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WITH TODAY'S ISSUE

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Elite troops battle IS as UN says jihadists execute scores

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SUCCESS IN LAST 20 YEARS

Spice output jumps 6-fold

Spice Research Centre develops 31 high-yielding varieties of 14 spices

MOHAMMAD AL-MASUM MOLLA

What is a common element in the aromatic wedding biriyani, The East India Company in the 17th century and one specialised research lab in Bogra? It is a quest for good spices to make everyday ordinary food extraordinary.

The lab's research in spice has made extraordinary progress.

A six times increase in spice production

in the last 20 years has made it possible to cut down the country's import of the everyday cooking ingredient.

Work of the Spice Research Centre (SRC) has been the key to this success, according to scientists, researchers and planners. The centre has been working to develop high-yielding varieties of spices and is also continuing extension works among spice growers with new seeds and technologies.

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A female farmer planting garlic in a field in Bogra's Chatmohar upazila, and turmeric and ginger fields inside the Spice Research Centre in the district, above. Spice production in Bangladesh increased six-fold in the last 20 years, thanks to the centre which developed high-yielding varieties of spices. The photos were taken recently.

PHOTO: AHMED HUMAYUN KABIR TOPU/STAR

RISE IN PRODUCTION OF SPICES

Year	Production (lakh tonnes)	Annual Demand (lakh tonnes)
1995-96	3.08	32
2000-01	3.92	
2014-15	18	

(Imports meet rest of the demand)



Patel fireworks drive Kings

SPORTS REPORTER

A blistering cameo from Samit Patel took Rajshahi Kings to a six-wicket victory over Dhaka Dynamites and in the process gave Darren Sammy's team their first win of the Bangladesh Premier League in the evening match at the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium in Mirpur yesterday.

With 32 required off the last five overs, Sabbir Rahman relieved the little pressure there was by opening the face of the bat to

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Daud Merchant now in Mumbai

Not clear how the dreaded criminal was taken to India

STAR REPORT

Abdur Rauf Daud Merchant, an Indian fugitive criminal, was sent to jail yesterday by a Mumbai court six days after he was released from a Bangladesh prison.



Convicted of killing Indian music baron Gulshan Kumar, the suspected associate of mafia boss Dawood Ibrahim was jailed in Bangladesh for illegal entry in 2009.

Quoting top police officials, Indian media reported yesterday that Daud Merchant was deported to India on Wednesday. Following his release from Dhaka Central Jail, he was taken to Meghalaya by the Bangladeshi authorities and handed over to the Border Security Force (BSF), it said.

Contacted, Home Minister Asaduzzaman Khan Kamal, however, told The Daily Star, "He [Daud] went back to his country through the Indian High Commission in Bangladesh three to four days ago following his release from

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Strengthen democracy, governance

Editors call for unity among journalists

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Editors and media rights advocates from home and abroad yesterday called for stronger collaboration and solidarity among journalists to promote democracy, good governance and freedom of speech.

Journalists across the globe are facing new kinds of challenges from authoritarian governments, corporations and religious fanatics, which hamper the growth of core values of democracy and secularism, they noted at a discussion.

Bangla daily Prothom Alo

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Team Trump already filled with DC insiders

CNN ONLINE

To shape his administration, President-elect Donald Trump is drawing squarely from the "swamp" he has pledged to drain.

Trump's transition team is staffed with long-time Washington experts and lobbyists from K Street, think tanks and political offices.

It's a far cry from Trump's campaign, which ended only Tuesday night, and message that he would "drain the swamp" in Washington.

He has advocated congressional term limits and proposed a "five-point plan for ethics reform" that included strengthening restrictions on lobbying, including five-year bans for members and staff of the executive branch and Congress from lobbying, and expanding the definition of lobbyist to prevent more revolving door activity.

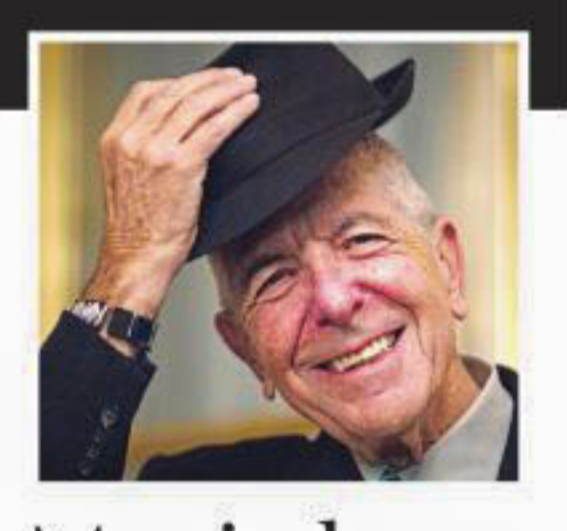


But he has so far fully embraced lobbyists within his transition, and all signs point to a heavy influence from longtime Washington Republican circles on his transition. And with Trump mostly skipping detailed policy proposals during his campaign, they can have a powerful impact on his agenda.

Leaders in his transition include former Rep Mike Rogers, former Reagan Attorney General and Heritage Foundation fellow Edwin Meese, former President of Heritage Edwin Feulner, former Bush administration official and lobbyist Christine Ciccone, former Dick Cheney adviser Ado Machida, former Senate Budget Committee staffer Eric Ueland and former Sen. Jeff Sessions' chief of staff Rick Dearborn.

The effort is chaired by New Jersey Gov Chris Christie and Trump counts former

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ANTI-TRUMP PROTESTS -- PAGE 8



Music loses a visionary

Leonard Cohen (1934-2016)

AGENCIES

If it be your will// That I speak no more// And my voice be still// As it was before// I will speak no more...

And Leonard Cohen, rock music's man of letters whose songs fused religious imagery with themes of redemption and sexual desire, earning him critical and popular acclaim, will be

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Jayeda Begum breaks down in tears in her son's tea stall in Brahmanbaria's Nasirnagar yesterday. She has been running the stall since police picked up her son Shipon after the attack on the local Hindus on October 30. Inset, local youths hide in a paddy field in nearby Nurpur area fearing arrest.

PHOTO: RASHED SHUMON



NASIRNAGAR HATE ATTACK

Blanket arrests net innocents, not kingpins

M ABUL KALAM AZAD and RASHIDUL HASAN from Brahmanbaria

Around 7:30pm on Monday, police went to Nasirnagar town's Livestock Hospital intersection and asked 26-year-old Shipon Mia to shut down his tea stall within 10 minutes.

He made a slight delay in complying with the order. Police slapped him, took him to the police station and made him an accused in the case over the October 30 attacks on Hindu houses and temples.

The night before, another team of police raided Datmondol village, some 5km off the town, and picked up a mentally challenged youth named Polash around 2:00am. He was asleep when police stormed his house.

This youth too was named as an accused in the case.

Shipon and Polash are among the innocents held in the blanket drives by police. The Daily Star has come to know that at least 15 innocent people allegedly become victim of the raids in three areas -- Nurpur, Paschimpara and Datmondol -- in the last two days.

Locals alleged that majority of the 78 people arrested so far over the October 30 incidents were not involved in the attacks or lootings. The arrestees include some real culprits but they are the petty ones.

Police are yet to arrest any of the instigators or masterminds even 12 days after a hundred Hindu houses and 17 temples were damaged or looted by unruly mobs, including zealots and goons.

Police didn't even arrest three local Awami League leaders -- MA Hashed, Faruk Mia and Suruj Ali -- who were expelled from the party for their alleged involvement in the attacks. The three moved freely in their areas before

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