2,285,074 • 105,160,735

Do more research to expand market

PM tells scientists about local fruits, agro items

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina yesterday asked agricultural scientists to conduct further research on local fruits and agricultural items to expand the market

"It is essential to carry out more research on our local fruits and local items.... I think our local items are she said while unveiling the cover of a book titled "100 Krishi Projukti Atlas" at a function in the city.

The programme was held at Bangabandhu International Conference Centre, with the PM joining it from the Gono Bhaban through a video

Bangladesh Agricultural Research Council (BARC) published the Atlas, containing 100 agricultural technologies, marking the birth centenary of Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman.

Hasina said the retirement age in government service has turned out to be a problem for those who are involved in research. "We need to do something for the agricultural scientists. We want to give them more incentives."

She asked the authorities concerned to place proposals on how the incentives can be given to the scientists.

Noting that the government is giving importance to agriculture, the PM said they want to give more benefits to agricultural researchers.

The premier asked the researchers to prepare crop zoning map identifying the high-yielding zones of different crops across the country.

Hasina said the retirement age is not a problem anymore for researchers in universities as the age-ceiling was increased there.

She said enough research works were done in the agriculture sector and agricultural institutes were strengthened through increasing manpower.

"But, we are giving the highest importance to research. We'll have to give more importance to research as our

population is growing."

Mentioning that Bangladesh's soil is very fertile, the PM put emphasis on plans, more studies and adequate laboratories for improving the quality of agricultural goods so that those can be exported abroad after meeting the local demand.

Hasina also stressed the need for development of agriculture-based industries as the country's economy is largely dependent on agriculture.

She said her government has already been able to ensure food security in the country and it has been working to achieve nutrition security.

Fisheries and Livestock Minister SM Rezaul Karim and Chairman of Parliamentary Standing Committee on Agriculture Ministry Matia Chowdhury, among others, addressed the programme, chaired by Agriculture

Minister Abdur Razzaque.

A documentary on the 100 agricultural technologies was screened at the function. Agricultural scientists, divisional commissioners, deputy commissioners and field-level the virtual function.

Metro trial run likely in July FROM PAGE 1 celebrating the golden jubilee of its

and procurement of the carriages and other equipment, witnessed 46.33

A DMTCL team was supposed to visit Japan last month to inspect the five pairs of trains manufactured there, but the plan was postponed because of coronavirus restrictions imposed by Japan.

After Japan extended the restriction to mid-March, the officials hired a firm to inspect the trains in Japan, Siddique told reporters at DMTCL office in capital's Eskaton, adding that officials of the company saw the carriages and locomotives from Bangladesh.

The inspection has been done, the first set might leave the Port of Kobe on February 20 for Bangladesh and could reach a depot in the capital's Diabari on

April 23 via the Mongla port, he said. The authorities will first conduct what Siddque said would be an integrated test of the train and then start a trial run between the first five stations, he added.

The trial run might continue for as long as six months, he added.

The second train is likely to reach the depot on June 16, and the third one on

The Japan Inspection Company Ltd has carried out the inspection, he added. Asked whether having a Japanese company do the inspection compromised its integrity, he said the firm, selected through a bidding process participated by five companies, enjoyed international-

The original implementation period of the project was 2012-2024.

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina later directed that metro services from Uttara to Agargaon be made operational by 2019, and from Agargaon to Motijheel

Failing to meet the deadline, the authorities in May 2019 said the project would be launched on December 16, 2021, when the country would be

that the metro rail could be open to the public in December, Siddique said, "We are trying our best to meet the target.

"We will be able to tell for sure... after the [integrated] test," he said.

Road Transport and Bridges Minister Obaidul Quader last month told reporters that the project was likely to be

In 2019, the DMTCL made plans to

(BR) did not object to the plans, it said the DMTCL design would be an impediment to turning Kamalapur station into a

On November 24 last year, the BR and the metro rail authorities agreed on a new plan which required shifting the Kamalapur Station Plaza to a nearby location to make room for the MRT-6

After that meeting, Railways Minister the existing plaza would be demolished and a similar one would be built. Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina would make the final decision in this regard, he added.

The Prime Minister's Office gave its consent to shifting of the iconic Kamalapur Station Plaza further north

has to be relocated because of the extension of the MRT-6. It is their [BR]

commissioners and agriculture officers were connected to

independence. Asked whether it was still his belief

complete by June next year. MRT-6 EXTENSION

stretch the MRT-6 to the Kamalapur Railway Station in accordance with the prime minister's directive.

Although the Bangladesh Railway

Multimodal Transport Hub (MmTH).

and turning the station into a MmTH.

the following month.

Abdul Baquee Miah, additional project director (civil) of MRT-6, said an MRT station and a scissor crossing would be built outside the Kamalapur station premises. The MRT structure and the station building would be 30 metres

"It is not true that the station building decision," he said.

People protest on the street against the military after Monday's coup, outside the PHOTO:

Mandalay Medical University in Mandalay, Myanmar yesterday.

UNSC calls for Suu Kyi's release

But in a show of defiance to the generals, a group of the lawmakers elected in a November 8 ballot convened a symbolic parliamentary session in the quarters where they have been staying since the takeover.

Small protests took place in the main city Yangon and elsewhere, with activists saying three protesters had been arrested - among around 150 people who have been detained since the coup, according to one rights

Doctors were also spearheading a campaign of civil disobedience.

But in a country with a bloody history of crackdowns on demonstrations, there was no mass outpouring of opposition on the streets.

The army seized power on Monday alleging irregularities in the election, derailing Myanmar's long and troubled transition to democracy. The move was condemned by Western governments, who have urged the junta to respect Suu Kyi's National League for Democracy's landslide victory.

Opposition to the junta has emerged strongly on Facebook, Myanmar's main social media platform, including for business and

The Ministry of Communications and Information said Facebook would be blocked until this Sunday, February 7, because users were "spreading fake news and misinformation and causing misunderstanding". Facebook's WhatsApp messaging was

crisis for the last couple of months

and that the situation worsened last

Most of them are residents of East

Raiabazar, Jigatola, Mohammadpur,

Adabar, Bhatara, Badda, Gendaria,

Turag, Uttar Khan, Dakkhin Khan,

part of Mirpur, Pallabi, and some

Hasan, a resident of Madarbari in

Uttarkhan, said, "We have been facing

an acute crisis of gas for the last one

month. The pressure of gas starts

dropping from 7:00am and supply

cuts off completely around 9:00am.

The normal flow returns around

The country's gas demand is about

3,700 mmcfd whereas it is getting

2,800 to 2,900 mmcfd, said a

Rupantarita Prakritik Gas Company

Officials attributed the dearth

The country needs at least 525

"LNG deficit is the main problem

mmcfd of imported LNG to keep the

... it dropped to 200 mmcfd in the

middle of January. We are getting 400

of supply to the reduced import of

liquefied natural gas (LNG) in recent

"We sometimes use a wood burning

areas of Old Dhaka.

stove ...," he said.

Ltd (RPGCL) official.

WHAT THE OFFICIALS SAY

2:00pm.

months.

supply normal.

Facebook was still available sporadically and demonstrators in the second city of Mandalay used it to livestream the first street protest since

"People's protest against military coup," read one banner.

The group of around 20 people chanted: "Our arrested leaders, release now, release now.'

The US said yesterday it was considering "targeted sanctions" against those funneling financial support to the military in Myanmar.

National Security Advisor Jake Sullivan said the White House is "looking at specific targeted sanctions both on individuals and on entities controlled by the military that enrich the military." He did not give further

DISOBEDIENCE

Staff at some government hospitals stopped work on Wednesday or wore ribbons in the NLD's red colour. In response, the army said people could get treatment in military hospitals.

Pictures shared on Wednesday showed workers at the agriculture ministry joining the campaign of disobedience.

Other signs of anger have emerged. For a third night, people in Yangon and other cities banged on pots and pans and honked car horns. In Yangon, streets resounded to the sound of clapping at 5:00 pm by coup

Suu Kyi, 75, has not been seen since her arrest along with other party

official of Petrobangla (Bangladesh

Oil, Gas & Mineral Corporation)

yesterday preferring not to be named.

He said during the winter,

mmcfd for the last five days," said an the supply chain with Petrobangla.

official said.

this month.

leaders. Police have filed charges against her of illegally importing and using six walkie-talkie radios found at her home and she has been detained until February 15. The daughter of the former British

colony's independence hero Aung San and the longtime leader of its democracy movement, Suu Kyi spent about 15 years under house arrest between 1989 and 2010. She was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize in

She remains hugely popular at home despite damage to her international reputation over the plight of Muslim Rohingya refugees.

The United Nations said it would step up international pressure to ensure the will of the people is respected.

PROTECT ROHINGYAS

The Gambia, which lodged a lawsuit against Myanmar in 2019 seeking to prevent a genocide of the Rohingya minority, on Wednesday demanded that coup leaders there protect the group, reports AFP.

"We are gravely concerned that the same military leadership that marginalised the Rohingya has now seized full control of the Myanmar the information government," ministry said in a statement.

"We fear they may launch another so-called 'clearance operation' to rid the country of the approximately 600,000 Rohingya who survived the last round of human rights violence," said the statement, adding that Banjul was "monitoring events very closely".

Sometimes we increase gas supply for

the domestic level, reducing supply

to power plants and vice versa," the

Md Rafiqul Islam, managing

director of RPGCL, said they have

been supplying 400 mmcfd LNG to

at regular intervals from Qater

and Oman as part of a long-term

agreement. He said that to meet

demand, they also bought LNG from

spot market, which turned volatile

spot market this winter but now it has

come down to \$10 per tonne and a

further drop is expected at the end of

charge of LNG imports, cancelled

orders for two consignments, each

of 138,000 cubic metres of LNG,

for delivery from spot market in

2032, Bangladesh annually purchase

1.8-2.5 million metric tonnes (MTPA)

of LNG from Qatar. The government

also annually purchase 1-1.5 MTPA

of LNG from Oman under a 10-year-

RPGCL MD Rafiqul.

contract that will end on 2028, said

As part of the 15-year contract until

November and December last year.

RPGC, the state-run agency in

Rafiqul said LNG price went up in

over the last few months.

He said they were receiving LNG

the national grid since January 23.

with farmers Wading into a sensitive issue for Indian

Prime Minister Narendra Modi, the US

New Delhi, the mostly peaceful protests were marred by violence on January 26, when some protesters entered the heart of the capital city after the Republic Day military parade and clashed with police.

"We encourage that any differences

following the Republic Day violence.

raping woman at gunpoint

STAR REPORT

Two men, including an assistant station master of Bangladesh Railway, were arrested between Wednesday night and yesterday morning in connection with separate rape incidents in Jashore and

In Jashore, a man raped his neighbour's wife at gunpoint on Wednesday when the victim was alone

Sabdar Hossain, of Dakshinpara village in Sadar upazila, in the night after the victim's husband filed a case in this regard, said Moniruzzaman, officer-incharge Jashore Kotwali Police Station.

know about the incident, he took her to the police station to file the case.

various ways including giving indecent proposals, the OC added. Meanwhile, in Rajshahi, police

arrested Moin Uddin Azad, 42, an assistant station master of Rajshahi Railway Station in connection with a rape case yesterday.

police found his links into the rape case after 17 days of investigation, Nibaran Chandra Burman, officer-in-charge of Boalia Police Station, said.

On January 18, a woman, 25, filed

messengers

The railway official Azad offered her

to his home on plea for giving her some books that might help her in the recruitment tests and raped her. Azad also threatened her of dire

found grounds for arresting him.

Benapole contributed to the report.

Ex-BNP MP given 10 years in jail

security on the court premises.

Thirty-four of the convicts were present in the courtroom. The others were on the run. The imprisonment tenure of the fugitives will start the day they surrender

or are arrested, according to the verdict.

the plaintiff, ailing freedom fighter

After the delivery of the verdict,

Moslemuddin, expressed happiness, saying, "Truth has emerged victorious." Welcoming the judgement, leaders and activists of the ruling Awami League

brought out a procession and distributed sweets among locals in Satkhira. On the other hand, BNP men expressed dissatisfaction and brought

out a procession in protest of the verdict. AL lawmaker in the district and former health minister Prof AFM Ruhal Haque said, "This verdict is a significant milestone in history. It has proved that those who commit crimes are never

spared.' Nazrul Islam, general secretary of Satkhira district AL, said, "We are happy that the criminals, who committed the crimes 19 years ago, have finally been handed punishment.

On the other hand, convict Habib's wife Shahanara Akhter Bokul said, "Justice has not been seen in the verdict. We will challenge the verdict at the High

Syed Iftekhar Ali, BNP chief in Satkhira, said, "We are not happy with the verdict. Will hope to get justice from the High Court.

On August 30, 2002, then opposition leader Hasina, now the prime minister, visited the house of a freedom fighter, after his wife was allegedly raped, in Hizaldi village of Kolaroa upazila.

While she was returning to Jashore, BNP men kept a bus haphazardly on a

road near the office of Kolaroa upazila BNP. As Hasina's motorcade reached the area, BNP men launched an attack on it, according to the case statement. At least 12 people, including AL

leaders and journalists, were injured in

the attack, said Satkhira court inspector Amol Kumar Roy. On September 2 of that year, Kolaroa unit freedom fighters' commander Moslemuddin filed the case against 27 named and 70 to 75 unnamed accused.

The accused included several BNF leaders and activists in Satkhira. After around 12 years of the incident, the case was recorded following a High

Court directive. Later, the case's investigation officer, police Inspector Shafiqur Rahman

pressed charges against 50 accused.

Tarique gets

According to the case statement, Tarique made derogatory comments about Bangabandhu at a meeting in London on December 16, 2014.

Later, the case was filed by Shahjahan Biswas, former commander of Muktijoddha Sangsad at Narail's Kalia upazila.

Tarique, who has been living in London since September 2008, was earlier convicted and sentenced in four other cases. A Dhaka court on October 10, 2018

awarded him life imprisonment in two cases filed in connection with the deadly grenade attack on an Awami League rally at Bangabandhu Avenue on August 21, 2004. In February the same year, Tarique was

sentenced to 10 years in jail by another Dhaka court in the Zia Orphanage Trust corruption case. Besides, he was sentenced to seven years' imprisonment by the High Court in a money laundering condensate is deposited in pipelines and if there is not enough gas at source, the supply gets disrupted.

LNG supply dearth worsens gas crisis

Nurullah, MD of Titas Gas, which distributes gas to homes in Dhaka city and serves around 28.74 lakh consumers, told The Daily Star yesterday that they had inadequate volume of gas in the system. Another Titas official claimed

they had a supply shortfall of 80 to 90 mmcfd in areas including Dhaka, Gazipur, Savar, Narayanganj, Narsingdi and Mymensingh due to technical issues of Gas Transmission Company Ltd (GTCL).

"From January 10 to January 23, we got less supply to the Titas network but since February 1, we are getting less supply due to technical glitch in GTCL," said the official.

He said they got 1,660 mmcfd on Wednesday when they were supposed to get 1,740 mmcfd. Around 200 mmcfd is used by homes. Contacted, a GTCL official wishing

problem was shortage of LNG supply to the national grid. "It has nothing to do with any

not to be named said the main

technical issues. We are coordinating

the air in celebration. In the final session, left-arm seamer

Mustafizur bowled brilliantly as he managed to get the ball to dart back into the left-hander sharply along with his magical cutters. took responsibility to score runs with the lower order as Bangladesh went

for lunch on 328 for seven. Taijul Islam gave valuable support and the pair frustrated the visitors, adding 48 runs for the eighth wicket before the left-hander departed for 18 off 72 balls. Mehedi reached his fifty off 99 balls in the company of Nayeem Hasan, with whom he added

Nayeem became Bonner's maiden scalp after scoring 24 when Mehedi Mehedi eventually reached the

He trapped John Campbell with a delivery angling into the left-hander's pad, which the on-field umpire denied initially. But the Fizz was confident

and took the review which showed

that the ball would have gone on to

Mustafizur then fired in an incoming yorker that hit the toe of Shayne Mosely and the umpire raised his finger, a decision upheld on review to leave the West Indies struggling on 24 for two.

Shakib, Taijul, Mehedi and Nayeem however did not get much assistance

DIGITAL SECURITY ACT

Man arrested over

Facebook posts

on PM, Quader

Our Correspondent, Dinajpur

Police yesterday arrested a man in Birampur upazila after a case had been filed under Digital Security Act in connection with posting two "distorted" images of the prime minister and the Awami League general secretary on Facebook. Arrestee Monir Khan, 23, is the son

of Shahidul Islam of Ramchandrapur village of the upazila. Police said they arrested him at

Katla Bazar yesterday.

They claimed that Monir uploaded the images of Sheikh Hasina and Obaidul Quader on his own Facebook page. Faridul Islam, AL general secretary

of a ward in Khatta Madhampara union, filed the case with Birampur Police Station yesterday. Moniruzzaman, officer-in-charge of Birmapur Police Station, said police

produced the man before a local court which sent him to jail. The Daily Star could not obtain the images in question.

AGRI-REFORM PROTESTS

US urges India to resume talks

embassy in New Delhi yesterday urged his government to resume talks with farmers angry over agricultural reforms that sparked a months-long protest campaign. Largely restricted to the outskirts of

images nternationally of protesters occupying the ramparts of New Delhi's historic Red Fort and later clashing with police raised awareness of the confrontation between Modi's government and the

between the parties be resolved through dialogue," a US embassy spokesperson said in a statement that also proffered general support to government measures to "improve the efficiency of India's markets and attract greater private sector investment."

Modi's government has held multiple rounds of talks with representatives of farmers who have camped in their thousands on the outskirts of the capital since late 2020, but there has been no word on when talks would resume

Man held for

at home, said police. Police arrested the alleged rapist

Sabdar, on Wednesday, forcibly entered the victim's house in absence of her husband and raped her at gunpoint, the OC said quoting the victim. After the victim's husband came to

Sabdar harassed her before in

He was arrested from the city's Seroil area in the early hours after the

he rape case with the police station. According to her case statement, the woman became known to the railway official while commuting on the railway and he used to talk to her on

ı job in exchange for Tk 8 lakh and she paid him an advance of Tk 2 lakh. On January 17, Azad invited her

consequences if she speaks out about the rape, she alleged in her case. The OC said Azad denied her involvement in the case, but police

Our correspondents from Rajshahi and

arm spinner Warrican and punched

Mehedi shines with maiden ton Shakib was caught off a top edge at

Bangladesh lost both overnight

batsmen inside the first session after resuming on 242 for five with Shakib Al Hasan and Liton Das in their Liton was the first to depart after adding the innings' third fifty-run partnership with Shakib. The right-

hander was bowled trying to cut a ball from left-arm spinner Jomel Warrican that was too close to the off Mehedi then joined Shakib who batted in compact manner in his first Test match back since completing a one-year ban from international

The 23-year-old at the other end looked solid and played a beautiful back-foot punch to pacer Shannon Gabriel to start proceedings. But

cricket, completing a well-compiled

point playing away from his body against off-spinner Rahkeem Cornwall after scoring 68 off 150 deliveries that also featured five boundaries. After Shakib's departure, Mehedi

was eight runs short of his hundred. milestone with a paddle sweep off left-

57 runs for the ninth wicket.

Tigers' spin quartet in the form of

hit the stumps.