



**POST-POLLS CRISIS IN US**  
Obama slams GOP leadership for not accepting result as Trump remains defiant  
**SEE PAGE 6**

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"We [BNP] join polls when we shouldn't and we don't take part when we should. We go to parliament when we shouldn't."  
BNP LEADER MAJ (RETD) HAFIZ UDDIN AHMED



"It doesn't matter that I'm fit as a butcher's dog, feel great... that I've had the disease and I'm bursting with antibodies."  
UK PRIME MINISTER BORIS JOHNSON ON SELF-ISOLATION AFTER A CONTACT TESTED POSITIVE FOR COVID-19



"I cannot help but observe that the United Nations Security Council no longer produces useful solutions today."  
FRENCH PRESIDENT EMMANUEL MACRON

## Food reserve under pressure

Grain stock drops to 8.8 lakh tonnes, far below comfortable level due to poor procurement, increased distribution amid pandemic

REJAUL KARIM BYRON and SOHEL PARVEZ

The country's food reserve dropped to 8.8 lakh tonnes on Sunday, despite bumper grain production in the last fiscal year.

The reasons include the government's failure to attain its boro procurement target and increased distribution of cereal among the people affected by the pandemic and recurring floods.

On July 1 last year, the food stock under the government's disposal stood at 16.74 lakh tonnes, which came down to 11.88 lakh tonnes within exactly a year.

Two days ago, it fell to 8.8 lakh tonnes, nearly half way down from the comfortable level of 15-16 lakh tonnes, according to data from the Food Planning and Monitoring Unit of the food ministry.

The reserves in government warehouses lowered despite record food production.

Rice and wheat production stood at 3.76 crore tonnes in the fiscal year ending in June, 0.45 percent higher than the 3.74 crore tonnes year-on-year, according to the final estimate of the Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics (BBS).

The food procurement goal flopped



mainly because the government had fixed prices for boro paddy and rice lower than the production cost at the farm level and also at a time when the price of paddy was high.

The food ministry had aimed to buy 8 lakh tonnes of boro paddy during the procurement period from April 26 to September 15. But it could manage to purchase only 2.2 lakh tonnes, falling short of the target by 72.5 percent.

It had targeted to purchase 10 lakh tonnes parboiled rice but managed to

SEE PAGE 2 COL 1



Violating traffic rules and ignoring a notice right there, motorcycles get on a pavement in the capital's Tejgaon area around 11:30am yesterday and put pedestrians at risk. This photographer, stationed there for around 45 minutes, saw dozens of bikers doing the same whenever traffic came to a halt.

PHOTO: PRABIR DAS

## BNP activists behind arson attacks: PM

STAFF CORRESPONDENT



Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina yesterday told parliament that it was the BNP that carried out the recent arson attack on buses to make the election questionable and malign the government.

"There was no reason to set fire to buses. But why did they do so? It was to make the election questionable when they are not getting people's votes and have lost public confidence," Hasina said in an unscheduled discussion.

She made the remark in reply to BNP MP Harunur Rashid's demand for formation of a parliamentary body to find out who were behind the arson attacks in the capital.

Hasina said when two parliamentary by-elections were being held, they all of a sudden set several buses on fire and but are shifting blame on the government.

"We're in power. Then why our

SEE PAGE 2 COL 6

## Seed potato too gets pricier

Potential potato crisis in early December; cultivation delayed due to floods

MAHBUBUR RAHMAN KHAN

With the high price of potatoes continuing to hurt household budgets across the board, farmers' pockets also bear the brunt as they have to buy seed potatoes at a higher rate.

Traders and government officials said the price of seed potatoes has increased due to the high price of potatoes, a kilogramme of which is now being sold for Tk 45-50 in the capital's kitchen markets.

Due to low prices last year, around Tk 25 per kg, many farmers had reduced the volume of cultivation of the tuber crop, a staple vegetable in kitchens. As a result, a substantial quantity of seed potatoes got damaged in cold storage, said Ruhul Amin, manager of Samabay Cold Storage in Cumilla.

"And this time when the farmers saw a good price of potatoes, they sold their seed potatoes for public consumption. Besides, many farmers are now showing interest in cultivating potatoes this year seeing good prices. So, the price shot up," he told The Daily Star on November 10.

Atiur Rahman, a farmer who has sown seed potatoes (Holland variety) on his one bigha land in Viyail union of Dinajpur's Chiribandar upazila, said it cost him an additional Tk 4,000 this time to do so.

He used to cultivate potatoes on 2.5 bigha land. "The rest 1.5 bigha is yet to get dry after the flood. Once it becomes cultivable, I'll sow seed potatoes on that field too," he said on November 4, adding he was expecting to start cultivation by the end of this month.

SEE PAGE 2 COL 3

War hero Shawkat Ali no more



1937-2020

RASHIDUL HASAN

Former deputy speaker Col (retd) Shawkat Ali, who was one of the accused in the historic Agartala Conspiracy Case, passed away at the Combined Military Hospital in Dhaka yesterday. He was 83.

A valiant freedom fighter, Shawkat had been suffering from multiple old age complications, including kidney- and heart-related problems.

SEE PAGE 10 COL 2

## Talks essential for viable solution

Says Japanese ambassador to Dhaka about Rohingya crisis during an interview with The Daily Star

PORIMOL PALMA and REFAYET ULLAH MIRDHA

Japan is directly communicating with Myanmar, emphasising the importance of Rohingya repatriation and accountability as it considers a long-term solution to the crisis and regional stability essential conditions for a free and open Indo-Pacific.

"For us, to see the resolution of Rohingya crisis and stability in the region is part of our joint efforts to achieve a free and open Indo-Pacific. Japan, Bangladesh and some other countries in the region can jointly work for stability," said Ito Naoki, Japanese ambassador to Bangladesh.

"My hope is that Myanmar will listen to Japan and work on early repatriation of the Rohingyas," Naoki said in an exclusive interview with The Daily Star at his official residence in the capital on November 8.

About a million Rohingyas, 750,000 of whom fled a brutal military crackdown in 2017, are living in Bangladesh. No Rohingya returned home despite repeated attempts over more than three years. Rohingyas say they don't have



Ito Naoki

SEE PAGE 2 COL 3

Highest daily infection in 10 weeks

2,139 new Covid cases in 24 hours

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Twenty-one more people died from Covid-19 in past 24 hours till 8:00am yesterday, said a press release of the Directorate General of Health Services.

With this, the total number of deaths rose to 6,215, while the death rate stood at 1.43 percent.

Another 2,139 new cases were recorded in the same 24 hours, taking the number of positive cases to 4,34,472, said the release.

This was the highest number of cases reported in a single day in the last 70 days. Also, this was a major jump from the second-highest count of 1,845 cases reported on Thursday.

On September 7, some 2,202 people tested

SEE PAGE 10 COL 1

## A vacation in Dooars was his last wish

Soumitra's daughter tells The Daily Star

MOHAMMAD AL-MASUM MOLLA



One of the greatest icons of Bengali cinema, Soumitra Chatterjee was never short of enthusiasm for work as his magic on the silver screen kept audiences enthralled for around six decades.

Quite understandably, the 85-year-old actor -- who played many iconic roles like "Feluda" and "Apu" -- was not glad when everything came to a halt due to the coronavirus-driven lockdown.

As the restrictions were relaxed slightly, Soumitra started working again, recounted his daughter Poulamoni Bose in a telephone conversation with The Daily Star.

"We protested the decision immediately, but he would not listen to anyone. He insisted on continuing working.

"We worked on one of my documentaries at Bharat Lakshmi studio even a day before he fell ill. It was a documentary on him. The shooting took place for three days. The work remains incomplete. He could not even watch his

SEE PAGE 2 COL 1



Drawing lines on the sand, children play games in Itna-Mithamain area of Nikli Haor in Kishoreganj. The area remains submerged under water during most of the year. It appears as a char when the dry season begins, much to the joy of children who live in the haor area. The photo was taken recently.

PHOTO: ANISUR RAHMAN

VIOLATING HEALTH GUIDELINES Mobile courts to start penalising within days

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Mobile courts will initiate drives in Dhaka within two to three days to make sure that people wear facemasks and follow other health rules, Cabinet Secretary Khandker Anwarul Islam said yesterday.

He added that the prime minister instructed the authorities concerned to be stricter in enforcing the health guidelines and take more precautionary measures against the spread of the coronavirus.

"We've issued the directive to the mobile courts and asked law enforcement agencies to be stricter ... hopefully you'll see the measures in the next two or three days," Anwarul said, when his attention was drawn to the fact that many were not wearing masks in public places.

The secretary was briefing reporters on yesterday's cabinet meeting held virtually with Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina in the chair. She joined the meeting from the Gono Bhaban while her cabinet colleagues took part from the secretariat.

On October 25, the government asked public and private organisations not to provide services to people who would not wear facemasks, in an attempt to fight the possible second wave of the virus in the coming winter.

BRTA DRIVE

Meanwhile, Bangladesh Road Transport SEE PAGE 2 COL 3