



# The Daily Star

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## High interest hurts farmers

Private banks disburse majority of farm loans thru' microfinance institutions



AKM ZAMIR UDDIN

While Bangladesh Bank set the interest rate of farm loans at eight percent, farmers are having to pay more than three times higher even in desperate times like the coronavirus pandemic.

Many farmers have paid no less than 25 percent as interest, thanks to a weak policy of Bangladesh Bank and lax monitoring that allow private banks and microfinance institutions to exploit the farmers.

Lutfur Rahman, a farmer at Debidwar of Cumilla, recently took a Tk 1 lakh farm loan from a microfinance institution. The repayment tenure is one year and he has to repay Tk 1.40 lakh, which means the annual interest rate is a whopping 40 percent.

"I have repeatedly tried to avail loans from different banks. But after being denied, I was compelled to take the loan from a microcredit institution to run my farm," he told The Daily Star recently.

Small farmers like Lutfur, who are keeping the agriculture sector going and

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**LUTFUR RAHMAN, A FARMER AT DEBIDWAR OF CUMILLA.**

feeding the nation, are bearing the brunt of this high interest rate when it has come down to one-digit figures for loans across the board, except for credit cards.

Experts question how farmers would survive after bearing such high interest and production costs when they don't even get a fair price for their produce. They said small and marginal farmers also face difficulties

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## BARISHAL VIOLENCE BCC, AL sue UNO, OC

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Barishal

The UNO, two police officers and several Ansar men in Barishal have been accused of battery and opening fire with an intent to kill the Barishal city mayor on Wednesday night in two cases filed with a court yesterday.

The cases were filed as tension between ruling party men and the administration officials intensified.

Barishal city Awami League member and Councillor Rafiqul Islam Khokon filed a case accusing Upazila Nirbahi Officer of Barishal Munibur Rahman, Officer-in-Charge Nurul Islam and Sub-Inspector Shahjalal Mallick of the city's Kotwali Police Station, and five Ansar men.

The other case was  
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The closure of educational institutions amid the pandemic has left Bastuhara Government Primary School in Khulna city in an utterly sorry state. The front yard is waterlogged and there is vegetation on the Shaheed Minar.

PHOTO: HABIBUR RAHMAN

## KABUL AIRPORT CHAOS Taliban blame US Shots fired as 7 Afghans killed in stampede near airport

AGENCIES

The Taliban yesterday blamed the United States for the chaotic evacuation of tens of thousands of Afghans and foreigners from the capital, one week after the hardline Islamist group returned to power in a rapid victory that stunned the world.

The insurgents also fired in the air and used batons to make people line up in orderly queues outside Kabul airport yesterday, witnesses said, after seven Afghans were killed in a crush at the gates.

The United States has warned of security threats and the European Union admitted it was "impossible" to evacuate everyone at risk from the Taliban, who have vowed a softer

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## 5 Bangladeshis fly out of Afghanistan

PORIMOL PALMA

Five Bangladeshis were evacuated from Afghanistan yesterday -- three of them under UN and two under US arrangements -- in a development giving much relief since the Afghanistan fell to the Taliban on August 15.

Besides, Uzbekistan has agreed to issue visas for the Bangladeshis within an hour if they could manage flights to Uzbekistan, said officials from Bangladesh

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## Aedes hotspots in city identified

DGHS survey finds 19 areas with high presence of larvae

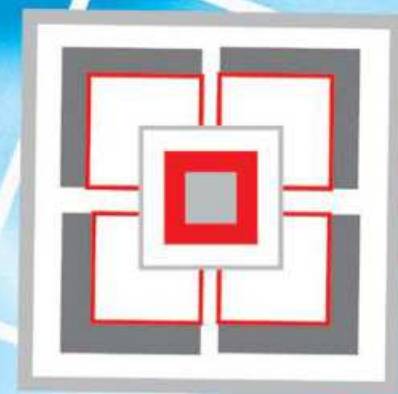
STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The health directorate has identified 19 areas in the capital as extremely vulnerable to dengue due to widespread presence of Aedes mosquito, the carrier of the virus.

Of the areas, 10 are in Dhaka North City Corporation (DNCC) and nine in Dhaka South City Corporation (DSCC).

The Directorate General of Health Services (DGHS) located those, conducting a survey from July 29 to August 7 in 100 areas of 98 wards of the two city corporations. The DGHS teams visited around 3,000 houses in the areas.

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