

Captive breeding: Zoo ready for 'rehabilitation'

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

With an excellent record of 'captive breeding,' the National Zoo at Mirpur is now ready for 'rehabilitation in the wild' many animals including some endangered species, Deputy Curator of the zoo Dr Mohammad Shahidullah has said.

The zoo authorities could now hand over four pairs of Indian tigers (similar to Royal Bengal Tiger), four pairs of Indian lions, 150 night herons, 37 pythons and up to 150 spotted deer for rehabilitation, he told this correspondent.

But other officials of the zoo said that despite an agreement with the Ministry of Environment and Forest last year, the project to rehabilitate zoo animals in the wild is yet to be implemented.

The ministries of Forest and Environment and Fisheries and Livestock at a meeting last year decided that the forest ministry would implement the rehabilitation project. But nothing has been done so far.

Wild life experts however say that animals bred in captivity do not always get acclimatised to the changed environment in forest unless they are carefully prepared for this. Such programmes are yet to start in the country.

In the present situation, the government should allow private sector enthusiasts to set up animal ranches, one expert suggested.

Boat falls into sea Bangladeshi killed in Singapore

AFP, Singapore

Two maintenance workers, one from Malaysia and the other from Bangladesh were killed when the lifeboat they were working on fell into the sea from a tanker off the Singapore coast, a report said yesterday.

Two Filipino seamen who were also in the lifeboat when a safety chain snapped Thursday evening, suffered minor injuries, the Straits Times said.

Police, who are investigating the accident, said the boat plunged into the sea from a Singapore-registered chemical tanker, the Excelsior, and flipped over.

All four men were pulled from the water by a passing ship and handed over to the crew of a police vessel.

The dead men were part of a maintenance team employed to work on the tanker before its scheduled departure on Thursday night.

Police foil dacoity bid at Uttara

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Police foiled a dacoity bid at a house at Sector-3 in the city's Uttara area yesterday afternoon.

A gang of three armed dacoits reached in front of the house of Gausul Karim Kochi in a yellow taxi cab and tried to enter the house at about 3:00 pm yesterday.

On receiving information, Uttara police rushed to the spot and chased the gang. The gang members managed to flee the scene, leaving the taxicab.

Police seized the taxicab (Dhaka Metro-Kha-11-0789) and arrested its driver Alauddin.

A case was filed with Uttara police station in this regard.

Engr electrocuted in Gazipur

UNB, Gazipur

An engineer was electrocuted at village Telipara in sadar upazila yesterday.

Family sources said Shahjahan Mia, Assistant Engineer of Sreepur Upazila Public Health and Engineering Department, came in contact with a live electric wire at his house while clearing a branch of mango tree from boundary wall.

He died on way to hospital.



Pedestrians are forced to use the main road at Farmgate as trucks are illegally parked on the footpath.

KMP fails to recover arms from political cadres & miscreants

QUAZI AMANULLAH, Khulna

Police have failed to recover any illegal arms from the possession of armed cadres of outlawed organisations and different political parties arrested from different places of the city and the district, sources in the KMP said.

Even the arms stolen or looted by miscreants could not be re-covered. The unrecovered illegal arms would be a threat to life and property of different political leaders during upcoming general elections, said some probable candidates who are now maintaining private security guards.

Top terrorist Ershad Shikhar has been given death penalty in seven murder cases. But neither KMP nor district police have so far been able to recover the huge quantity of arms and ammunition possessed by him. Only two of his licenced arms were recovered from his palatial house Swamakamol in December, 1999. These two arms were shown seized and their licences cancelled.

'Divisional leader' of outlawed PBGP Mahmud Hasan Shimul was arrested from Jessore in the early last year. But no arms could be recovered from his possession so

far.

According to intelligence sources, Shimul has a dozen of arms including three sophisticated revolvers and one AK-47. His party has more than 100 arms, the sources said.

Shimul and Ershad Shikhar were

Khulna lawyers continue court boycott

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Khulna

Ongoing strike by 238 lawyers of the Khulna Bar Association has completely paralysed the Special Court trying cases under the Woman and Child Repression Act.

Lawyers who continued their boycott of the court for the 17th day yesterday remained firm in their demand for the removal of Judge Aminul Islam for his alleged corrupt practices.

In a memorandum to the chief justice, the lawyers had appealed for immediate removal of Judge Aminul Islam on charges of reckless corrupt

partners in arms trade. They used to rent some of these arms for killing mission, the sources informed.

Another terrorist 'Kana Babu' was arrested from Khalishpur two months ago. But police could not recover any arms from him. 'Kana Babu' was the custodian of Shimul's armoury located at Jessore town.

Bablu Molla, one of the alleged killers of Bagerhat AL leader Kalidas Boral was arrested last month. But his arms are yet to be recovered. Molla supplied arms to all his accomplices who were involved in the murder of Kalidas Boral.

Intelligence sources said Bablu Molla has over 100 arms of different kinds in his possession. He has deposited those arms to several political godfathers and some terrorists of the Sundarbans after he became an accused in Kalidas Boral murder case, they said.

Arms looted from Rupsa Sea Foods Ltd, Shiromoni cable factory, Akij Jute Mills and two banks of Bagerhat district and stolen from Malkhana of KMP during last four years are also yet to be recovered.

Arms used to commit murders by professional killers and terrorists still remain unrecovered, the sources further said.

A S M NURUNNABI

The Dhaka city is already under seriously adverse environmental impacts due to industrial pollution, air pollution, noise pollution etc. One of the contributors of this deadly environmental pollution is brickfields that are posing a growing threat of further deterioration in this regard.

Brickfields are already in existence in certain city areas and its outskirts. We find them on both sides of the river Buriganga, particularly near Pagla, at Mirpur, Mohammadpur and other vast areas extending beyond Gabtali. The fields from which earth is collected by digging become less suitable for agriculture.

Particularly, on the other side of the Buriganga river where land is mostly low-lying, more digging will result in further depression of the land level.

In view of the growing number of brickfields on the river banks which resort to such practices, the resulting depression of land level will make it difficult to adopt future plans for expansion of the Dhaka city towards the other side of the

DOWN TO EARTH

Brick kilns' destructive role

Buriganga river.

The most damaging aspect of pollution results from the kilns operated by the brick fields. Some of these brick fields use gas and furnace oil where the fallout causes less adverse effects. But the majority of the kilns in Dhaka city areas use pieces of wood logs and bamboo stumps and also old tyres as fuels for the kilns. Their adverse effect on environment is more pronounced as the smoke thus created spreads far and wide in the city and its suburbs and poses a potent threat to public health.

According to sources in the Department of Roads and Highways, almost all the big trees on both sides of the 88-kilometre Dhaka-Aricha highway have died due to the prolonged floods of 1998

coupled with air and soil pollution by the brick manufacturers. Besides, the industrial waste materials located near the highway had also affected the trees in many ways including stifling of their water supply, their main sustenance. Among the main causes for defoliation of the big trees along the road are the widespread pollution created by the damaging materials used by the kilns as fuel for the brick fields.

There are other aspects of pollution from brick fields. The materials from the existing brick fields find their way into the Buriganga river making the water highly polluted as an additional damaging agent along with other chemical wastes from the adjoining tanneries and other harmful wastes from sewerage lines connecting the

river water.

It is a sad fact of our city planning that some of the brick fields using harmful materials for their kilns are allowed to operate with impunity near city areas without let or hindrance from either environmental or public health considerations. It is imperative for the Department of Environment to play an effective role in prohibiting brick fields from operating near city areas.

In the present situation, the sooner the areas of operation of these brick fields are shifted outside the periphery of the city areas earmarked for inclusion in the planned expansion of the city through satellite townships in the near future, the better will be the prospects for a more organised civic life in our emerging mega city.

CMCH to have a 'fair price medicine shop'

NURUL ALAM, Chittagong

Chittagong Medical College Hospital (CMCH) authorities will set up a 'fair price medicine shop' on the hospital premises shortly to meet the needs of patients.

CMCH will be the first government hospital in the country to have such a medicine shop to help patients buy medicine at cheaper prices, Director of the hospital Brig Zillur Rahman told this correspondent.

He said all formalities have been completed to float tender for engaging a genuine drug trader to run the fair price shop. "We expect to inaugurate the shop in July."

Patients at this hospital now have to buy medicine at exorbitant prices from shops near the hospital. They may not have to do so when the fair price shop is set up, he added.

The higher authorities concerned recently approved the proposal for such a shop following a feasibility study conducted by a committee headed by Prof Dr AQM Sirajul Islam, head of skin and VD department at the CMCH, hospital sources said.

Dr Islam said medicine shops near this hospital mostly demand

Counting of votes begins tomorrow

Analysts unable to say who will form West Bengal govt

BSS, Kolkata

Seventy-one per cent voters exercised their franchise on Thursday in the West Bengal Assembly election, which was marked by killing, sporadic clashes, fake votes and capturing of polling booths.

The counting of the votes will begin tomorrow.

Political analysts are still unable to predict who is going to form the next government, but gave a clear idea that Left Front has lost a considerable number of votes from its vote banks in the election.

According to an immediate survey of TV channel Doordarshan, both the Left Front and Trinamool-Congress(I) alliance have bagged equally 44 per cent of votes while others got 12 per cent.

Zee TV hinted that out of 294 seats the Left Front will get 125 to 135 while Trinamool-Congress alliance will win 145 to 150 seats. And the independent candidates are likely to get 10 to 12 seats.

However, the election analysts said exit polls should not be considered correct. But it is sure that number of votes of the Left Front reduced.

Earlier, a Doordarshan exit poll telecast on Thursday said, the opposition Congress is likely to win in three of the five state assembly elections Assam, Kerala and Tamil Nadu while the ruling Left Front may retain power in West Bengal.

In West Bengal, the CPM led Left Front is likely to scrape through in West Bengal, winning 150 of the 294 seats with the Trinamool-Congress(I) combine close

behind with 138 seats.

The Left Front and Trinamool with allies may be tied at a 44 per cent vote share with others getting 12 per cent, says the Times-DRS poll.

However, the Left Front has suffered a six per cent negative swing compared to a four per cent swing in favour of Trinamool-Congress(I) Front.

In Assam, the Congress may form the government bagging 60 of the 126 seats while the ruling AGP-BJP combine would be reduced to only 33 seats, the exit poll telecast on Doordarshan said.

Others, with 32 seats, are likely to play a crucial role in the formation of the government.

The Congress-led United Democratic Front(UDF) is set to get a two-thirds majority in Kerala with 100 of the 140 seats while ruling Left Front may get only 37 seats, the exit poll says.

The AIADMK led front in which Congress is a partner is set to wrest power from the ruling DMK, winning 125 of the 234 seats while the DMK-led front would get 105 seats in a close fight in Tamil Nadu state assembly elections, according to an exit poll telecast on Doordarshan.

The DMK front is likely to get 47 per cent of votes while Jayalalitha's AIADMK will get 48 per cent, projects the Times-DRS poll. Others are likely to get remaining five per cent, the opposition DMK is poised to get 40 per cent of the vote share in Pondicherry, followed by 28 per cent for the TMC-INC-CPI and 25 per cent for the AIADMK.



Dirty water accumulates in numerous potholes on such damaged roads in Tejgaon Industrial Area due to years of neglect by the authorities concerned.

Seeking votes 'much ahead of election' not prohibited

UNB, Dhaka

Country's election laws do not authorise the Election Commission (EC) to bar aspirants from campaigning anytime before the announcement of the schedule.

"All restrictions, including election expenditures, are effective only after announcement of election schedule. But there is no law to stop someone from campaigning in advance," said a top EC official.

The EC explanation came amid a growing controversy over whether existing laws can stop a political party or individual from early electioneering as the parliamentary polls are coming nearer.

The EC official said Representation of People's Order (RPO) prohibits any form of electioneering before three weeks of polling, but this law is effective once the election schedule is announced, not before.

A former senior EC official, considered one of the most experienced experts on election laws in the country, also said that the PRO didn't authorise the Election Commission to bar campaign in advance.

"Micro level campaign even can

start on the day following an election. From that day a defeated or winning party or an aspirant can start seeking voter's support in the next poll," he said.

He said it is not at all a violation of laws if the Prime Minister or the Opposition leader seeks vote, in public meetings, for her party and symbol much before the general election.

"When the election is nearing, obviously the political parties can start campaigning to prepare themselves as well as bring an election fever among the voters," said the former EC official.

The expert said that the key leaders of the political parties even much before the election, can easily start seeking votes saying they will do this and that or not if they are voted to power.

"If a party evaluates its defeat in

Will journalist Tipu remain disabled?



The Daily Star - প্রথম আলো

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