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Crocodile skin brings forex

Country's first crocodile farm in Mymensingh targets export of 1,000 skins a year

AMINUL ISLAM, Mymensingh

Crocodile skin has emerged as a potential export item due to its high demand in some Asian and European countries.

The country's first crocodile farm, Reptiles Farm Ltd, exported skins of 200 crocodiles to Japan and earned around \$1,06,000 in December last year.

Established in Hatiber village in Mymensingh's Bhaluka upazila, the farm has been exporting crocodile skins mainly to Japan for the last three years.

It made its maiden export to the East Asian country in 2014 when it shipped 430 crocodile skins for around \$2,00,000, farm manager Abu Syem Muhammad Arif told The Daily Star.

In 2015, the farm exported 400 skins for around \$1,65,000 to Japan, he said.

Farm officials said they have a target to export skins of 1,000 crocodiles a year.

The farm started rearing crocodiles commercially in 2004. Initially, it imported 75 saltwater crocodiles, including 15 males, from Malaysia on December 23, 2004, at a cost of Tk 1.25 crore.

Currently, there are some 2,000 crocodiles of different age and size. Of them, 100 crocodiles are at the breeding stage in 40 specially-designed breeding ponds of the farm which covers 13.6 acres of land. The farm also has 10 hatcheries, 600 individual pans and a skin store house, said the farm manager.

There are around 40 permanent and some 30 daily basis employees, he said, adding that the production and skin processing are done at the farm.

A crocodile reaches maturity for skins in three years, while eight to 10 years are needed for their breeding, Abu Syem said.

"There is a great demand for skins in some Asian and European countries but we are exporting those only to Japan," he said, adding that the price of a skin depends on its size and quality.

Crocodile leather is used for making luxury handbags, wallets, belts and boots, Abu Syem said.

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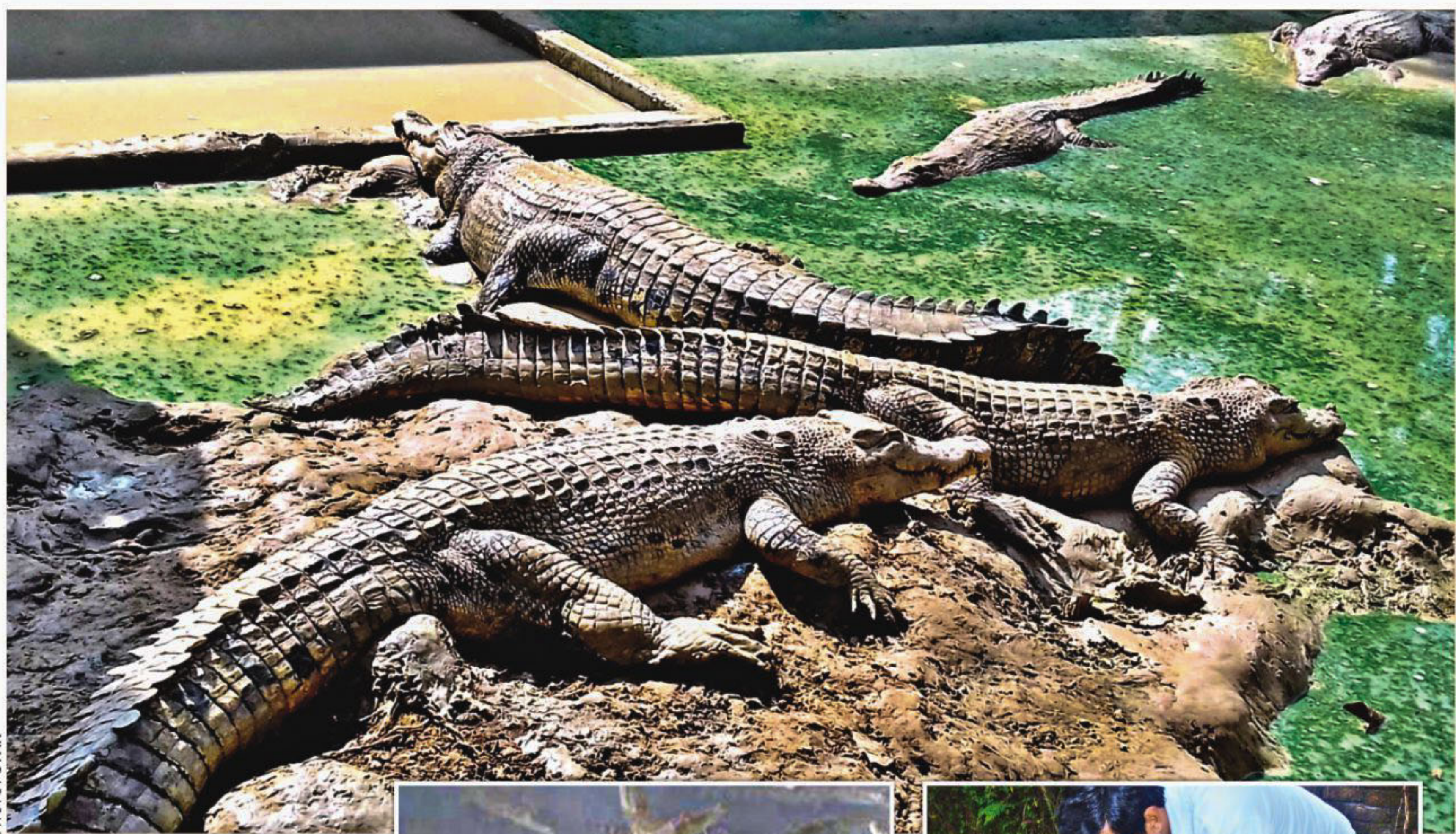


PHOTO: STAR

A few sunning crocodiles at Reptiles Farm Ltd in Mymensingh's Bhaluka upazila. Currently, there are about 2,000 crocodiles at the farm which exports crocodile skin to Japan. Bottom, baby crocs in a pond. Manager Abu Syem Muhammad Arif collects crocodile eggs for hatching. The photos were taken last month.



Get rid of communal content in textbooks

Govt urged at discussion

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The next generations will grow up on the footmark of Hefazat-e-Islami, a Qawmi madrassa-based organisation, if the communal things "inserted" in school textbooks were not removed.

The speakers of a discussion also demanded that the government should immediately discard all the communal elements from the textbooks.

"The poison of communalism is infusing into the children gradually. On one hand, the government says it will root out fundamentalism from the country; on the other, it brings changes to the textbooks following Hefazat's demands. This will not work out," said Rasheda K Choudhury, former adviser to a caretaker government.

"No-one will be able to stop several other incidents like Holey Artisan if communalisation of the textbooks continues," she observed.

She was addressing the discussion following launch of a report on "Communalisation of Textbooks" investigated and published by the Citizens' National Inquiry Commission at the capital's WVA Auditorium.

Ekattorer Ghatak Dalal

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Man crosses Atlantic on paddle board



CNN ONLINE

South African watersport pro Chris Bertish has just nailed a world first: he's crossed the Atlantic solo, unassisted and unsupported, on a stand-up paddle board.

The big-wave surfer and Guinness World Record holder crossed 4,500 nautical miles, setting off from Agadir, Morocco, on December 6 and arriving at English Harbour, Antigua, on the morning of March 9, local time.

Bertish's stand-up paddleboard (SUP) may not be an off-the shelf job -- it's a custom-made, 1,360-pound, 20-foot-long vessel fitted with a tiny cabin

SEE PAGE 11 COL 3

Myanmar forces committed 'crimes against humanity'

Says UN envoy

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The persecution of Rohingyas by Myanmar forces amounts to "definite crimes against humanity", Yanghee Lee, UN special rapporteur for human rights in Myanmar, has said.

"The situation in Myanmar is far worse than I had anticipated. I knew it was bad, but not this bad. My assessment is ... I would say crimes against humanity. Definite crimes against humanity," she was quoted as saying in a BBC report published yesterday.

Lee talked to the BBC after visiting Rohingya refugees who recently entered Bangladesh from Myanmar's Rakhine state

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New policy to cut tobacco farming

It aims at inspiring farmers to go for other crops, strengthening anti-tobacco cell

PORIMOL PALMA

As part of its efforts to bring tobacco consumption to zero by 2040, the government has drafted a policy to inspire tobacco farmers to go for alternatives crops.

The National Tobacco Control Cell (NTCC) under the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare recently drafted the "Health Improvement Surcharge Management Policy, 2016", which will be placed before the cabinet for approval this month.

The policy's objective is to plan and take up tobacco-control programmes and prevent all sorts of non-communicable diseases relating to tobacco, including cancer, tuberculosis and lung diseases.

Every year, more than 92,100 people in Bangladesh are killed by tobacco-caused diseases, while over 1.64 lakh children and 2.55 crore adults continue to use tobacco each day, according to Tobacco Atlas, a database of World Lung Foundation.

The World Health Organization says Bangladesh is a high-risk country that can see substantial deaths throughout the 21st century due to tobacco consumption.

Muhammad Ruhul Quddus, coordinator of NTCC, said the cell may work with Department of Agriculture Extension (DAE) and Bangladesh Bank on ways to provide incentives to the farmers to check tobacco cultivation.

SEE PAGE 11 COL 5

Court fires S Korean president

Two killed as pro-Park protesters clash with police

AFP, Seoul

South Korean President Park Geun-Hye was fired yesterday as a court upheld her impeachment over a corruption scandal that has paralysed the nation at a time of mounting tensions in East Asia.

The unanimous decision brought to a climax months of political turmoil that saw millions of people take to the streets in weekly protests, and triggers a new presidential election to be held within 60 days.

That will offer South Korea a chance to draw a line under the scandal, which has occupied its attention for months, even as the North has unleashed new missile launches and threats that have raised international alarm.



Park Geun-Hye

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More states seek to halt Trump's new travel ban

AGENCIES

Several states said on Thursday they would move forward with legal challenges to a revised executive order signed by President Donald Trump this week that temporarily bars the admission of refugees and some travelers from a group of Muslim-majority countries.

The new travel order, which is set to take effect on March 16, replaced a more sweeping ban issued on Jan 27 that caused chaos and protests at airports.

The first order was hit by more than two dozen lawsuits, including a challenge brought by Washington state and joined by Minnesota.

In response to Washington's lawsuit, US District Judge James Robart in Seattle ordered an emergency halt to the policy last month. That ruling was upheld by an appeals court in San Francisco.

Washington state Attorney General Robert Ferguson said on Thursday he planned to ask Robart to confirm that his ruling would also apply to Trump's revised order, which would halt it from being implemented.

Ferguson told a news conference the new order harmed a "smaller group" of individuals but that would not affect the state's ability to challenge it in court.

He said the burden was on the Trump administration to show that the court ruling from last month did not apply to its new policy.

A US Department of Justice spokeswoman declined to

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PHOTO: STAR

Workers loading watermelons at Dholaikhal Bazar in Patuakhali's Kalapara upazila yesterday. Some 70 farmers grew the fruit on around 100 acres of land in the upazila. There has been a good yield this season. Watermelons were sold for Tk50 to Tk100 each at the wholesale market.

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PRAYER TIMING MARCH 11
Fazr Juma Asr Maghrib Esha
AZAN 5-15 12-30 4-30 6-05 7-30
JAMAAT 5-50 1-15 4-45 6-10 8-00
SOURCE: ISLAMIC FOUNDATION