured another yesterday, according to our correspondents.

In Pabna, Rafat Hossain, 16, and Rohan Hossain, 15, died and another was injured as their motorcycle collided head-on with a bus in Uttarchak of Atghoria, said police.

In Chittagong, trucker Arif, 50, died as his vehicle hit a bus from behind after he lost control over the steering in Sitakunda, reports our correspondent.

# Allocate funds for permanent levees in coast

Farmer organisations urge govt ahead of upcoming national budget

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Special allocation of funds in the upcoming budget is essential so permanent embankments could be built for saving agricultural land in coastal areas, said different farmer organisations yesterday.

The organisations also urged formation of a "National Price Commission" to ensure fair price for their agricultural products.

The call was made at a press conference titled "We Demand Fair Price Commission for

Agriculture Production: Permanent Embankment is Must to Save Coastal Agricultural Land" in the capital's Jatiya Press Club, jointly organised by 12 local and national farmer organisations.

The organisers are Coastal Farmers' Association, Bangladesh Fish Workers Alliance, Bangladesh Agricultural Farm Labour Federation, National Women Farmers Association, Bangladesh Adibasi Samity, Haor Farmers and Fishers Alliance, Gram Labour Resource Centre, Nolphira Pani Unnayan Samity, Dighon CIG,

Kendriyo Krishak Moitree, Bangladesh Farmers' Forum and COAST Trust.

Even though the size of the national budget is growing every year, allocation for agriculture in it is not growing accordingly, the speakers observed during the programme that was moderated by Mustafa Kamal Akand of COAST Trust.

Mujibur Haque Munir, secretariat coordinator of Bangladesh Farmers' Forum, said since 46 percent of the country's total labour force are engaged in agriculture and the

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## PORT CITY PROBLEMS

# Street food, including iftar items, poses health risks

ARUN BIKASH DEY, Ctg

The health department in Chittagong seems oblivious to the unhygienic conditions under which iftar items such as chhola, piyajua, beguni, alur chop etc. are produced and sold, causing foodborne diseases.

These inexpensive and popular foods are mainly consumed by students and day labourers all over the port city, especially on CDA Avenue, Chawk Bazar, New Market intersection, Anderkilla, Laldighi Par, Chittagong College Road, Jamal Khan Road, Kazir Dewri, Momin Road, Jubilee Road, Cheragi Pahar, MA Aziz Stadium area and Kotwali intersection.

Due to a lack of basic infrastructure, such as water connections, the sanitary quality at these venues may be compromised.

Trapa Chowdhury, a student of Chittagong College who lives in Chawk Bazar, had diarrhoea for two days after having fuchka from a street vendor at Parade Maidan area. Like Trapa, many consume food purchased from street vendors, who lack knowledge on food-handling. The vendors also often do not wash hands between food and money transactions and restroom breaks.

Sanitary and food safety inspectors are appointed under the health department to ensure people's right to safe food, yet the practice of selling unsafe foods are going on at large.

A vendor was seen mixing ice, mint leaves, salt



PHOTO: STAR

and sugar with his bare hands. He then added water from a container to prepare the drink -- exposed to flies and dust. Vendors usually add artificial colours to the drinks as well to make them appear more attractive.

When asked, Chittagong Civil Surgeon Azizur Rahman Siddique said these colourful drinks are extremely unsafe to drink. "The vendors mix artificial colours, which may damage the kidney and may

even cause cancer," he said.

"There are two aspects to street food safety. First, the foods and drinks are prepared on the streets, and are easily contaminated with germs from the surroundings. Second, the water being used is not safe for consumption, even if it is from a tube-well. It can lead to food poisoning, diarrhoea, jaundice, typhoid and other diseases," he said.

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Chickens are food; they are also living beings. This truck carrying chickens in cages was making a long journey from Narsingdi to Morishya Bazar, in Ukhia upazila of Cox's Bazar. It made a brief stop at Sadhonpur in Banskhal upazila, Chittagong to cool the fowls down with water from a nearby pond, so that they don't die of heat.

PHOTO: RAJIB RAIHAN