

Robotic tail

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waist with a harness.

“When a human tilts their body one way, the tail moves in the opposite direction.”

As Japan greys it is leading the industrial world in seeking ways to keep its ageing population mobile and productive.

While other nations have turned to immigrant workers to replenish a shrinking workforce, less welcoming Japan has focused more on a technological solution.

The robotic tail, which uses four artificial muscles and compressed air to move in eight directions, will remain in the lab for now, however, as researchers look for ways to make it more flexible, Nabeshima said.

Apart from helping the elderly get around, the team are also looking at industrial applications for the artificial appendage, such as a balance aid for warehouse workers carrying heavy loads.

“I think it would be nice to incorporate this further developed prosthetic tail into daily life, when one seeks a little more help balancing,” Nabeshima said.

US warrant

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It says the vessel and all the oil aboard are subject to forfeiture based on violations of US sanctions. It also cites violations of bank fraud, money laundering and terrorism statutes.

The US State Department has also threatened to issue a visa ban on anyone working on the ship.

The US move comes after it tried -- and failed -- to block the tanker's release on Thursday.

The July 4 seizure came amid surging tensions in the Gulf after several alleged Iranian attacks on smaller tankers.

The US -- citing Tehran's threat to American allies -- expanded its military presence in the region with a new aircraft carrier task force, missile batteries and strategic bombers.

Iran called the detention of the Grace 1 an “illegal interception” staged by the United States, while Washington cheered it as “excellent news.”

Ties between Tehran and Washington are at a low point since US President Donald Trump withdrew last year from a landmark 2015 nuclear deal between major powers and Iran, reimposing crippling unilateral sanctions.

Pending cases

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selection of cases have been the main reasons behind the backlog.

More efficient and experienced judges are needed to be appointed in order to speed up the hearing and disposal of the cases, he said.

The lawyer proposed a system where judges would be able to accept or reject a case at the initial stage as many unnecessary cases are filed with the courts.

Refused by the lower courts, people seek bail from the HC creating a long backlog of bail petitions in the HC, the advocate said.

Contacted, Law Minister Anisul Huq told The Daily Star that some new judges might be appointed to the HC, but the government had no plan to appoint new judges to the Appellate Division as the chief justice had not said anything to the government in this regard.

Recruitment of lower court judges through the Bangladesh Judicial Service Commission is a continuous process, he said without elaborating on this issue.

Supreme Court Registrar General Md Zakir Hossain told this correspondent that the rate of case disposal saw a rise in the recent years.

In 2014, Bangladesh Law Commission recommended the government recruit 3,000 judges at lower courts for quick disposal of pending cases and reducing sufferings of justice seekers.

Bhola

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could not identify him and other relatives unless they were introduced to her.

Her condition had improved slightly on Friday, five days after she was violated by her two neighbours.

The schoolgirl was brought to the DMCH early on Thursday after doctors at Bhola and Dshal hospitals had failed to stop the bleeding.

She was raped at her aunt's house on the eve of Eid-ul-Azha when she went there to have mehendi on her arms.

While she was waiting on the veranda, Al Amin, 27, a tenant at the house, gagged her with a strip of cloth and forced her into his room, said police.

Al Amin and his associate Manjur Alam, 25, tied her up and violated her, they added.

According to law enforcers, another youth named Jamal Akand allegedly assisted the duo in the crime. The victim's father filed a case accusing the three.

Al Amin and Manjur were killed in a “gunfight” with police on Wednesday. The other accused is now behind bars.

Greenland isn’t for sale but it is increasingly valuable

AFP, Washington

President Donald Trump’s reported wish to buy Greenland may have been rejected by Denmark, but it underscores the rapidly rising value of the massive, ice-covered island due to global warming and to China’s drive for an Arctic presence.

The accelerating polar ice melt has left sparsely populated Greenland, a self-governing part of Denmark, astride what are potentially major shipping routes and in the crosshairs of intensifying geopolitical competition between superpowers.

It also has untapped natural resources like oil, minerals and valuable rare earth elements that China, the United States and other major tech economies covet.

A Chinese government-backed group’s offer last year to build three new international airports on Greenland sparked alarms in Copenhagen and Washington.

The Chinese plan was finally nixed in exchange for Danish funding and a pledge of support from the Pentagon.

Trump’s idea to buy Greenland, reported by the Wall Street Journal on Friday, “is not a serious proposal,”

said Heather Conley, a specialist at the Center for Strategic and International Studies in Washington.

But, “The administration has awoken to the Arctic as a geostrategic issue,” she said.

Greenland has been essential to US defense since World War II when it was a base for monitoring Nazi ships and submarines passing through the “Arctic Avenue,” the sea gateway to the north Atlantic.

In 1943 the US Air Force built its farthest-north air base at Thule, Greenland.

Thule was crucial in the Cold War, a first line of monitoring against a potential Russian attack. With a population of 600, the base today is part of the Nato mission, operating satellite monitoring and strategic missile detection systems and handling thousands of flights a year.

Conley said that after the Cold War ebbed in the 1990s, Washington stopped thinking about the Arctic.

Yet as the polar ice sheet began to shrink, the Russians became more active and China has moved to establish itself in the region.

US Secretary of State Mike Pompeo underscored the revived US interest

in a speech in May in Finland, where he slammed China and Russia for “aggressive behavior” in the Arctic.

“The region has become an arena of global power and competition” owing to vast reserves of oil, gas, minerals and fish stocks, he warned.

“Just because the Arctic is a place of wilderness does not mean it should become a place of lawlessness,” he said.

With no geographical claim to the region, but whose massive commercial shipping industry would benefit from new polar routes as the ice melts, China is the newcomer whose presence could shift the balance.

It began sending scientific missions in 2004. In the past several years, a Chinese company has gained mining rights for rare earths, partnering with an Australian company in the Kvanefeld project.

In January 2018 Beijing unveiled its “Polar Silk Road” strategy to extend its economic footprint through the Arctic.

In a sign of Washington’s rekindled interest, US President Donald Trump will go to Denmark in September, and Vice President Mike Pence will visit Iceland.

Ex-Trump campaign chief Lewandowski says ‘happy’ to testify before Congress

REUTERS, Washington

President Donald Trump’s former campaign manager, Corey Lewandowski, said on Friday that he was “happy” to testify before the Democratic-led U.S. House Judiciary Committee as part of a congressional investigation of the Trump presidency.

The panel, which is considering whether to recommend Trump’s impeachment, subpoenaed Lewandowski on Thursday as a witness to an alleged attempt by the president to impede former Special Counsel Robert Mueller’s Russia investigation after the 2016 election.

Now a private citizen, Lewandowski said he looked forward to the chance

to testify as “a guy who’s going to fight back” against Democratic claims of wrongdoing by Trump.

“I am an open book. I want to go and remind the American people that these guys are on a witch hunt, right?” Lewandowski told Fox News Radio. “Never did I say I wasn’t coming.”

House Democrats believed the White House might try to block Lewandowski from testifying, as it has done with other former Trump advisers, including former White House Counsel Don McGahn and former White House Communications Director Hope Hicks.

“They didn’t have to subpoena me,” Lewandowski told Fox. “They

could have just said, hey, Corey, will you show up? I would have said: I’m happy to come, right? Because I want to explain that there was no collusion, there was no obstruction.”

Lewandowski, who is contemplating a run for the U.S. Senate in next year’s elections, said he could make a final decision on the issue in early October.

Mueller’s investigation into Russian interference in 2016 failed to produce enough evidence to prove that Moscow conspired with the Trump campaign, despite numerous contacts between Russia and campaign officials. Mueller also made no determination about whether Trump obstructed justice.

Rawhide trade runs into snag

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dumped rawhide at around Tk 100 crore.

Delwar Hossain, president of Bangladesh Hide and Skin Merchants’ Association, yesterday said, “Many tanners came to the rawhide market at Posta in the capital, but we did not sell any. We want payment of our previous dues of Tk 400 crore.”

He said the tanners should pay at least 50 percent of the money in cash so that the total outstanding amount did not become bigger.

The tanners also should say when and how they will clear the dues, Delwar told The Daily Star over phone.

“We will place this issue before the commerce minister during a meeting to be held tomorrow [today] at his ministry,” he said.

Posta is the biggest rawhide market of the country. The situation was similar in the rawhide markets in Amin Bazar on the outskirts of the capital, in Mymensingh, Thakurgaon and Jashore.

Tanners buy hide from the merchants on credit throughout the year and clear the dues in phases. Tanners pay at least 40 percent of the dues every year before Eid-ul-Azha.

Several merchants told this paper recently that the tanners, however, paid only 5 percent of the outstanding amount before this Eid.

Tanner paid merchants between Tk 30 and Tk 35 crore, which was

too inadequate to buy rawhide at the government-fixed rates, Delwar said.

He further said tanners had paid the merchants Tk 75 crore before the Eid last year, when rawhide prices crashed to a 10-year low, dealing a heavy blow to seasonal traders.

Alamgir Hossain, a rawhide merchant at Posta, said some tanners came to the market yesterday to buy rawhide, but they were ready to pay only 25 percent of the actual price.

“We want assurance that all our dues will be paid. I followed the decision from our association of not selling rawhide today,” he said.

Meanwhile, talking to journalists after an association meeting at Posta yesterday, Delwar said, “Tanners claimed they paid merchants all the dues. This is totally false.”

“Tanners want to run their business keeping us in a tight spot,” he said.

Meanwhile, leaders of Bangladesh Tanners Association (BTA) yesterday claimed that they started buying rawhide from merchants.

BTA General Secretary Shakawat Ullah told reporters at the Savar Tannery Industrial Estate that tanners began buying hide at Shambhuganj market.

“Usually, we start buying rawhide 10 to 15 days after Eid-ul-Azha. For this year, we planned to start buying the hide from August 20, but we started earlier following a ‘rumour’ that rawhides were thrown away amid

a poor demand,” he said.

Before the Eid, the commerce ministry had fixed the rawhide rates in consultations with other ministries, different divisions and departments, tanners and rawhide merchants.

The prices of rawhide of cows and buffaloes were fixed at Tk 45-50 per square foot in the capital and Tk 35-40 elsewhere.

The price of rawhide of castrated goats was fixed at Tk 18-20 per square foot, while it was Tk 13-15 for that of uncastrated goats.

This Eid, over 1 crore animals were sacrificed across the country. Of them, some 45 lakhs were cows, bulls and buffaloes, said rawhide traders.

Rawhide merchants have collected some 90 lakh pieces of hide from seasonal traders and farmers, said Delwar.

Talking to The Daily Star yesterday, Md Mofizul Islam, senior secretary to the commerce ministry, said his ministry was not aware whether tanners started buying rawhide yesterday.

“We have called a meeting at the ministry today to discuss the issue. Tanners, merchants and other stakeholders will attend the meeting,” he said.

The secretary also said the ministry may also fix a minimum price rate of rawhide at the field level to avoid similar crisis in future.

Thousands of travelers delayed at US airports by computer outage

REUTERS, Washington

Thousands of travelers at US airports faced delays on Friday because of an nationwide outage of US Customs and Border Protection’s (CBP) processing systems that lasted several hours.

In a tweet at 6:37 p.m. EDT (2237 GMT), CBP said “the affected systems are coming back online and travelers are being processed.”

It said there was “no indication the disruption was malicious in nature at this time.”

Earlier, CBP said officers were processing international travelers using alternative procedures, which caused “longer than usual wait times.”

The computer issue was not impacting departures.

People at various U.S. airports posted videos on social media sites of lengthy lines at processing checkpoints and several airports warned of extensive delays.

On an average day, CBP processes around 358,000 air passengers and crew.

The Federal Aviation

Administration (FAA) said the outage had not caused any changes in flights.

This is not the first time the system has faced problems. The system was down for four hours on Jan. 2, 2017, as many travelers were returning from holiday trips.

A Homeland Security inspector general’s office report issued in November 2017 found “inadequate CBP software capacity testing, leaving the potential for recurrence of processing errors.”

The report also warned of “inadequate business continuity and disaster recovery capabilities to minimize the impact of system failures on the traveling public. Until such deficiencies are addressed, CBP lacks a means to minimize the possibility and impact of similar system outages in the future.”

CBP told the inspector general in 2017 that as “CBP moves to a cloud computing environment, improved performance and lead testing to emulate a production environment will be included in the requirements.”

Italy prosecutors probe Salvini over migrant ship limbo

AFP, Rome

Italian prosecutors have opened an investigation into alleged kidnapping and abuse of office after far-right Interior Minister Matteo Salvini prevented a charity ship carrying rescued migrants from docking.

While the Open Arms rescue ship lies anchored within swimming distance of southern island Lampedusa with 134 migrants on board including around 30 children, a Sicily prosecutor on Saturday sent judicial police to coastguard headquarters in Rome as part of the probe.

Police took records of communications between the interior ministry and rescue services in order to verify the chain of command for who is preventing the ship docking, the left-leaning Repubblica daily said.

The move came after the coastguard on Friday took the unprecedented step of writing to Salvini to say “there are no impediments of any kind to docking without delay.”

The national search and rescue coordination office in Rome has also asked the interior ministry for the urgent assignment of a safe port.

Italy has evacuated a handful of people from the Open Arms for medical treatment but Salvini refuses to allow the vessel to dock despite other European countries agreeing to take in the people on board.

The captain of the ship operated by Proactiva Open Arms, Marc Reig, said on Friday that the migrants, rescued after leaving chaos-stricken Libya, were “broken psychologically”.

The mainly African migrants aboard Open Arms have been plucked from boats in the Mediterranean this month, with weather conditions encouraging more departures from Libya.

Around 30 minors are on board, some unaccompanied, and the Palermo prosecutor has assigned someone to take charge of them, with Italian media suggesting they could be evacuated soon.

“The world is witness to what the 134 people who are waiting to disembark have had to endure,” Open Arms tweeted.

“It is only the lack of will of the politicians who have the power to

decide that separates them from a safe haven,” the Spanish charity said.

Salvini tweeted that if the ship had gone back to Spain 16 days ago “you would already have been home.”

“The NGOs’ battle is political and certainly not humanitarian, played out using the lives of migrants,” he said.

Prime Minister Giuseppe Conte said on Thursday that France, Germany, Romania, Portugal, Spain and Luxembourg had agreed to take in the migrants.

But interior ministry sources on Friday said that “no European country has taken formal steps to take the migrants on board.”

The fate of the migrants aboard the Open Arms vessel is at the centre of a political crisis in Italy.

Earlier this month, Salvini signed a decree banning the Open Arms from Italian waters, saying it was to protect public order.

But Proactiva appealed to the administrative court which on Wednesday suspended his decree.

Ten killed

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Chowdhury,33, was killed when he was he hit by a truck around 9:30pm in Jhaugara area on Mymensingh-Haluaghat road.

He was trying to stop a truck from driving down the wrong side of the road, said OC Khondaker Shaker Ahmed of Kotwali Police Station.

He died at Mymensingh Medical College Hospital about an hour later.

The truck driver has been arrested, the OC said.

In Gopalganj, 11-year-old Amin Sheikh, son of Al-amin Sheikh, was run over and killed by a bus of Tungipara Express when he crossing a road on Saturday morning, said OC Monirul Islam of Gopalganj Sadar Police Station.

Meanwhile, Sobuj Sheikh, 26, of Hatbariya village of Gopalganj, died on Friday evening, a day after he was injured in a road crash.

Our correspondents in Benapole, Brahmanbaria, Noakhali, Dinajpur, Mymensingh, and Faridpur contributed to this report.

Govt to work for medical

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physicians gathered a huge experience through conducting the surgery titled “Operation Freedom”.

The PM congratulated the physicians, nurses and other staff for conducting the operation successfully. She hoped that the twins would return to their mother's lap soon.

Hasina said the medical institutions, who were involved in the surgery, would have to be more developed and modernised in light of their experience.

Elaborating her government's steps for the development of medical science, she said Bangladesh's first medical university was established during the tenure of a previous Awami League government.

Members of the Hungarian medical team highly appreciated the cooperation of the Bangladeshi doctors. They also praised the hospitality of the Bangladesh government in this regard.

They observed that the successful

surgery created a new kind of friendship between Bangladesh and Hungary.

Speaking on the occasion, the twins' father Rafikul Islam expressed gratitude to the PM for taking the responsibility of her daughters' treatment.

He also thanked the doctors who performed the surgery.

Director General of Armed Forces Medical Services Maj Gen Fashiur Rahman, leader of the Hungarian medical team Dr Csapody and its members Dr Csoky and Dr Pataki, among others, spoke at the programme.

The three-and-a-half-year-old twins from Pabna's Chatmohor upazila had been suffering from a rare embryological disorder.

The conjoined babies were separated after a successful 33-hour operation at the CMH on August 2. Doctors said such a surgery was very rare in the world.