



Rare bird spotted in Cox's Bazar

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Four rare woodpeckers have recently been spotted in the Dulahazara Safari Park in Cox's Bazar after many decades.

Eminent bird-watcher Enam-ul-Haque spotted and filmed the Great Slaty Woodpeckers on November 23.

The Slaty woodpecker, which stands out for its huge pale bill and unusually long neck and tail, is a rare bird species of the Indian subcontinent and can only be seen in the Himalayas between Arunachal and Himachal states.

In the Birds of the Indian Subcontinent (Oxford University Press, 1998), Grimmett and Inskipp write, "The Great Slaty Woodpecker is a former resident of Bangladesh, but there is no recent record of the bird being spotted in the country. It might have survived in the Chittagong Hill Tracts."

Enam's observation means Slaty woodpeckers could now be included in the list of rare birds in the country.

8 Bogra JCD men expelled

A CORRESPONDENT, Bogra

The Jatiyatabadi Chhatra Dal (JCD) central committee has expelled eight of its leaders and activists of the Bogra district unit for their anti-organisational activities.

The high command of the BNP also ordered the Bogra police to arrest the eight expelled leaders and activists of the JCD.

The expelled are: Sabbir Hossain Bablu, Moniruzzaman Moni, Alamgir Hossain, Afzal Hossain Nahid, Zakaria Shamim, ATM Mamun, Zitu, and Fine. Their pri

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Last date for renewal of arms licenses Dec 31

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The government has asked the licensed firearms holders to renew their licenses from the firearm section of the District Magistrate's office by December 31.

Renewal of firearm licenses in Dhaka district for the year 2003 will start on December 1, according to a handout issued by the District Information office yesterday. Necessary renewal fees are to be deposited with the Bangladesh Bank and the original copy of the bank receipt submitted with the application form, the released a d d e d . During license renewal, the firearms have to be shown in an unloaded form to the concerned officials.

If the firearms have been deposited with the local police station as per government directive, the arms holders can renew their licenses showing the deposit receipts.

First group of UN arms inspectors in Baghdad

REUTERS, Baghdad

The first group of UN arms inspectors arrived in Baghdad yesterday to relaunch a search for weapons of mass destruction after a four-year absence, a mission that could trigger a US-led war.

Seventeen inspectors were aboard the flight from Larnaca, Cyprus, which touched down in Baghdad at around noon. Eleven are from the UN Monitoring, Verification and Inspection Commission (UNMOVIC) charged with searching for missiles and biological and chemical weapons.

The remaining six, from the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), will investigate any nuclear weapons capability Iraq may have. The inspections are set to start on Wednesday. The last UN inspections team left Baghdad in December 1998, just before a US military strike on Iraq.

The inspectors are armed with a tough UN resolution that demands Iraq disarm or face "serious consequences". Baghdad has vowed to

meet a December 8 deadline to produce a full account of its weapons programme and said UN inspectors will be given free access to all sites. The inspectors must give their first report to the UN Security Council by January 27.

Meanwhile, Iraqi authorities made public yesterday an angry letter to the United Nations over a tough UN resolution ahead of the first weapons inspections in Iraq in four years.

Foreign Minister Naji Sabri said

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in a November 23 letter to UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan that Baghdad accepted UN resolution 1441 in hopes of sparing its people war but felt that the resolution provided the United States with a pretext to launch an attack on Iraq.

In the first detailed response since Iraq accepted the Security Council resolution on November 13, Sabri gave an item by item reply and reiterated a continuing theme.

"The real motive was to create

pretexts to attack Iraq under an international cover," Sabri wrote in the letter, adding that the resolution gave the UN inspectors tyrannical authority.

Resolution 1441 obliges Baghdad to allow inspectors from the United Nations and the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) to peer into every nook and cranny of the country in the search for weapons of mass destruction.

As part of the resolution Baghdad agreed to produce a full account of its weapons programme by a December 8 deadline and said UN inspectors will be given free access to all sites across the country. The inspectors must give their first report to the UN Security Council by January 27.

Iraq released the contents of the letter as the United Nations declared its monitoring centre at the former Canal Hotel in Baghdad ready for the first group of 18 inspectors, who will arrive on Monday. The f i r s t i n s p e c

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PHOTO: AKM MOHSIN

Two vendors sell onion stems, used as winter vegetables, at Karwan Bazaar in the city yesterday. With winter setting in, seasonal vegetables started rolling in city markets from other districts like every year.

Police excesses?

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Khulna

A Jubo Dal activist, picked up by an assistant police commissioner of Khulna Metropolitan Police allegedly without any warrant or specific charge, is now in "critical" condition at Khulna Medical College Hospital (KMCH), according to police and other sources.

Shafiqul Islam, also a football player of Young Boys' Sporting Club here, was picked up from Pabla area by Clarence Gomes, Assistant Police Commissioner (APC) in charge of KMP's North Zone and severely beaten at Khalishpur thana.

He was admitted to KMCH on Sunday. His condition remained "critical" till 6 pm yesterday, hospital sources said.

The Officer-in-charge of Khalishpur thana said Shafiqul has been shown arrested under Section 54 and is under treatment in police custody. When asked, the OC said he does not know why Shafiqul was picked up and beaten by the APC.

When contacted, the APC became annoyed and refused to tell anything about his action against Shafiqul Islam.

But city BNP secretary Nazrul Islam Manju claimed that the APC acted on an instruction from APBN Commandant-in-charge Shahidul Islam Chowdhury.

Shafiqul is a neighbour of the APBN Commandant, it was learnt. The commandant could not be contacted as he was out of Khulna yesterday.

Sunset rule for youths in Pabna

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Pabna

The district authorities have slapped a ban on the movement of youths after sunset to curb criminal activities.

The deputy commissioner (DC) of Pabna issued an executive order to slap the ban and the decision was announced by loudspeakers throughout the district yesterday.

When contacted, Police Super of Pabna Amir Uddin said the announcement was made as per the district's law and order committee's decision to improve law and order.

The decision has created resentment among students who take private tuition after dusk.

concocted". The IO also prayed for filing of a case against complainant Nuruddin and the victim -- Sabrina -- , and acquittal of Abbas Uddin.

After acquittal, Abbas Uddin filed a case against Nuruddin and his daughter Sabrina with the Special Court, Dhaka last year.

The court took the case into cognisance and framed charges against accused Nuruddin and Sabrina in absentia on April 8 this year.

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Retirement benefits bill for non-govt teachers

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Jatiya Sangsad yesterday passed three bills including one aiming to ensure smooth disbursement of retirement benefits to the teachers and employees of non-government educational institutions.

A 21-member board will be set up to disburse retirement benefits among the teachers and employees of private schools, colleges, schools, madrasahs and vocational institutions.

The education secretary will become the chairman of the board, according to the Private Educational Institution Teachers and Employees Retirement Benefits Act, 2002. The government will set up the board as soon as possible after the new law comes to force.

The DG and a director of the directorate of secondary and higher secretary education, the DG of the directorate of technical education,

one deputy secretary each from the education, establishment and finance ministries, 11 representatives of the teachers and three of the employees will become members of the board.

Besides disbursing retirement benefits among the retired teachers and employees, the board will also pay retirement benefits to the serving teachers or employees in case of death. It would fix the rate, time-limit and other relevant issues relating to such benefits.

The board will raise its funds from government donation, subscriptions by the teachers and employees and other sources. Subscriptions of the teachers and employees would be deducted from the source of their monthly salary.

In his statement about the bill's aims and objectives, Education Minister Dr Osman Farruk said paying retirement benefits to teachers and employees of private edu-

cational institutions in a planned way was not possible due to lack of a separate law.

The parliament also passed another bill amending Private Educational Institution Teachers and Employee Welfare Trust Act, 1990 under which retirement benefits were given earlier.

LGSD and Cooperatives Minister Abdul Mannan Bhuiyan piloted the other bill seeking amendments to the Cooperatives Society Act, 2001, which was also approved by the House. The amendments aim to accelerate cooperatives movement in the country.

All the three bills were passed in the absence of the main opposition Awami League that boycotted yesterday's proceedings of the House protesting introduction of a bill that seeks to change the name of Bangabandhu Award for Agriculture into National Award for Agriculture.

171 dailies in city

BSS, Dhaka

Information Minister Tariqul Islam yesterday said as many as 171 daily newspapers were now being published from Dhaka city.

"The number of weeklies and monthlies are 231 and 269 respectively that are published from the capital city," he said while replying to a question from Delwar Hossain Sayeedi of Jamaat in the Jatiya Sangsad.

He said all newspapers were being published under the 1973 Printing and Publication (declaration and registration) Act.

	Sun Rises	Sun Sets
Nov 26	12-45	5-11 pm
Nov 27	6-22 am	

Prayer Timings		
Nov 26		
	Azan	Jamaat
Fajr	4-47	5-07
Zohr	12-45	1-15
Asr	3-45	4-00
Maghrib	5-14	5-24
Esha	7-30	7-45
Source: Islamic Foundation		

Scores of cars double-park on the busy thoroughfare in Motijheel yesterday, taking over almost half of the road. The result is non-stop traffic jam during rush hours.

PHOTO: STAR

Complainant gets 5 yrs for filing false case

COURT CORRESPONDENT

The First Special Court for Prevention of Women and Children Repression, Dhaka yesterday sentenced a complainant to five year's imprisonment for filing a false case against a person under the Women and Children Repression Prevention Act 2000 to harass him.

Judge Mohammad Dudu Miah Sarker sentenced Nuruddin Ahmed for filing a false case against Abbas Uddin.

Nuruddin, in the case filed with

Mirpur thana on June 21, 2000 under the Act, had alleged that Abbas Uddin abducted his minor daughter Sbrina Ahmed Rima and raped her.

The judge also sentenced her to one year's imprisonment.

This is the first verdict by the court against a complainant.

The investigation officer (IO) of the case submitted a final report to the Special Court as the charges brought against Abbas Uddin were proved to be "false, fabricated and

Disciplined, still defiant

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Defying a government order, three officials of Bangladesh Television who have been withdrawn from BTV attended office yesterday as usual.

Official sources said BTV's director (news) AKM Hanif, executive producer (news) Muhammad Hashim Reza and producer (news) Muhammad Saifullah were withdrawn for negligence of duty. A cameraman and a sub-assistant engineer were also withdrawn.

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