



Clockwise, a white-rumped vulture at Rangamati forest office and a pheasant, civet, porcupine and spotted deer at Rangamati Hill District Council Zoo.

PHOTO: STAR

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CHT wildlife in peril

SHANTIMOY CHAKMA, Rangamati

The wildlife in the Chittagong Hill Tracts (CHT) is on the brink of extinction, as illegal logging and poaching go side by side amid lax monitoring by forest department.

The critically endangered species are rare yaks (nilgai), tiger, panther, civet cats, pangolin, vulture, gibbon (ulluk), baboon, barking deer and sambar, slow loris (lajjabati banor) and peacock, said locals and forest officials.

"Many of these animals are fleeing to the forests across the border, while many have been killed at the natural and reserve forests in CHT for years," said an official of the forest department in Rangamati.

The last survey on the wildlife in the CHT conducted in 1975 recorded 76 species of wild mammals, 183 species of wild birds, seven species of amphibious animals, and 25 species of reptiles and snakes. Many of these species are rarely seen in the forests nowadays.

Banteng, wild water buffalo, Sumatran rhinoceros, Indian rhinoceros and swamp deer are already extinct, while those awaiting extinction are sloth bear, green peafowl, rufous-necked hornbill and white-winged duck, said Professor Dr Monirul H Khan, Department of Zoology, Jahangirnagar University.

Monirul, also principal officer of the World

'Yes, I am an anarchist'

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Kejriwal, along with cabinet colleagues, defied prohibitory orders in a bid to march to the office of central Home Minister Sushil Kumar Shinde and stage the protest but were stopped by police near Rail Bhawan, hardly 200 yards away.

"Some people are saying that I am an anarchist... Yes, I am an anarchist. Today, I will create anarchy for Shinde," he said in an impromptu address to his party lawmakers and supporters at the protest site.

Justifying his move, Kejriwal said, "I did not want to disturb the Republic Day (on January 26) preparations but when women of Delhi are feeling unsafe, I cannot keep quiet."

The 45-year old chief minister, whose party formed the government in

Delhi last December, came down heavily on the police and said, "Delhi police collects bribes from people across the city and sends it up to senior officials."

He also asked "honest police officials" to take leave and join him in the agitation demanding that Delhi police, which is now run by the federal Indian government, be brought under his government, a demand rejected by the central home minister.

Kejriwal made it clear that the protest would not impede his work as all the files of his office would be delivered to him at the venue of the demonstration.

The movement in the Indian capital comes after last week's gang-rape of a Danish tourist, and a controversial midnight raid by Delhi Law Minister

Somnath Bharti in a South Delhi neighbourhood.

The minister conducted a self-described midnight "raid" in the neighbourhood and asked the police to arrest some Ugandan citizens and raid a house where, he alleged, they were trafficking drugs and sex. The police refused, saying they had no warrant.

Kejriwal says the police officers involved must be suspended or removed immediately, ignoring the assurance from federal Home Minister Sushil Kumar Shinde that action against the police officials would be taken after an inquiry.

Shinde said Kejriwal should wait for the report of a judicial inquiry ordered by Delhi's Lt-Governor Najeeb Jung against last week's incident.

3 priorities

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Expressing dissatisfaction on the insurance sector, Muhith said: "The insurance sector is the most awful sector. At present, there are 76 insurance companies, which have not been brought under any control."

"Now that the insurance companies are being controlled, they are creating barriers for the regulatory authorities, as this sector was a haven for plundering and theft."

Warning the insurance companies, the minister said, "These companies are wicked and they will have to pay, unless they rationalise and civilise their behaviour."

He also said that if the insurance companies do not stop plundering, they will be penalised.

Highlighting another priority, Muhith said they will have to do something about corruption, but he would not elaborate the measures for containing graft.

In the last stint of the present government's tenure, one of the most talked about issues was corruption in the banking sector; Muhith mentioned three specific steps in this regard.

First, stop fraud and pilferage in the banks; Bangladesh Bank has already prepared some policies in this regard, he said.

Second, the amount of default loans, which is also a result of corruption, will be brought down, Muhith added.

Third, a balance will be created among the exposure of bank credit to borrowers and sectors.

"Elimination of corruption cannot be achieved through punishment -- it has to be done by improving the system. We will focus more on that."

The finance minister said all regulatory authorities and banks have been asked to prepare the measures to be taken for development in their respective sectors, based on which, the government will take steps in the next five years.

In response to a reporter's queries on whether this government would stay in power for five years, Muhith said it does not matter how long the government will stay, but the programmes must be made for five years.

Mid-level leaders

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And to make the grassroots stronger, AL will launch member-collection drives, organise visits and hold council sessions across the country. The central leaders are likely to commence the programmes this month.

This time, Hasina desires her party and government function separately and thus make the organisation stronger which suffered much since her party had formed government in 2009, say party insiders.

Saturday's meeting sources said the party's central committee member Abdul Rahman had congratulated the AL president for forming the government with senior and young lawmakers.

"The present cabinet comprises of elder and younger leaders of the party. But we, the mid-ranking leaders, have been ignored," he was quoted as saying by another central committee member.

Responding to the disappointment of Rahman, who was an AL organising secretary, the AL chief said this time the party's responsible leaders had been kept from the cabinet to make the party stronger.

She had told her colleagues that to this end she would not include the joint and organising secretaries to her cabinet, said sources.

However, the party's secretary general, its five presidium members and one organising secretary have been made cabinet members.

AL General Secretary Syed Ashrafur Islam got the LGRD ministry while the five presidium members have been given the post and telecommunications, agriculture, housing and public works, health, and the communications ministries.

Organising Secretary Bir Bahadur U Shei Ching has been made state minister for Chittagong Hill Tract affairs.

Dangerous insinuation

FROM PAGE 1

unsubstantiated statements will further complicate the already dangerously fractured politics of Bangladesh.

Also, her repeated statements that sovereignty had come under question have a direct implication on our bilateral relations with India, a country which she has continually claimed Sheikh Hasina's government is subservient to.

Her speech of over an hour contains distortion of some other facts as well.

Again and again, she has claimed the attacks on Hindus were acts of the government. Her claim is totally contradicted by reports in all mainstream media, which found out that immediately after the election Jamaat activists had swung into the mayhem, burning up Hindus' houses and looting their properties. This was also verified by the testimony of the victims.

Khaleda's indication that foreign forces were involved was only backed by two newspapers, whose reports have failed to produce any proof whatsoever to support their claims. No other mainstream media reported such presence of "unknown faces".

Had foreign forces been involved, it would have come under national and international focus.

The police action on Hefajat rally was covered live by a few hundred journalists. None of them reported involvement of any foreign forces. Even Hefajat, whose men came face to face with the law enforcers during the drive, did not make such claims.

The BNP chief's yet another statement that the rise of militants happened during the Awami League rule and the past BNP government never patronised militancy and that it rather curbed militancy is also not true.

Khaleda's denial is nothing new. This is her decade-old strategy of denying facts. Under the patronage of her past government, JMB and JMJB, two militant outfits, had spread their tentacles in many parts of the country. But she and some of her government ministers kept denying the existence of dreaded

killer Siddiqui Islam alias Bangla Bhai, who was the operations commander of Jagrata Muslim Janata Bangladesh (JMJB).

At a time when Bangla Bhai and his cadres were spreading militancy in some northern districts and later across the country, Khaleda, then prime minister, in August 2004 while exchanging views with editors said there was no Bangla Bhai.

"It's propaganda against the government and the country. And it [the propaganda] is aimed at causing a rift within the four-party alliance," Khaleda told parliament on March 15, 2005, pointing the finger at the then main opposition Awami League.

Matiur Rahman Nizami, chief of Jamaat-e-Islami and then industries minister, on July 22, 2004, said: "Bangla Bhai was created by some newspapers."

On June 22 the same year, while speaking to reporters in the parliament building, Nizami said, "Police have nothing to do when there is no existence of a so-called Bangla Bhai. Who should they arrest?"

The Jamaat ameer on March 13, 2005, said: "They [the AL] want to split the four-party alliance through peddling propaganda on the existence of so called militancy. Because they [AL] know it well that if the alliance exists, it won't be possible for them to win the next election."

The then state minister for home, Lutfozzaman Babar, on January 26, 2005, also said the JMJB did not exist officially.

The JMB even unleashed a simultaneous bomb attacks across the country on August 17, 2005. The unprecedented blasts compelled the BNP-Jamaat government to take some measures, including banning JMB, JMJB and Huji, and arresting some leaders of those militant outfits.

And finally, the capture of Bangla Bhai on March 6, 2006, proved the media were right about the militants' reign of terror and the statements of Khaleda, Nizami and others were false.

The story does not end here. Many other violent incidents took place during the four-party alliance rule, indicating a sharp rise of extremism and militancy.

The militants launched a grenade attack on AL chief Sheikh Hasina's rally on August 21, 2004, which was aimed at assassinating Hasina. The AL president narrowly escaped, but 24 of her party leaders were killed in the attack. The killing of AL MPs Shah AMS Kibria and Ahsanullah Master were also part of the violent activities carried out by the militants.

Militant outfit Huji, which emerged in 1992 when Khaleda was prime minister of her first government, is found to have carried out the August 21 attack and it was her government that did not allow a fair investigation into the incident.

Her administration then cooked up a story, framing one unknown Joj Mia, saying he had admitted to have carried out the grenade attack. This was done to save Huji men.

And the sensational recovery of 10 truckloads of arms and ammunition on April 2, 2004, in Chittagong has appeared as a glaring example of how the country was made a route of arms smuggling during the BNP-Jamaat rule.

Khaleda in her yesterday's speech cited some militant attacks that took place during the past AL-led government (1996-2001). But the truth is it was Huji that planted a bomb in Gopalganj in 2000 to assassinate the then PM Hasina.

This extremist outfit also carried out several attacks during Hasina's past rule. They include the bomb attacks on left-leaning cultural organisation Udichi's programme in Jessore, Chhayanaut's age-old Bangla New Year celebrations at Ramna Batamul in the capital and the Communist Party's public meeting in the capital's Paltan Maidan.

So, again, facts do not support Khaleda's claim that her government did not patronise militancy.

Three Pakistanis held

FROM PAGE 1

Arrestee Fakhru, who came to Bangladesh a month and a half ago, re-engaged Mehmod and Osman to carry out destructive operations prior to the January 5 national polls, claimed Monirul, a spokesman for DMP.

He said, "As their mission failed due to strict vigilance of law enforcers, they decided to stay for a few more days in Bangladesh and head for Myanmar at a convenient time to assist their like-minded organisation Tehrik-e-Azadi Arakan there."

They were of Myanmar origin and had moved to Pakistan and were recruited into the Taliban force. They were trained to take part in a "Jihad in Afghanistan". Later, they received Pakistan citizenship, Monirul said.

He said the detectives were hoping to get more information out of the three regarding their patrons, political motives and intention

during the remand period.

The detectives recovered a Pakistani passport with an expired Bangladeshi visa from Fakhru. The other two had no travel documents on them. Tehrik-e-Taliban Pakistan is a leading group of Islamist militants operating in Pakistan with the intention to enforce its version of the Sharia.

Enraged by the execution of war criminal Abdul Quader Mollah, also a Jamaat-e-Islami leader, the outfit on December 20 last year threatened to attack the Bangladesh High Commission in Islamabad.

Tehrik-e-Taliban, led by Maulana Fazlullah, gained notoriety for a failed bombing attempt in Times Square, New York, on May 1, 2010. Even on Sunday, Tehrik-e-Taliban operatives carried out a bomb attack in North Waziristan of Pakistan that killed 20 soldiers and injured at least 30 people.

7 BNP leaders get HC bail

FROM PAGE 1

filed with police stations in Keraniganj and Savar.

Amir Khasru Mahmud Chowdhury got bail in two cases recently filed in Chittagong for creating violence.

The accused leaders, except for Mahub Uddin Khokon, appeared before the HC bench yesterday for bail in the cases, Deputy Attorney General Md Salim told this correspondent.

Earlier in the day, the same HC bench granted a six-month bail to BNP Joint Secretary General AM Mahub Uddin Khokon in three cases, including the one for Bangla Motor arson attack.

Following the HC order, there is no legal bar to Khokon's release, said barrister AKM Ehsanur Rahman, a counsel for the BNP leader.

Also the secretary of Supreme Court Bar Association, Khokon filed the bail petitions through his lawyer on Sunday.

Of the four cases, the first one was filed for killing a police during a Hefajat-e-Islam rally at Motijheel on May 5 last year, while the second for blasting crude bombs at Kamalapur during an opposition-sponsored demonstration on November 5.

The third case was lodged for an arson

attack on a police requisitioned bus at Bangla Motor that left a policeman killed on December 25.

A day after the Bangla Motors arson attack, detectives arrested Khokon in front of Matshya Bhawan in the capital.

As many as 20 central leaders of the BNP and five top leaders of Jatiyatabadi Chhatra Dal and Jatiyatabadi Swachhasebak Dal are now behind bars in different cases.

DON'T HARASS MIR NASIR: HC
The HC yesterday directed the government not to harass or show BNP leader Mir Mohammad Nasiruddin arrested in any case "without the due process of law".

The HC came up with the order following a writ petition filed by the accused. The order means that police cannot implicate or show Nasiruddin arrested in any more cases if his name is not mentioned in the first information report (FIR) of the case and if there is no specific allegation or arrest order against him, his lawyer Ruhul Quddus Kazal told The Daily Star.

Police have already shown Nasiruddin arrested in three cases. The BNP leader has secured bail in two cases.

Nasiruddin was arrested on November 10 last year.

Public apology

FROM PAGE 16

Early reports suggest that the contractor got hold of the giant trove of data thanks to the access Korea Credit Bureau enjoys to databases run by three big South Korean credit card firms. The contractor stole the data by copying it to a USB stick.

Regulators are now looking into security measures at the three credit card firms -- KB Kookmin Card, Lotte Card, and NH Nonghyup Card -- to ensure data stays safe. A task force has been set up to investigate the impact of the theft.

In a statement the Financial Services Commission (FSC), Korea's national financial regulator, said: "The credit card firms will cover any financial losses caused to their customers due to the latest accident."

Another official at the FSC said the data was easy to steal because it was unencrypted and the credit card firms did not know it had been copied until investigators told them about the theft.

Attackers of Hindus won't be spared

FROM PAGE 16

The BNP chief had not only decided to boycott the polls, but also tried hard to foil it, mentioned Hasina, also president of the Awami League. "For that, she [Khaleda] imposed hartals and blockades day after day."

Terming Khaleda Zia a failed person, she said: "You [Khaleda] tried to wage a movement, but failed. You tried to foil the election, but failed."

"The BNP chief now wants to burn up the whole country with the fire of anger as she failed at everything else. That's why she [Khaleda] is now killing people and playing game with the lives and properties of people

through terrorism and militancy," she added.

The PM asked the BNP chairperson to stop destructive activities as people want peace.

She complained that the BNP chief had put her highest effort to save war criminals. "Why do you [Khaleda] want to save war criminals? I think the BNP leader doesn't believe in country's freedom. She still sees Pakistan in her dreams. That's why she has affection for war criminals."

The BNP and Jamaat cadres killed people in all upazilas of Satkhira to save war criminals, alleged Hasina.

Emphasising the need for peace

across the country, the PM said it is not possible to develop the country economically without peace.

She urged people to make united efforts for resisting any sort of terrorism and militancy. The government with the help of mass people will eradicate militancy and terrorism from the country, she added.

Health and Family Welfare Minister Mohammad Nasim, Civil Aviation and Tourism Minister Rashed Khan Menon, State Minister for Home Affairs Asaduzzaman Khan Kamal and local lamaker Mostafa Lutfullah spoke at the rally, organised by the local Awami League.

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