



A pair of zebras find their new home at Sylhet Wildlife Conservation Centre in Tilagarh Eco Park. They were among the first batch of 58 animals brought from Bangabandhu Safari Park of Gazipur on Tuesday. Also included in the batch were these peacocks, inset.

PHOTO: SHEIKH NASIR

## Sylhet Wildlife Conservation Centre gets first batch of animals

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Sylhet

Sylhet Wildlife Conservation Centre at Tilagarh Eco Park has received a batch of 58 animals of nine species for the first time, as the authorities prepare to open the centre for public tomorrow.

The animals, most of them birds, were transferred from Bangabandhu Safari Park of Gazipur on Tuesday, said Munirul Islam, divisional forest officer in Sylhet. The first batch includes two zebras, two deer, 12 peacocks, one golden pheasant, three silver pheasants, three macaws, four African grey parrots, four sun conure parrots, 30 love birds and a python.

Four more deer will arrive next week, while a pair of tigers or lions will be brought by December, the official said.

The Eco Park was established on October 3, 2012 on 112 acres of forest land at Tilagarh, on the fringe of Sylhet city, with an aim to build a sanctuary of wildlife. It is after more than six years that the Eco Park has received any wildlife.

Monzur Kader Chowdhury, former president of animal welfare organisation Pradhikar, said the conservation centre will be very helpful for quick response to protect wildlife from any danger.

As part of the conservation centre, a hospital has been built to treat and rehabilitate injured wildlife in Sylhet.

Asked, DFO Munirul Islam said, "We have all necessary equipment at the wildlife hospital but we are waiting for the doctor to join duty."

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## NEWSIN brief

### Kuet admission test results out

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Khulna

The test results for admission in 2018-19 session at Khulna University of Engineering and Technology (Kuet) were made available yesterday, five days earlier than the scheduled date.

Prof Dr Quazi Sazzad Hossain, vice chancellor of Kuet, told The Daily Star that Kuet released the results early so admission seekers can concentrate more on studies for admission tests at other universities.

On October 27, a total of 7,282 students took the admission test at Kuet for 1,065 seats available in 16 departments.

Enrolment may start on November 10 and orientation for new students is scheduled for January 24, 2019.

### Pledge Harbor football tournament begins tomorrow

CITY DESK

The fourth Pledge Harbor Inter School Football Tournament (PHIFT 2018), an annual football tournament organised and hosted by Pledge Harbor Int'l School, will begin tomorrow, said a press release.

This year, 27 teams will compete for championship titles in two two age groups -- under-14 and under-19.

A number of schools have been taking part in the tournament consistently since its inception in 2015.

### Man held with 3,800 yaba pills

CU CORRESPONDENT

Detective Branch of police in Chattogram yesterday arrested a man with 3,800 yaba pills from Firingi Bazar area in the port city on Tuesday.

The arrestee Al Amin, 19, is a bus helper, police said.

Lawmen intercepted a bus of Hanif Paribahan in front of Baitul Ridwan Masjid in Firingi Bazar area around 10:00pm and arrested Al Amin after recovering the contrabands, said Senior Assistant Police Commissioner Asif Mohiuddin.

A case was filed with Kotwali Police Station.

### Fire guts valuables of eight houses

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

Fire gutted valuables of eight houses in Banshkhali upazila in Chattogram early yesterday, fire service and civil defence sources said.

The flames originated from an electric short circuit of a house and soon spread to adjacent houses around 12:30am, said Jasim Uddin, deputy assistant director of Fire Service and Civil Defence, Chattogram.

On information, a team of firefighters rushed to the spot and doused the blaze around 1:30am.

Valuables worth Tk 3 lakh were gutted in the fire, Jasim Uddin added.

# This time, it's urea

## ACC sues former Bogura warehouse in-charge, contractor for misappropriating BCIC fertiliser worth Tk 153cr

MOSTAFA SHABUI, Bogura

After the "disappearance" of coal from Barapukuria coal mine and hard rock from Maddhapara granite mine, around 52,345 tonnes of fertiliser from Bogura's Santahar warehouse has apparently gone "missing".

The urea, kept in a buffer warehouse, belonged to state-run Bangladesh Chemical Industries Corporation (BCIC). Its total value is Tk 153.36 crore.

The former in-charge of the warehouse and the owner of a contracting company have allegedly sold the fertiliser in black market between July 2013 and June 2016.

This came to light as Anti-Corruption Commission in Bogura filed a case against deputy chief engineer (mechanical) Nabir Uddin Khan, former in-charge of the warehouse, and Rashedul Islam Khan, proprietor of M/s Raja Traders, for allegedly misappropriating the above-mentioned fertiliser.

Rashedul Islam Khan is also a leader of Adamdighi upazila Sramik League, a pro-Awami League organisation.

Aminul Islam, assistant director of Bogura integrated district office of ACC, filed the case with Adamdighi Police Station yesterday morning.

Monirul Islam, officer-in-charge

of the police station, said it was filed under section 5 (2) of the Prevention of Corruption Act.

"The buffer warehouse [Santahar] is under BCIC, which imports and produces fertiliser then stores at the depots," Aminul told The Daily Star.

The fertiliser is preserved in 24 buffer warehouses across the country and is transported there through various contractors, said the ACC assistant director.

But allegations ran rife that fertiliser was being misappropriated during transportation, especially the ones for Santahar warehouse, the assistant director said. "So, we

investigated the allegations and found evidence that it was being sold illegally."

Aminul Islam said BCIC imported the urea and also produced it at Kafco (Karnaphuli Fertilizer Company Limited) and SFCL (Shahjhalal Fertilizer Company Limited) during 2013-14, 2014-15 and 2015-16 fiscal years.

Later, BCIC floated a tender to transport the urea to its warehouses and gave the contract to six companies. At the same time, BCIC also signed a contract with Raja Traders for loading and unloading the urea at Santahar warehouse, he said.

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## Man found dead in capital

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Police yesterday recovered the body of a battery-run rickshaw driver, with his throat slit, in the capital's Sabujbagh area.

Abdul Kuddus Fakir, officer-in-charge of Sabujbag Police Station, told The Daily Star that based on information received from locals, police recovered the body of the victim, Rashed Akanda, 30, from an open area in Dakkhin Begunbari around 6:00am.

Criminals, yet to be identified, might have killed the man elsewhere for his autoricshaw before dumping the body there around midnight, the OC said, adding that the body was sent to Dhaka Medical College morgue for an autopsy.

Rashed's brother-in-law Zakir Hossain said Rashed hailed from Gaibandha, and lived in a rickshaw garage in the capital's Rajarbagh Kalibari area.

# Country to get 5 more medical universities: PM

UNB, Dhaka

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina yesterday promised to set up five more medical universities in five divisional headquarters, if her party is re-elected in the next national election.

"...If we can form government again, then Insha'allah we'll set up five more medical universities in five divisional headquarters," she said.

The prime minister said this while inaugurating the 250-bed Sheikh Russel Gastroenterology Institute and Hospital at Mohakhali in the city.

Currently, Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujib Medical University is in operation in Dhaka, while medical universities in Rajshahi, Sylhet and Chattogram are under construction.

About the national election, Sheikh Hasina said the election can be held 90 days prior to the completion of the Parliament's tenure. "The Election Commission may announce the election schedule any time...we'll participate in the election," she said.

She mentioned that if people vote for the Awami League again, it will be possible for the party to serve them. "If there's continuity

[of the government], we'll be able to achieve the targets we have set."

The prime minister said the birth centenary of Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman will be celebrated in 2020, while the golden jubilee of the independence will be observed in 2021. The government has set a target to make the country a developed one by 2041, while formulated the Delta Plan 2100, she added.

Addressing physicians, she put emphasis on research to find out which diseases people of the country suffer from the most, and what type of medicines would be most effective for them. "I think, research on this issue is very much important."

The PM mentioned that the main objective of the medical universities will be to conduct research.

"Research will be conducted at the medical universities firstly, while medical colleges will be affiliated with these universities in their respective areas. The medical universities will take care of the standards of the curricula of the medical colleges," she said.

Chaired by Health and Family Welfare Minister Mohammed Nasim, the inaugural programme was also addressed by

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The newly-built Sylhet Central Jail complex is set to be inaugurated by Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina via videoconference today. The prison compound sprawls over 30 acres of land in Badaghat area of the sadar upazila. Its construction began in January 2012, and was completed in June this year. The old prison is situated at Dhopadighir Par area in the city.

PHOTO: SHEIKH NASIR

## HC upholds death penalty of three muggers

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The High Court (HC) yesterday upheld death sentence of three muggers for killing senior videographer of ATN Bangla Shafiqul Islam in 2010.

The bench of Justice Bhabani Prasad Singha and Justice Md Kamrul Hossain Mollah delivered the verdict after accepting the death reference and dismissing the appeals of the convicts.

The convicts are Md Sujan, Md Ratan and Md Raju.

According to the prosecution, Shafiqul was attacked and killed by muggers while returning home in Madhyapara on May 8, 2010.

His body was found in Rustampur, on the outskirts of the capital the next day.

A Dhaka court in February 2013 sentenced the trio to death for killing Shafiqul.

# Prepaid gas meters a win-win in Ctg

MOHAMMAD SUMAN, Ctg

Pre-paid meters for household gas consumption have been saving gas by 20 percent in Chattogram city, and cost for consumers has also been coming down as they have been refraining from wasting the resources.

A survey conducted by Karnaphuli Gas Distribution Company Limited (KGDCL) came up with the findings in a report published earlier this year. The survey was done among 300 subscribers, comparing their gas consumptions before and after beginning to use prepaid meters.

The report found that before installing the prepaid meters, a customer used 55 cubic metres of gas on average per month, but it was reduced to around 44 cubic metres.

According to KGDCL, there are 5.98 lakh residential gas connections in the city. A project titled "Natural Gas Efficiency Project" was initiated to set up prepaid meters for 60,000 subscribers in 2014, which opened at consumer level in May 2017. A total of 44,826 meters have been installed till yesterday, while the others will be installed by next February.

Engineer Sarwar Hossain, director of the project, said at least 20 percent of the gas was being saved which would be provided to other areas.

He said, "After the project completes, we will save 6.5 lakh cubic metres of gas per month, which will cover the demand of more than 15,000 new consumers."

KGDCL officials said awareness regarding gas consumption has also helped customers save money. Earlier, Tk 800 per month had to be paid for using a double burner stove, which was

estimated to burn around 88 cubic metres of gas. Price of per cubic metre of gas is Tk 9.11.

But it was found that most consumers used on average 55-60 cubic metres of gas per month. After using prepaid meters, the usage came down to 40-50 cubic metres, which saved them about Tk 400-450 per month.

"There is a growing interest among residential consumers in using prepaid meters, due to the cost benefit," KGDCL Managing Director Khaiz Ahmed Mozumder told The Daily Star.

According to KGDCL, the cost of this project was estimated at Tk 246.47 crore, of which Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) is giving Tk 154.11 crore, the government is providing Tk 81.45 crore and KGDCL is providing the rest -- Tk 10.91 crore.

The areas covered under the

project are: Nasirabad Housing Society, Halishahar Housing State, Halishahar Housing State, Hill View Residential Area, OR Nizam Road, Khulshi, Chawkbazar, Kazir Dewri, Mehedibagh, Sugandha and Panchlaish Residential area.

Faisal Alam, a resident of Nasirabad residential area, told The Daily Star that earlier he had to pay Tk 800 whether he used his burners or not. But after the introduction of prepaid meters, the cost has come down to Tk 400 to Tk 500, he added.

Rony Islam, a resident of Khulshi area and also owner of residential building Rehana Monjil, said in post-paid system, he had to pay Tk 800 monthly as gas bill of a flat that was vacant. "It is a loss for any building owner," he said, adding, "But now due to prepaid meter, I don't need to pay any bill, except for Tk 60 as meter fee."

# Quota for the disabled to be considered if AL returns to power: Menon

UNB, Dhaka

Social Welfare Minister Rashed Khan Menon yesterday said steps will be taken to resolve all problems of the physically-challenged people, including the quota issue, with top priority if Awami League returns to power.

"The current government is at the end completing its term. Therefore, it's not possible for the government to take any effective step for the disabled. If Awami League wins the 11th parliamentary elections, the people with disabilities will be considered first," he said.

"Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina is very responsive about the disabled people. She said she'll make special arrangements for them," he said.

The minister came up the remarks while speaking at a roundtable discussion organised by Bangladesh Disabled Students Unity Council at Jatiya Press Club in the Capital.

"The rights of disabled people are the fundamental human rights. The government enacted a law for protecting the rights of the disabled people in 2013, ensuring quota in government jobs for them. So, there's no scope to abolish quota for the disabled people," Menon added.

"Many multinational companies are doing business in our country. The government can make it mandatory for them to recruit disabled people. It'll open a big job market for them," said Dr Md Ridwanul Haque, associate professor of the Institute of Business Administration (IBA) of Dhaka University.

There was 1 percent quota for disabled people in government jobs.

But, the government abolished quotas in class I and II government jobs following a countrywide demonstration by general students and jobseekers, demanding reform in the existing quota system in public service.