



"Those who are involved in militancy are just militants. They have no religion, country and border..."
PRIME MINISTER SHEIKH HASINA AT A PROGRAMME AT THE GONO BHABAN (PAGE 3)

"Please treat these children as human beings and ensure their rights."
MUJIBUL HAQUE, FORMER STATE MINISTER FOR LABOUR, ABOUT WORKING CHILDREN AT A ROUNDTABLE IN THE CAPITAL (PAGE 3)

"Never threaten an Iranian. Try respect -- it works!"
IRANIAN FM JAVAD ZARIF AFTER TRUMP ISSUES THREAT. (PAGE 8)

Fruits for all seasons

Project on to ensure fruits grown locally available round the year

MOHAMMAD AL-MASUM MOLLA

What if the fruit you love is available in the market not only for a few months, but throughout the whole year? And what if this very fruit does not need to be imported but is grown locally and sold at a street cart in your neighbourhood?

That is the goal of the Year-Round Fruit Production for Nutrition Improvement project -- to make fruits available all over the year and meet the nutrition demand of the population. The Department of Agricultural Extension (DAE) has been implementing it since 2014-15.

An adult is supposed to consume 250 grams of fruit daily but per capita intake is 80 grams in Bangladesh at present, according to the agriculture ministry.

Even a decade ago, local fruits were limited to Bangladesh's hot and humid summer. People keenly waited for May, June and July when mango, litchi, jackfruit and most other fruits would make their way to the market.

The second month of the Bangla calendar, Jaishtha (mid-May to mid-June), is aptly called the Madhu Mas (honey month) because most of these fruits become available around this time.

However, the scenario has changed now. Several fruits are found almost all the time.

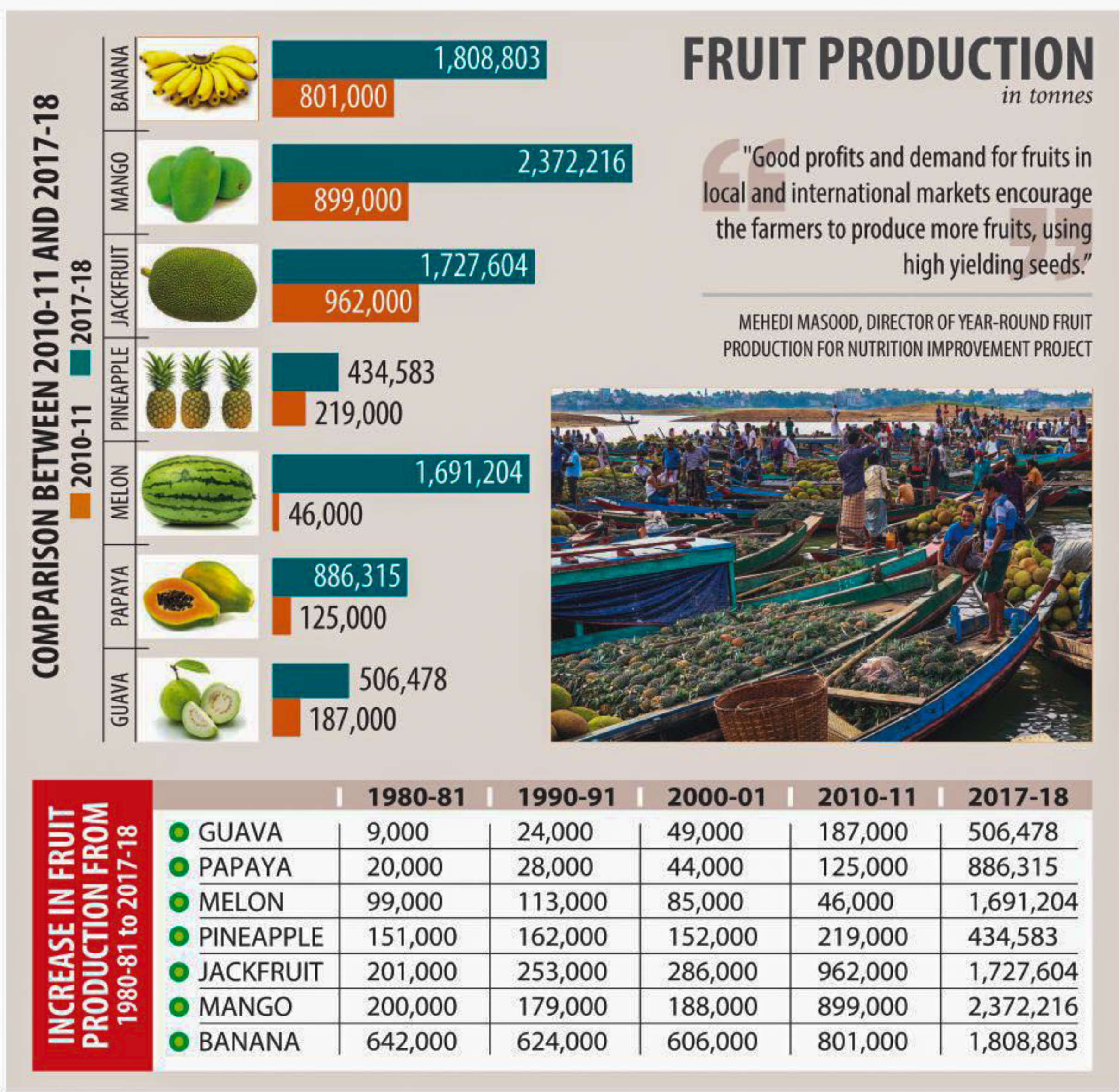
Mehedi Masood, the project director, said earlier fruits would be available during the three summer months, but the government is focusing on year-round production.

"Now you will find guava, papaya, pineapple and some other fruits almost round the year. We are also expanding the production tenure of mango."

Since the inception of the project, more than one lakh farmers were

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HC ASKS GOVT TO MONITOR FRUIT MARKET, WAREHOUSES -- PAGE 2



Rooppur Power Plant HC asks ministry to submit report on 'irregularities'

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The High Court yesterday sought enquiry reports from the housing and public works ministry on alleged irregularities in purchasing furniture and other household items for officials and other employees of Rooppur Nuclear Power Plant.

The HC asked the Attorney General's Office to collect the reports from the committees formed by the ministry and submit those to the court within a week of its reopening after the upcoming vacation.

Both the Appellate and the HC divisions of the Supreme Court will go on a three-week annual vacation on May 24 and reopen on June 16. It means the reports would have to be submitted by June 23.

The HC bench of Justice Tariq ul Hakim and Justice Md Shohrwardi passed the order following a writ petition filed for its directive on the government to form a judicial committee to look into the allegations.

During yesterday's hearing, barrister Sayedul Haque Suman, the writ petitioner, told the HC that the irregularities in purchasing the furniture and other household products should be enquired by an independent judicial committee, as the committees formed by the housing ministry might be biased.

The officials against whom the

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SC to clarify notice for the media

Says law minister

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Supreme Court will soon clarify a notice issued by the SC administration that requested print and electronic media to refrain from reporting on ongoing cases at the court, Law Minister Anisul Huq said yesterday.

"Discussion is going on among them [SC judges] about the notice and the Supreme Court will very soon give a clarification on it and therefore, misunderstandings will be removed," he said while talking to reporters after meeting with Chief Justice Syed Mahmud Hossain at the latter's SC office.

The minister said he met the chief justice as he does routinely and discussed the notice, among other issues.

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Tiger number rises by eight in 3 years

Say officials citing latest census on big cats in Sundarbans



PINAKI ROY

The number of Bengal tigers in the Bangladesh part of the Sundarbans has increased slightly, according to a latest tiger census.

The number rose to 114 in 2018, up from 106 recorded during the previous survey in 2015, an official involved in the latest census said seeking anonymity.

The report on the census titled "Second Phase Status of Tiger in Bangladesh Sundarbans 2018" will be released at the capital's Ban Bhaban tomorrow.

The census on the critically endangered species was conducted dividing

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Tokyo to sign \$2.5b deal with Dhaka

Prime minister to visit Japan next week

STAR REPORT

Japan will sign an agreement with Bangladesh on providing \$2.5 billion Official Development Assistance (ODA) during a visit of Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina to Tokyo at the end of this month.

The amount in the 40th ODA agreement will be 35 percent higher than that of last year, said Japanese Ambassador to Bangladesh Hiroyasu Izumi when he met Hasina at the Gono Bhaban yesterday, reports UNB.

Izumi also assured the PM of Japan's continued support to Bangladesh in its efforts for economic prosperity, said PM's Press Secretary Ihsanul Karim while briefing reporters after the meeting.

The diplomat told Hasina that Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe was eagerly waiting to receive her in Japan during

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INDIAN ELECTION

Exit polls results may be wrong

Eurasia Group says political watchers should exercise caution as 2004, 2014 exit polls failed to accurately predict outcome

AGENCIES

Exit polls from India's month-long parliamentary elections suggest that Prime Minister Narendra Modi's Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) and its allies are set to form the government again. Political consultancy Eurasia Group, however, said that election watchers should exercise some caution around those predictions.

Local Indian media reported that exit polls predicted a clear majority for the BJP-led National Democratic Alliance. It is expected to win nearly or above 300 seats in India's lower house of parliament, or Lokh Sabha as it is known, according to the Economic Times.

"The exit polls released are in line with our belief that Modi's BJP will be the single

largest party, while it will have to rely on allies to form the government," Akhil Bery, South Asia analyst at Eurasia Group, said in a note on Sunday. "However, it is important to recognise that exit polls in India have not had the best history in predicting the elections."

More than 8,000 candidates contested for a total of 543 seats in the elections. The polls spanned over seven phases, which began on April 11 and ended on May 19. To form a government, a party or a coalition needs to win 272 seats. Votes are set to be counted on May 23.

Bery pointed to previous elections where exit polls either completely missed the mark or failed to accurately predict an outcome.

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Rejoinder, our reply

The managing director of Ananda Shipyard and Slipways Ltd in a rejoinder to a report headlined "Ship-builder eating away Meghna" carried in this paper on May 10 claimed that the company has all the approvals required for its ship-building activities on the Meghna and occupation of the river's foreshore. Ananda Shipyard and Slipways Ltd did not provide any documents in support of its claim with the rejoinder.

Our reply

The company officials were contacted before publication of the report. They had then claimed to have approvals but failed to come up with any documentary evidence.

The accompanying Bangla version of the rejoinder signed by the managing director says the shipyard's foreshore licence expired six years ago, which The Daily Star report mentioned quoting an official of Ananda Shipyard.

The shipyard repeatedly made claims but could not substantiate those.

We stand by our report.



An excavator demolishing an illegal structure in the Meghna during a BIWTA drive in Char Betagi area of Munshiganj's Gazaria upazila yesterday.

PHOTO: RASHED SHUMON

EVICTING MEGHNA GRABBERS

BIWTA drive stops halfway

Officials contradict each other over legal status of a dockyard

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Halfway into an eviction drive at Char Betagi in Munshiganj's Gazaria yesterday, the BIWTA withdrew as a curious drama unfolded over the legal status of two slipways built by a dockyard on the Meghna's foreshore.

A team of Bangladesh Inland Water Transport Authority (BIWTA) officials, including its chairman Commodore M Mahbub-ul Islam, went to the private dockyard of Khan Brothers Slipways and Engineering Works in Hossendi for a much-awaited eviction drive.

They went there to remove the slipways but soon the BIWTA officials appeared unsure whether the company had the required foreshore licence. The team just tore down a brick wall as a mark of eviction and left.

At the scene, the BIWTA high officials not only contradicted one another over the foreshore licence issue, but also their earlier comments on the matter.

Curiously, they had on them no official documents regarding the issuing of foreshore licence and how the company owned a part of a delta in the river.

Commodore Mahbub at one stage asked BIWTA magistrate Mostafizur Rahman, who was leading the mobile court for the eviction drive, to look into how Khan Brothers became the owner of land of Char Betagi delta in the river.

Char Betagi is near another delta called Char Balaki and they are surrounded by the Meghna. The Shitalakkhya and Dhaleshwari converge with the

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