

A treasure trove of marine lives

FROM PAGE 20

kilometres wide. At the edge of the shelf, depths in the trough are about 1,200 metres. It is globally famous for its cetaceans (whales, dolphins and porpoises) population.

An Isabela exploration team discovered three rare species of marine wildlife -- Minke whale, a mammal, masked booby, a seabird, and gastropod, a marine mollusc.

Based on secondary information gathered from literature review, an orientation was conducted to sensitise the 13-member Isabela team "Quest for Sea and Life" in the capital prior to the voyage. Team leader Kabir Bin Anwar, director general at the Prime Minister's Office, and this author informed the team about the mission.

The team started the journey from Dhaka in the evening of March 22. The next morning it was welcomed by a school of Ganges River Dolphin breaching estuarine waters in Dhaingrami dolphin sanctuary at the Passuriver.

Karotoa, a Bangladesh Navy ship that carried the team, left Mongla naval base later that morning and cruised through the Sundarbans to the destination. An introductory session about the mission, cruise route, methodology and safety aspects were conducted onboard by Kabir Bin Anwar, Sabbir, commander of Navy, and Shams, the captain of the ship.

The team was well equipped with necessary marine research gears and its members were from marine ecology, under water exploration, hydrology, ornithology, fisheries, blue economy and marine navigations. It was supported by a naval contingent of 80 members onboard.

The team members started taking notes of the field observation while cruising through the Sundarbans en route to Akram Point down to Hiron Point. It was very exciting to watch nature from the ship and the team stumbled upon different species of wild flora and fauna.

The bank of the river was full of diversity in floral composition which usually looks clustered of a specific plant community in each section, like Keya (pandanus) and Tiger fern; Golpata (Nipa palm); Sundari (Heretaria), Baen (Avicennia) groves; Keora (sonneratia); Geoa and Goaran community and so on.

Spotted deer were seen browsing at

the open floor of Keora forest; monkeys on the fruiting trees like Baen and Choi; White-bellied Sea Eagle perching on the top of a tall Keora tree; Lesser Adjutant stork and Osprey together with other shorebirds wading at the open mudflats and sand dunes; Crested Serpent Eagle, Grey-headed Fish Eagle and Kestrel soaring up high; Ringed lizard on the crevices and tree holes along the bank of canals and rivers. Groups of Irrawaddy dolphins and Indo-Pacific Humpback dolphins were also seen leaping in the channel between Hiron Point and Akram Point.

It was the early morning of March 24 when the team found a pair of Bryde's whalesplashing water fountain through their blow-hole. The sky was clear, the wind and the waves were modest and the water was blue at that time.

Everyone was exhilarated and feeling lucky to see the giant whale. The watchers on board were busy taking photos. The ship reduced its speed to avoid collision and maintained a safe distance so that the whales would not get annoyed.

We used binoculars and telescopes to track down marine lives. Crews of two TV channels also recorded videos. Our team members were given specific spots at the ship and asked to watch wildlife and keep records. The team took more than 2,000 images of Swatch of No-Ground. Later, all photographs were thoroughly checked and the images of species were identified. One such rare identification was Minke whale.

The common Minke whale (Balaenoptera acutorostrata) is the smallest baleen whale in the North Pacific. It is 7.5 metres in length when it is fully grown. It is known to feed on small schooling fish and invertebrates. It has 50 to 70 throat grooves on the underside of its body which can extend considerably when engulfing prey. Minke whales are most often solitary.

The masked booby (Sula dactylatra) is a large seabird of the booby family "Sulidae". This species breeds on islands in tropical oceans, except in the eastern Atlantic. It is also called the masked gannet or the blue-faced booby. The team first spotted and photographed the bird flying over Swatch of No-Ground on March 24.

Cruising around 200km of marine water there, the Isabela team came across two species of whales, six species of dolphins, 10 species of

seabirds, one species of sea turtle, 30 species fish, five species of shellfish and two species of seagrass. Striking among them are Minke Whale, Bryde's whale, Indo-Pacific humpback dolphin, Irrawaddy dolphin, Indo-Pacific Bottle-nose dolphin, Spinner dolphin, Masked booby, Great Black-headed gull, Crested Tern, Hawksbill turtle, Hammer-headed Shark, Tuna, Grouper and swimming crab.

A pair of live conch univalve mollusc got entangled in the fishing net. They were collected for identification and reference. The Isabela taxonomic group studied the specimen and identified them as Mirabilistrombus listeri (Gray, 1852), a group of conchs that are sometimes referred to as "true conchs".

Swatch of No-Ground is a mysterious submarine canyon in the Bay of Bengal which is geologically, hydrologically and ecologically unexplored marine ecosystem on earth. A part of it was announced as the country's first Marine Protected Area (MPA) by the Ministry of Environment and Forest.

It spans approximately 672 square miles (1,738 square kilometres) and is more than 900 metres in depth in some locations. The area is a key breeding and spawning ground for dolphins, whales, sharks and turtles. The marine protected area was declared for the long-term protection of cetaceans that inhabit the waters offshore of Bangladesh.

Anisuzzaman Khan is the chief adviser Isabela Foundation.

Tigers

FROM PAGE 1

The weather is likely to be bad as rain is forecast in the early afternoon in Dublin. Bangladesh are likely to retain much of the side that lost Wednesday's match against New Zealand by 15 runs. The Tigers should be eager to correct the batting errors that saw them lose steam at the end of their innings against New Zealand. They are also the side that would have felt more unfortunate for rain ruining the opener and stopping a recovery effort engineered by Tamim Iqbal and Mahmudullah Riyad. By virtue of a net run rate superior to Ireland's, Bangladesh are in second place in the table.

The tri-series is being played in a league format -- there will be no final and the team with the most points will be crowned champions.

Mayhem

FROM PAGE 20

The death of Afia, from Chapainawabganj, triggered a protest among her fellows. Around 200-300 students went to the hospital and vandalised several rooms and other things on the first floor. They also demanded punishment of the doctors.

Later, police brought the situation under control.

Prof Anwarul Islam, chairman of DU's zoology department, told journalists at the scene that he also came to know about the "wrong treatment" of his student.

"I have learnt from the medical file of Afia that she was suffering from cancer, but she was basically suffering from dengue," he said.

It totally proved incompetency of a doctor and that he was not fit for treating people, Anwarul added.

Prof Matiuir Rahman, consultant of Afia, also an owner of the hospital, told The Daily Star that the hospital authorities would form a three-member committee to investigate the matter.

He claimed that the doctor treated her properly, but he might have written the disease name carelessly.

In connection with the death of Afia, Dhaka University filed a case against nine people, including director and consultant of Central Hospital, with Dhanmondi Police Station.

RCC decides

FROM PAGE 20

Meanwhile, Bulbul called a general meeting yesterday to discuss reinstatement of previous panel mayors as well as former members of standing committees on various municipality affairs who were changed during his suspension between May 2015 and April this year.

But the meeting was postponed after the High Court on Wednesday gave a stay order on it following a writ petition of Councillor Nizam.

Nizam said he filed the writ, saying that law does not permit to change incumbent panel mayors and members of standing committees before expiry of their tenures.

Taking office in 2013, Bulbul made councillors -- Anwarul Amin, Nuruzzaman Tito and Nurin Nahar -- panel mayors who would become the acting mayor in his absence as per the rule.

After his suspension, ruling party men convinced the panel mayors to resign.

Then councillors Nizam, AKM Rashedul Hasan and Tahera Begum were made panel mayors, paving the way for the pro-ruling party man, Nizam, to become the RCC acting mayor.

Members of all 22 standing committees of the city corporation were also changed in absence of Bulbul.

Talking to this correspondent, Bulbul claimed that the High Court in its order said his suspension was illegal.

"Therefore, decisions taken by an illegal authority which do not serve the public interest should be scrapped," he said.

Elected in June 2013, Bulbul was suspended on May 7 in 2015 after courts accepted charge sheets against him in four criminal cases, including one for murder of a police constable.

Bulbul went to the HC and won the legal battle. Finally, the Supreme Court upheld the HC verdict on March 5 this year. Bulbul was reinstated on April 2.

Dutch king

FROM PAGE 20

KLM Cityhopper -- the airline's short-haul carrier -- flights for over 21 years.

Prior to that he piloted planes for Dutch carrier Martinair.

The King told the newspaper that he used the twice-monthly flights with KLM to decompress from his royal duties, with his pastime allowing him to fully concentrate on the task at hand.

"For me the most important thing is that I have a hobby for which I need to concentrate completely," he said.

"You have an aircraft, passengers and crew. You have responsibility for them. You can't take your problems from the ground into the skies. You can completely disengage and concentrate on something else. That, for me, is the most relaxing part of flying," he said.

King Willem-Alexander revealed he has been training to fly Boeing 737s which will soon replace KLM Cityhopper's Fokker 70 fleet.

According to information provided by the Royal Dutch household, King Willem-Alexander first took to the skies over 30 years ago while still a student. In the late 80's his passion took him to Kenya, where he worked as a volunteer pilot, first for the medical aid organization, African Medical Research & Education Foundation (AMREF), and later for the Kenya Wildlife Service.

But the Dutch King isn't the only royal with history in the cockpit.

Britain's heir to the throne, Prince Charles, is a qualified pilot, and his two sons, William and Harry, flew helicopters in their previous military careers -- William, a search-and-rescue chopper and Harry, Apache helicopters in Afghanistan.

Brunei's Sultan Hassanal Bolkiah also reportedly sometimes slips into the cockpit while flying on state visits.

Banani OC

FROM PAGE 1

4) allegedly raped the woman at an abandoned house in Korail bosti (slum). This is when the case of police negligence grew to bigger proportions.

Taking her two relatives with her, the rape victim, aged 23, visited The Daily Star centre on Monday evening to share her predicament.

While describing the incident, the woman said, after being raped, she was lying unconscious on a road inside Korail Bosti. Later, she was admitted to One Stop Crisis Centre of Dhaka Medical College Hospital.

"After my recovery, along with some papers -- mentioning that I was sexually assaulted, I was sent to the Banani Police Station to file the case," she said.

OC Farman Ali, on March 12, drove away the rape survivor, from the police station when she begged him to file a case, she said.

Finally, she had to go to a court to record her case at the Banani Police Station, said the victim.

Citing the OC's attitude towards her, she said, "I showed all the documents [of DMCH] to the OC and spent the whole day filing the case. But instead of recording my case, the OC threw the documents in front of me and forced me out of the police station."

"Later, I went to the police station for another two to three days to file a case. But police refused to record it," she said adding, that finding no alternative, she went to a Human Rights organisation, which advised her

to go to court.

She filed a complaint at a Nari O Shishu Tribunal-2 [Women and Children repression prevention tribunal] on March 29.

"The tribunal on April 14 ordered the Banani Police Station to record the case," Ziaur Rahman Khan, lawyer for the victim told The Daily Star.

Ziaur Rahman, however, said the Banani police finally recorded the case 14 days after the court order.

Expressing utter frustration about the development of the case, the rape survivor said none of the four alleged criminals, whose names were mentioned in the First Information Report, had been arrested so far.

Furthermore, instead of offering comfort, her husband, who is also a garment worker, is not communicating with her after the incident.

While visiting Korail slum yesterday, family members of the rape survivor told this correspondent that the four alleged rapists -- Junaid Hossain, Nayeb Ali, Sohag and Natib Ali -- are still in the area. Locals said the four youths provide water and electricity connections to the slum, a venture involving a huge amount of money.

Despite repeated attempts, Farman Ali did not receive the calls. He also did not reply to the text messages.

Deputy Commissioner (media), Dhaka Metropolitan Police, Masudur Rahman said the case had been filed and investigation was underway into all the allegations.

'Greatest witch hunt

FROM PAGE 20

four-month-old administration.

"With all of the illegal acts that took place in the Clinton campaign & Obama Administration, there was never a special counsel appointed!" Trump wrote, misspelling the word counsel as he referred to Democratic former President Barack Obama and former presidential candidate Hillary Clinton.

"This is the single greatest witch hunt of a politician in American history!" added Trump, who said in a speech on Wednesday that "no politician in history" had been treated worse or more unfairly than he has.

Democratic Senator Amy Klobuchar responded, "This is a truth hunt."

US stocks rallied back yesterday after seeing their biggest drop in eight months the previous day on worries that the political turmoil could sideline Trump initiatives such as tax cuts that investors see as favoring economic growth. Investors cited a supportive economic and corporate earnings backdrop for the modest rebound. In late morning trading, the benchmark S&P 500 was up about a third of a percent.

"European equities are now fully entangled in the Trump-related sell-off. Yesterday the US market bore the brunt of the move but now it has gone global," said David Madden, analyst at traders CMC Markets UK.

Rosenstein, the No 2 Justice Department official, named Mueller amid mounting pressure in Congress for an independent investigation beyond existing FBI and congressional probes into the Russia issue.

Mueller's appointment was not expected to affect the FBI or congressional investigations.

Senate Democratic Leader Chuck Schumer said Comey should still appear before congressional committees that have invited him to testify, despite Mueller's appointment.

A key issue Mueller may have to tackle is whether Trump has committed obstruction of justice, an offense that could be used in any effort in Congress to impeach him and remove him from office.

Trump cited displeasure with the FBI's Russia probe as a factor in dismissing Comey. In addition, Comey wrote a memo detailing Trump's comments to him in February saying "I hope you can let this go," referring to the Flynn probe, a source who saw the memo said on Tuesday.

Flynn's contacts with Russians during the presidential campaign, as well as his work for the Turkish government, are under investigation. He was fired as national security adviser in February after it emerged he had misled Vice President Mike Pence about conversations with the Russian ambassador to Washington in December.

Flynn and other advisers to Trump's campaign were in contact with Russian officials and others with Kremlin ties in at least 18 calls and emails during the last seven months of the presidential race, Reuters reported yesterday.

Russia has denied US intelligence agencies' conclusion that it interfered in

the election campaign to try to tilt the vote in Trump's favor. Trump has long bristled at the notion that Russia played any role in his November election victory.

Democrats and Trump's fellow Republicans widely praised the appointment of a special counsel to take over the Russia probe.

Rosenstein was due to brief US senators later on Thursday. Democratic Senator Joe Manchin said Rosenstein would be questioned about a letter he wrote accusing Comey of missteps as FBI director, including his handling of an election-year probe into Hillary Clinton's use of a private email server while she was secretary of state.

The White House initially said that letter prompted Trump to fire Comey, but Trump later said he had already decided to dismiss him and was thinking of "this Russia thing."

The Russia matter has consumed Washington and overshadowed Republican legislative priorities including a planned healthcare overhaul and sweeping tax cuts, something the party had hoped to make rapid progress on given its control of the White House and both chambers of Congress.

"There's a sense of drift and distraction," Republican Senator Susan Collins told MSNBC. "It feels like everything is up in the air, everything is chaotic, and there's some lack of leadership coming from the White House."

Dick Durbin, the No 2 Democrat in the Senate, told CNN: "This president has no one to blame but himself for the Islamic Bank

FROM PAGE 20

Ahsanul Alam, who is also an independent director of the bank, gave wrong information to the media about the Zakat fund, scholarships and Ifiar expenditure, Arastoo Khan, chairman of the bank, told reporters at a press conference at the bank's headquarters in the city's Motijheel.

The allegation is the latest to hit the bank.

The internal feud among the directors of the bank came four months after a major change had been made to the board.

Arastoo said different media reported that the board had decided to donate the IBBL Zakat fund's Tk 450 crore to the Prime Minister's Zakat Fund. "But no such decision has been made," he said.

He said the prime minister had called him over the issue and warned him about spreading such wrong information in the market.

"I explained to the prime minister that our net profit was Tk 450 crore last year and the size of the Zakat fund was Tk 28 crore," he said, adding that the board only discussed about the tax issue of the Zakat fund.

During their appointment, directors have to take oath that they will not disclose any information that may affect the bank's image.

Ahsanul violated his oath by spreading wrong information which had dented the bank's reputation, said Arastoo, also a former secretary.

"It is unfortunate that a division has been made within the board. But we will overcome it soon," he said.

The board, however, had not made any decision whether Ahsanul would be stripped of his directorship because of breaching the oath, according to the IBBL chairman.

Ahsanul was not present during the media briefing. He was in India, Arastoo said.

In January, the IBBL appointed its director Arastoo as the new chairman and brought major changes to key positions.

At the time, Ahsanul was also elected as the vice-chairman.

Mostly

FROM PAGE 20

Mohakhali area.

"[People] die from other diseases," she added while addressing a briefing at the IEDCR held by the Directorate General of Health Services (DGHS) to inform journalists about precautions and consequences of the disease.

Panic spread among people in recent days as many citizens of Dhaka with symptoms of the viral disease thronged hospitals.

Prof Sabrina said they have recorded a positive 86 out of 139 chikungunya cases between April 1 and May 17 this year.

Most of the patients with symptoms are from Kalabagan,

Kathalbagan and Hatirpool areas where an outbreak of the virus occurred last December, she said.

Speaking at the briefing, Abul Kalam Azad, director general of DGHS, urged people not to panic about the disease.

He said they have started awareness building programmes across the country and in the capital to control the disease.

Citizens need to keep their households clean so that mosquitoes cannot breed, he said.

Symptoms of chikungunya are fever, muscle pain, headache, nausea, fatigue, rash and often accompanied by a very debilitating joint pain which can last for days. Aedes aegypti mosquito is the carrier of both chikungunya and dengue viruses.

According to World Health Organisation (WHO), there is no cure for the disease. Treatment is focused on relieving the symptoms.

Society of Medicine, Bangladesh President Prof Khan Abul Kalam Azad, who also addressed the briefing, said although both chikungunya and dengue are mosquito-borne diseases, they can be identified separately by observing the symptoms of patients.

If a person suddenly gets fever, mild or otherwise, feels pain and swelling in joints, and has rashes, then it can be suspected that s/he has chikungunya, said the professor.

If the pain is in the muscles and is accompanied with a high fever, it indicates that the patient may have dengue, he said.

"Laboratory test will be needed for confirmation," he added.

Prof Sanya Tahmina, director of Disease Control and Line Director of CDC, DGHS, also spoke at the briefing.

Holiday market run

FROM PAGE 20

and holidays.

However days before the beginning of Ramadan, DNCC gave permission for the market's operation every day until Eid-ul-Fitr, said Shamsun Nahar, vice president of the women's forum. The market will remain open from 10:00am to 7:00pm.

The shop owners will not have to give any fees to the DNCC, she said, adding that the objective of the holiday market was to create opportunities for small women entrepreneurs. Women entrepreneurs at the grassroots level of the forum will be able to sell their goods at the market.

Aleya Sarwar Daisy, a woman councillor, will coordinate the whole thing.

Shamsun Nahar said the initiative had been taken around three years back. The forum at first tried to implement the idea with the help of

Bangladesh Bank. But later it requested the DNCC mayor for help.

DNCC Mayor Annisul Huq said rehabilitating women was a mandate of the city corporation. The authorities are taking steps to introduce such holiday markets in every ward of the DNCC area.

The mayor also promised to open a separate holiday market where specially-abled people will be able to sell products.

While addressing the programme as the chief guest, Home Minister Asaduzzaman Khan Kamal expressed the hope that the small entrepreneurs would gradually expand their businesses to operate them on a large scale.

He assured them of security so that they could run their shops smoothly.

A member of the women's forum, Popy Barua requested the mayor to allot a permanent place for the market.

Journo watch in country

FROM PAGE 1

image and interest.

He further said monitoring was not only for journalists but also for all citizens and that was in the interest of the country.

But his ministry's letter to missions only mentioned journalists. "... it is requested kindly to take up the matter seriously so that Bangladeshi journalists whenever travelling to the respective host countries, should be monitored to unearth their activities," it read.

"The Parliamentary Standing Committee has expressed its concern over the negative activities of Bangladeshi journalists abroad as such activities give wrong information on Bangladesh in the international arena," it said.

Diplomatic sources said the ministry's instructions came after the Parliamentary Standing Committee on Ministry of Foreign Affairs during its 12th meeting discussed a series of recent visits by Bangladeshi journalists to Pakistan at the invitation of the Pakistan government.

Lawmaker Mahjabeen Khaled, a committee member, alleged that those Bangladeshi journalists were spreading propaganda and disseminating misleading information about the 1971 genocide.

Pakistan in recent months took a good number of Bangladeshi journalists, in batches, to Pakistan despite diplomatic tensions following the executions of war criminals in Bangladesh. Some of the journalists were allegedly Pakistan leaning.

Even though the foreign ministry

directive did not clarify what type of "negative" activities journalists carry out abroad, the government move has created widespread criticism.

Journalists feared harassment and abuse of the directive.

Journalists also feared that they may face difficulties at immigrations -- during departures and arrivals.

State Minister for Foreign Affairs Md Shahriar Alam and Foreign Secretary Md Shahidul Haque were present at the press conference at the ministry.

Meanwhile, President and General Secretary of Bangladesh Federal Union of Journalists (BFUJ) Manjurul Ahsan Bulbul and Omar Faruq told The Daily Star that they had contacted the ministry immediately after learning about the matter yesterday to know about the details of the directive.

"We are hopeful of the withdrawal of the directives of the foreign ministry or we will issue our formal reaction in the next few days," said the BFUJ president, adding, "We will hold a meeting with the top brass at the foreign ministry on Sunday or Monday to discuss the matter."

General Secretary of Dhaka Union of Journalists Sohel Haider said steps could be taken if a journalist group or individual was engaged in a campaign against the development, interest and image of the country.

"But the step can't be taken under Article 57 of the ICT Act ... steps must be taken through the Press Council, which is now a strong body," Sohel said.