



Unknown miscreants set fire to the house of Brojendra Singha, president of the Chhatak upazila branch of Monipuri Samaj Kalyan Samity, an association of the indigenous community, yesterday afternoon. The family members were away and the house was locked at the time.

PHOTO: STAR

Govt issues circular recognising Dawra degree

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The government last night issued a circular, recognising Dawra degree of Qawmi madrasa as equivalent to Master's degree.

It means anyone having the Dawra-e-Hadith degree would now be treated as Master's degree holder in Islamic Studies or Arabic.

The circular was issued two days after Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina announced the recognition of the certificate of the highest degree awarded by Qawmi madrasas at a meeting with some 350 representatives of Qawmi madrasas at the Gono Bhaban.

"Keeping the unique characteristics of Qawmi madrasa and based on the basic principles of Darul Ulum Deobandh, the certificates of Dawra-e-Hadith of Qawmi madrasa has been given the status of Master's [Islamic Studies and in Arabic]," reads the circular from the education ministry.

In order to give the recognition, the ministry also formed a committee led by Hefajat-e-Islam chief Shah Ahmed Shafi, also the chairman of Befaql Madarisil Arabia Bangladesh.

The chairman can co-opt any member, but the number would not exceed 15, said the circular.

Over the certificate-related activities, the committee has been empowered as the highest decision making body.

The Dawra-e-Hadith examinations will be held under the supervision of the committee. One or several sub-committee (s) can be formed to formulate the syllabus, exam system and time, question papers, evaluate answer scripts and other relevant activities.

The committee will report to the education ministry, reads the circular.

It's surrender

FROM PAGE 20

degree at a meeting with some 350 representatives of Qawmi madrasas at the Gono Bhaban.

At the meeting, Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina said she did not like setting up the statue of "Greek Goddess Themis" on the SC premises, reported UNB.

Around Tuesday midnight, unknown miscreants smeared graffiti painted on roadside walls near the CU institute with burnt lubricants.

Speaking at yesterday's rally, publisher Robin Ahsan expressed concerns that once government implementation of the demand of Hefajat-e-Islam by removing the statue, they may seek removal of other sculptures from across the country.

Slamming the government move to recognise Qawmi madrasa certificates, Bangladesh Chhatra Union President GM Zilani Shuvo claimed that the national flag is not raised at the madrasas and "they also don't play the national anthem". "Have these issues been fixed?" he questioned.

Badiur Rahman, vice president of Udichi central committee, said the government decision was a "stark attack on the Bangladeshi culture". He also called for launching a nationwide movement against the decision.

Udichi Central Committee President Shafiqul Islam and Gonojagoran Mancha activist Jibananda Jayanta, among others, spoke at the rally.

Dhaka a reliable partner of Moscow

Says Russian foreign minister; Bangladesh, Russia ink two MoUs

UNB, Dhaka

Terming Bangladesh a reliable partner of his country, Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov yesterday highly appreciated the improving bilateral relations between the two countries since Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina's official visit to Moscow in 2013.

Foreign Minister AH Mahmood Ali had official talks with his Russian counterpart in Moscow in the morning. He witnessed the signing of two Memoranda of Understanding (MoUs) with Russia on cooperation in the field of mass communications.

Mahmood urged the Russian minister to consider resuming the Bangla Service of Radio Moscow, according to a message received here.

This was the first official visit by a Bangladesh foreign minister to Russia at the invitation of the Russian FM since the then USSR recognised Bangladesh as an independent country in January 1972.

The visit also coincided with 45

years of diplomatic relations between the two countries.

Lavrov expressed happiness at the increased two-way trade that crossed \$1.5 billion in 2015-2016 and hoped that bilateral economic cooperation would be further intensified in future.

Mahmood handed over a letter from Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina to Lavrov. Hasina in the letter addressed to her Russian counterpart Dmitry Medvedev invited him to visit Bangladesh.

The Bangladesh minister sought Lavrov's support for duty- and quota-free access of Bangladeshi products to Russian market and also to the member states of Russia-led Eurasian Economic Union.

The two ministers discussed regional issues of mutual interests, including the situation concerning the Rohingya Muslims from Myanmar.

Later, Mahmood visited the Russian telecom and mass communications ministry and had a meeting with the minister-in-charge Nikolai A Nikiforov.

45,000 children die

FROM PAGE 20

said the physician who teaches microbiology at the Noakhali Science and Technology University.

Though Bangladesh made much progress in sanitation, certain hard-to-reach areas, mostly in coastal regions, lagged behind, added Firoze.

Launches plying rivers release human excreta into the rivers, polluting the water. It makes use of river water by the coastal people risky.

The physician suggested that the government should increase investment and improve management of drinking water.

According to the WHO report, 42 percent urban population in Bangladesh don't use improved sanitation facilities, while the figure is 38 percent for rural population.

Besides, 13 percent people don't have improved drinking water sources.

The UN body found that the Bangladesh government increased its budget for WASH from \$308m in 2013 to \$548m in 2015, which was not

enough.

Bangladesh's total WASH expenditure was 0.41 percent of its GDP, while the per capita WASH expense was \$5. Half of the WASH finance in Bangladesh came from households, 23 percent from external sources and the rest from the government, said the report.

It said planned investments were yet to take into account the much more ambitious SDG target, which aimed for universal access to safely managed water and sanitation services by 2030.

Maria Neira, WHO director at the Department of Public Health, Environmental and Social Determinants of Health, said: "Today, almost two billion people use a source of drinking water contaminated with faeces, putting them at risk of contracting cholera, dysentery, typhoid and polio."

The report said many countries were not increasing their budget fast enough to meet the water and sanitation targets under the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

Nigeria seizes \$43m cash stash in Lagos house

AFP, Lagos

Nigeria's anti-graft agency seized over \$43 million in cash during a raid on a Lagos apartment in what it hailed as a victory for President Muhammadu Buhari's war on corruption following a string of setbacks.

The Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC) said in a statement issued late Wednesday it discovered the "humongous" amount of money in an apartment in Ikoyi, an upscale district of Lagos.

EFCC operatives found \$43.4 million along with £27,800 (\$34,807) and 23.2 million naira (\$73,301) in the seventh floor apartment after a tip-off from a person who noticed "suspicious movement of bags in and out of a particular apartment in the building."

"She comes looking haggard, with dirty clothes, but her skin didn't quite match her appearance, perhaps a disguise," said the anonymous source

quoted in the EFCC statement.

The money, kept immaculate in sealed plastic wrappers, was hidden in filing cabinets and behind hidden panels in a wardrobe.

No arrests have been made over the haul, EFCC spokesman Wilson Uwujaren told AFP.

"It is a major seizure," Uwujaren said. "For us it shows that the policy of government and whistleblowing is commendable."

The EFCC has been on the backfoot after facing resistance from the country's Senate and losing some key court battles.

Last week, a Lagos court lifted an EFCC order freezing some \$5 million in a bank account operated by Nigeria's former first lady Patience Jonathan.

An Abuja court also dismissed a corruption case against Justice Adeniyi Ademola and his wife on technical grounds.

2 moons

FROM PAGE 20

water plumes rising from the "tiger stripe" fractures in Enceladus' icy surface. Saturn's sixth-largest moon is an ice-encased world with an ocean beneath.

The researchers believe that the hydrogen originated from a hydrothermal reaction between the moon's ocean and its rocky core. If that is the case, the crucial chemical methane could be forming in the ocean as well.

"Now, Enceladus is high on the list in the solar system for showing habitable conditions," said Hunter Waite, leader of the Cassini Ion and Neutral Mass Spectrometer team at the Southwest Research Institute in San Antonio and lead author of the Enceladus study.

"The presence of hydrogen established another reference point saying there is hydrothermal activity inside this body, and that's interesting because we know in our own oceans, those are very important places that are teeming with life, and they are probably one of the earliest places where life happened on Earth."

Additionally, the Hubble Space Telescope showed a water plume erupting on the warmest part of the surface of Europa, one of Jupiter's moons with an icy crust over a salty liquid water ocean containing twice as much water as Earth's seas. This is the second time a plume has been observed in this exact spot, which has researchers excited that it could prove to be a feature on the surface.

"This is significant, because the rest of the planet isn't easy to predict or understand, and it's happening for the second time in the warmest spot," said Britney Schmidt, second author on the Europa study.

The necessary ingredients for life include liquid water, energy sources and chemicals such as carbon, hydrogen, oxygen, nitrogen, sulfur and phosphorus.

Europa and Enceladus are showcasing some of these key ingredients for life in their oceans, which is why researchers believe they are the best chance for finding life beyond Earth.

Previous results from the Cassini mission's flybys of Enceladus already had researchers intrigued. First, they could see plume material linked to interior water. They determined that the moon had a global ocean, and then a cosmic dust analyser revealed silicon dioxide grains, indicating warm hydrothermal activity.

"This (molecular hydrogen) is just like the icing on the cake," Waite said. "Now, you see the chemical energy source that microbes could use. The only thing we haven't seen is phosphorus and sulfur, and that's probably because they were in small enough quantities that we didn't see them. We have to go back and look and search for signs of life as well."

Earth is considered an ocean world because bodies of water cover the majority of the planet's surface. Other ocean worlds in the solar system, besides Europa and Enceladus, potentially include Jupiter's moons Ganymede and Callisto; Saturn's moons Mimas and Titan; Neptune's moon Triton; and the dwarf planet Pluto.

It is believed that Venus and Mars were once ocean worlds, but the greenhouse gas effect and a vulnerable atmosphere, respectively, caused those planets to lose their oceans.

'BGB-SMUGGLERS GUNFIGHT'

Myanmar woman killed, 4 injured in Cox's Bazar

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Cox's Bazar

An elderly Rohingya woman was killed and four others were hit by bullets when alleged yaba smugglers and BGB personnel "exchanged fire" at Shah Parir Dwip in Teknaf upazila early yesterday.

The deceased was identified as Jahida Khatun, 60.

The bullet-hit Myanmar nationals are: Mohammad Kashem, 80, Majuma, 49, and Rashida, 25. Bangladeshi Mohammad Shafiq, 35, of Shah Parir Dwip in Teknaf, was also among the injured.

The BGB team also detained a Bangladeshi and recovered 28,000 yaba tablets.

Lt Col Abujar Al Jahid, commanding officer of 2 BGB Battalion in Teknaf, said acting on a tip-off, a BGB patrol team went to Golarchar area along the Naf river around 12:30am.

They then saw two boats heading towards Bangladesh from Myanmar and signalled them to stop. Instead of stopping, alleged yaba smugglers on the boats opened fire. The BGB members returned fire, triggering a "gunbattle", the BGB official said.

During the "gunfight", four Myanmar citizens, including Jahida, and a Bangladeshi were hit.

The five were first taken to Teknaf Upazila Health Complex where doctors declared Jahida dead. The four others were later moved to Cox's Bazar Sadar Hospital.

One of the boats managed to turn

back, while the other got stuck in a char, the BGB official said, adding that the BGB members then searched the stranded boat and recovered 28,000 yaba tablets.

A case was filed with Teknaf Police Station.

Main Uddin Khan, officer-in-charge of the police station, said the body of Jahida was sent to Cox's Bazar Sadar Hospital morgue for autopsy.

AL 'cancels'

FROM PAGE 20

Wednesday said, "There's no link between the celebrations of Bangla New Year and religion...the festival is part of [our] cultural tradition."

She will hold a reception at her official residence Gono Bhaban to celebrate the day.

Dhaka city AL, now divided into North and South units, usually brings out the colourful procession from Bahadur Shah Park to Bangabandhu Avenue, the party's headquarters.

In a statement sent to the press on Wednesday, AL's Dhaka South City unit said they had taken every preparation to celebrate the day, including bringing out the procession.

"We cancelled the programme upon directive from the high-command," AL Dhaka South City unit General Secretary Shahey Alam Murad told The Daily Star yesterday afternoon.

The government recently directed all educational institutions to bring out Mongol Shobhajatra following Unesco's declaration of the procession in November last year as an Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity.

A haven for bats

FROM PAGE 20

Bats find shelter in caves, crevices, tree cavities and buildings. Some species are solitary while other form colonies of more than a million.

The greatest threat to bats is people. Habitat destruction and people's fear of bats makes a lethal combination. An emerging disease called White Nose Syndrome is killing large numbers of hibernating bats in North America.

Bats play an important role in our ecosystem. However, take caution when bats are near as they are also associated with diseases deadly to humans. Rabies, Nipah, Hendra, Ebola and Marburg are all viruses bats can carry.

But do not go hating bats because of this. They are incredibly important pollinators and they also eat mosquitoes. A single little brown bat can eat up to 1,000 mosquitoes in a single hour.

Bats are the only mammals capable of true flight.

With extremely elongated fingers and a membrane stretched between, bat's wing anatomically resembles the human hand. Almost 1,000 bat species can be found worldwide and they make up a quarter of all mammal species on earth, according to experts.

About 70 percent bats consume

insects, making them a natural pest controller. There are also fruit-eating bats; nectar-eating bats; carnivorous bats that prey on small mammals, birds, lizards and frogs; fish-eating bats, and perhaps most notorious, the blood-sucking bats of the Americas.

Bats can be found almost anywhere in the world, except the polar regions and extreme deserts.

While some species of bats have populations in the millions, others are smaller in number or are in decline.

Some bats have a highly sophisticated sense of hearing. They emit sounds that bounce off objects in their path, sending echoes back to the bats. From these echoes, the bats can determine the size of objects, how far away they are, how fast they are travelling and even their texture, all in split second.

Bats are divided into two suborders: Megachiroptera, meaning large bat, and Microchiroptera, meaning small bat. The large bats have a six-foot wingspan. The smallest bats are no more than an inch long.

Bats live longer than most other mammals of their size. The longest living known specimen in the wild was 30 years old.

| Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh Ministry of Planning Implementation Monitoring and Evaluation Division Monitoring & Evaluation Capabilities of IMED (1st Revised) Project Sher-E Bangla Nagar, Dhaka-1207. www.imes.gov.bd | | | | |
|--|--|--|----------------------------|------------------------------|
| Re-Request for Expression of Interest (EOI) | | | | |
| 1 | Ministry/Division: | Implementation Monitoring and Evaluation Division, Ministry of Planning. | | |
| 2 | Agency: | Implementation Monitoring and Evaluation Division (IMED). | | |
| 3 | Procuring Entity Name: | Strengthening Monitoring & Evaluation Capabilities of IMED (SMECI) (1st Revised). | | |
| 4 | Procuring Entity Code: | 1501-5019. | | |
| 5 | Procuring Entity District: | Dhaka. | | |
| 6 | EOI for Selection of: | Individual Consultant (Time-based). | | |
| 7 | EOI Ref No.: | 21.00.0000.060.14.011.17 | | |
| 8 | Date: | 14-April-2017. | | |
| KEY INFORMATION | | | | |
| 9 | Procurement Method: | Individual Consultant. | | |
| FUNDING INFORMATION | | | | |
| 10 | Budget and Source of Funds: | Development Budget (GOB). | | |
| 11 | Development Partners: | None. | | |
| PARTICULAR INFORMATION | | | | |
| 12 | Project/Programme Code: | 1501-5019. | | |
| 13 | Project/Programme Name: | Strengthening Monitoring & Evaluation Capabilities of IMED (SMECI) (1st Revised). | | |
| 14 | EOI Closing Date: | 24- April-2017. | | |
| INFORMATION FOR APPLICANTS | | | | |
| 15 | Brief Description of Assignment: | IT and MIS Specialist (Nos.-1): Reputed National Individual Consultant; S/he will monitor the progress of PMIS development according to ToR & Inception Report of IECI (the firm employed for PMIS development); integrating the PMIS with IMED, Planning Commission, ERD, FD and C&AG and any other authority if found required; prepare all related reports as required by PD; advice and arrange conference and seminar for collaboration with all stakeholders; facilitate and coordinate the PMIS training activities; testing, Installation, Monitor and Review the performance of the PMIS; work closely with project management to run e-format in place of existing IMED format and to run problem ranking system of all ADP projects by coding and sub-coding depends on all sorts of defined problems indicators; such other functions as may be assigned by higher authority. | | |
| 16 | Experience, Resources and Delivery Capacity Required: | IT and MIS Specialist: Applicants should have minimum Masters in IT or 4 years Bachelor in IT and minimum 10 years working experience as IT specialist. | | |
| 17 | Other Details: | Interested applicants shall obtain further information from the Project Office from 10:00 AM to 4:30 PM in any working day before the closing date. Applicants shall have to submit EOI with their CV and forwarding letter in sealed envelope labeled with Individual Consultant for "IT and MIS Specialist" under SMECI Project to the following address. | | |
| 18 | Association with foreign firm is: | Not applicable | | |
| 19 | Ref No. | Phasing of Services | Location | Indicative Start Date |
| | Cs/s8//13-15. | 10 Man Month | IMED, Ministry of Planning | May-2017 |
| PROCURING ENTITY DETAILS | | | | |
| 20 | Name of Official Inviting EOI: | Md. Habibur Islam. | | |
| 21 | Designation of Official Inviting EOI: | Project Director, SMECI Project. | | |
| 22 | Address of Official Inviting EOI: | Block # 12, Room # 06, IMED, Ministry of Planning, Sher-e-Bangla Nagar, Dhaka-1207. | | |
| 23 | Contact Details of Official Inviting EOI | Phone: 9118070, Fax: 9180749, Email: ihabibul@yahoo.com | | |
| 24 | The procuring entity reserves the right to accept or reject any/all tender(s) without assigning any reason whatsoever. | | | |
| Md. Habibur Islam Project Director SMECI | | | | |