

Endangered wolf killed by villagers

STAR REPORT

A group of local people in Barguna’s Taltali upazila have recently trapped and killed an endangered species of Indian wolf which, experts believe, had not been seen in the country since 1940s.

Deputy Commissioner of the district Kabir Mahmood told The Daily Star that the wild animal had been preying on the cattle of locals for the last couple of days.

On June 4, locals caught the animal by setting a trap and beat it to death, the DC added.

Later, the photographs of the dead animal were collected by Md Anwarul Islam, professor of zoology at Dhaka University, and sent to two leading canid specialists -- Dr Yadvendradev V Jhala, head of the department of animal ecology and conservation biology at the Wildlife Institute of India, and Dr Jan F Kamler, lead canid biologist at the Wildlife Conservation Research Unit at University of Oxford.

The two specialists confirmed that the animal was a wolf, said Prof Anwar, who is also the CEO of WildTeam, a wildlife conservation organisation.

The professor said this species used to inhabit in northwest and the southwest region of the country until 1940s.

“We are going to conduct a DNA test to confirm the species of the animal,” Prof Anwar said, adding that they had already collected the DNA samples.

Grey wolf (Canis lupus) is considered as the most primitive and among the rarest species of canine alive today with the remaining population living in Europe, Asia and North America and Indian wolf (Canis lupus pallipes) is a subspecies of grey wolf that ranges from Southwest Asia to the Indian Subcontinent.



This Indian wolf (Canis lupus pallipes) was allegedly trapped and beaten to death by villagers in Barguna’s Taltali upazila recently. PHOTO: COLLECTED

AMIT MUHURI MURDER

Ripon tells magistrate how he did it

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Chattogram

The prime accused in Amit Muhuri murder case, Ripon Nath, yesterday confessed before a court that he used a brick to thrash Amit’s head inside the Chattogram Central Jail.

Amit Muhuri, a listed criminal who was accused in 15 cases including two for murders, died on May 29 following a fight with another inmate Ripon Nath, according to the case started by Jailor Nasir Ahmed.

Ripon had been on a five-day remand following the incident and was produced before the court of Additional Metropolitan Magistrate Mohiuddin Murad yesterday.

“He said he thrashed Amit’s head with a brick which was being used for setting up a stove inside the jail. He did it during an altercation over where to sleep. The court sent Ripon to jail after recording his statement,” said Assistant Commissioner (Prosecution) Kazi Shahabuddin Ahmed.

Asif Mohiuddin, additional deputy commissioner of the Detective Branch of Police, told this paper, “In confession, Ripon repeated what he earlier told police officials during remand. He narrated the same story to DB investigators as well.”

According to the case details, Amit and Ripon engaged in a clash inside room-6 of cell-32 when Ripon hit Amit on the head with a brick. Critically injured, Amit was taken to Chattogram Medical College Hospital around 10:00pm. He died around 1:00am.

Amit had been in Chattogram Central Jail since September 2017 when he was arrested in a murder case filed with the Kotwali Police Station of the port city.

Good chance

FROM PAGE 1

on his left thigh on Monday, which he had injured while scoring 121 in the 106-run defeat against England on Saturday, and it was gathered from the image that there was a Grade 1 strain. Team management informed that the report had been sent to a specialist, but everyone seemed confident that Shakib will play the next game.

“He picked up a little injury, as you all saw in that game against England,” Rhodes said after the match against Sri Lanka at the County Ground in Bristol was abandoned without a ball bowled yesterday. “He fought on and battled on, and played extremely well with an injury. We’re very, very optimistic with the treatment that he’ll get this week and the way that he

can recover well; we’re very optimistic that he can play in the next game against West Indies.”

Shakib received treatment from physio Thihan Chandramohan early on in his innings on Saturday at the Cardiff Wales Stadium and was present during team practice on Monday, but did not bat or bowl.

Chandramohan had said on Monday that he had gone for the scan as a precautionary measure.

Shakib’s lowest score in the three matches so far has been 64 against New Zealand. He is still the highest scorer in the World Cup with 260 runs and has also taken three wickets, so Bangladesh will desperately need his services to keep their race to the semifinals on track.

Why shouldn’t

FROM PAGE 1

all other barriers, he added.

There are systemic or other failures for crimes remaining unpunished, the petitioner said, adding that when the state fails to identify the accused or collect and present acceptable evidence against the criminals, the duty to compensate remains.

Referring to what the Indian Supreme Court said in several cases, the petitioner said the state’s responsibility does not end merely by registering a case, conducting investigation and initiating prosecution.

“The responsibility for rehabilitation of the victim remains and hence, the right to compensation remains for the victim.”

The HC also issued a rule asking the government to explain in four weeks why it should not be directed to give Tk 50 lakh each to the families of Shahinoor Akhter Tania and Sumaiya

Akhter, who had been gang-raped in Kishoreganj and Rajshahi.

Shahinoor Akhter Tania, who worked at Ibne Sina Hospital’s Kalyanpur branch in the capital, was raped and murdered in a passenger bus on her way home in Kishoreganj’s Katiadi upazila.

Sumaiya Akhter, 14, of Mohanpur upazila in Rajshahi, died by suicide after she was gang-raped on April 17, according to the writ petition.

The respondents to the rule were secretaries to the ministries of home, children and women, health and family planning, road transport and bridges, the Bangladesh Road Transport Authority, chairman and director of National Legal Aid Services Organization, inspector general of police, superintendents of police of Kishoreganj and Rajshahi, officers-in-charge of Bajitpur Police Station in Kishoreganj and Mohanpur Police Station in Rajshahi.

Less ambitious, more realistic

FROM PAGE 1

and a new finance minister, it is not unreasonable to expect a new beginning where major structural reform initiatives addressing the most pressing problems currently afflicting the economy will be the most distinguishing feature relative to the previous budgets,” he told The Daily Star.

Prof Shamsul Alam, senior secretary at the Planning Commission, said he too expected that the government would take the necessary steps for economic reforms so that revenue earning increased in line with the GDP growth.

For example, the banking sector should be reformed in a way that it could play a supportive role in achieving a higher economic growth, he added.

“Our finance minister is dynamic and forward-looking. I believe he would be able to live up to the expectation,” he added.

In the coming budget, the finance minister will make some compromises as well.

Like in the previous years, more funds will be injected into state-run banks despite their continued financial irregularities and irresponsible lending practices.

In the last 10 years, the government injected more than Tk 17500 crore of taxpayers’ money into the state-run banks, although there has been hardly any improvement in their governance and lending practices.

In the coming fiscal year, some Tk 1,500 crore will be set aside to bail out these banks.

After a dillydally for seven years, the government is going to implement the new VAT law this time, but there will be several VAT rates, as in the existing laws.

Zahid Hussain said the original VAT law 2012 was drafted after much consultations with experts and stakeholders.

“Had it been implemented as passed by parliament in 2012, Bangladesh would have been a pioneer in modern VAT laws,” he said.

But it is now clear that the law will be implemented after making several amendments, most of which appear to be in the wrong direction, he added.

“We hear the revisions include having different VAT rates at imports, production, wholesale and retail stages with input credit eligible only for the top 15 percent rate. This will reduce VAT to almost like an excise duty, bringing back the old and buried problem of taxes on taxes,” he said.

BUDGET MEASURES

There will be some populist measures

BUDGET IN FIGURES [In crores]

SECTORS	2018-19 (ORIGINAL BUDGET)	2018-19 (REVISED BUDGET)	2019-20 (PROPOSED BUDGET)
Total budget	464,574	442,542	523,190
Revenue budget	291,574	275,542	320,469
Salary and allowance	58,512	57,989	69,260
Expenditure on interest payment	51,338	48,742	52,154
Govt incentive, subsidy and grants	106,931	107,025	112,075
ADP	173,000	167,000	202,721
Total revenue	339,280	320,387	377,810
NBR tax	296,201	280,000	325,600
Non-NBR tax	9,727	9,600	14,500
Non tax revenue	33,352	27,000	37,710

in the budget.

Incentives will be given to remitters for the first time to encourage them to send remittance through official channels instead of via hundi.

Besides, there will a separate fund for start-ups to alleviate youth unemployment.

The government also plans to bring an additional 14 lakh people under the social safety net programmes.

It will bring 1 crore new taxpayers under its tax net. For this purpose, the NBR will conduct a survey on households in Dhaka and other big cities to get a picture of how many eligible taxpayers are out of the tax net.

The next budget may bring smiles to several thousand teachers of private secondary educational institutions working without any pay, as the government is likely to allocate Tk 1,150 crore to bring around 3,000 more institutions under the Monthly Pay Order (MPO) scheme, which remained suspended for nine years.

BUDGET TARGETS

The size of the budget will be around Tk 523,190 crore, according to the draft budget proposal. The size of revised budget in the 2018-19 was Tk 442,542 crore.

This time, the highest expenditure, or Tk 69,260 crore, will go for the salary and allowances of government employees. This is 19.43 percent more than that in the revised budget of outgoing fiscal year.

The development budget will also see a rise, by 21.38 percent to Tk 202,721 crore.

The government has already allocated one-fourth of the development budget to 14 mega projects, including Padma Bridge, metro rail and Rooppur Nuclear Power Plant.

The development budget in the outgoing FY is 16.95 percent higher than that in the previous fiscal year.

Rain ruins Tigers

FROM PAGE 1

hoping -- in defiance of the forecast -- that a game would be possible the following day. Mushfiqur Rahim and Sabbir Rahman arrived at the ground yesterday at 10:45 am, despite there being no sign of rain relenting. The rest of the team joined them around two hours later, hoping against hope. More than the equation to reach the semis, that fond hope may also have been occasioned by the eagerness to turn their momentum around after two harsh defeats on the trot.

While the equation has become tougher, it has also become more straightforward. With rain coming with the territory of matches in England, Bangladesh will now have to look to win every time they are on the park. It now remains to be seen how the Tigers respond to this altered reality.

Three major challenges

FROM PAGE 1

Currently, income tax accounts for only 30 to 35 percent of the total revenue earned. It should be 50 percent as there are a lot of wealthy people in Bangladesh, said Muhith.

The number of taxpayers has to increase to generate more revenue and four crore out of 16 crore people in Bangladesh should pay taxes.

“If it doesn’t happen, efforts should be made to bring at least one crore people under the tax net within the next five years.”

At present, only 15 lakh people pay taxes.

Muhith said earnings from value-added tax (VAT) and customs would increase automatically, and gave his support to multiple slabs of VAT.

The former finance minister also said he had faced the challenges of fixing the revenue target while preparing the budget.

“If you set a high revenue target, then you will hear a hue and cry. But if you set a low target, then you will not have [enough] money to provide services to the people,” he noted.

Implementation of the budget poses another big challenge, according to the former bureaucrat.

During the interview, Muhith also touched upon external pressures present during budget formulation.

He said he had never faced any political pressure while formulating the budget during his long career.

“But businesses had tried to create pressure.”

He said the Federation of Bangladesh

Chambers of Commerce and Industries, the Dhaka Chamber of Commerce and Industries, and the Bangladesh Garment Manufacturers and Exporters Association play an important role in the budget preparation.

“You will have to share with them whatever you want to do. You can do nothing by making them unhappy. Ultimately, you need to collect money.”

Improving the condition of the banking sector was another challenge for the current finance minister, according to Muhith.

“If a bank fails, it will create a serious crisis in the economy. So, during my tenure I had emphasised on the banking sector and never allowed any bank to fail.”

He blamed owners and sponsors for the Farmers Bank crisis, saying, “The bank was looted by its owners.”

“I should have allowed it to die. I should have allowed it to merge with another bank.”

The private commercial bank, which was established in 2013, became a hotbed for financial irregularities in less than three years of operation. More than Tk 3,500 crore was siphoned out of the bank, according to the Bangladesh Bank.

Subsequently, Farmers Bank was renamed the Padma Bank, as the troubled lender looks to sweep the gross irregularities and loan scams under the carpet and get an image makeover.

“A lot of chances were given to banks and now they should be brought under control. Banks must be brought under regulation,” Muhith said.

Nine held over raping 5 girls

STAR REPORT

Police in the last two days arrested nine people over raping five girls, including a minor and a mentally challenged girl, in separate incidents in four districts.

In Khagrachhari, police arrested three teenagers over raping a girl in Sadar upazila on Monday night.

They raped her around noon on the same day while she was looking after their livestock near their house and no one else was there, said Shahadat Hossain Tito, officer-in-charge of Khagrachhari Sadar Police Station.

The victim filed a case with the police station following the incident, he added.

In Netrakona, police on Monday arrested three youths -- Jamrul, 28, Humayun, 23, and Kajal, 45 -- over gang-raping a differently abled girl in Kendua upazila.

They intercepted the girl while she was going to her aunt’s house on Monday afternoon and dragged her to a nearby jungle where they gang-raped her, said Mohammad Raseduzzaman, OC of Kendua Police Station.

In Chapainawabganj, police on Monday arrested one Selim Reza, 45, on charge of raping an eight-year-old girl, said Ziaur Rahman, OC of Chapainawabganj Sadar Model Police Station.

In Narayanganj, police yesterday arrested a man for raping a teenage girl in the town on Friday.

The accused Rabiul Hasan Sunny, 30, worked at a garment factory in in the district, said Kamrul Islam, OC of Narayanganj Sadar Model Police Station.

Besides, police arrested Shamim Mia, a bus driver, for attempting to rape a teenager in a running bus on Dhaka-Chittagong highway in Sonargaon upazila on Monday night.

Our Khagrachhari, Mymensingh, Chapainawabganj and Narayanganj correspondents contributed to this report.

Ukraine slams ‘imperial’ Russia in Hague sea case

AFP, The Hague

Ukraine yesterday accused Russia of acting like an imperial power as it urged a tribunal in The Hague to take on its case over the seas around Crimea.

Kiev told the Permanent Court of Arbitration (PCA) that Russia had illegally blocked access to the Black Sea, Sea of Azov and Kerch Strait since annexing Crimea in 2014.

Russia had pressed the court during its opening arguments on Monday to throw out the case.

“Russia’s approach is based on the imperial historical narrative pushed by its leaders. In the version of reality presented yesterday by Russia, nothing has changed since the Russian empire,” Ukraine’s deputy foreign minister Olena Zerkal told the PCA.

“This explains why Russia believes that it alone can make the rules, but it can’t.”

Zerkal criticised what she called Russia’s “complete disrespect for the international law of the sea.”

MOON-SIGHTING FIASCO

BNP MP wants religious affairs minister to quit

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

BNP MP Harunur Rashid yesterday in parliament demanded the resignation of State Minister for Religious Affairs Sheikh Md Abdullah for the confusion over the Eid-ul Fitr date.

Two other MPs from Jatiya Party also came down heavily on the state minister on the issue.

“I expect the religious affairs minister [state minister] to resign over this moon-sighting issue and the national moon-sighting committee to be abolished,” Harun, the Chapainawabganj-3 lawmaker, said while speaking on the point of order.

Lambasting the minister, he also questioned what the job of the national moon-sighting committee was.

“The moon is usually sighted during the evening. The moon is supposed to be sighted at 6:30pm or 7:00pm.”

Harun said Abdullah came up with first announcement of the Eid date at 9:00pm, saying Eid would be celebrated on June 6 as the moon was not sighted anywhere in Bangladesh.

“After taraweeh prayers, when we fell asleep..., the second announcement came on television at

SEE PAGE 9 COL 2

Dead ship likely to be dismantled on Parki beach

Chattogram DoE to issue environmental clearance

MOSTAFA YOUSUF, Chattogram

The Directorate of Environment has recommended that its Chattogram office issue the environmental go-ahead for breaking a ship that ran aground at Parki beach in Anwara upazila two years ago.

The recommendation came at a DoE meeting in April.

The beach, where the dead ship MV Crystal Gold washed ashore during Cyclone Mora in May 2017, is frequented by hundreds of tourist every day and experts fear they may be exposed to pollution if the ship is dismantled.

Al Amin, professor of the Institute of Forestry and Environmental Science at Chittagong University, said, “There is a locality very close to the beach. if the ship is broken without 100 percent safety measures, there will be heavy damage to public health as well as to the environment as the dead ship contain various types of toxic.”

SEE PAGE 10 COL 5

Finance minister is fine, will place budget tomorrow

Press release says

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Finance Minister AHM Mustafa Kamal is “perfectly fine” and he will place his maiden budget in parliament tomorrow as scheduled, the finance ministry said in a press release last night.

The release came after daylight rumours about whether the minister would be able to place the budget on health grounds.

The minister went to the Apollo Hospitals in the capital in the evening only for a routine medical check-up, it added.

Address rights issues

FROM PAGE 1

During his visit here, Gilmore had meetings with Law, Justice and Parliamentary Affairs Minister Anisul Huq and acting UN resident coordinator and country directors of ILO, UNHCR, IOM, UNDP, UNICEF, UNFPA, UN as well as with representatives of NGOs and trade unions.

He also visited the refugee camps and met the Rohingya refugees and local communities as well as the Refugee Relief and Repatriation Commissioner Mohammed Abul Kalam, in Cox’s Bazar.

Besides, Gilmore discussed the aspects of rule of law and law enforcement, elections, freedom of assembly, women’s and children’s rights, human rights cooperation in the UN, rights of minorities and the implementation of the Chittagong Hill Tracts Peace Accord, the statement said.

“The international community is grateful for Bangladesh’s generous hosting of the Rohingyas, and we as the European Union are doing our part to address the crisis,” he said.

Gilmore termed Bangladesh’s hospitality for the Rohingya refugees, including by the host communities, an example of solidarity to be followed by all.

The EU is making every effort to support Bangladesh in the important humanitarian mission, at financial and political levels, and it has mobilised €104.5 million since 2017, added the statement.