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Good days for salt farmers

Profit first time in three years as govt discourages import

MOHAMMAD ALI ZINNAT, Cox's Bazar

Several thousand salt producers are happy seeing profits for the first time in three years after the government took up a policy discouraging import of salt.

Salt producers of Cox's Bazar, who meet most of the national demand, have comfortably recouped their production cost this season, in stark contrast to the three previous years when their earnings could barely cover half of the production costs.

In the last three seasons, salt producers faced financial hardship as they did not get a fair price. As the earning was lower than the production cost, many were discouraged to go on all-out production leaving several thousand acres unutilised.

The situation has now changed dramatically. Some 65,000 acres of land in Cox's Bazar and around 5,000 acres in the coastal upazila of Banskhal of Chittagong are being used for salt production.

A target of producing 18 lakh tonnes of salt from 61,000 acres of land in Cox's Bazar has been set this season, between

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Sea water is evaporated under the sun to produce salt at a salt field at Bharuakhali in Cox's Bazar. After three years, good salt prices have brought smiles to farmers in the district. Costing Tk 150 to produce a maund, it was selling for around Tk 380 last month. Right, farmers are busy in salt fields to produce the essential product. The photos were taken last month.

PHOTO: MOHAMMAD ALI ZINNAT



Housewife burnt in acid attack

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A man threw acid on his wife yesterday at Demra in Dhaka Metropolitan Police, accusing her of an extra-marital affair.

The victim, Jesmine Akhter, 26, a mother of

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Two Netrakona war criminals to die

Get death on 2 charges, jail until death on another 2

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The International Crimes Tribunal-1 yesterday sentenced Obaidul Haque Taher and Ataur Rahman Nani to death for committing crimes against humanity during the Liberation War.

The court found the raskars of Netrakona guilty in four out of six charges brought against them. It gave them death penalty in two charges; imprisonment until death in two others and acquitted them from two charges.

"...We are of the view that no punishment other than death will be equal to the said horrendous and barbaric crimes for which the accused persons have already found guilty beyond reasonable doubt in the charge no-3 and -5," said Justice Anwarul Haque, chairman of the tribunal.

"It may be mentioned here that the accused persons expressed no repentance for their such conduct at any stage, and we do not find any mitigating factors to award lesser sentence to the accused persons other than death," said the chairman.



Taher

Nani

The government would decide whether they would be executed by hanging or shooting, he said.

"We are satisfied with the verdict ... It would be good if they are executed as soon as possible," Mizanur Rahman, a survivor of Taher and Nani's crimes and a prosecution witness in the case, told The Daily Star over telephone.

Taher, 66, was the commander of Netrakona Razakar Bahini, an auxiliary force of the Pakistan army in 1971, while Nani, 62, was a member of that force.

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No possibility of cutting fuel prices

State minister tells Sangsad

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

State Minister for Power Nasrul Hamid yesterday hinted that there was no possibility of reducing fuel prices although oil prices were dropping on the international market as we are paying off loans of over Tk 32,000 crore with the money," he told parliament while making a statement.

"The government is not making any profit since the fuel prices fell on international market as we are paying off loans of over Tk 32,000 crore with the money," he told parliament while making a statement.

The government had to give huge fuel subsidies when oil prices were high on the world market, added Nasrul.

Bangladesh Petroleum Corporation, the country's oil importing agency, had to take loans from the

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Earth is made up of two planets

Reveals new study

INDEPENDENT.CO.UK

A "violent, head-on collision" created Earth as we know it, ground-breaking new research has revealed.

A planetary embryo called Theia, thought to be around the size of Mars or Earth, collided with Earth 4.5 billion years ago when our planet was just 100 million years old.

It was already known that Theia and Earth collided, but the new evidence from the UCLA-led scientific team shows it was less of a side swipe, as

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Businessman shot dead

Body found in Mirpur

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A businessman has been shot dead. Police recovered his body at Mirpur in the capital yesterday morning.

Relatives suspect Rafiqul Islam Junayed, owner of a residential hotel in Bishil area near Mirpur-1, was killed by extortionists. He was also a shareholder in a real estate company.

Faruqul Alam, officer-in-charge (investigation) of Darussalam Police Station, said the body was first noticed in front of Paikpara Government Staff Quarter Mosque by some locals who were going to say their Fazr prayers.

It was lying on the footpath and had a bullet wound on the left side of the chest, he said.

Talking to this correspondent who visited the area later at noon, Abu Musa, muezzin of the mosque,

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PRAYER TIMING
FEBRUARY 3

Fazr	Zohr	Asr	Maghrib	Esha
5-30	12-45	4-15	5-52	7-15

JAMAAT 6-05 1-15 4-30 5-56 7-45

SOURCE: ISLAMIC FOUNDATION



A woman traffic sergeant fines a law-breaker biker at Bangla Motor intersection in the city yesterday. Female traffic cops have been posted for the first time in major cities recently along with the male ones.

PHOTO: AMRAN HOSSAIN

ZIKA OUTBREAK WHO asks SE Asia for preventive action

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The World Health Organisation yesterday urged Bangladesh and its neighbouring countries to be on the watch for Zika virus disease and take preventive action.

"The Zika virus is of concern in the WHO South-East Asia Region as the Aedes aegyptii mosquito, responsible for its spread, is found in many areas and there is no evidence of immunity to the Zika virus in many populations of the Region," said Regional Director Poonam Khetrapal Singh of WHO South-East Asia in a statement.

The WHO South-East Region includes Bangladesh, Bhutan, North Korea, India, Indonesia, Maldives, Myanmar, Nepal, Sri Lanka, Thailand and East Timor.

In the past, sporadic Zika virus cases were

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US PRESIDENTIAL RACE Cruz bests Trump in Iowa caucus

REUTERS, Des Moines

US Senator Ted Cruz soundly defeated billionaire Donald Trump in Iowa's Republican nominating contest on Monday, upending the party's presidential race and creating a three-way competition with establishment candidate Senator Marco Rubio.

On the Democratic side, officials said former Secretary of State Hillary Clinton had won by a razor-thin margin against US Senator Bernie Sanders of Vermont, the closest in Iowa Democratic caucus history.

Cruz, a conservative lawmaker from Texas, won the first state Republican contest in the 2016 race with 28 percent of the vote compared with 24 percent for businessman Trump. Rubio, a US senator from Florida, came in third with 23 percent, making a stronger-than-expected finish.

With Democrat Clinton prevailing by only four delegates, according to party figures, Sanders, a self-described democratic socialist, declared the result a "virtual tie."

"Hillary Clinton has won the Iowa Caucus," Matt Paul, the Iowa state director for Clinton said in a statement released in the early hours of yesterday morning.

Cruz's win and Rubio's strong showing could dent the momentum for Trump, whose candidacy has alarmed the Republican establishment and been marked by controversies ranging from his calls to ban Muslims temporarily from entering the United States to promising to build a wall on the US-Mexican border.

RELATED STORY ON PAGE 8



Donald Trump

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