



# A curious case at Dhaka zoo

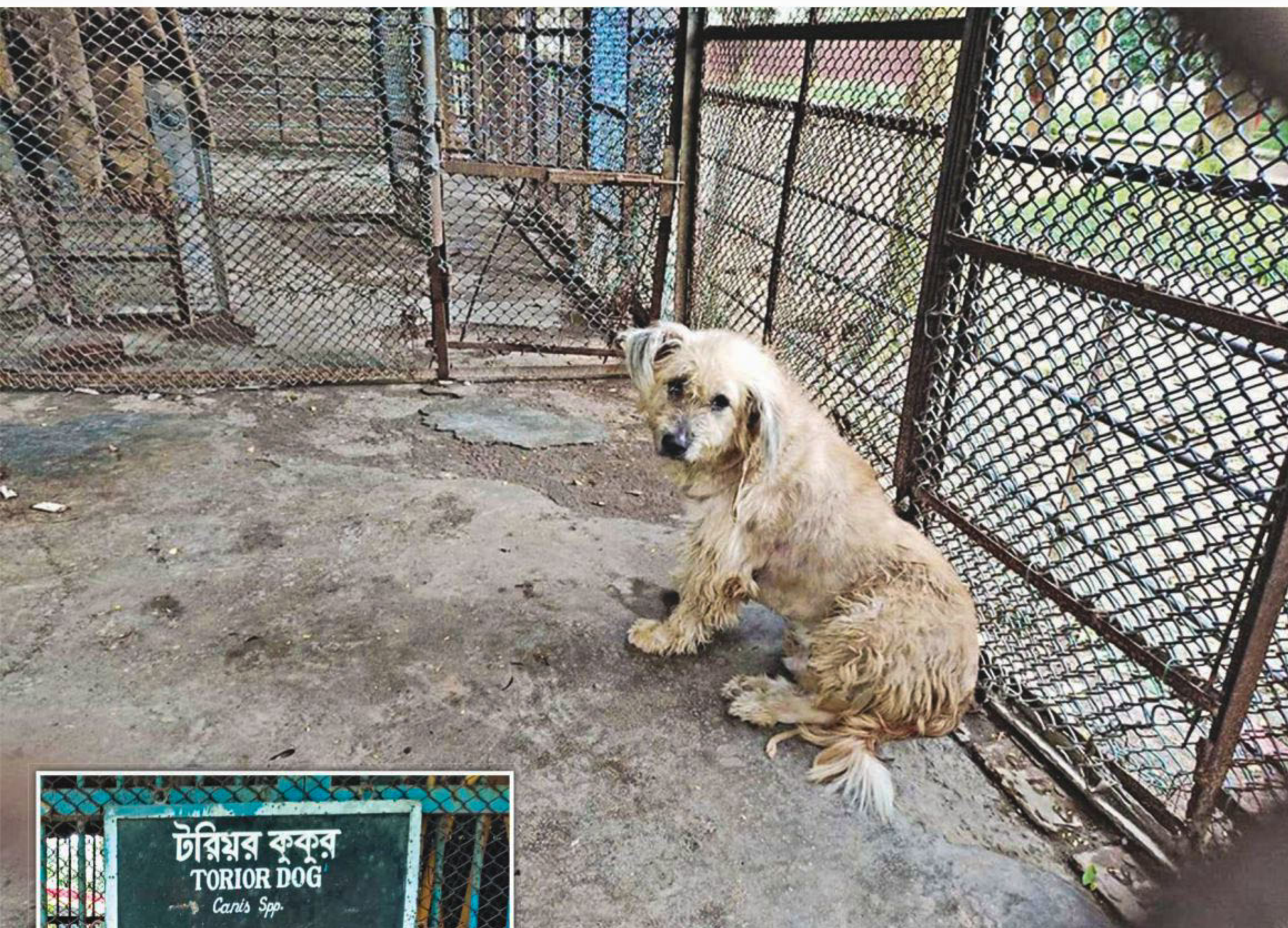


PHOTO: COLLECTED / STAR

This dog had been on display at the National Zoo till Friday, to the bemusement of visitors and dismay of animal rights groups. Inset, if the sign on the cage was to be believed, this "Torior dog" was donated by eminent artist SM Sultan, raising more questions than it answered. The photos were taken last week.

MATTHEWS CHIRAN

Bangladesh National Zoo authorities on Friday handed over two animals from its collection to a citizen for adoption, one of which it has claimed was a donation from one of the most renowned artists in the country's history. It naturally begs the question -- why?

Following reports on social media that a dog was on display at the zoo and animal rights activists' dismay over the matter, this correspondent made a trip to the zoo and found the long-furred dog, labelled a "Torior" on the sign outside a small cage, which saying animal was donated to the zoo by eminent artist (and well-known animal lover) SM Sultan.

The sign does not reveal much else -- about the artist or the animal.

Sultan passed away on October 10, 1994, which means even if the dog was donated as an infant in the last days of the artist's life, it would have to be at least 25 years old -- long beyond the normal lifespan of dogs.

According to staffers at the zoo, the dog is provided bread at 7am and 700gm of meat at 11am every day.

Another dog was found at the zoo, in a relatively larger enclosure -- a Sarail hound, descendent of the greyhound, Arabian hunting dog and wild dog -- according to the information board.

Sarail is one of the most well-known breeds of dogs from Bangladesh, named after the upazila in Brahmanbaria where

they were first found.

However, visitors at the zoo were not particularly thrilled about them. "Who comes to the zoo to see a dog? I don't find any reason for keeping them. Maybe the zoo authorities do not have enough interesting animals," said Mehedi, a private university student.

Animal rights organisation People for Animal Welfare (PAW) Foundation recently raised the issue dogs in captivity at the zoo.

Founder of the organisation Rakibul Haq Emil termed dogs as companion animals. "Dogs are not kept at zoos in other countries. They are not wild animals; why should they be kept in zoos?"

PAW Foundation also wrote to the zoo's curator on August 22, asking for the dog to be freed and handed over to a willing adopter.

There is no such breed called "Torior"; instead it would be terrier -- a type of dog that span across many breeds, according to Dhaka University Zoology Professor Niamul Naser.

Wishing anonymity, a veterinary official of the zoo said, "A dog usually lives 10 to 15 years... This dog is not directly from SM Sultan. But a dog donated by the artist was kept in the same cage. When that dog died, this one was kept instead. However, signboard has not been changed."

Dhaka University Zoology Prof Firoj Jaman said, "Wild animals can be kept at zoo to draw visitors, or for educational purposes. But keeping domestic animals in a zoo doesn't serve any purpose."

## A GAME OF HIDE-AND-SEEK

Getting in touch with and finding information about it from the zoo authorities proved to be difficult.

This correspondent went to the zoo on Monday and Tuesday, and spent several hours each day waiting to meet Curator Dr SM Nazrul Islam, but both days he was out of the office.

When asked about it in person, Deputy Curator Nurul Islam refused to talk on record, and suggested to talk with the curator.

Contacted over phone, the curator said that the reason behind keeping the dogs was they were special cases. "The dog was donated by a renowned artist. If you contact with the concerned department, they will help you find the exact date and time. We kept the dog in his honour," he said about the terrier.

When pointed out that a dog donated by SM Sultan would be a very old dog which this one was not, he backtracked, saying, "I received this dog when I joined, and that is what I know."

Asked about the request from PAW Foundation, Nazrul said they were considering it, and would decide whether they wanted to continue displaying dogs at the zoo.

When this correspondent contacted the concerned department -- Small Mammals and Reptiles -- for information on the dogs, official MA Jalil said they could not provide it unless instructed by higher authorities.

Requested over phone, deputy curator Nurul Islam refused to

cooperate, instead asking for proof that this correspondent was indeed a journalist.

This correspondent then called curator SM Nazrul Islam, only to find his tone very different. "Why are you so interested about the dogs? The zoo has done a lot of development work. Instead of all that, if you want to write about dogs in a newspaper like The Daily Star, that is very unfortunate."

"Whatever information I have given you is enough," he said, adding he was in a meeting and the discussion about dogs was "not important". He did not want to talk about it any further.

## A HAPPY ENDING

In response to the letter sent by PAW Foundation, the zoo on Friday afternoon handed over both the dogs to Lira Hasnin, an advisor of PAW Foundation and an animal lover who was willing to adopt the dogs, said Rakibul Haq Emil.

"Our vet checked both the dogs. The terrier is between five and six years old, and he needs some treatment. But he is happy at his new home," he said, and shared a video of the terrier, who was named Hope, at his new home sauntering around happily in Lira's lawn and curiously interacting with her pet cats.

"The Sarail is still somewhat feral, so we have kept him at our shelter to gradually get him accustomed to other dogs and humans," Emil said, adding that they are thankful to the zoo authorities for giving the dogs a chance at a healthy, normal life.

## 2 militant suspects held in Sadarghat

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Rab arrested two alleged activists of banned militant outfit Ansar Al Islam from the city's Sadarghat area early yesterday.

The arrestees were identified as Abu Saleh Imu, 23, and Saif, 32.

Both are activists of Ansar Al Islam's publicity wing, said Mohammed Mohiuddin Faruque, a company commander of Rab-2.

They were arrested upon their arrival to the capital from Barishal, Faruque added.

Imu was an admin of the outfit's Facebook pages "Ummah" and "Ibada", from which they used to issue threats, and Saif was his associate, the Rab official said.

Also, Saif is an accused in a case filed in connection with the arrest of two female activists of the banned outfit in Barishal, he said.

Rab claimed to have recovered leaflets, books, multimedia equipment including those for making videos and dubbing, and other material for publicity from their possession.

PHOTO: PALASH KHAN



LUNCH FROM ACROSS THE RIVER ... A woman gets off the boat at Soarighat, carrying lunchboxes on her head that she would take to Old Dhaka to sell to employees of different offices. She brings home-cooked meals for some 40 people every day in two trips from Keraniganj, selling each box for Tk 40-60. The photo was taken recently.

## DENGUE OUTBREAK

# Daily hospital admissions come down below thousand, 1st fatality reported in Ctg

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The number of dengue patients admitted to hospitals across the country in a day finally came down to 700 yesterday. The number of daily hospital admissions with the mosquito-borne viral disease was more than 1,000 since July 29.

According to Directorate General of Health Services (DGHS), a total of 760 dengue patients were admitted to different hospitals and clinics till 8am yesterday. The number was 1,025 on Friday.

However, the risk of increase in the number of patients is still there, as September and October have seen high prevalence of dengue cases in previous years, provided Aedes mosquitoes get favourable weather, experts said.

Kinkar Ghosh, epidemiologist of Dhaka Shishu Hospital, said if there is intermittent rain in September, there are chances of increase in the number of dengue cases. But if necessary measures are taken, the situation can be under control.

With the new cases, the total number of dengue patients rose to 70,196, according to DGHS data.

Meanwhile two dengue patients, including a woman, died yesterday -- making the death toll 126.

However, official figure of deaths is 57. Shilpi Akhter, 35, died yesterday noon at

Khulna Medical College Hospital (KMCH). According to KMCH, Shilpi, from Athalia village under Terokhada upazila in Khulna district, was admitted at KMCH on Friday afternoon.

Partha Protim Debnath, assistant registrar of of KMCH's medicine department told The Daily Star that Shilpi died of hemorrhage caused by dengue.

Atiar Rahman Sheikh, assistant civil surgeon of Khulna, told The Daily Star that seven people, including four women, died of dengue fever in Khulna. Of them, five died in Khulna Medical College Hospital.

In Chattogram, a dengue patient died early yesterday at a private hospital. This is the first case in Chattogram this year.

The deceased was identified as Badshah Mollah, 55, hailing from Salimpur of Sitakunda upazila in Chattogram.

Suffering from fever for three days, Badshah, a C&F businessman in the port city, was admitted to Diabetic General Hospital Chattogram on August 21 as he was diagnosed with dengue, said Sajib Ahmed, brother-in-law of Badshah, adding that he was referred to Parkview Hospital in the city that night.

He had been undergoing treatment at the ICU of the hospital since then, said Sajib.

"Badshah was admitted to our hospital

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## VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN

# Situation turned dire as justice wasn't served: Sultana Kamal

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Violence against women would not have taken such a drastic turn in the country, if the victims received justice, noted human rights activist Sultana Kamal said yesterday.

"Every day, girl children are victims of [sexual] abuse and the situation is extremely disconcerting," she said while speaking as chief guest at a debate competition in the city's Film Development Corporation.

Debate for Democracy organised the competition, themed "Justice for Nusrat murder will reduce violence against women", where Lalmatia Women's College

won the champion's trophy and Govt Madrasah-E-Alia become runner-up.

Moderated by the chairman of Debate for Democracy, Hasan Ahmed Chowdhury Kiron, the event saw both teams applying logic to support their respective positions on the topic.

The Govt Madrasah-E-Alia team participated as the ruling party -- placing their logic to prove that justice is key to preventing violence against women in the country.

On the other hand, Lalmatia Women's College tried to prove that practice of values

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Sixty-year-old Abdus Samad has been delivering water to Zero Point area near the Secretariat for 20 years. He collects water from Mohanogor Natya Mancha compound in Gulistan, and sells two containers for Tk 25. The photo was taken recently.

## Road transport lacks discipline, says state minister for shipping

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

State Minister for Shipping Khalid Mahmud Chowdhury yesterday said the country's road transport system lacks discipline.

"In Bangladesh, we are facing many challenges, we even emerged victorious in challenges like [building] the Padma Bridge," he said.

"However, it's sad but true, we are experiencing many weaknesses regarding discipline in road transport," he added.

The state minister made the comments while visiting Bangladesh Inland Water Transport Corporation (BIWTC) official Krishna Roy at National Institute of Traumatology and Orthopedic Rehabilitation in the capital.

Krishna, an official at BIWTC's accounts section, lost her left leg after a bus ran her over at Banglamotor on Tuesday.

The state minister said a set of recommendations have been submitted for bringing discipline on roads.

Unexpected incidents like what happened with Krishna will not occur if discipline on road is reestablished through implementing the recommendations, he said.

Mahmud said it's a matter of concern that the place where the incident occurred is designated for pedestrians. It should be investigated whether there was any engine failure, whether the bus had fitness certificate or the driver was fit, he added.

Law enforcement agency members will investigate this and bring culprits under the purview of law, he further said. On Krishna's health condition, he said doctors were doing their best to provide her proper treatment.

Hopefully she will recover soon, he said, adding his ministry will provide necessary support to ensure her treatment, and Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina is concerned about the matter.

If necessary, Krishna will be sent abroad for treatment, he added.

## Bangladesh would not be born without Bangabandhu

Says Tofail Ahmed

DU CORRESPONDENT

Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman guided Bangladesh to the path of liberation, and the country would not have been born if Bangabandhu were not born, said former commerce minister, veteran Awami League leader and lawmaker Tofail Ahmed yesterday.

He made the remark while addressing a seminar titled "Bangabandhu-i Bangladesh", held at Centre for Advanced Research in Arts and Social Sciences auditorium of Dhaka University.

Dhaka University Mass Communication and Journalism Alumni Association (DUMCIAA) organised the seminar -- marking the 44th anniversary of Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman and national mourning day.

"Bangabandhu spent almost 14 years behind bars to realise demands of the

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