

12,000km

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Urnee, the name of the turtle, has crossed the path until March 23, 2011. It is now in the middle of the Bay of Bengal, 780 km east of the Chennai coast of India, 977 km north-east of the Sri Lankan coast, 662 km west of the Andaman and Nicobar Islands and 806 km southwest of its Sonadia Island release point, Marinelife Alliance sources say.

Marinelife Alliance, Bangladesh, a research organisation, has been working on marine turtle conservation since 2001. It set the satellite transmitter with the help of Mote Marine Lab, Duke University, WIDECAST of the USA.

The researchers of Bangladesh named the adult female Olive Ridley Urnee, tagged it with a small device called Platform Terminal Transmitter (PTT) and released it in Sonadia on March 29, 2010.

Urnee started heading back to the Bangladesh coast on February 22.

Before reaching the Sonadia shoreline, Urnee must dodge a wide danger zone as the Bangladesh coast is full of fishing fleets including various fishing gears like marine set bag net, drifting gill nets and commercial mechanised trawl net.

"Our main concern is how Urnee can overcome this danger zone to reach the Sonadia coast," said M Zahurul Islam, key researcher of the Marinelife Alliance.

Every year a significant number of sea turtles come back to Bangladeshi coast including Cox's Bazar, St Martin's Island and Sonadia for nesting.

Adult turtles always go back to the same place for nesting where they were hatched and born. But researchers do not know much about their sea routes and destination except that they come back in September in Bangladesh coast for nesting.

"Sea turtles are ready for nesting when they are over 20 years old. In Bangladesh we found around 400 nests in the St Martin's Island and Sonadia," said Zahurul Islam.

"Urnee is coming back to Sonadia after her release one year ago. She was supposed to come back in September for nesting. We don't know why she is coming back so late," he added.

Researchers say this tracking will save thousands of

migratory turtles from unpredictable fishing fleets. Every year a huge number of Olive Ridley and Green turtles are killed after being trapped in the fishing net as a bycatch of fish.

The Marine Alliance last year found 187 dead sea turtles along the St Martin's and Sonadia coast. But the real number is much higher than that, officials say.

Once the migratory routes are known, different agencies like the navy, fisheries department and conservation authorities can take immediate action to designate and implement safe routes for the turtles, a species that plays a vital role to keep the sea environment clean.

"Urnee travelled to as far as the Sri Lankan coast and is now coming back to Bangladesh for nesting. It gives us valuable information that will be very helpful for researchers," said Zahurul of Marinelife Alliance.

As sea turtles are air-breathing reptiles, they come up to the ocean surface every 30 to 40 minutes. The satellite device only receives signal from the transmitter set on its back when it comes up to the surface. The location and path of migration of the turtle can be determined by mapping these location points.

The technique holds great potential for unlocking many secrets of sea turtles' behaviour and ecology, Zahurul said.

"We are expecting to bug some more turtles which could give us an idea on the range of areas the turtles travel from Bangladesh," he added.

15 Shibir men

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Jamaat-backed student organisation following a clash that injured at least 20 people including several policemen.

The Shibir men were holding a rally in Kakrail and Shanti Nagar areas without any permission and blocking the road, said police sources.

When police tried to stop them, they ransacked roadside business establishments, vandalised vehicles and clashed with the law enforcers.

Metropolitan Magistrate Keshab Roy Chowdhury passed the order after Ramna police produced them before the court with ten days' remand prayers.

Of the arrested 17, Ashiqur Rahman and Mominal Islam were directly sent to jail by the court.

Alim arrested

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Justice Nizamul Huq ordered police to produce Alim before the tribunal within 24 hours of his arrest, excluding the journey period.

The court, however, directed law enforcers to consider health of Alim, aged over 80, while arresting him and producing him before it.

The tribunal issued the warrant in response to a petition filed by the prosecutors on March 23.

Alim was involved in the killing of more than 10,000 innocent people with the assistance of Razakars and Pakistani occupation forces during the Liberation War, reads the petition.

The petition also stated that Alim, the then peace committee chairman in Joypurhat, killed local Awami League leader Dr Abul Kashem on July 26, 1971.

Alim should be arrested to be quizzed, the petitioners insist.

Meanwhile, the tribunal adjourned till April 5 the hearing on another petition filed by the prosecutors seeking permission for a three-day interrogation of Jamaat-Islami chief Motiur Rahman Nizami in the custody of the war crimes probe body.

The court asked the prosecutors to inform it by April 5 about the place where the detained Jamaat leader would be kept during the interrogation.

The prosecutors filed the petition on March 23.

They yesterday also submitted a petition to the tribunal's registrar to allow the investigation agency to quiz detained Jamaat secretary general Ali Ahsan Mohammad Mojaheed for three days in its custody.

Advocate Syed Rezaur Rahman and barrister Syed Haider Ali appeared as prosecutors, while advocate Tajul Islam stood for Nizami.

Ershad wins

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an appeal seeking Eric's custodianship filed by Ershad's estranged wife Bidisha Siddique.

Asked about the judgment, Bidisha's lawyer Abdul Mannan Khan told The Daily Star they would soon file an appeal with the higher court against the judgment.

In the order, the judge said as per provision of the Muslim Family Ordinance a mother could be a guardian of a male child for seven years. But Eric is ten years old. So, the appeal for custodianship to bring up a ten-year old male child is to be rejected.

Ershad was present at the court while Bidisha was absent during the judgment.

On May 27 of 2009, Bidisha filed a case with the court seeking the custodianship of Eric on grounds that her son was being deprived of proper nursing.

So, Eric should be placed in her custody, Bidisha said.

Woman kills

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8:00pm and informed the police. The body was sent to Sir Salimullah Medical College morgue for an autopsy yesterday, the SI said.

Police will take steps after the autopsy is performed, he added.

An unnatural death case was filed in this connection.

HC orders

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in response to a writ petition by Kamaruzzaman and Quader Molla.

The two were arrested in July last year on different charges and were later shown arrested in connection with crimes against humanity during the Liberation War in 1971.

Meanwhile, the HC yesterday stayed for four months the proceedings of a case filed for "hurting religious sentiment of Muslims" against four Jamaat leaders including its chief Motiur Rahman Nizami.

The three others are party Secretary General Ali Ahsan Mohammad Mojaheed, Nayebe-e-amir Delwar Hossain Saydee and its Dhaka city chief Rafiqul Islam Khan.

The HC bench of Justice Shamim Hossain and Justice MR Hasan also issued four rules upon the government to explain within four weeks why the proceedings against the Jamaat leaders should not be quashed.

RMG worker

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Hearing the news, aggrieved several hundred factory workers of Body Fashion and other garment factories and locals came out and damaged window panes of road side establishments, ransacked vehicles, set the buses ablaze and blocked the Dhaka-Gazipur Highway.

A running battle between the transport workers and garment workers ensued, leaving 25 people injured.

The factory workers, heading to their workplaces, halted the bus but its driver and helpers managed to escape.

On information, police rushed to the spot and charged batons on the workers to pacify the situation.

A fire brigade official said they doused fire on the buses with the help of police.

Officer-in-Charge Kamaruzzaman of Joydevpur Police Station said police lifted the road barricade at 11:30am.

The body of the victim was taken to his village home at Dewanganj in Jamalpur for burial.

PM asks NBR

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during a meeting at her office.

Hasina said a section of people earned thousand of crores of taka overnight. She directed the tax officials to look into this matter.

She said some people often buy luxurious cars and houses. "You have to identify those people and should ask them whether they pay their taxes properly," she said.

The premier said all have to be accountable about their income and expenditure, and through this transparency of the people about payment of taxes would be ensured.

PM's Press Secretary Abul Kalam Azad briefed reporters after the meeting.

Caretaker to get JS fix

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In light of the prevailing situation, the parliamentary body took the decision to work for removing flaws in the caretaker government system, a member of the special committee said on condition of anonymity.

He said the committee members also agreed in principle not to propose changes that might trigger a political crisis over holding the next parliamentary election.

The multi-party parliamentary committee opened the discussion on the issue at its last meeting on March 24. It decided to meet on March 29 in an exclusive members only meeting to discuss some 'sensitive' and 'critical' issues regarding the caretaker government system, another member of the committee told The Daily Star on Thursday.

The member, preferring not to be named as he is not authorised to talk to the media, said they will also discuss about the administration of the defence services under a caretaker government. During a caretaker government regime, the president holds the defence portfolio, and the system created crisis in the past. Therefore, the com-

mittee will examine carefully whether change is needed to the current provision, the member added.

"We don't want to say anything publicly about the caretaker government system until the committee reaches a decision after holding a thorough discussion on it," Suranjit Sengupta, co-chair of the parliamentary body, told reporters after the March 24 meeting.

He said the sixth parliament hurriedly passed the 13th amendment to the constitution introducing the caretaker government system.

"It's a black law. There was none in the parliament to speak about the loopholes in the system. We are now examining the constitutional clauses on the caretaker government system," said Suranjit, also chief of the parliamentary standing committee on the law justice and parliamentary affairs ministry.

The main opposition BNP refrained from nominating its member to the special parliamentary committee on constitutional amendment, as it does not want to be a part of the process of amending the constitution.

The party already

accused the government of hatching a conspiracy to scrap the caretaker government system.

Meanwhile, two eminent jurists Dr Kamal Hossain and TH Khan, during a hearing of an appeal on the caretaker government system at the Supreme Court, argued that the system should remain in effect, and the apex court should not question the legality of the system considering "the interest of the people".

In his argument before the Appellate Division, Dr Kamal Hossain, one of the framers of the constitution, said if there are flaws in the caretaker government system those can be removed through consultation.

He said the non-party caretaker government system had to be introduced because neither the civil society nor the political parties outside the government thought that free, fair and neutral polls could be held under a political government.

The appeal against a High Court verdict upholding the 13th amendment is still pending with the Appellate Division of Supreme Court.

Libyan rebels push west

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town of Ajdabiyah with the help of foreign warplanes on Saturday, the rebels advanced unchallenged to Ras Lanuf, a rebel fighter told Reuters on the road towards the oil terminal town.

The speed of the rebel advance suggests a rapid retreat by Gaddafi's forces after they lost Ajdabiyah, which had been an important gateway for the better-armed government troops to the rebel-held east.

In Brega, an oil town west of Ajdabiyah, rebel fighters were distributing water from trucks to residents or picking over debris of ammunition boxes and tank parts abandoned by the Gaddafi forces. There were long queues at fuel stations.

A man who said he worked for the state-owned Sirte Oil Company but refused to give his name said Gaddafi troops had passed through without stopping and there had been no fighting.

The rebels' advance is a rapid reversal of two weeks of losses and indicates that Western air strikes are shifting the battlefield dynamics in their favour.

As the front line moved toward the heartland of Gaddafi's support, government forces pounded Misrata in the west with tank, mortar and artillery fire on Saturday. Witnesses said the shelling halted after coalition aircraft appeared overhead.

A Misrata resident told Reuters by phone the humanitarian situation in the city was very bad, but that rebels had said they would fight until the city was freed from Gaddafi.

"It is quiet right now, apart from occasional exchanges of fire... In comparison with yesterday it is

calm. Yesterday we had western coalition bombing of Gaddafi's positions, particularly near the air base about 10 km (six miles) from the city," a resident called Sami said.

"Misrata has been under siege for 38 days. Not much food, water is a rarity and people are obliged to use wells to get water. We have problems with medicines."

A rebel in Misrata told Reuters Gaddafi was putting all his weight into attacking Misrata so he could control the whole of the west of the country after losing the entire east.

Libyan government spokesman Mussa Ibrahim told reporters in the capital Tripoli that Gaddafi was directing his forces but appeared to suggest the leader might be moving around the country so as to keep his whereabouts a mystery.

"He is leading the battle. He is leading the nation forward from anywhere in the country," said Ibrahim.

"He has many offices, many places around Libya. I assure you he is leading the nation at this very moment and he is in continuous communication with everyone around the country."

Asked if Gaddafi was constantly on the move, Ibrahim said: "It's a time of war. In a time of war you act differently."

"NOWHERE TO HIDE" Capturing Ajdabiyah was a big morale boost for rebels a week after air strikes began to enforce a UN-mandated no-fly zone.

"This is a victory from God," said Ali Mohamed, a 53-year-old teacher in the rebel stronghold of Benghazi.

"Insha'allah, we will be victorious. After two days, we will be in Tripoli," he said.

Fouzi Dihoum, a catering company employee, said the

rebels could push forward because the area between Ajdabiya and Sirte was desert in which Gaddafi forces were easy targets for planes.

"There is nowhere to hide. It's an open area," he said.

Internet social networks and some Arabic-language media have reported that Khamis, commander of the elite 32nd brigade, was killed by a disaffected air force pilot who, according to the reports, flew his plane into the Gaddafi compound in Tripoli.

There has been no confirmation and Libyan officials say such reports are part of a deliberate campaign of misinformation.

Last week Libyan officials said nearly 100 civilians had been killed in coalition strikes, but US Defence Secretary Robert Gates dismissed the assertion.

COALITION OPERATIONS US, French, British and other allied aircraft started attacking Libyan government troops eight days ago.

French fighters destroyed at least five warplanes and two helicopters from pro-Gaddafi forces in the Zintan and Misrata regions on Saturday, the military said in a statement on the French armed forces website, reports AFP.

British warplanes destroyed five Libyan armoured vehicles in air strikes on Ajdabiya and Misrata on Friday, the defence ministry in London said.

British Defence Secretary Liam Fox has told the BBC that coalition countries attacking targets in Libya will not supply arms to anti-Gaddafi rebels, despite reports that this is being actively considered.

Dr Fox said there was a UN arms embargo across the entire country, adding "We have to accept that."

Some relief for acid, burn victims

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reputed Bayer Innovation of the Year Award in 2010.

Ali has invented bio-based materials to create new wound dressing, bone-graft implant products and medical suture technology using wool from New Zealand sheep.

He uses low-volume protein sources from the wool to wound dressing and medical devices.

Two of his wound-care medical products are now being used at New Zealand hospitals and are approved for use in Australia, United States and the European Union.

"Bangladesh can get benefit out of the invention," Ali said in an interview with BSS last week when he came to Dhaka for a personal visit.

He said the new wound dressing dramatically brings down the treatment time while the result is far

better than any other existing treatment process as the bio-based wound dressing accelerates wound healing process and tissue growth.

"It works 40 percent faster than any other traditional products in wound treatment," Ali said.

The scientist sees very bright prospect of using the new product in Bangladesh because of availability of natural raw materials.

He pointed out that Bangladesh can use shrimp shell in place of wool to produce the same products with similar quality and effectiveness.

"There is lot of shrimp shells available at the industry where shrimp are being processed regularly for either export or domestic use," he said.

Ali said he is now in talks with a local pharmaceutical company to introduce the products in

Bangladesh.

"We are expecting a positive result from the on going discussions and hoping to introduce the products in a year," he said.

He believes that the new products will serve better in treating the acid victims and the people with severe burn injury.

He, however, said the treatment would be costlier than the existing synthetic products, but it would heal the wounds of the acid and burn victims to the extent so they can get back to normal life.

Apost graduate in chemistry from Jahangirnagar University, Ali did higher study in his subject in the United States before joining in research work first in Korea and then in New Zealand.

Currently, he is a senior scientist at the AgResearch, a leading research organisation in New Zealand.

Ties with US

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institutional links, Foreign Secretary Mijarul Quayes has said.

"I think values and institutions are more important than a personal matter. Our relations of partnership are deepened, and advancing. It'll be inconsistent if our relation is affected by one's position," he said at a regular press briefing at the foreign ministry yesterday.

He made the remark when asked to give his views on US Assistant Secretary of State for South and Central Asian Affairs Robert Blake's statement during his recent visit to Dhaka that the issue of Prof Muhammad Yunus will affect bilateral relations.

"I don't like to say anything on his comments. It would have been nice if you could ask him to elaborate his comments," Quayes told journalists.

The foreign secretary categorically said the court will settle the issue since Prof Yunus has gone to court to seek redress.

Asked whether US Secretary of State Hillary Clinton's visit to Dhaka will depend on the issue of Prof Yunus, Quayes said high-level visits would take place if the relation of partnership has any value.

Replying to a question whether he thinks Blake's remarks about the Bangladesh Bank's order to remove Prof Yunus from Grameen Bank are tantamount to interfering in Bangladesh's internal matter, Quayes said if you had asked the question to Robert Blake, he must have carried it to Washington.

In reply to another question, he said the foreign ministry is in constant touch with the US government through its embassy in Washington, but all discussions on bilateral

issues cannot be disclosed.

BLAKE TALKS WITH ATN NEWS

Meanwhile, in an interview with ATN News aired yesterday, Blake said that the US is concerned that the Grameen Bank matter perhaps foreshadows a more widespread limitation on civil society and on NGOs.

Speaking about Nobel laureate Prof Muhammad Yunus and Grameen Bank, he said that several people have expressed concern about that "And obviously, that would have an impact on our relations, because we do see Bangladesh as a bit of a model in this respect."

"So we don't just see it narrowly in terms of Muhammad Yunus. This is about Grameen Bank and its integrity, and the continued independence and vigour of civil society here in Bangladesh," Blake noted.

He added that the US is interested in ensuring the future integrity and effectiveness of Grameen Bank, and ensuring that it will have leadership that will ensure that integrity and effectiveness.

"I think Professor Yunus is concerned right now that there isn't that leadership there. He himself is not confident about the future of Grameen Bank. We very much respect his view, and I think we understand that many of Grameen Bank's shareholders share his view," the State Department official said.

Asked about Grameen Bank's future leadership, he said: "I think there are many, many qualified candidates out there who would do an outstanding job. But it's not for the United States to say who those might be. Again, we hope that can be done in a very collaborative manner to ensure the outcome that I described."

Radiation report

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A cancer risk is evident with an exposure of 100 millisieverts a year.

However, a key concern is how to safely pump away the highly radioactive water, but chief government spokesman Yukio Edano admitted progress at the site was slow.

Workers were trying to pinpoint the exact source of the radioactive water leak, but there are concerns that fuel rod vessels or their valves and pipes are damaged.

"It will take some time in order to remove the water while ensuring the safety of workers," Edano told a press conference.

There was also a warning from Yukiya Amano, director general of the International Atomic Energy Agency, that the emergency could go on for weeks, if not months, given the damage to the plant, The New York Times reported.

Last week three workers received medical treatment after stepping in radioactive water during efforts to install cables and restore critical reactor cooling systems.

The incident heaped more pressure on the plant operator because two were hospitalised after wearing inadequate safety gear.

But officials said yesterday the three would be discharged from medical care with no sign of serious injuries, apparently because they suffered only localised exposure to their feet.

The March 11 magnitude 9.0 earthquake and towering tsunami left more than 27,000 people dead or missing, erasing entire towns.

The wave knocked out cooling systems for the six reactors at the Fukushima plant, leading to suspected partial meltdowns in three of them. Hydrogen explosions and fires have also ripped through the facility.

Fire engines have hosed huge amounts of seawater onto the plant in a bid to keep the fuel rods inside reactor cores and pools from being exposed to the air, and prevent a full meltdown.

Oliver Isnard, an expert with the French Institute for Radiological Protection and Nuclear Safety, said the reading of 1,000 millisieverts in the water at the plant was "proof that the reactor core partially melted."

Several hundred metres (yards) offshore, levels of radioactive iodine some 1,850 times the legal limit were reported Sunday, up from 1,250 times on Saturday, but officials ruled out an immediate threat to marine life and seafood safety.

Some 500 technicians, firefighters and soldiers are battling day and night to contain Japan's worst ever atomic accident, reports AFP.

The nuclear safety agency yesterday said workers hoped to start using electric pumps instead of firetrucks for cooling operations at reactor number one.

High-voltage electric cables have been reconnected to the reactors and power has been partially restored to enable lighting in some reactor control rooms.

Worried about the possible corrosive effect of salt buildup in the crippled plant, engineers have started pumping fresh water into some of the reactors.

"Tepco has a certain control of the situation," said Isnard. "But it will be very complicated, notably because of the contaminated water. It's a colossal task."

Radioactive vapour seeping from the plant has contaminated tap water and farm produce in the region, leading to shipment halts in Japan as well as the United States, European Union, China and a host of other nations.

Japan has effectively widened its evacuation zone to 30 kilometres from the plant -- still much less than the 80 kilometres advised by the United States.

A Kyodo survey showed 58.2 percent of respondents disapproved of the government's handling of the nuclear crisis.

TOKYO LEVELS NORMAL The elevated radiation detected yesterday was confined to the reactor, and radioactivity in the air beyond the evacuation zone around the plant remained in normal ranges.

In downtown Tokyo, a Reuters reading yesterday afternoon showed ambient radiation of 0.16 microsieverts per hour, below the global average of naturally occurring background radiation of 0.17-0.39 microsieverts per hour.