

# Sundarbans tiger gets more space to roam free

## Govt doubles the size of wildlife sanctuary

By APJ, Dhaka

Sundarbans has more than doubled the size of the wildlife sanctuary in the world's largest mangrove forest to try to protect endangered Bengal tigers whose numbers have fallen sharply, officials said yesterday.

More than half, or 52 percent, of the 60 Bengal tigers in the 27,000-square-mile Sundarbans — one of the largest habitats of this tiger — has been declared a sanctuary this week, said the government's chief forest conservator Shaiful Alam.

The Sundarbans, which also straddles part of Bangladesh's borders with some rare animals including the irrawaddy dolphins and the Bengal tigers, both declared endangered because of poaching and loss of their habitat.

Previously the wildlife sanctuary was limited to 23 percent of the forest cover, and villagers and tourists had more unrestricted access to the rest of the mangrove forest.

A 2015 survey found a dramatic decline in the numbers of the Bengal tiger — 106 tigers, down from 440 during a 2004 count.

Monirul Khan, a tiger expert and professor of wildlife management at Dhaka University, said the decision would "surely help" increase the number of wild tigers.

"This is a law. We appreciate it. If it's enforced effectively, I'm hopeful it will help the animals, especially the tigers, to grow in confidence for the tigers," said Amir Hossain, head of the government's Tiger Monitoring Project, said the expanded sanctuary "will be a safe roaming area for the tigers."

"People's movement in the extended sanctuary will be restricted," he said. The nearly 350,000 locals who depend on the forest for their livelihoods and logs will not be allowed to enter it, he said.

Despite this expansion, the wildlife and forest department has not been sure. Sundarbans still face an existential crisis from a controversial power plant at the edge of the forest which Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina's government is moving ahead with, experts said.

A UN agency last October asked the government to halt construction of the 2,200-megawatt power plant because there was a high chance that pollution from the would "irreversibly damage" the Sundarbans.

"The government should rethink about the power plant as the extension of the sanctuary alone won't make much difference for the tigers and other Sundarbans animals," Khan said.

# Barguna UNO

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On July 19, Barisal CMHC court sent a notice to the government to appear before it in compliance with the order and sought bail in the defamation case. He was granted bail hours after he landed in jail.

In the face of severe criticism, including from the Bangladesh Press Syndicate, who later withdrew the case. Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina was criticised for filing the case against the UNO.

Following the incident the deputy commissioners of Barguna and Pabna were suspended on July 24. On July 25, the law ministry sent a proposal to the Supreme Court for transferring Chief Metropolitan Magistrate of Barisal Md Ali Hossain who had dealt with the defamation case against Tariq Salaman.

# No scope

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apparently in response to comments made by some ministers and lawmakers about the Supreme Court.

The chief justice was presiding over a six-member bench of the Appellate Division of the SC during a hearing of three government petitions challenging the High Court verdict that early release rules, which allow the executive magistrates run mobile courts, unconstitutional.

The apex court bench, however, extended for two weeks its July 4 order suspending the executive magistrates to run the mobile courts for the next two weeks.

It also adjourned the hearing on the petitions for the same period.

Chief Justice Md Noor Hossain said justice told Mahbubey Alam that some ministers commented about what judges say in the courtroom. "Is it fair?" he asked.

He said any political statement during court proceedings. We make comments on the issues relating to the judiciary, such as the mobile court rules," he said as the attorney general told the court that the ministers were made on both sides and that the media had published them.

Law Minister Anisul Hujum said he was not aware of any political statement at the Supreme Court Bar Association powers that the SC was asserting the authority of the present court judges, provided under the constitution.

Referring to the chief justice, Anisul said sitting in a courtroom, the chief justice talked about getting rid of the High Court.

On July 9, seven ministers and members of parliament from the treasury and opposition benches launched a blistering attack on the HC and SC for judgments against the late Sheikh Sarif-ud-Daula, removing their judges for incapacity or misconduct.



Twins Tofa and Tahura, aged about 10 months, at Dhaka Medical College Hospital. After a nine-hour operation, doctors at the hospital successfully separated the twins girls conjoined at the waist. The photo was taken yesterday while the sisters were being taken to the post operative room at the operation theatre.

# Conjoined twins separated

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in good health after the nine-hour surgery.

Conjoined twins are identical twins joined at the head, neck, torso or limbs. It is an extremely rare phenomenon. Two babies joined at the pelvis are even rarer. Doctors say such cases are called pygopagus conjoined twins.

Yesterday's surgery was the first of its kind in the country, they added.

The 10-month-old babies, each weighing 5kg, were joined from the back to below their waist. They shared one anus.

There will be some minor surgeries after three to six months, depending on the twins' health, the doctor said.

Some of their body parts are still displaced and surgeries to reconstruct their anus and vaginal and reproductive organs will be needed, she said.

The physicians were worried that the surgery would create holes in their spine, causing difficulty in the movement of their legs, but the babies started moving their legs soon after the operation, she informed.

"The real challenge now is to ensure the babies do not contract infection. We request everyone to maintain hygiene and keep them safe," she stressed.

The babies were moving their legs and one even smiled as they were taken out of the operation theatre complex of the hospital.

Their mother Shahida said she was nervous during the marathon operation.

Her heart pounded every minute during the operation. Lashed about my daughters' condition to anyone coming out of the operation theatre. I was relieved when I saw my daughters with my own eyes," she told this newspaper.

An investigation committee will study plastic surgery, orthopedics, neurosurgery, urology and radiology operated on the babies, said Asraf-ul-Haq, head of paediatric surgery at DMCH.

The physicians spoke to reporters at the hospital after the surgery around 5:00pm.

Director of the hospital Brig Gen Mizanur Rahman said the cost of the surgery was borne by DMCH.

# Students separated

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to talk to them. But how can I negotiate with 200 students in the open street?"

He said the students, however, sent 25 delegates to his office and demanded the removal of the three administrative staff.

"I told them that I have formed an investigation committee where a representative has been preserved for a student representative and I will take action fairly according to the findings of the committee. I cannot take any step against any individual be he or she a student, a faculty or an administrative staff without substantial evidence," he added.

Wishing not to be named, a student told this newspaper, "We are here protesting and we believe the university authorities have done injustice to our teacher [Farhaan]. We like him and we know he is a good teacher."

"Assaulting a university teacher is a shameful act. It will be a bad instance if the responsible people are unpunished."

In a press release on its website yesterday, the university said it formed the five-member probe committee.

Prof Yusuf Haider, chairman of the university's mathematics and natural sciences department and former Pro-VC of Dhaka University, will lead the committee. There will be two university alumni and a student representative in the committee as its members.

# Uncertainty over hajj

By PAGE 1

According to him, the Saudi hajj ministry secretary will sit with some top officials of the Bangladesh Hajj Mission in Saudi Arabia today to discuss the cancellation of Hajj.

About the uncertainty over the pilgrimage of 40,000 people, Jallil said a section of hajj agencies were yet to complete all the formalities, including renting houses in Makkah and Madina.

About 44,000 out of 1.27 million Bangladeshi pilgrims have been granted Saudi visas so far this year, the secretary said.

Asked if the hajj agencies were responsible for cancellation of Biman flights, he said Biman had started operating Hajj flights on July 24. It has cancelled 12 flights so far for the same reason.

AM Mosadique Ahmed, chief executive officer and managing director of Biman, said neither he nor the Saudi authorities had informed them beforehand about the additional fees. "The hajj agencies and the pilgrims are responsible to pay the extra fees at the final stage of the trip."

Talking to The Daily Star, Religious Affairs Secretary Abdul Jallil said the Saudi government was yet to formally inform them about the additional fees.

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# Body formed

By PAGE 16

report after the Eid-ul-Azha holidays.

During the ongoing monsoon, the capital port city has experienced some of the worst waterlogging in recent times.

The ministers and private secretary retained under water yet again during the monsoon, but even the local government minister was holding a meeting on waterlogging.

Though the ministers and high-ranking officials were seen leaving office in jeeps and mid-ranking ones in minibuses, but a downpour of general staff had to get out of their shoes and roll up trousers to get out of the country's administrative nerve centre wading through above-ankle filthy water.

"At the moment, there is no coordination among the authorities responsible for storm drainage management and they act in an isolated manner. Some of them cannot resolve the problem and the mayors have to take initiatives for coordination."

There are seven different authorities including Water Development Board, Ministry of private housing developers that intervene in the capital city's storm drainage facility and maintenance.

Replying to a journalist's question, the minister said, "There is no such situation at the moment that calls for a city government system."

Responding to another question, he said he would investigate whether it is possible to open 15km box culverts on the road of Mirpur Cantonment to allocate Tk 5,000 crore if needed. If not possible, they would at least ensure that those remain clear of blockage so rain water finds an easy passage.

CC Mayor AJM Nasir Uddin said unclaimed armbands, grabbing of cars, Mayors and watermelon said though it is not mammoth task to open the box culverts, it is still possible if the government intends.

# Victim makes a judicial

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"I told the court everything including the rape," she told The Daily Star.

Differently constituted organisations yesterday formed a human chain in Bogra town demanding speedy trial of Tufan and other culprits.

Referring to Tomu "rape" and murder incident in Comilla, they asked the government to arrest and punish all the culprits.

BNP leaders and activists also staged demonstrations in front of their party office in the town. They demanded "immediate trial of the culprits."

Speakers at a human chain programme organised by Bangladesh Employment Movement Party in front of the capital's Jaiya Press Club yesterday demanded expeditious punishment to alleged rapist Tufan and his cohorts.

They called upon the government to ensure security of the victim and her family members.

The girl did not immediately reveal her fear of a backlash.

She later held with a pledge to help her get admitted to a college. As she fell due to bleeding, Tufan gave her medication and sent her home.

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# Siddiqi's water

By PAGE 16

Shahjahan Siddiqi directly at some age-aging students that day Siddiqi collapsed on the street instantly.

Later, doctors at the National Institute of Pathology in Dhaka said Siddiqi could not see with his right eye. The left eye responded to light once or twice when the physicians removed the bandage on July 23.

Siddiqi's condition is bearing Siddiqi's medical costs. He was taken to Sankata Netralaya on July 27.

Meanwhile, Health and Family Welfare Minister Mohammed Nasim yesterday said Siddiqi would get a career ministry on his return to the country.

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# Section 57

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Talking to this correspondent, Subrata claimed that he was not directly involved in any poll party but was a supporter of the Awami League. "I have no enmity with the accused," he said.

Asked why he had filed the case against Latif and not the news portal which ran the story, Subrata just said, "I will consider it later."

Offices in Charge Sukumar Biswas of Dumuria Police Station said they arrested Latif after finding evidence against him and that they would continue with their probe.

Mahabab Reja Mim, daughter of Latif, said she was shocked and was horrified when over 50 policemen surrounded their home around midnight to arrest her father.

"My father is a journalist. We requested them [police] not to arrest my father at night as he is not a criminal. Besides, my country is not a country where any heed to our request," she said.

State Minister Narayan said he had heard about the case. "One can file a case from his own point of view. I don't want to say anything about it. But, I have no involvement in the matter," he said.

Julfiker, the recipient of the goat, said the animal was very sick when he

got it and that he had informed the government officials present at the distribution ceremony about the sick goat.

The officials did not care about his complaint, he added.

"But what is happening now is unacceptable. Some people are trying to take advantage of the issue. It should be stopped," he said.

BATI's lawyer, Motiar Rahman Mollah said the section would hear his client's bail petition today.

Journalists are continuing a movement demanding the repeal of section 57 of the Digital Security Act, which was passed in 2017. They are demanding free freedom of speech and the press."

They said the section had vile wording, allowing it to be used for silencing newpersons and social media users.

Amid widespread criticism, Law Minister Anisul Hujum on several occasions said section 57 would be removed. The minister on July 9 said the government would decide on the matter while finalising the draft of "Digital Security Act."

Section 57 under the section are being piloted. According to a source at the Cyber Tribunal in Dhaka, around 700 cases have so far been filed under section 57 since 2013 when the act was amended with stringent punishment.

# 'Food' created

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researchers from the VIT Technical Education Centre of Finland and Lappeenranta University of Technology (LUT) succeeded in creating a protein powder, which could be used to feed people or animals.

"The 'protein reactor' can be used to produce protein. It can be used as an alternative animal feed, this would allow land to be used for other purposes such as forestry or more crops for human consumption."

Although the technology is in its infancy, researchers hope the "protein reactor" could become a household item.

Juha-Pekka Pitkanen, a scientist at VTT, said: "In practice, all the raw materials are available from the air. In the future, the technology can be used to produce protein for instance, for other areas of agriculture."

"One especially interesting is a home reactor, a type of domestic appliance that the consumer can use to produce the needed protein."

According to the researchers, the process of creating food from electricity can be nearly 10 times as energy efficient as photosynthesis, the process used by plants.

# Harunur Rashid Khan

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without portfolio in the BNP government led by Khaleida Zia after he had won two seats in the 2001 election.

The pioneering industrialist who was suffering from old age complications breathed his last at his residence at Monno City in Manikganj. On July 24, he was admitted to Mirpur Hospital in the capital and was taken back to his residence on July 31 after his health condition improved a bit.

He left behind his wife Hurun Nahar, two daughters -- Afroza Khan Rita and Firoza Mahmud Parvin. His daughter-in-law was his only daughter. His daughter returns from London, family sources said.

Monno was the chairman of Monno Group of Industries that includes the flagship company Monno Ceramic Tiles. He had different organizations including Monno Ceramic, Monno Tiles, Monno Ceramic, Monno Fabrics and Monno Attire Limited.

Khaleida Zia has expressed deep shock at the death of Monno.

He was a pioneer in the death of business entrepreneur, philanthropist & ex MP Harunur Rashid Monno, Khaleida Zia tweeted. "My soul rest in eternal peace," she added.

In his preface of the book My Life Harunur Monno said he had no lack of fulfillment. "What I have got is more than what I had wanted."

"If my life history inspires anyone to love his own work and makes his position stronger, that would be my achievement."