

Saifur sees no harm in hunting guest birds

UNB, Dhaka

Finance and Planning Minister M Saifur Rahman yesterday dubbed the migratory birds "cause of havoc" as "they invade wetlands, crowd out local species, gobble up crops and insects and then fly out of the country."

The finance minister launched his tirade against the foreign birds as environmental issues cropped up while he was addressing the opening ceremony of an international

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Microsoft faces \$2.4m fine a day by EU

Bbc ONLINE

The European Commission yesterday threatened to fine Microsoft up to 2m euros (\$2.4m) a day until it gives rivals more access to its operating systems.

Brussels said the software giant had failed to supply adequate information about its server programmes.

Microsoft has five weeks to provide improved documentation before the daily penalties are imposed.

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Prayer Timing		
December 23		
	Azan	Jamaat
Fajr	5-25	6-00
Juma	12-30	1-15
Asr	3-45	4-00
Maghrib	5-24	5-27
Esha	7-00	7-30

Source: Islamic Foundation

FERTILISER TRADERS' STRIKE

Finance, agri ministries asked to resolve crisis

REAZ AHMAD

Amidst growing fears of yield loss in the current boro season due to fertiliser traders' indefinite strike, the parliamentary standing committee on agriculture ministry yesterday asked both the ministries of finance and agriculture to resolve immediately the crisis stemming from non-release of outstanding subsidies to fertiliser importers.

A ruling BNP lawmaker at the committee meeting made written allegations of gross irregularities in releasing fertiliser subsidy. The

committee viewed it as a big problem since the supply stoppage of fertiliser came at a time when farmers apply about 80 percent of their yearly fertiliser doses for boro, potato and other winter crops.

Bangladesh Fertiliser Association (BFA), federating body of fertiliser traders, went on an indefinite supply stoppage of imported fertilisers -- murate of potash (MoP), triple super phosphate (TSP) and di-ammonium phosphate (DAP) -- from Monday, protesting the finance ministry's inertia in releasing long outstanding

Tk 60 crore subsidy. The BFA claims bills for another Tk 40 crore subsidy were lying with the agriculture ministry and deputy commissioners' offices.

Emerging from a meeting of the cabinet committee on government purchases, Finance Minister M Saifur Rahman however told reporters yesterday that if the subsidy bills were found authentic, his ministry would release the subsidy funds and there would be no problem for farmers in getting fertiliser in time.

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Doctor's 'negligence' costs a youth's life

TAREQ SALAHUDDIN

A doctor's alleged negligence has resulted in the death of a youth in the prime of his life.

Mahmudul Alam and Mahbuba Alam of Gulshan in the city alleged that their only son Shamsheer Mahmud Abi, 28, lost his life due to the indifference and laxness of a physician and the staff of a city clinic.

S M Abi, 28, who had no previous history of heart illness, suddenly felt chest pain in the morning of November 22. Within a few minutes he felt worse and became restless with profuse sweating. Advised by the family doctor, the parents decided to get an electro-

cardiogram (ECG) and took him to NHN Saleh Memorial (Diabetic) Centre at

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Shamsheer Mahmud Abi

Rivals kill 3 outlaws

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Kushtia

A new faction, Communist War, of Purbo Banglar Communist Party (PBCP) killed three cadres of rival PBCP-Janajuddha faction in Meherpur and Chuadanga yesterday.

The two Janajuddha cadres

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Suicide squads now on the run: Babar

UNB, Dhaka

State Minister for Home Affairs Lutfozzaman Babar yesterday said the militant suicide squads are on the run getting flushed out of their

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Wonder onion on the block

Experts hope import to stop in 4 years

RAFIQ HASAN, back from Bogra

A new variety of onion that can be grown round the year and yields three to four times the existing varieties is being cultivated in some areas of northwestern region of the country.

Production of the new big-size onion ranges from 10 to 13 tonnes per acre against 3-4 tonnes of the other varieties, growers said.

of only in winter as is the case with the existing Faridpuri and Taherpuri varieties.

Bangladesh produces around 1.5 lakh tonnes of onion a year against its requirement of about five lakh tonnes. The shortage is met through import, mainly from India,

costing around Tk 500 crore in foreign currency.

The new variety with much higher yield would help meet the shortage of onion in the country, NCDP officials hoped while talking to a group of journalists visiting the

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Bigger, better and high-yielding new variety of onions grown round the year is being cultivated in northern Bangladesh. The photo was taken from Bogra.

Bomb-making materials seized from Shibir man

STAR REPORT

Kushtia police yesterday seized some bomb-making materials from a madrasa student who claimed himself to be an activist of Islami Chhatra Shibir.

The seized materials include two capacitors, one radio system, three batteries, wires, an electronic circuit and 200 gram powder, which the police suspect as gunpowder.

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Govt to import 2 lakh tonnes sugar to check soaring price

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The government will import two lakh metric tons of sugar to check the price hike in the local market, commerce ministry adviser Barkat Ullah Bulu told BBC last night.

Bulu told the BBC Bangla Service that the ministry has

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NEW COURT OUTBURST

Saddam calls US liar

AFP, Baghdad

Ousted Iraqi dictator Saddam Hussein lashed out at the United States as his trial resumed Thursday, branding them "liars" for dismissing charges he was tortured by his American jailers.

"The White House are liars. They said Iraq had chemical weapons.

They lied again when they said I had not been beaten," he told the court trying him on charges of crimes against humanity.

Prosecution witnesses, testifying anonymously front behind a blue screen, told of torture under Saddam's regime, a day after the former dictator sought to turn the

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