



A baby Gharial being put in a water-filled hole dug in the yard of a local's house in Dakshin Teota village in Manikganj's Shivalaya upazila yesterday. A fisherman had accidentally caught the crocodile in the Jamuna river earlier in the day and later kept it here. On being informed, Shivalaya Upazila Livestock Officer AM Rezaqul Haider visited the place and sent the animal to the zoo in Dhaka.

PHOTO: COLLECTED

Four technocrat ministers resign



Nurul Islam Yeafesh Osman Mustafa Jabbar Matur Rahman

FROM PAGE 1 Talking to The Daily Star, Yeafesh Osman said he already sent his resignation letter to the Cabinet Division following the PM's directive. Sources also confirmed Mustafa Jabbar's resignation. AKM Niaj Morshed, assistant personal secretary to expatriates' welfare minister, said Nurul Islam sent his resignation letter to the Cabinet Division around 6:30pm. Abu Sayeed, personal officer to Matur Rahman, also confirmed that the minister submitted his resignation. Sources in the AL said that in their second round of talks with the PM today, Oikyafront leaders might demand inclusion of some of their members in the polls-time government. This is why the four technocrat ministers hurriedly stepped down to send a signal that there was no scope for unelected people to be in the cabinet. Before the 2014 election, Hasina had offered the BNP, which had representation in parliament at the time, a number of portfolios, including home ministry. But BNP chief Khaleda Zia refused to be a part of that election-time administration and her party eventually boycotted the election. No political parties in the Oikyafront has representation in parliament. The Hasina-led incumbent cabinet is comprised of 34 ministers, 17 state ministers and two deputy ministers, and four of them are technocrats. Besides, PM's seven advisers and one special envoy enjoy minister's status. The prime minister, however, didn't discuss at the meeting the size of the polls-time cabinet. On October 22, she hinted at not making the polls-time cabinet smaller, saying she preferred not to downsize it for the sake of completing the ongoing crucial development projects. Sources said that in place of the four technocrat ministers, the same number of lawmakers could be included in the polls-time government as ministers. Of them, two to three might be from the main opposition Jatiya Party, they said. Jatiya Party Chairman HM Ershad, also the special envoy of the prime minister, already requested Hasina to include four of the party MPs in the

Gas crisis

FROM PAGE 16 9:00pm," said Monir Hossain, a private jobholder, who lives at Adabar. Shurovi Rozario, a resident of East Rajabazar, said she was using electric oven for cooking. She is worried about her electricity bill this month. "Why do I have to pay the extra bill?" she asked. Residents of Mohammadpur, Jatrabari, Mirpur, Uttara and Tongi are also affected badly. Gas crisis is not new in the country. For years, Titas Gas Transmission and Distribution Company Limited and Karnaphuli Gas Distribution Company Ltd -- the two distributors who are subsidiaries of Petrobangla -- have been running short of gas as demands grow. However, the supply got a boost since August 18 when the KGDCL started feeding 300mmcf liquefied natural gas (LNG) from a ship anchored on the Bay of Bengal through the Matarbari reservoir at Moheshkhali. The ship carrying Bangladesh's first imported consignment of 1.37 lakh cubic feet of LNG from Qatar anchored in the Bay on April 24. Since then several deadlines had expired for gas transmission to the reservoir due to technical problems. Finally on August 18, the supply began in Chattogram.

However, there was no monitoring system in place to tackle any technical problems. Admitting this, Petrobangla Chairman Abul Mansur Md Faizullah said, "No, no, we didn't have any plan for tackling such a glitch. "Today [yesterday] I held a meeting with experts. A monitoring team will be formed for troubleshooting time to time and to fix such problems in future." In the past, the KGDCL was dependent solely on the national grid. But after the off-shore LNG terminal was launched, the dependency fell. Of its total supply of around 390 mmcf, some 300 mmcf used to come from the new terminal. But since Saturday night's glitch, it is relying solely on the national grid again.

"Yesterday, we got 210 mmcf from the national grid," said Monjurul, the KGDCL general manager, adding that many export-oriented industries in Chattogram was being badly affected by the shortage. To ease the crisis in Chattogram, the Gas Transmission Company Ltd, another subsidiary of Petrobangla, is now supplying about 200-220 mmcf of gas from the national grid to some 6 lakh customers, including households, in the port city. This is creating a shortfall in Dhaka and its adjacent areas. In June last year, Titas Gas had 27.34 lakh consumers -- 21.17 lakh of them households. It distributes gas in 12 districts including Dhaka, Gazipur and Narayanganj. Usually, Titas can supply about 1,700 mmcf to these districts against their demand for 2,000 mmcf, said its Director (operations) Kamruzzaman Khan. "But, due to the rationing [supplying to Chhattogram] we can now supply about 1,550 mmcf to our consumers," he said. In Chattogram, power generation at two units of Raozan Power Plant and Shikalbaha 225 MW Power Plant has stopped because of the gas crisis. Chittagong Urea Fertiliser Limited and several CNG fuelling stations have also been experiencing timid gas pressure, reports our local correspondent.

China unveils

FROM PAGE 16 quarters of the Tiangong -- or "Heavenly Palace" -- which will also have two other modules for scientific experiments and will be equipped with solar panels. Three astronauts will be permanently stationed in the 60-tonne orbiting lab, which will enable the crew to conduct biological and microgravity research. Assembly is expected to be completed around 2022 and the station would have a lifespan of around 10 years. The International Space Station -- a collaboration between the United States, Russia, Canada, Europe and Japan -- has been in operation since 1998 but is due to be retired in 2024. China will then have the only space station in orbit, though it will be much smaller than the ISS which weighs 400 tonnes and is as large as a football pitch. The country announced in May that the lab would be open to "all countries" to conduct science experiments. "There is no doubt that China will use its station in a similar way as the ISS partners are using their outpost: research, technology and as a stepping-stone for deep-space exploration," said Chen Lan, analyst at GoTaikonauts.com, a website specialising in the Chinese space programme. Research institutes, universities, and public and private companies have been invited to propose projects. Some 40 plans from 27 countries and regions have been received, according to state media. The European Space Agency has sent astronauts to China to receive training in order to be ready to work inside the Chinese space station once it is launched. "I'm sure over time China will be successful developing partnerships," said Bill Ostrove, space analyst with US-based Forecast International consultancy.

France

FROM PAGE 16 They were detained in swoops on addresses in the Iser region, southeast of Lyon, in Moselle on the border with Germany and Luxembourg, and in Ille-et-Vilaine near the city of Rennes in the country's northwest. It was not immediately clear what the connection between those arrested was. In an interview published on Sunday, Macron warned of the threat from far-right movements across Europe, saying complacency during the 1930s was what had opened the way for the rise of Hitler in Germany and Mussolini in Italy.

Zimbabwe roar

FROM PAGE 1 own backyard by an opposition who are the lowest-ranked in Test cricket and were coincidentally playing their first Test of the year. On the other hand, Zimbabwean cricket has long been going through systemic problems and this win came as a blessing for them. It was their first win in the format since September 2013 against Pakistan and first away win since winning Chattogram's MA Aziz Stadium's inaugural Test in November 2001. The home side would have had to accomplish their highest successful chase to win the Test match, coming into the fourth day needing 295 runs chasing a target of 321. The Tigers did manage to start on a positive note, with Imrul Kayes and Liton Das adding 56 runs for the opening wicket. Both batsmen managed to survive a few scares and hung in during the first hour of the day -- the toughest time to bat. However, just when it seemed like things would start to come back in favour of the home side, Bangladesh crumbled with the bat like they did in the first innings when they were bundled out for 143. The poor shot selection and rash temperament started from the top as Liton, who had a reprieve on 21, was trapped leg-before to a short-pitched Sikandar Raza delivery which he completely missed. Number three batsman Mominul

Haque, who started his innings with two beautiful boundaries, again paid the price for poor foot movement, dragging a Kyle Jarvis delivery onto the stumps just a ball after he was beaten by the seamer. By the time that Imrul was dismissed while going for a sweep after scoring a hard-fought 103-ball 43, Raza's bowling had become so venomous that the Bangladeshi batsmen were unsure of how to handle the off-spinner. Stand-in captain Mahmudullah Riyad continued his lean patch in the longest format of the game and was dismissed after being caught in two minds about whether to sweep or defend. Ultimately, he was caught at short leg to become Raza's third victim. Nazmul Hossain took things from bad to worse on the stroke of lunch when he handed a short-pitched delivery from debutant leg-spinner Brandon Mavuta to cover leaving the hosts reeling on 111 for five. The 21-year-old went on to dismiss Mushfiqur Rahim just after lunch as the right-hander was caught in deep square leg going for a slop-sweep. Mavuta followed that up by removing Mehedi Hasan Miraz, who edged behind. Nazmul Islam was his fourth victim, trapped leg-before, before another debutant, Wellington Masakadza, put the Tigers out of their misery by removing Tajjul Islam and Ariful to send Zimbabwe into rapturous celebrations.

JMB leader

FROM PAGE 16 Acting on a tip off that some militants were holding a secret meeting in Pirab Tatipukur area, a team from Shibganj Police Station raided the spot around 1:30am. Sensing the presence of police, the alleged JMB men opened fire on them, forcing the law enforcers to return fire, said Sonatan Chakraborty, additional superintendent of police of Bogura Sadar circle. At one stage, the alleged militants retreated and the police found a bullet-hit man, he added. They took him to Bogura Shaheed Ziaur Rahman Medical College Hospital where doctors declared him dead, he said. The police also recovered two fire-arms and three bullets from the spot. A case was filed with Shibganj police in this regard. According to police records, Khorshed was the mastermind of writer and blogger Shahjahan Bachchu murder in Munshiganj on June 12, 2018. Besides, he was in charge of killing Pir

(religious leader) Shahidul on May 7, 2016 at Tanore upazila in Rajshahi, said Bogura police chief Ali Ashraf Bhuiyan. Khorshed was first arrested in Jamalpur in connection with an explosives case in September 2006 and was sentenced to 12 years' imprisonment. Primarily, he was in Jamalpur jail but was later shifted to Kashimpur jail where he spent around six years. He walked out of Kashimpur jail in November 2013 after he had obtained bail from the High Court. Since then he was involved in JMB activities. Following the snatching of the three JMB men in Mymensingh, he came into the spotlight and became the supreme leader of JMB, police said. SP Ali Ashraf told The Daily Star that Khorshed had a good link with Salahuddin and used to collect firearms and money from him for the outfit. Police said Salahuddin was wanted in three cases filed against him with as many police stations in Jamalpur, Rangpur and Kurigram.

Where no party

FROM PAGE 16 Talking to The Daily Star recently, Talukder Md Yunus, AL general secretary of Barishal district, said, "Multiple candidates are competing for nomination as the Awami League is a big party. Everybody will work for the candidates who will be nomination by the party." Bilkis Jahan Shirin, the BNP's organising secretary in Barishal division, alleged that law enforcement agencies were obstructing her party workers from carrying out political activities. "Yet, our party activists are preparing to contest the election. All will work as per the party's decision ... whoever gets the nomination." In the six constituencies of Barishal district, at least 20 AL leaders and 13 BNP nomination aspirants are campaigning vigorously. Barishal district unit AL President Abul Hasnat Abdullah, who is believed to have influence in AL units of southern region, is the heavyweight candidate in Barisal-1. Other constituencies in the region have potential rebel problems. In Barisal-4 for instance, a group of AL leaders held a press conference in September alleging incumbent lawmaker Pankaj Debnath of indulging corruption and harassing party men. In Barguna, at least 10 AL candidates and five BNP leaders are in the race for

party tickets in the two constituencies there. As a consequence, a group of AL leaders and activists declared Barguna-1 lawmaker Dharendra Debnath Shambhu persona non grata in the constituency. At least five AL leaders are campaigning and lobbying for tickets there. Potential rebels for the AL and BNP are fewer in Bhola. Some five AL's and six BNP's leaders are seeking tickets in the four constituencies. Commerce Minister Tofail Ahmed may run from Bhola-1. In Jhalakathi, five AL and six BNP leaders are active on the ground. Senior AL leader and Industries Minister Amir Hossain Amu is likely to contest from Jhalakathi-2. In Pirojpur, nine AL and 10 BNP leaders are trying to get party tickets in the three constituencies. Jatiya Party (Manju) chief Anwar Hossain Manju might run from Pirojpur-2. Convicted war criminal Delwar Hossain Sayeed's son Shamim Sayeed may run from Porojpur-1. Intra-party conflict allegedly led to the killing of a Jubo League activist during a clash in Mothbaria (Pirojpur-3) constituency in July, 2016. In Patuakhali, at least 22 AL and 11 BNP leaders are campaigning for party nominations in its four constituencies.

No need

FROM PAGE 16 contempt of court petition filed by a company which had deposited money. Attorney General Mahubey Alam told The Daily Star that the government need not return the money following the top court order. The SC passed the order on the grounds that the money had been deposited with the state fund as black money and that is why it cannot be returned. Besides, the companies and the businesspeople had deposited the money voluntarily so they cannot want it back, he added. BB lawyer M Amir-Ul Islam told reporters that the HC had directed the BB to return the money following some writ petitions. But the petitions were not acceptable over the issue of returning money. Lawsuits could be filed for the recovery of the money, he added. Ahsanul Karim, a lawyer for the companies, said the BB need not return the money to his clients following the SC order. On March 16 last year, the SC's Appellate Division dismissed 11 appeals challenging 11 HC verdicts that had ordered the government to return Tk 615 crore to 17 companies and several businesspeople. The companies include S Alam Steel Ltd, Meghna Cement Mills Ltd, Bshundhara Paper Mills Ltd, Unique Hotel and Resort Ltd, Eastern Housing

Ltd and the Consolidated Tea and Land (Bangladesh) Ltd and East West Property Development (Pvt) Ltd. Later, the government and the BB filed an appeal and 13 separate review petitions with the SC challenging its verdict. East West Property Development (Pvt) Ltd, a company which was forced to deposit money with the BB during the regime of the military-backed caretaker government, filed a contempt of court petition with the SC against the government for not returning its money. During the 2007-08 tenure of the army-backed caretaker government, an unprecedented anti-corruption crackdown was launched by army-led taskforces under the National Coordination Committee. The joint forces investigating high-profile financial crimes had interrogated a number of corruption suspects and businesspeople. At least 40 companies and individuals had to deposit over Tk 1,200 crore with the central bank following the drive. After an elected government took office in January 2009, the companies approached it on several occasions to get back their money. But the government didn't entertain their requests. Later, the 17 companies filed writ petitions with the HC, seeking a refund with interest.

22 top cops promoted

FROM PAGE 1 The Ministry of Public Administration issued separate circulars, signed by its Joint Secretary Md Mafidur Rahman, announcing the names of those promoted and requesting the home ministry to issue circulars in this regard. Ministry circulars on the recommendation of promotions of SPs by the Departmental Promotion Committee (DPC) are likely to be issued in a couple of days, officials said. The officials recommended for a promotion to Addl IG under Grade-II are: Rowshan Ara Begum, Mezbah Uddin, Md Iqbal Bahar, Mosharraf Hossain, and Md Shahab Uddin Koreshi. The 17 officials to be promoted to DIG are: Mainul Islam, SM Rokon Uddin, Masudur Rahman Bhuiyan, Tawfiq Mahbub Chowdhury, Nazrul Islam, Krishna Pada Roy, Kushum Dewan, Bashir Ahmed, Habibur Rahman, Anwar Hossain, AKM Hafiz Akhter, Mahid Uddin, Mafiz Uddin Ahmed, Abdul Baten, Intiaj Ahmed, Mainul Hasan and Abu Kalam Siddik. The rank upgrades come following a proposal by the Police Headquarters (PHQ) to the home ministry on July 4 requesting the promotions of 495 officials -- 11 addl inspector generals (grade I), 42 addl inspector generals (grade II), 46 DIGs (grade III), 83 addl

DIGs (grade IV) and 313 SPs (grade V). Afterwards, the home ministry held a meeting attended by Inspector General of Police Mohammad Javed Patwary and officials of home and different ministries concerned on October 2 and finalised a list of names. Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina gave the nod to the proposal after receiving the final one approved by the ministry of establishment and finance. In its proposal, the PHQ highlighted the dearth of top vacancies and that "competent officials" had been in the same position for too long as suitable posts were not created at the upper level of police.

US votes in midterm polls

FROM PAGE 16 If they do win control of the House, Democrats will try to harden US policy toward Saudi Arabia, Russia and North Korea, while maintaining the status quo on hot-button areas like China and Iran. In a last-minute controversy, NBC, Fox News and Facebook on Monday pulled an ad by Trump's campaign that critics have labeled racist. The 30-second spot featured courtroom video of an illegal immigrant from Mexico convicted in the 2014 killings of two police officers, juxtaposed with scenes of migrants headed through Mexico. Critics, including members of Trump's own party, have condemned the commercial as racially divisive. CNN had already refused to run the ad, saying it was "racist." Facebook also blocked about 115 user accounts after US authorities tipped it off to suspicious behavior that may be linked to a foreign entity, the company said hours voting began. US intelligence agencies have concluded the Russian government meddled in the 2016 election with social media posts meant to spread misinformation and sow discord, an accusation denied by Moscow. Voter turnout could be the highest for a midterm election in 50 years, experts predicted. About 40 million early votes were likely cast, said

Michael McDonald, a professor at the University of Florida who tracks the figures. In the last such congressional elections in 2014, there were 27.5 million early votes. At least 64 House races remain competitive, according to a Reuters analysis of the three top nonpartisan forecasters, and Senate control was expected to come down to a half dozen close contests in Arizona, Nevada, Missouri, North Dakota, Indiana and Florida. Democrats could also recapture governor's offices in several battleground states such as Michigan, Wisconsin and Ohio, a potential help for the party in those states in the 2020 presidential race. Wrapping up the campaign in recent days, Trump repeatedly raised fears about immigrants, issuing harsh warnings about a caravan of Central American migrants that is moving slowly through Mexico toward the US border. Trump rounded up his campaign declaring "the Republican agenda is the American dream" and at his final event, in Cape Girardeau, Missouri, he called on supporters to seize their "righteous destiny as Americans." A debate about whether Trump's rhetoric encouraged extremists erupted in the campaign's final weeks after pipe bombs were mailed to his top political rivals allegedly by a Trump supporter who was arrested and charged, and 11