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FARMING IN HAORS

Harvest or not, heartbreak almost certain

Farmers watch Boro rot, fields submerge, prices plummet

STAR REPORT

Torrential rainfall, rising pre-monsoon water levels, lightning strikes during thunderstorms, and submerged fields have left farmers in the haors struggling to save the Boro paddy, the lifeline for millions in the region.

"Half of my paddy is submerged in the field. And the paddy I managed to harvest is rotting at home due to a lack of sunlight," said Abdur Rahim of Nakdora village in Netrokona's Kalmakanda upazila.

"Now it feels like 'harvest or not?'. Both are equally distressing," he added.

➔ Labourers refuse to work due to flooding, fear of lightning strikes

➔ PM says affected farmers will receive assistance for 3 months

Jhontu Chandra Das, a farmer from Bhandabil Haor in Sunamganj's Shalla upazila, said even farm workers are no longer interested in Nayanbhaga, a traditional system where farmers offer half the paddy to anyone who harvests it during a disaster.

The situation has worsened as excessive rainfall continues. Five rivers have crossed the pre-monsoon danger level, flooding vast swathes of low-lying areas and submerging thousands of hectares of farmland.

Low-lying crop fields in all seven haor districts -- Sunamganj, Netrokona, Moulvibazar, Kishoreganj, Habiganj, Brahmanbaria, and Sylhet -- have been affected.

Contacted about government efforts to support haor farmers, Md Moniruzzaman, director of procurement at the Directorate General of Food, said a high-level meeting was held yesterday. Food Secretary Abu Taher Md Masud Rana chaired the meeting, attended by deputy commissioners of the haor districts and officials from the Directorate General of Food.

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Ripe and semi-ripe paddy in Medar Beel, a major haor wetland in Netrokona, lie completely submerged yesterday after four days of continuous rainfall and runoff from Meghalaya hills triggered widespread waterlogging across the district, leaving farmers in deep uncertainty.

PHOTO: ALI AZGAR PONIR

Govt pitches charter panel, opposition seeks time

Jamaat cites 'conceptual differences'

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The government yesterday proposed forming a special parliamentary committee to amend the constitution in line with the July charter.

The opposition, however, said they need time to decide on joining the committee as they seek reform of the constitution.

Law Minister Md Asaduzzaman said he and Home Minister Salahuddin Ahmed earlier proposed forming a special committee to bring amendments to the constitution.

"We have prepared a list of 12 members,

which includes BNP, Gono Adhikar Parishad, Ganosamhati Andolan, Bangladesh Jatiya Party (BJP), and independent MPs."

Highlighting the proportion of opposition representation in the parliament, the law minister said, "In percentage terms, the opposition holds 26 percent. From their side, we are asking for five names. We have prepared a list of 12 -- seven from BNP and five from other parties. If the opposition provides five names, we want to present the matter tomorrow [Thursday] and move forward with forming the special committee."

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74% measles patients did not get shots

Outbreak may ease by May-end

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

As much as 74 percent of the confirmed measles patients did not receive either of the two doses of the vaccine, while 14 percent received only one dose, government data show.

Only 12 percent of the patients were fully vaccinated, exposing serious gaps in vaccination coverage, according to data available until April 19.

Among suspected measles patients, 59 percent did not receive either dose of the vaccine, while 19 percent received only one dose.

Around 22 percent received both doses, which are administered to children at nine months and 15 months.

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Four-month-old Rafsan Gazi, who was brought to the capital's Infectious Diseases Hospital from Patuakhali after contracting measles, is undergoing treatment. Due to the increasing number of patients and a shortage of beds, he was given space on the floor of the hospital.

PHOTO: MEHEDI HASAN

4 arrested over 'links with TTP'

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Detective Branch of Dhaka Metropolitan Police has arrested four people for their alleged links with Tehrik-i-Taliban Pakistan (TTP), a militant outfit based in Pakistan.

A Dhaka court yesterday placed them on a four-day remand.

The arrestees are Imran Chowdhury, 29, his brother Mostakim Chowdhury, 25, Ripon Hossain Sheikh, 28, and Abu Bakar, 25.

According to DB sources, its Ramna division held them and recovered firearms, bullets, explosives, and a drone during drives conducted in various parts of Dhaka.

Speaking to The Daily Star yesterday, DB Chief and Additional Commissioner of Police Shafiqul Islam said the arrestees are members of an extremist outfit named "ARSA", which follows the TTP's ideology.

Arakan Rohingya Salvation Army (ARSA) is widely known as a Rohingya militant organisation.

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Star wins WAN-IFRA gold, silver awards

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Daily Star has won two prestigious honours -- a gold and a silver -- at the South Asian Digital Media Awards 2026, presented by WAN-IFRA (the World Association of Newspapers and News Publishers), cementing its position among the region's most forward-thinking news organisations.

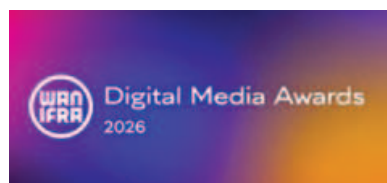
The gold went to the newspaper's investigative report, "Anatomy of BGB Shootings in Rampura", which was recognised in the "Best Use of Video" category for its powerful visual storytelling.

The silver, meanwhile, was awarded to Keeron, an EdTech and upskilling platform of The Daily Star, in the "Most Innovative Digital Product" category.

WAN-IFRA announced the results yesterday, marking a landmark moment for Bangladeshi digital journalism on the regional stage.

WAN-IFRA is the global organisation of the world's press, representing more than 3,000 media companies and 18,000 publications in over 120 countries. Its Digital Media Awards recognise publishers that lead in digital transformation and innovation,

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