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REGD. No. DA 781 | Vol. XXIX No. 110 | BAISHAKH 23, 1426 BS | www.thedailystar.net | Your Right to Know | PLUS 4 PAGES BUSINESS JACKET ON CASHLESS SHOPPING & DINING AND HALF PAGE JACKET ON EBL | SHARAN 29, 1440 HIJRI | 22 PAGES PRICE : Tk 12.00

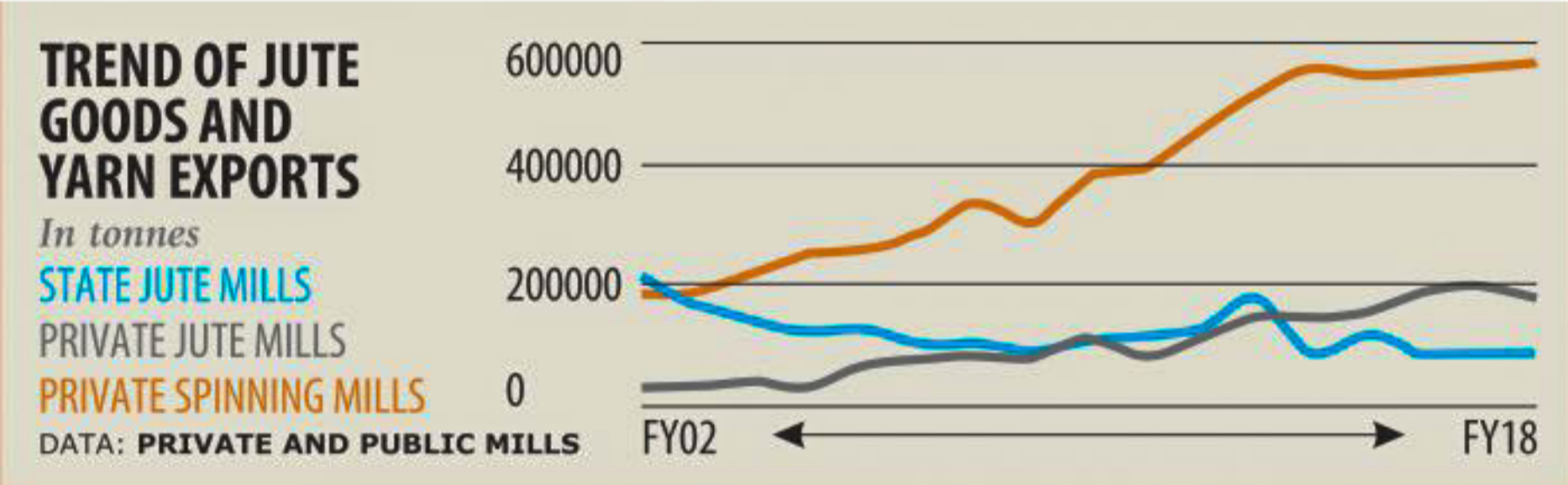
"It is you, the real estate developers, who should be blamed for turning landowners greedy by offering abnormal land prices and property shares."
LAND MINISTER SAIFUZZAMAN CHOWDHURY

"When a directive from the prime minister is required to ensure justice, we have to understand the system is not working."
AIN O SALISH KENDRA EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR SHEEPA HAFIZA

"Let's listen to what the voters said in the elections and put our differences aside for a moment. Let's do a deal."
THERESA MAY URGES JEREMY CORBYN ON BREXIT

Golden fibre in troubled waters

Shrinking foreign markets, poor demand at home and abroad send jute industry in downward spiral



SOHEL PARVEZ

Bangladesh's jute industry is in deep trouble. Exports of traditional jute goods have been falling in the face of competition from low-priced polypropylene and synthetic goods as well as a shrinking demand in the traditional markets abroad.

The domestic market is not growing much either as the government has failed to fully enforce the Mandatory Jute Packaging Act passed nine years ago.

And although exports of diversified jute products show a rising trend, it is too little to rescue the sector involving 4

crore people, according to export data and industry people.

"This is an exceptionally bad year. Shipment has declined both in terms of value and volume. This is a very bad news for the sector," said Mahmudul Huq, deputy managing director of privately-run Janata Jute Mills.

Ironically though, Bangladesh is a major global supplier of jute products. It meets 97.5 percent of the global demand for jute yarn, 70 percent of raw jute and 46 percent of sacks and bags.

On average, the country produces 15 lakh tonnes of jute per year. Of the volume, private and public mills process about 10

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Workers construct a house in Chandpur's Rajrajeshwar union in the sadar upazila yesterday. When Cyclone Fani struck Bangladesh, it obliterated over 100 houses in the area and damaged many more. Around 14 people also died in different parts of the country during the cyclonic storm.

PHOTO: ALAM PALASH

Assess damage fast, respond quickly

Orders PM; ministry allocates relief materials

STAR REPORT

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina yesterday asked the authorities to quickly assess the damage and provide assistance to cyclone Fani victims.

She also prayed for the people who died during the cyclone and extended condolence to the bereaved families.

Hasina, who is now in London, also directed Awami League leaders and activists to stand by the cyclone victims.

The disaster management ministry has so far allocated 3,800 tonnes of rice, 41,000 packets of dry food and Tk 1.97 crore for the victims.

The National Disaster Response Coordination Centre, a wing of the Ministry of Disaster Management and Relief, yesterday published a report mentioning the amount of damage caused by the cyclonic storm and action taken by the authorities concerned.

About 1.55 lakh acres of croplands

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Make it compliant to boost export

Experts on leather sector; govt urged to make CETP at Savar fully functional

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The government should make the central effluent treatment plant at the Savar tannery estate fully functional to make the leather sector compliant and boost export, said Syed Manzur Elahi, founding chairman of Apex Footwear Ltd and Apex Tannery Ltd.

"Our first priority should be making the CETP fully functional," he told a discussion in the capital's The Daily Star Centre yesterday.

The discussion on "The leather sector after the tanning industry relocation: issues and challenges" was organised by the Asia Foundation and the Research and Policy Integration for Development (RAPID).

Before they were relocated, tanneries in the capital's Hazaribagh used to produce every day about 21,600 cubic metres of environmentally hazardous effluent containing chromium, sulphur, ammonium, salt and other chemicals. These tanneries used the toxic chemicals to treat rawhides and discharged the toxic waste in the open sewers and pits completely untreated, posing serious health hazards to the people.

The liquid waste ended up in the river Buriganga untreated, as none of the factories in Hazaribagh had adequate infrastructure for ETPs.

Eventually, the government was prompted to relocate the factories to an estate where the effluents could be treated.

At yesterday's event, Elahi said the leather sector would rebound globally as prices of leather products and synthetic ones have become

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BNP's decision not to join JS was wrong

Says Fakhru

UNB, Dhaka

BNP Secretary General Mirza Fakhru Islam Alamgir yesterday said the party's previous decision of not joining parliament soon after the December 30 election was wrong.

"We should keep it in mind that nothing can be achieved by chanting cheap slogans. Our acting chairman [Tarique Rahman] has made the right decision as we have to fight both in and outside parliament," he said.

Fakhru was addressing a discussion, organised by Sammito Chhatra Forum at the Jatiya Press Club, marking the 4th death anniversary of BNP leader Nasiruddin Ahmed Pintu.

The BNP secretary general said, "I don't

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Owners' greed key reason for road crashes

Say workers, defend drivers

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Bangladesh Road Transport Workers' Federation yesterday cited an unhealthy competition among transport owners for profit as a major reason behind road accidents.

Terming road transport the "most neglected" sector in the country, the federation said blaming only drivers for road accidents would not solve this problem.

It also came up with a 16-point proposal, including state initiative to establish driving schools to produce skilled drivers and instructors, aiming at curbing crashes.

The federation, an umbrella organisation for at least 235 transport worker unions across the country, placed the proposals at a view-exchange meeting it organised at the Jatiya Press Club in Dhaka.

The country saw two major student agitations for safe road in the last nine months over death of students in road crashes in the capital. A rise in road accidents is often blamed on errant drivers and owners.

In the key note speech, federation General Secretary Osman Ali said transport workers are the most neglected

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BUSINESS

GOING CASHLESS

It is still quite unthinkable for most people to leave their homes without at least some cash in hand. However, that exposes oneself to the risks of theft or misplacement. Money lost or stolen is almost impossible to get back. Once it's gone, it's usually gone for good. While keeping cash in hand makes it easier to stick to a budget, depending solely on it means one can end up in dire straits in cases of emergencies that may require more cash than one has on them. But, undesirable scenarios as such can be avoided if one goes cashless i.e. use cards and mobile financial services and, if used wisely, they can simplify one's life and also yield savings. The Daily Star today has a four-page supplement on the virtues of going cashless.

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Campbell, Hope register record ODI partnership

SPORTS REPORTER

West Indies openers Shai Hope and John Campbell scripted a world record 365-run partnership for the first wicket against Ireland in the ODI tri-series opener at the Clontarf Cricket Club in Dublin yesterday. The visitors won the match by a massive 196 runs after bundling out the hosts for just 185 in reply to their mammoth 381 for three total.

Hope and Campbell eclipsed the 304-run stand Pakistan's Fakhar Zaman and Imam-ul-Haq against Zimbabwe last year. It is also the first time that both openers of any team have scored more than 150 runs in the ODI format.

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Children jump off a rope tied to a vessel and dive into the Kirtankhola river. The soothing waters provide the children with some relief from hot summer days. The photo was taken yesterday in Barishal's Palashpur area.

PHOTO: TITU DAS

INDIA ELECTIONS 5TH PHASE

Seven states go to polls today

Suspected militants shot dead
BJP leader in J&K

AGENCIES

Elaborate arrangements have been made for peaceful conduct of fifth phase of Lok Sabha elections today. Fifty one constituencies, spread over seven states, will go to polls in this phase.

Voting will take place for 14 seats in Uttar Pradesh; 12 in Rajasthan; seven each in Madhya Pradesh and West Bengal; five in Bihar, four in Jharkhand and two in Jammu and Kashmir.

Suspected militants shot dead a local leader of Modi's ruling party in Jammu and Kashmir on Saturday night.

The militants opened fire on Gul Mohammad Mir, who belonged to a local unit of the Hindu nationalist Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), at his house in south Kashmir.

Kashmir police called it a "terror crime" and Modi condemned Mir's killing in a Twitter post yesterday, saying "there is no place for such violence in our country."

A polling station to be used in today's voting was set ablaze in the nearby Shopian area, reported AFP.

In Uttar Pradesh, polling parties were sent to their respective booths under tight security. The constituencies which will go to polls include Lucknow, Raebareilly, Amethi, Banda, Fatehpur, Kaushambhi, Barabanki, Faizabad, Behraich, Kaisarganj, Dhau-rahra, Sitapur, Mohanlalganj and Gonda. There are more than three lakh thirty nine thousand new voters in this phase.

The key contestants in the state are senior BJP leader and Union Home Minister Rajnath Singh, Congress

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