

## Tulip among 1,000 most influential London people

UNB, Dhaka

British MP Tulip Siddiq has been named in the progress list of London's 1,000 most influential people.

Tulip, Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman's granddaughter and Sheikh Rehana's daughter, expressed her happiness over the selection through her official Facebook page and Twitter. "I was honoured to find out last night that the London Evening Standard has included me in their list of 1000 most influential people in London. I must admit that the phrase "no shrinking violet" never gets old!" her Facebook post reads.

She is Labour's Member of Parliament from her home seat of Hampstead and Kilburn. The newspaper -- Evening Standard -- published its Progress list of London's 1,000 most influential people recently.

London Mayor Sadiq Khan heads the list, followed by British Prime Minister Theresa May, but it is an astonishingly diverse group: the top 25 include an athlete, a bishop, a Facebook executive and an astronaut -- Tim Peake.

What the 1,000 individuals in the list represent is the changing face of London: diverse, adaptable, socially inclusive -- and progressive, accordingly to the newspaper.

## Didn't insult Obama, says Duterte

Calls UN chief 'fool'

AFP, Jakarta

Philippine President Rodrigo Duterte insisted yesterday he had not intended to insult US leader Barack Obama, but immediately took aim at another global figure by labelling UN chief Ban Ki-moon a "fool".

Duterte sparked a storm on the eve of an Asian summit this week by labelling Obama a "son of a whore", prompting the US president to cancel a planned meeting. The pair met briefly later at the gathering in Laos after Duterte expressed regret.

But acid-tongued Duterte yesterday said the Philippine expression "putangina" should not be taken at face value, and it was "an ordinary expression (used) by everyone".

"It's son of a bitch or son of a gun. It's not son of a whore," he told an audience of Filipinos during a visit to the Indonesian capital Jakarta.

He insisted his remarks were not directed at Obama but at the US State Department, which has raised concerns over potential human rights violations in Duterte's anti-crime campaign which has left almost 3,000 dead in just over two months.

Duterte said he had clarified his comments to Obama when they met.

The United Nations has also spoken out against his crime crackdown and yesterday Duterte added UN chief Ban, who spoke at the Asian summit, to the list of those he has insulted. "I told myself, you're just one more fool," Duterte said of Ban.

"I will continue the campaign against the criminals. I do not have any pity for them," he added.

## FBI takes threat of US election hack 'seriously'

AFP, Washington

The FBI is taking "very seriously" the possibility a foreign country is trying to meddle with America's electoral process and even influence voting outcomes, the agency's director James Comey said Thursday.

US agencies, companies and individuals are frequently targeted by overseas hackers, and Democratic presidential nominee Hillary Clinton's campaign has accused Moscow of hacking into Democratic National Committee (DNC) emails.

The recent breach of DNC data, along with other electronic intrusions, has raised concerns about cyber incidents that could affect the outcome of the US presidential race, or other contests.

FBI agents "take very seriously the notion that a state actor is messing somewhat in our electoral process -- whether that is to disrupt, to influence, to sow discord, or to create doubt," Comey said at a Washington security summit, without specifically mentioning Russia.

The FBI is "working very hard" to understand the size and scope of any hacking attempts, he said, but tried to reassure the public that the old-fashioned way of tallying ballots in many states protects them from hackers.

## India to release

FROM PAGE 16

grown in Indian oilseed fields now.

According to Indian agriculture ministry statistics, the country had to import over 12 million tonnes of edible oil against nine million it produced in 2014-15 to meet the domestic demand.

Talking to this correspondent in Kolkata on Wednesday, Dr SR Rao, adviser of India's Department of Biotechnology (DBT), said the release of GM mustard with higher yield potential would be welcome news, as India has to spend \$10 to 12 billion for paying yearly import bills of edible oil.

Every year India imports millions of tonnes of soybean and rapeseed oil (like mustard) originated from GM oilseeds.

The Centre for Genetic Manipulation of Crop Plants (CGMCP) at UDSC used two genes -- barnase and barstar -- isolated from a common soil bacterium called *Bacillus amyloliquefaciens* -- to get hybrid vigour in mustard, giving promise to higher yield potentials.

Subsequent field trials over the past few years carried out in various regions of India validated the fact that DMH-11 has got up to 38 percent yield advantage over the currently cultivated mustard varieties in India. Mustard is India's top consuming cooking oil followed by groundnut oil, sunflower oil, castor oil and soybean.

India has been commercially growing non-food genetically modified crop -- Bt cotton -- for the last 14 years and the country turned out to be a cotton exporting nation from a cotton-starved one during that period.

But when it comes to GM food crop, Indian policy planners backtracked from regulators decision in the past. Around three years before Bangladesh's release of GM crop, Indian GEAC had given approval for release of Bt brinjal in that country. But in the face of anti-GMO groups' outcry, the then Indian minister for environment Jairam Ramesh overruled the release order.

SR Rao said for all these years, the release of Bt brinjal had been kept on a perpetual moratorium. Of late, risk assessment on the GM brinjal started afresh.

Talking to The Daily Star on the sideline of a workshop titled "GM Crops and Food Safety" at Bose Institute, Visva-Bharati University Vice-Chancellor Prof Swapan Kumar Datta said, "Bangladesh has shown the political will and courage in promoting biotech science by releasing Bt brinjal."

Born and brought up in Bangladesh's Sirajganj, Prof Datta had served the International Rice Research Institute (IRRI) earlier and widely credited with infusing vitamin-A producing gene in BRRI dhan-29, which is now under confined field test for being released as "Golden Rice".

The United States Food and Drug Administration's (FDA) Consumer Safety Officer Dr Carrie McMahon told this correspondent, "Our policy is to protect human and animal health while not hindering innovation."

Dr Carrie was delivering speeches on regulators' role in ensuring safety of foods derived from GM crops at Bidhan Chandra Krishi Viswavidyalaya in Nadia, West Bengal on Tuesday.

Prof Julian Adams, who has been teaching molecular, cellular and development biology at University of Michigan for the last four decades, was sharing dais with Dr Carrie at food safety workshops both at Bose Institute and at Bidhan Chandra Krishi Viswavidyalaya.

He said had there been no adoption of GM crops by 28 countries since 1996, some 21 million hectares of additional land would have been required to grow the additional food derived from agrobiotech.

Welcoming the Indian regulators' go-ahead to GM mustard, India's leading daily Time of India ran editorial "Let Science Lead" on Wednesday.

"Adoption of GM crops ought to be a pivotal strategy in increasing agricultural yields and assessing India's food security -- launching a much-needed second Green Revolution. But for that to happen politics needs to be kept at bay with science forming the sole basis of formulating policies regarding GM crops," reads the editorial.

A total of 28 countries grow GM crops on 170 million hectares of land with the US and Brazil on the forefront, according to the International Service for the Acquisition of Agri-Biotech Applications (ISAAA). Of these countries, 20 are developing nations while only eight are industrialised countries.

A 100-fold increase in acreage from 1.7 million hectares in 1996 to 170 million hectares in 2012 makes GM crops the fastest adopted crop technology in the history of modern agriculture, says ISAAA, a non-profit international network that operates from New York, Kenya and the Philippines.

## Circus elephant

FROM PAGE 16

captured by municipal officials in the Pimpri-Chinchwad industrial township after they spoke to forest officials over the phone about how to calm her down.

The Indian Express reported that it was around 10:00am on Wednesday, when the three caretakers of Rambo Circus took Nitya, one of the four elephants in the circus, out of the Bhosari circus ground for a bath.

Speaking to the newspaper, Circus spokesman Sujith Dilip said: "Nitya is very gentle by nature. Even on the circus ground, she roams around when set free without harming anyone and anything."

"The caretaker would have succeeded in controlling her, but she became nervous, scared and stressed seeing so many people around her."

"Her mother too wasn't around and hence she started running here and there. The people were scared and so was she."

Rambo Circus moved its main base to Bengaluru in July, but could not take four of its elephants including Nitya because of a pending transit permit.

Mahesh Swami, assistant police inspector of the Bhosari Police station, commented: "Though no outward incident happened, we have warned the circus owner to take precautionary measures."

The Animal Welfare Board had recently seized a few animals of the circus after complaints that they were being tortured.

## Tanners fix

FROM PAGE 1

Last year, the price of per square foot salted cowhide was fixed between Tk 50 and Tk 55 in Dhaka and between Tk 40 and Tk 45 outside the capital, according to data from Bangladesh Tanners' Association.

The price of goatskin was fixed between Tk 20 and Tk 22 per sft across the country last year.

The Eid-ul-Azha will be observed across the country on September 13.

The tanners were supposed to declare the prices on Wednesday as per an instruction by Commerce Minister Tofail Ahmed given on Monday.

But they were late for setting the prices of rawhide as traders in the leather and rawhide business could not reach a consensus.

In 2015-16, Bangladesh exported leather and leather goods worth \$1.16 billion, which was \$1.13 billion in the previous fiscal year and \$1.29 billion in 2013-14, according to the Export Promotion Bureau.

## 33 Bangladeshi

FROM PAGE 16

deceased, he said most of the bodies have already been laid to rest while the rest would be buried after completion of necessary formalities.

No family members have applied for bringing the bodies of the deceased back home, the consular added. "Family members usually do not request us to send the bodies back home. So we arrange burials here after receiving permission from the relatives."

On another note, Masudur said the Bangladesh hajj authorities in Saudi Arabia have completed all arrangements for performing hajj smoothly.

"We received only one complaint against a hajj agent about unsatisfactory accommodation," he said, adding that the agent later resolved the problem.

A total of 1,01,797 Bangladeshi hajj pilgrims, including 5,183 under government management, have reached Saudi Arabia to perform the holy ritual from today.

The return flights for the hajjis will be operated from September 17 till October 17.

## Toilets occupying

FROM PAGE 5

National River Protection Commission Act 2013.

Contacted, Enamul Habib, chief executive officer of SCC, said he had already visited the place and lawful action will be taken against the Kazirabar Fish Traders' Association.

"Poor governance and corruption allowed this to happen. However, we appreciate that the corporation is inquiring..." said Sharif Jamil, joint secretary of Bangladesh Paribesh Andolon.

But, the structure is still there and frequently used.

There are legal provisions to demolish such illegal structures and bring the grabbers under legal action, he added.

## Ban on fishing

FROM PAGE 16

the sea after spawning, he added.

The government has been imposing fishing bans since 2003-04 to protect mother hilsas.

The catch of hilsa rose significantly this year due to the successful implementation of ban over the last couple of years, said Shafikur, fisheries officer in Chandpur.

A total of 3.5 lakh tonnes of hilsa were caught last year and the number might exceed 4 lakh tonnes next year if the mother hilsas are saved during this spawning season, he noted.

## BTRC inks €157m

FROM PAGE 1

and Telecommunications Tarana Halim and French Ambassador to Bangladesh Sophie Aubert were also present.

The BTRC had finalised the Tk 1,386 crore deal in July and sent it to the government for approval. The telecom regulator was recently given the go-ahead, said Mahmood.

This is the lowest ever interest rate from the HSBC globally, he added.

State Minister Tarana said although it took quite a long time to finalise the loan deal, the project is being implemented without wasting time.

"It's a project with national pride and we will be able to launch the satellite according to our plan," she added.

Senior BTRC officials said the HSBC loan will be spent on the satellite's design and installation with an insurance coverage.

Besides, the government will spend another €56.5 million from its own resources for launching the satellite.

The project cost has been estimated at Tk 2,967.95 crore, of which Tk 1,314 crore would come from the government exchequer.

Officials said the cost might come down as the BTRC has received offers lower than the prices estimated two years ago.

Earlier in November last year, the telecom regulator had signed a \$248 million deal with Thales Alenia Space, a French aerospace manufacturer, to design, install and launch the satellite.

After installation, the satellite will be taken to Florida's Cape Canaveral

for launch. It is expected to be launched on the Victory Day (December 16) in 2017, according to project officials.

The BTRC has already paid about €71 million in three installments to Thales after borrowing money from a local bank. The loan would be adjusted after receiving the credit from HSBC.

Meanwhile, the telecom regulator is working to form a public limited company named Bangladesh Satellite Communication Ltd to look after the commercial operation of the satellite.

Senior BTRC officials said they have received approval from the Registrar of Joint Stock Companies and Firms for the new entity.

Bangladesh currently meets its demand for satellite connectivity by renting bandwidth from foreign operators, which costs the country around \$14 million a year. The Bangabandhu-1 satellite will save the foreign currency.

According to the Development Project Proforma (DPP) of the project, the scheme would reach break-even point in seven years after the satellite's launch. It would enable the BTRC to sell any spare capacity to other nations.

The satellite is expected to provide services to all South Asian countries as well as Indonesia, the Philippines, Turkmenistan, Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan, if its frequency is properly coordinated, said the DPP.

The government has further plans to launch two more satellites.

## Fakhrul slates removal

FROM PAGE 16

the 38th founding anniversary of Jatiyatabadi Mohila Dal, the women wing of BNP.

Mohila Dal was established on September 9, 1978.

On September 7, the government removed BNP founder Zia's Swadhinata Padak (Independence Award) from the museum.

Criticising the liberation war affairs minister's remark on relocation of Zia's grave from the parliament premises, Fakhrul said, "A minister yesterday [Thursday] threatened to shift Ziaur Rahman's grave to other place [from the parliament area]. We strongly condemn and protest it."

"These decisions will only isolate them [the government] from the people further."

On Thursday, Liberation War Affairs Minister AKM Mozammel Huq at a discussion in the city raised doubt whether Zia's body is in the grave in the parliament area and demanded that the grave be shifted from that place.

Fakhrul also claimed that Ziaur Rahman is the proclaimer of Bangladesh's independence and said, "It is very unfortunate that the anti-people government has deviated from the spirit of the Liberation War."

Either by removing the accolade or by relocating Zia's grave, the government would not be able to efface or belittle his image from the hearts of the people as it is engraved in their minds,

he said.

"It won't be possible to underestimate Zia by removing his award and relocating his grave. Valiant freedom fighter Zia will be in the hearts of 16 crore people," he observed.

In 2003, the then BNP-Jamaat four-party alliance government gave the Swadhinata Padak, the highest civil award, to Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman and Ziaur Rahman for their role in the Liberation War and nation building.

The then main opposition in parliament, the Awami League, had strongly criticised the government's move and refused to accept the award. The party had said that giving award to Bangabandhu and Zia was a conspiracy to compare the two on a same scale.

As the AL refused the award, the government had then sent the medals and citation papers to the National Museum for display.

At a discussion in the Jatiya Press Club, Fakhrul warned the government that it would face dire consequences if it tries to remove Zia's grave from the parliament area.

BNP's Dhaka city unit organised the discussion, protesting against the removal of Zia's Swadhinata Padak from the museum.

As per the schedule, the BNP will hold demonstrations in every district and metropolitan headquarters today, protesting the incident.

## Donald Trump

FROM PAGE 16

"I've never seen anything like the attacks we're seeing now," Kelly Shackelford, president of the First Liberty Institute legal organization, told the gathering.

The billionaire Trump, who is under pressure to convince the far right of his conservative values, is also well aware of his need to court middle-of-the-road voters including independents, as he trails Hillary in most polls ahead of the November 8 election.

'BIRTHING' NO MORE?

In that vein his campaign has taken steps to distance the Republican nominee from his years-long propagation of the "birther" conspiracy theory that Obama was not born in the United States.

"He believes President Obama was born here... He was born in Hawaii," Trump campaign manager Kellyanne Conway told CNN.

Her comments came a day after Trump surrogate and former New York mayor Rudy Giuliani made similar statements.

Trump himself has so far refused to acknowledge Obama's presidential legitimacy once and for all.

The real estate magnate was the most prominent early proponent of a theory that Obama, the nation's first black president, was not born in the United States and therefore, under the US Constitution, ineligible to be commander in chief.

Trump embraced the long-debunked "birther movement" in early 2011, eager to push the theory as a way to connect with white conservatives and catapult himself to prominence while he mulled his own run for the White House.

Years later, in 2016, Trump rode to primary victory thanks overwhelmingly to white support.

Hillary has attacked Trump as recently as Thursday for refusing to disavow the birther theory.

"We are facing a candidate with a long history of racial discrimination in his business, who traffics in toxic conspiracy theories like the lie that President Obama is not a true American," Hillary told the National Baptist Convention in Kansas City.

"If he doesn't even respect all Americans, how can he serve all Americans?" Hillary asked. "So we must keep calling him out, and rejecting the hateful, bigoted rhetoric that seeks to pit Americans one against each other."

PAYING RESPECTS ON 9/11

Hillary meanwhile was convening a Friday working session addressing terrorism and national security in New York with a bipartisan group of experts including former acting CIA director Michael Morell, former commander of US forces in Afghanistan John Allen, and retired US Navy admiral James Stavridis.

She will also attend an evening fundraiser in the city featuring legendary singer and actress Barbra Streisand.

The national security gathering comes just two days before the country marks the 15th anniversary of the September 11 attacks on the World Trade Center in New York and the Pentagon in Washington.

Hillary, a former US senator representing New York, will attend the ceremony at Ground Zero tomorrow. She is going not in a campaign or political capacity but "to pay her respects," a campaign aide told AFP.

## Ukraine reports first combat death since new truce

AFP, Kiev

Ukraine on Friday reported its first combat death since a new ceasefire with pro-Russian rebels went into effect on September 1.

"In the past day, as a result of military activities, one of our soldiers died and two were wounded," Ukrainian military spokesman Andriy Lysenko told reporters.

Lysenko said rebels attacked in the flashpoint town of Mariinka, which straddles the buffer zone between the warring sides' forces.