



## SALINITY IN COASTAL AREAS

# Alternative crops ignite farmers' hope

Govt moves to introduce new farming techniques

PINAKI ROY with DIPANKAR ROY, Khulna

People living by the Kirtonkhola river in Barishal noticed in March this year that the river's water had become unusually salty.

After an electrical conductivity test, Department of Environment officials confirmed what the locals have been saying.

They said the sudden rise in salinity may have been caused by reduced water flow from upstream and lower rainfall.

The Kirtonkhola is now another in a list of over 100 rivers flowing through the coastal region and affected by salinity due to sea water intrusion.

Saline river water also results in salinity in the groundwater which in turn increases the level of soil salinity. And that causes a significant reduction of vegetation in the affected areas, experts say.

Around 25-30 percent of the country's arable land is located in 21 coastal districts, of which 53 percent has become saline-affected, finds a recent study by Khulna University.

According to the study, around 75 percent of land in Satkhira, 66 percent in Bagerhat, 32 percent land in

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A child busy flying his kite on a street in the capital's Panthapath area yesterday. Flying kite in this concrete jungle is mostly done on roofs of buildings. The boy was able to fly the kite as the streets were almost empty there due to the ongoing countrywide "lockdown" enforced to curb the spread of Covid infection.

PHOTO: FIROZ AHMED

## Khulna court denies journo bail in case under DSA

STAR REPORT

A Khulna court yesterday rejected the bail petition of a local journalist in a case filed under the Digital Security Act over circulating misinformation on Facebook against the city mayor.

Another court in Joypurhat sent a youth to jail in a case filed under the controversial law over making derogatory remarks about Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina on Facebook.

Journalist Abu Tayeb's lawyer Akhter Jahan Ruku submitted the bail petition virtually, but Khulna Metropolitan Magistrate Golam Sarwar rejected it.

Abu Tayeb is the Khulna correspondent of private television channel ntv and the daily Loksamaj.

The journalist was arrested from his Khulna home Tuesday, hours after city Mayor Talukder Abdul Khalek filed the case against him.

The mayor in the case statement alleged that Abu Tayeb deliberately circulated misinformation against him on Facebook multiple times.

A day after his arrest, a

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## POSSIBLE UNREST BEFORE EID

# Cops to make list of factories

MOHAMMAD JAMIL KHAN and MOSTAFA YOUSUF

Intelligence and regulatory bodies fear a possible labour unrest ahead of Eid caused by the uncertainty over payment of salaries and festival bonuses of workers of some factories affected by the pandemic.

In this situation, the Police Headquarters (PHQ) has instructed the Industrial Police unit to make a list of factories which are not capable of paying workers' salaries and bonuses so that steps can be taken to avoid unrest.

Garment factories are among the vulnerable ones.

In Chattogram, two government regulatory bodies have apprehended that 67 garment factories may face labour unrest over payment of salaries and festival bonuses ahead of Eid.

The PHQ instruction, directed by the inspector general of police, has also asked the Industrial Police to coordinate with factory owners and workers so that no such unrest happens.

According to sources, police have already started preparing the list of factories. The list would be sent to Bangladesh Garment Manufacturers and Exporters Association (BGMEA) seeking further action, said sources.

Besides, police have beefed up

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### ROAD TO FREEDOM

THIS DAY IN BANGLADESH LIBERATION WAR HISTORY

## Mujibnagar cabinet meets

APRIL 23, 1971

SHAMSUDDOZA SAJEN

PAKISTAN CLOSING CONSULATE IN CALCUTTA

The Pakistan radio said tonight that Pakistan had decided to close down the Deputy High Commission office in Calcutta and had asked India to close her Deputy High Commission office in Dacca.

The radio, quoting an announcement in Pakistan capital Islamabad, said the closures would take effect very soon.

Pakistan's move followed angry demonstrations in Calcutta against the new deputy high commissioner, appointed after the previous holder of the post switched allegiance to the Bangladesh independence movement.

Earlier today, Pakistan accused the Indian government of failing to prevent what she termed unprovoked and violent demonstrations against the new Deputy High Commissioner Mehdi Masud. It also protested that the Indian government had not taken action to remove the former deputy high commissioner from the mission premises.

CABINET MEETING HELD

A meeting of the cabinet members of the Mujibnagar Government was held today. The cabinet appointed Abdus Samad Azad as the political aide to the cabinet, MA Mannan MNA as the in-charge of public relations and Barrister Amir-ul Islam as an aide to Prime Minister Tajuddin Ahmad.

The provisional government had summoned all administrative officers from secretaries down to district officials to two different

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## COVID PANDEMIC

# Earnings of low-income people drop by 66pc

Says a survey

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The ongoing Covid-19 crisis has been taking a heavy toll on low-income groups as they have been facing income losses and taking out loans to cope with the pandemic fallout.

While the second wave is sweeping across the nation even before the affects of the first are fully recovered from, low-income people, including day-labourers, rickshaw-pullers, and roadside hawkers, are facing the real struggle of the ongoing restrictions on travelling and office activities widely known as a "lockdown", said a research published yesterday.

"Right to Food Bangladesh" published the quick, explorative research on possible impacts of

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## Nasa's Perseverance rover makes oxygen on Mars



AFP, United States

The six-wheeled robot has converted some carbon dioxide from the Martian atmosphere into oxygen, the first time this has happened on another planet, the space agency said Wednesday.

"This is a critical first step at converting carbon dioxide to oxygen on Mars," said Jim Reuter, associate administrator for Nasa's space technology mission directorate.

The technology demonstration took place on April 20, and it's hoped future versions of the experimental instrument that was used could pave the way for future human exploration.

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### PRAYER TIMING APRIL 23

Fazr	Juma	Asr	Maghrib	Esha
AZAN 4:06	12:30	4:45	6:27	8:00
JAMAAT 4:16	1:15	5:00	6:37	8:30

SOURCE: ISLAMIC FOUNDATION

### SEHRI, IFTAR TIMING

RAMADAN	APRIL	SEHRI	IFTAR
10	23		6:27
11	24	4:05	6:28
12	25	4:05	6:28

## ILIAS ALI

# BNP seeks explanation from Abbas over remark

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The BNP has sought an explanation from the party's standing committee member Mirza Abbas over his statement on the disappearance of the party leader M Ilias Ali.

Party sources said the party's Secretary General Mirza Fakhru Islam Alamgir, on behalf of the party's acting chairman Tarique Rahman, sent the letter to him yesterday afternoon.

The letter reads that Ilias Ali remained missing for the last nine years and centering his disappearance a public opinion was formed inside and outside the country.

The letter read, "Your [statement] questioned the public opinion. In such a situation, the party's leaders and activists expect an explanation from you."

A day after delivering the statement, Mirza Abbas

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It is the breeding season for several bird species. Like many other migratory birds, blue-tailed bee-eater is also visiting Bangladesh to breed. This pair was captured in Arakul area of Dhaka's South Keraniganj recently.

PHOTO: COURTESY OF ASKER IBNE FIROZ

## India sets record in daily Covid infections

Reports 314,835 cases in 24hrs; US administers 200m shots ahead of 100-day deadline

AFP, New Delhi

India yesterday posted a global record for the number of coronavirus cases in a day, as US President Joe Biden hailed his government's "stunning" vaccination drive.

Despite vaccine rollouts in many countries, Covid-19 surges are putting immense pressure on authorities from Germany to Uruguay, with no end in sight for a pandemic that has claimed more than three million lives worldwide.

The underfunded healthcare system of India, home to 1.3 billion people, was being stretched to the limit by a ferocious new wave of infections, with desperate warnings of shortages of oxygen, medicines and hospital beds.

"I'm feeling really helpless," said Jasvinder Pal Singh, a pharmacy owner in the capital New Delhi.

"People are crying, they ask me for medication, and I'm saying 'no, no and no'."

India's health ministry data yesterday showed 314,835 new infections in the past 24 hours -- the most of any country since the pandemic began -- as hospitals sent out desperate warnings that patients could die without fresh oxygen supplies.

The current wave has been blamed on a new variant and super-spreader events including the Kumbh Mela, one of the world's biggest religious gatherings, as well as large political rallies.

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