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Date palm shows hope

First Middle Eastern date palms planted in Barisal in hope of new agricultural industry

SUSHANTA GHOSH with ANDREW EAGLE

Cultivated in the Bengal region since time immemorial, the native sugar date palm, locally called 'khejurer gachhi', is well-appreciated, primarily for its syrup. Now, for the first time in southern Bangladesh government horticulturalists are trialling a number of Middle Eastern date palm varieties, of the distinct species renowned for its well-known fruit. If the trial plantation proves successful, it is hoped that date production can be a new agricultural industry for the region.

Dates have been a staple food in the Middle East and Indus Valley for many thousands of years. The fruit of the date palm, a tree which may originally be native to modern-day Iraq, have featured on the plates of diners since ancient times, admired for their sweetness in Ancient Egypt and Mesopotamia. Nowadays the tree is widely cultivated throughout the Middle East, North Africa, and in tropical and subtropical regions worldwide.

The horticulture centre in Barisal's Babuganj upazila is attempting to add southern Bangladesh to the world's date-producing regions. "We have planted 73 date palms of eleven varieties thus far, in what is a first for the country's south," says the centre's deputy director Swapon Kumar Halder. "If we succeed in producing quality dates, we plan to encourage a local industry. Potentially, thousands of farmers will benefit."

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Saudi date palms being planted at the horticulture centre in Barisal's Babuganj upazila on trial basis. Some 73 date palms of eleven varieties have been planted at the centre recently.

PHOTO:
STAR

Leaving a legacy of success

Pranab to quit as Indian president Monday

PALLAB BHATTACHARYA,
New Delhi

As Pranab Mukherjee, the first Bengali president of India, readies to step down on Monday after his five-year tenure, he leaves behind the legacy of a copybook head of state who strived hard to bring the presidential palace closer to the public.

After he was elected in July 2012, he had told journalists the constitution simply does not provide for an "active" or "passive" or "activist president".

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3 killed as clashes rage over Al-Aqsa

Dozens wounded after Israel bars worshippers aged under 50 from entering the holy site for Friday prayer

AFP, Jerusalem

Three Palestinians were killed and dozens wounded yesterday as clashes erupted between protesters and Israeli forces over new security measures at an ultra-sensitive Jerusalem holy site where police restricted access for Muslim prayers.

One Palestinian was shot dead by Israeli gunfire in the A-Tur neighbourhood of east Jerusalem, according to the Palestinian health ministry.

A second Palestinian was killed by gunfire in east Jerusalem's Ras al-Amud neighbourhood, while a third was shot dead in Abu Dis in the occupied West Bank, the ministry said, without providing details on the circumstances.

Israel's army confirmed it was involved in clashes in Abu Dis.

The unrest came after Israeli ministers decided not to order the removal of metal detectors erected at entrances to the Haram al-Sharif compound, known to Jews as the Temple Mount, following an attack nearby a week ago that killed two policemen. The compound contains the revered Al-Aqsa mosque.

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In anticipation of protests, Israeli police yesterday barred men under 50 from entering Jerusalem's Old City for prayers, while all women were allowed in.

Police said later in the day that discretion could be applied in the use of the metal detectors instead of forcing everyone to go through them.

But Palestinian and religious leaders were still calling on worshippers not to enter until they were removed.

Hundreds held midday prayers near the gates of the Old City in protest. According to police, dozens of people entered the compound.

Crowds gathered outside Jerusalem's Old City found shops closed and streets around Damascus Gate -- the entrance most heavily used by Palestinians -- blocked.

A group of several hundred people, including Muslim leaders, marched towards the Lions Gate entrance to the mosque compound, but police informed them that only men aged 50 or over would be allowed in.

Police later fired stun grenades and tear

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INCLUSIVE POLLS
UK to engage with all parties of Bangladesh
Sees no improvement in HR situation

UNB, Dhaka

The UK has said it will "engage constructively" with all Bangladeshi political parties and their international partners to strengthen democratic accountability and capacity to hold participatory elections.

The British Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) stated this in the Bangladesh section of its Human Rights and Democracy Report on the situation in 2016.

The formation of the Election Commission provides a vital opportunity to build confidence that the political process can be free and fair, said the report published on Thursday.

"There was no improvement in the overall human rights situation in Bangladesh during 2016.

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Robo-footballers go for world champs



AFP, Sydney

A roar rings out as a small, white robot wins a tussle for the ball and kicks it into the goal. Australia's robo-teers yesterday put their bipedal humanoids through their paces ahead of the world championships in Japan next week with one task in mind -- to claim the RoboCup trophy for a record sixth time.

The contest is celebrating its 20th anniversary this year, with the two key contenders from Australia and Germany, who have both won five championships each.

An even bigger goal looms ahead in 2050 with roboticists hoping to advance their development of artificial intelligence to the point where they can take on and beat the human World Cup champions.

"Every team has exactly the same robot, and it's all about who can come up with the best software to

SEE PAGE 12 COL 1

'HUMAN TRAFFICKING'
Malaysia rescues 14
Bangladeshis

THE STAR, Malaysia

Fourteen Bangladeshi nationals were rescued in Ampang, Malaysia, on Thursday during a raid which crippled a human trafficking syndicate.

Immigration Director General Datuk Seri Mustafar Ali said following a tip-off, a Special Operations Intelligence Division team raided a house in the area at 5:00am.

He said the 14 were believed to have been

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PRAYER TIMING JULY 22

Fazr Zohr Asr Maghrib Esha

AZAN 4-15 12-45 5-00 6-54 8-15

JAMAT 4-50 1-15 5-15 6-58 8-45

SOURCE: ISLAMIC FOUNDATION



White House
press secy
Spicer quits
Sarah Huckabee to
take over the post

AFP, Washington

White House press secretary Sean Spicer and a member of President Donald Trump's legal team resigned yesterday in a one-two punch to a reeling administration, as pressure mounts from a broadening investigation into the Trump campaign's ties to Russia.

Spicer resigned in opposition to Trump's naming of Anthony Scaramucci, a Wall Street financier and longtime supporter of the

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Palestinians react to teargas that was shot by Israeli forces after Friday prayer on a street outside Jerusalem's Old city. Three Palestinians were killed and dozens wounded as clashes erupted between protesters and Israeli forces over new security measures at the holy Jerusalem site. Inset, Israeli forces detain a Palestinian man.

PHOTO: AFP, REUTERS

BSF picks up 5 Bangladeshis in 3 days

OUR CORRESPONDENT,
Dinajpur

Another Bangladeshi was picked up by Indian Border Security Force from Porsha border in Naogaon early yesterday.

The victim, Shahidul Islam, 14, is the son of Jaher Ali of Katapur village under Porsha upazila.

With Shahidul, five Bangladeshis were picked up from border areas of Porsha and Sapahar upazilas of Naogaon in the last three days.

The boy's family members said Shahidul came out of his house, which is adjacent to border area, around 4:00am, responding to the call of nature. But members of Kaderipara BSF camp under 60 BSF Battalion in Malda detained Shahidul and took him to their camp, they added.

Contacted, Subedar Rahmatullah of Nitpur Border Guard Bangladesh camp confirmed the incident, saying that the BGB

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"প্রতিদিন ডিম খান সুস্থ থাকুন"



ডিম সংক্রান্ত বিষয়ে বিভাস্তি দূরীকরণে প্রাণিসম্পদ অধিদলের গণবিজ্ঞপ্তি

ডিম একটি উৎকৃষ্ট মানের খাবার যা সহজলভ্য পুষ্টিমানে ভরপুর এবং দামে সাশ্রয়ী। ডিম দেশের আপামর জনসাধারণের খাদ্য তালিকায় অপরিস্রার্থকীয় এবং অত্যাবশ্যকীয় অংশ। এর রয়েছে বহুমূলী গুণাগুণ যেমন- ডিম হৃদয়ের সংস্থাবনা কমায়, চোখ ও লিভার ভাল রাখে, ওজন কমায়, হজম ক্ষমতা বাড়ায়, শরীর সুস্থ রাখে এবং শরীরের হাত ও দাঁত মজবুত করে। ইদানিং লক্ষ্য করা যাচ্ছে যে বাজারে আসল ডিম এবং নকল ডিম সংক্রান্ত বিষয়ে বিভিন্ন ধরনের অপপ্রচার চালানো হচ্ছে, যার কারণে জনমনে বিভাস্তি সৃষ্টি হচ্ছে। ফলশ্রুতিতে ডিম বাজারজাতকরণে নেতৃত্বাদিক প্রভাব লক্ষ্য করা যাচ্ছে। এসব অপপ্রচারের ফলে মানুষের মনে পুষ্টির অন্যতম উৎস ডিম সম্পর্কে ভাস্ত ধারণা তৈরী হচ্ছে এবং জনসাধারণের উপর নেতৃত্বাদিক প্রভাব পড়ছে। অন্যদিকে দেশের পোলিট্রি ও ডিম বিপণনে জড়িত ব্যবসায়ী ক্ষতির সম্মুখীন হচ্ছে যা কোন মতেই কাম নয়। দেশে স্বাস্থ্যসম্মত উপায়ে ডিমের উৎপাদন এবং বাজারজাতকরণ সম্পর্কে প্রাণিসম্পদ অধিদলের এবং মৎস্য ও প্রাণিসম্পদ মন্ত্রণালয় সক্রিয় রয়েছে জনসাধারণের অবগতির জন্য আরো জানাচ্ছে যে, যদি কোন বিক্রির নকল ডিম সম্পর্কিত অপপ্রচারে জড়িত থাকার প্রমাণ পাওয়া যায় তাহলে নিরাপদ খাদ্য আইন ২০১৩ ধারা ৫৮ এর তফসিল ক্রমিক নং ১ এ অনুযায়ী প্রয়োজনীয়।

স্বাস্থ্যসম্মত উপায়ে উৎপাদিত সহজলভ্য ডিম নিশ্চিতে খাওয়া এবং নির্ভয়ে এর বহুমূলী ব্যবহার করার জন্য সর্বসাধারণকে অনুরোধ করা হচ্ছে।



প্রাচারেং
প্রাণিসম্পদ অধিদল, মৎস্য ও প্রাণিসম্পদ মন্ত্রণালয়



জড়ি-১৪৭