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P6

**In memory
of Azizur
Rahman Buli**



P7

**'Peace not
possible
without power'**



P11

**Australia
hard to stop,
says Marsh**



B1

**Food makers
in a pickle over
sugar price hike**

Sitrang slams the south



The Bay was rough all day yesterday as the country braced itself for Cyclone Sitrang, which started crossing the Bangladesh coast last night. The photo was taken in Chattogram city's Patenga area.

PHOTO: RAJIB RAIHAN

BLOWS TO AMAN First drought, now cyclone

MOHAMMAD AL-MASUM
MOLLA

Cyclone Sitrang, which hit the coastal districts early today, is likely to cause damage to the standing Aman paddy.

The Department of Agricultural Extension estimated the damage at around 11 percent of the crop in the country's 13 coastal districts.

Speaking to The Daily Star yesterday, Md Benojir Alam, DAE director general, said, "If the cyclone hits with 110-kilometer wind speeds, we fear some 11 percent of the Aman paddy will be damaged in those 13 districts. If the wind speed is low, the damage will always be less."

The DAE said Aman was cultivated on 56.57 lakh hectares of land across the country, of which around some 11 lakh hectares were in three coastal divisions

SEE PAGE 6 COL 5

DENGUE OUTBREAK Sitrang may prolong the sufferings

HELEMUL ALAM

The surge in dengue cases in the country could continue longer than expected because of the rain.

Experts had earlier expected that the number of patients afflicted with the mosquito-borne disease would reduce in the first week of November, but they are now predicting that the spike in cases will continue due to the wet weather.

There has been torrential rain in the coastal districts, as well as the capital, due to the effects of cyclone Sitrang since early yesterday.

In the 24 hours preceding yesterday morning, at least five dengue patients died and 903 others were admitted to different hospitals across the country, according to the Directorate General of Health Services (DGHS).

The total number of dengue cases this year stood at 31,966, and deaths 118.

SEE PAGE 6 COL 2

ROOPPUR NUCLEAR POWER PLANT Cost may rise for multiple factors

REJAUL KARIM BYRON, back from Rooppur

Rooppur Nuclear Power Plant Project may see a cost rise due to slow progress in power grid upgrade, possible changes in the loan repayment method amid the Russia-Ukraine war and the devaluation of the taka.

The Tk 113,092 crore plant has two units with a power generation capacity of 1,200 megawatts each. Of the amount, Tk 91,040 crore (\$11.38 billion) will be provided by Russia as loan, according to an agreement.

Project officials said the first unit will be ready for commercial operation in December 2023 and the second one in July 2024.

The plant, however, may face delay in going into commercial operation as the Infrastructure Development for Power Evacuation Facility, scheduled to be completed by December next year, has

seen only 27 percent financial progress and 45 percent physical progress in nearly five years till September this year.

Talking to reporters at the plant site recently, Shawkat Akbar, project director of Rooppur Nuclear Power Plant, said they would not be able to run the plant until the power grid upgrade is done under the infrastructure development facility.

"Once we use nuclear fuel in the plant, we can't stop production," he pointed out.

Work of the infrastructure development facility under the Power Grid Company of Bangladesh (PGCB) began in April 2018 at a cost of Tk 10,981 crore with Tk 8,219 crore funding from the Indian Line of Credit.

The project's aim is to ensure power evacuation from the nuclear power

SEE PAGE 7 COL 4

Rishi Sunak set to become new UK PM

**Warns Tory party faces
'existential threat', rules
out early general election**

AFP, London

Former finance minister Rishi Sunak yesterday won the battle for leadership of Britain's Conservative party and will become the country's first prime minister of colour.

Penny Mordaunt, the last rival left after Boris Johnson dramatically pulled out, failed to secure the necessary 100 nominations from her fellow MPs.

"Rishi Sunak is therefore elected as leader of the Conservative party," senior backbencher Graham Brady said, as Mordaunt pledged her "full support" for Sunak.

Triumph for 42-year-old Sunak came after Johnson's decision late Sunday to abandon his political comeback bid.

Just weeks after he lost out to Liz Truss to lead the ruling Tories, Sunak therefore pulled off a stunning reversal in fortunes.

SEE PAGE 2 COL 4

'A big win for us'

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Pacer Taskin Ahmed's career-best T20I figures helped Bangladesh to their maiden win in the Super 12 of the T20 World Cup as the Tigers registered a nine-run victory against the Netherlands at the Bellerive Oval on Monday.

On a gloomy day in Hobart, Taskin took four for 25, helping Bangladesh restrict the Netherlands to 135 all out in 20 overs after posting a competitive 144 for eight.

The win comes as a huge relief for the Tigers, who have been enduring a lean patch in the shortest format for a while, losing 14 of the 19 played since they exited the last year's edition without a single win in the Super 12s in the UAE.

Bangladesh have played in all of the seven previous editions of the T20 World

SEE PAGE 2 COL 5



Bangladesh pacer Taskin Ahmed pumps his fists as Najmul Hossain Shanto runs in to join him in celebration following the dismissal of a Netherlands batter during their Super 12 fixture of the T20 World Cup at the Bellerive Oval in Hobart yesterday. Taskin took four wickets for 25 runs as Bangladesh won the match by nine runs.

PHOTO: BCB

ONLINE GAMING SITE

Indian firm sells poker chips instead

Transfers crores of taka to India

MOHAMMAD JAMIL KHAN

An Indian company sold virtual poker chips in Bangladesh and took the lion's share of Tk 168 crore out of the country, a CTTC investigation found.

The company, Moonfrog Asia Pte Ltd, transferred the money into their account in India, the Counter Terrorism and Transnational Crime unit said.

The company had taken permission from the government to sell video games but is actually selling virtual poker chips, according to official documents.

Members of the CTTC said selling poker chips is illegal in the country as it is a form of gambling and a punishable offence in Bangladesh as per the Public Gambling Act-1967.

On October 20, the CTTC filed a case with Shahjahanpur Police Station against 10 named Bangladeshis and four to five unidentified people on charges of "operating online gambling".

According to the first information report, local and foreign fraudsters operate online gambling and conduct financial transactions through Mobile Financing Services (MFS).

"We have already arrested a suspect, Md Benzir Hossain, who is operating gambling with nine other absconding people through gaming sites, including Teen Patti Gold,"

SEE PAGE 2 COL 1

