



LITCHI OF DINAJPUR

Good yield likely, still worry there

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Dinajpur

The litchi farmers of Dinajpur and adjacent districts are worried about how to transport the sweet summer fruit to the rest of the country during this coronavirus pandemic-driven ongoing shutdown.

The loss would be unbearable to farmers, as they work with a short harvest season -- lasting between 40 days and 2 months -- as well as to litchi-lovers, who wait year-round for this brief time.

Though litchi is grown in 30 of out 64 districts in the country, Dinajpur litchis are renowned for being tastier and the northern district is the prime source of litchis for discerning buyers.

Growers are saying transporting the highly perishable litchi will prove challenging this season.

Litchi is usually transported across the country by trucks, buses, trains, and even by air. This year, however, farmers say all this will be difficult due to the shutdown-- despite the fact that goods-laden vehicles are out of purview of the public transport suspension.

Farmers will likely start to pluck the fruit in Dinajpur in the end of May -- following the Eid.

Talking with The Daily Star, orchard owners said they got a healthy flowering in litchi trees at the end of February and the weather has been favourable.

"We expect a good production this year," said Md Monsur Ali of Mashimpur village in Dinajpur Sadar.

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Shoppers throng the clothes market in the capital's Kellar Mor yesterday. Ignoring the social distancing guidelines amid the coronavirus outbreak, high volume of shoppers were on the streets outside the market doing their Eid shopping.

PHOTO: AMRAN HOSSAIN



China's envoy to Israel found dead at home

AFP, Herzliya

China's ambassador to Israel, Du Wei, was found dead at his residence on the outskirts of Tel Aviv yesterday, police said.

The 57-year-old envoy, who had arrived in Israel in mid-February, was found dead in his home in Herzliya, north of the city, spokesman Micky Rosenfeld told AFP.

Police units were at the scene "as part of the regular procedure... (but) there is no investigation into his death," Rosenfeld told AFP.

Du's wife and son were not with him in Israel.

The Chinese foreign ministry said it would only comment when it had "solid" information.

Du had previously served as ambassador to Ukraine, according to his biography on the embassy's website.

The Haaretz daily said initial reports said staff had found Du dead in his bed and that there were no signs of violence.

It quoted Israel's emergency medical service

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Disinfectant spraying can be harmful

Warns WHO

AFP, Geneva

Spraying disinfectant on the streets, as practised in some countries, does not eliminate the new coronavirus and even poses a health risk, the World Health Organization (WHO) warned on Saturday.

In a document on cleaning and disinfecting surfaces as part of the response to the virus, the WHO says spraying can be ineffective.

"Spraying or fumigation of outdoor spaces, such as streets or marketplaces, is... not recommended to kill the Covid-19 virus or other pathogens because disinfectant is inactivated by dirt and debris," explains the WHO.

"Even in the absence of organic matter, chemical spraying is unlikely to adequately cover all surfaces for the duration of the required contact

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FIRST YEAR OF BANGLADESH BANGABANDHU'S NATION-BUILDING CHALLENGES

21-member education committee formed

May 18, 1972

SHAMSUDDOZA SAJEN

EDUCATION COMMISSION FORMED
Following Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman's declaration to introduce people-oriented education in Bangladesh, the government has formed a 21-member education committee.

The committee will be headed by eminent educationist Dr Muhammad Qudrat-i-Khuda. The committee will collect opinions of different sections of the population and submit a detailed proposal to reform the existing education system.

CABINET MEETS
On the second day of the Cabinet meeting, the members unanimously agree on a detailed plan to check price hikes. The cabinet meeting was presided over by Bangabandhu. The Cabinet also

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A delegation of primary school teachers calls on Bangabandhu on May 15, 1972.



SUED UNDER DSA Court denies Kishore, Mushtaq bail

Virtual court says a regular court would decide on bail, remand COURT CORRESPONDENT

A virtual court in Dhaka yesterday rejected bail appeals of cartoonist Ahmed Kabir Kishore and writer Mushtaq Ahmed as a seven-day remand prayer was pending against them in a case filed under the Digital Security Act.

Metropolitan Magistrate Sadbir Yasir Ahsan Chowdhury of Virtual Court-2 passed the order after the lawyers of the arrestees submitted two separate bail petitions.

In the order, the court proclaimed as the remand prayer against the two filed by investigating officer of the case Sub-Inspector Jamshedul Alam on May 7 was still pending, the bail petitions and the remand prayer would be heard after the reopening of regular courts.

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NZ PM turned away from cafe under virus rules



AFP, Wellington

In New Zealand, no one is exempt from the strict coronavirus prevention measures -- not even Prime Minister Jacinda Ardern, who was denied entry to a cafe because of her own social distancing rules.

Ardern, her fiancé Clarke Gayford and a group of friends were turned away from a cafe in Wellington on Saturday because it had already reached its customer limit.

"I have to take responsibility for this, I didn't get organised and book anywhere," Gayford tweeted in response to another diner, who had spotted the couple being turned away.

As New Zealand eases out of its coronavirus lockdown, cafes were allowed to reopen on

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Rohingya 'drug peddler' killed in 'gunfight'

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Cox's Bazar

An alleged Rohingya drug peddler was killed in a "gunfight" with members of Border Guard Bangladesh in Teknaf upazila early yesterday.

The dead, M Saker, 22, used to live in Ukhiya's Balukhali Rohingya camp, said BGB officials.

Lt Col Foysal Hasan Khan, commanding officer of BGB Battalion-2, said a BGB team took position in Nayapara salt field area around 4:30am on information that some smugglers were entering Bangladesh from Myanmar with a big consignment of drugs.

They then noticed some people entering the area with sacks after crossing the Naf river, and the BGB team asked them to stop, he said.

Seeing the BGB members, the "smugglers" opened fire. The BGB members retaliated,

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A young boy in Shahbagh is pictured yesterday afternoon riding a bicycle, from which he sells face masks, gloves and other items that have become essential during the Covid-19 outbreak.

PHOTO: FIROZ AHMED

Obama slams Trump admin's virus response

Europe inches to normality as Spain records lowest death toll; Brazil passes Italy in confirmed cases

AGENCIES

Former US President Barack Obama criticised the Trump administration's response to the Covid-19 pandemic ravaging America as restrictions were eased in parts of Europe yesterday.

With the worldwide death toll topping 312,000 and the global economy reeling from the vast damage caused by lockdowns, the re-openings in some of the hardest-hit countries such as Italy provided much-needed relief.

But the number of Covid-19 fatalities soared past 15,000 in Brazil with 230,000 infections, making it the country with the fourth-highest number of cases, a grim reminder of the scale of the crisis.

In Germany, where authorities have started a gradual easing of restrictions, reigning Bundesliga champions Bayern Munich were set to play Union Berlin in the capital last night, a day after the league resumed play in empty, echoing stadiums.

Already attracting a record TV audience, the Bundesliga restart is under intense scrutiny as a test case, with top sports competitions trying to find ways to resume play without increasing the risk of spreading the virus, which has infected 4.6 million people globally.

The first big-purse golf tournament in months also wrapped up yesterday, with the normally overlooked Korean LPGA Championship winning new interest to

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