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Use of banned net killing fish resources

A threat to biodiversity in Sundarbans

DIPANKAR ROY with ANDREW EAGLE

To stroll along the Pankhali Ferry Ghat riverbank via Chalna Bazar in Khulna's Dacope upazila is to watch fishers busy, dawn to dusk, as they haul fine-mesh triangular nets in the hope of collecting juvenile shrimp. A livelihood for hundreds, the illegal activity continues unabated, threatening the biodiversity and ecological balance of Sundarbans waterways including the Shibsha River.

"Large numbers of juvenile crustaceans and fish fry of various species are destroyed every day," says environmentalist Anawarul Kadir. "Such fishing activities impede healthy fish reproduction and spoil the ecosystem. While it continues, one can only be anxious about our environmental future."

The use of fine-mesh current nets is banned in order to protect fish stocks. But such government regulation is routinely ignored.

According to Chandon Shil, a fisheries and marine technology student from Khulna University, current net fishing occurs throughout the protected mangrove forest, where unscrupulous forest department officials turn a blind eye; while some police personnel allow such catch to be sold in public markets.

This time of year is the breeding season for many fish and crustacean species, with the rivers of the Sundarbans attracting large schools of fish for mating. But the natural fish nursery is disturbed, not only by the harvesting of juvenile

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Fishermen catching shrimp fry in the Baleswar river in Bagerhat's Mongla upazila with fine nets, an act that also destroys other fish species and damages biodiversity. The fry would be sold to shrimp hatcheries in the area.

FILE PHOTO

SCHOOL COMMITTEE POLLS Headmaster, 3 others beaten up

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Jhalakathi

A school headmaster and three others were beaten up on Monday night allegedly by the Jhalakathi sadar upazila chairman and his men over holding an election to a school managing committee.

Latifur Rahman, headmaster of Gobindo Dabol Primary School, and Uttam Dass, a trader of Kirtipasha Bazar, have been shifted to Barisal Sher-e-Bangla Medical College Hospital from Jhalakathi Sadar Hospital as their condition deteriorated.

Uttam's sister Boni Rani Dass and sister-in-law Anjona Rani Dass were treated at the sadar hospital.

Latifur claimed to The Daily Star that the accused broke his hand and leg with hockey sticks at a field near Ramnagar Police Box on picking him up from Ronals Road in Jhalakathi on a government vehicle used by the chairman.

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RELOCATION FROM HAZARIBAGH Tanners seek time from HC till Eid-ul-Azha

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Tannery owners have sought permission from the High Court to operate their factories in the city's Hazaribagh until the Eid-ul-Azha this year, claiming that the Tannery Industrial Estate in Savar and its central effluent treatment plant were not fully ready for their relocation.

The Tannery Owners Association and Bangladesh Finished Leather, Leather Goods and Footwear Exporters Association jointly filed a petition with the HC in this regard on March 23.

The HC bench of Justice Syed Refaat Ahmed and Justice Md Salim started hearing the petition yesterday. The court fixed today for resuming the hearing.

According to the petition, the process of providing gas connections to the industrial units in Savar was incomplete.

The environment pollution level decreased in Hazaribagh area as rawhide was not allowed in, tanners' lawyer Barrister Mehedi Hasan Chowdhury told The Daily Star, adding that construction of

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2010 BLAST AT CJ'S RESIDENCE

Court orders fresh probe into case

CHAITANYA CHANDRA HALDER and TUHIN SHUBHRA ADHIKARY

A Dhaka court has ordered reinvestigation into a case filed in connection with 2010 Molotov cocktail attack on then chief justice ABM Khairul Haque's residence.

The order was made over eight months after the police had submitted a final report discharging five accused BNP men.

Three police officials probed the incident as investigation officers (IOs) and the last one submitted the final report.

On March 2 this year, Additional Public Prosecutor Taposh Kumar Paul filed a petition seeking reinvestigation of the case. The prosecutor brought an allegation that the IO, being influenced by the accused, submitted the final report without uncovering the truth.

"The case should be reinvestigated as the investigation officer did not carry out the investigation properly even though the names of the accused were mentioned in the FIR," he wrote.

Judge Kamrul Hossain Mollah of the Metropolitan Sessions Judge's Court of Dhaka accepted his prayer and directed the Police Bureau of Investigation to carry out an investigation and submit the report on April 20.

Of the five accused, Moazzem Hossain Alal was the president of Jatiyatabadi Jubo Dal, Habib-un-Nabi Khan Sohel was the president of Swechhchasebak Dal and Sultan Salauddin Tuku was the Chhatra Dal president.

The other two were then human rights affairs secretary of BNP Nasir Uddin Asim and Akhter Hamid Paban, son of then BNP secretary general Khandker Delwar Hossain.

According to the case documents, two crude bombs exploded in the

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Anti-terror steps should not restrict freedom: UN

UNB, Dhaka

The UN Human Rights Committee has urged Bangladesh to make sure that counterterrorism measures were not used to restrict freedom of expression and opinion of journalists and human rights defenders.

The committee in its concluding observations on the civil and political rights record said the State party should ensure that its counter-terrorism legislation was in full conformity with the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights.

It advocated that the death penalty should not be imposed for offences, such as the financing of terrorism, which do not constitute the "most serious crimes" within the meaning of article 6 (2) of the Covenant.

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Biggest dinosaur footprint found



MAIL ONLINE

The world's largest dinosaur footprint has been uncovered in northwestern Australia.

Measuring nearly 5 feet 9 inches (1.75 meters), the track belongs to a sauropod - a huge long-necked herbivore who roamed the region 140 million years ago.

It was found alongside an unprecedented 21 different types of dinosaur tracks in an area dubbed 'Australia's Jurassic Park'.

Dr Steve Salisbury, a palaeontologist at University of Queensland and lead author of a paper on the findings, said it was the most diverse discovery of its kind in the world.

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QUESTION LEAK Principal, 8 others held

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Detectives arrested nine people, including a school principal, for their alleged involvement in leaking multiple choice questions (MCQs) of different public examinations online.

The gang used to leak questions of SSC, HSC and JSC exams by taking snaps of the question papers usually around an hour before the beginning of the exams, said Abdul Baten, joint commissioner of the Detective Branch of Dhaka Metropolitan Police.

"They solved the MCQs within 30 minutes and uploaded them on their Facebook group from where the students got the answers right before the exams began," he told a press briefing at DMP media centre yesterday.

The question papers were leaked either during

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A car jumped onto the road median near the city's Ramna Police Station yesterday morning leaving two of its passengers injured after it tried to speed past another car. A tow truck later pulled it off.

PHOTO: ANISUR RAHMAN

Comilla city goes to polls tomorrow

Candidates of AL, BNP end hectic campaign

KHALID BIN NAZRUL from Comilla

Mayoral candidates from the ruling Awami League and the BNP wrapped up their intensive two-week-long campaign in Comilla yesterday midnight in the run-up to the city corporation polls.

More than two lakh voters are entitled to cast their ballots tomorrow to elect city mayor from four contestants -- former mayor BNP nominated Monirul Hoque Shakoo, former ward councillor and AL candidate Anjum Sultana Sima, Shirin Akter from Jatiya Samajtantrik Dal (JSD-Rob) and independent candidate Maj (Ret) Mamunur Rashid.

This is the first election under the newly-

formed Election Commission, in which candidates from both the ruling party and the BNP are participating and they seem to be neck and neck in the electoral race.

Huge security measures have been taken to ensure free and fair voting and to maintain law and order during the election. Members of Border Guard Bangladesh have already started patrolling the city.

According to BNP leaders, the city election is a litmus test for the EC that can gain people's faith by holding free and fair polls.

However, Awami League's advisory council member HT Imam told journalists yesterday that he didn't agree to what BNP leaders said.

Former Comilla municipality was

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