

Jackdaws

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to the wild jackdaws approached their nest. At the same time scientists played a recording of a warning call (threatening) or "contact calls" (non-threatening).

The next time jackdaws saw this same person, the birds that had previously heard the warning call were defensive and returned to their nests more than twice as quickly on average. Birds that heard contact calls still returned to their nests but took longer – they took 63 percent of the time compared to birds that had not heard the call at all.

The study, published in Royal Society Open Science, looked at 34 jackdaw nest boxes.

"One of the big challenges for a lot of animals is how to live alongside humans. People can provide some benefits, such as the food at bird feeders, but in some cases humans are also a threat," said lead author Victoria Lee, a PhD researcher at the University of Exeter.

"Being able to discriminate between dangerous and harmless people is likely to be beneficial, and in this case we see jackdaws can learn to identify dangerous people without having had a bad experience themselves," she said.

Jackdaws are the smallest members of the crow family and have a light grey patch on their neck and pale white iris.

They are known for forming strong bonds with mates and will stay together for life – even if they have years of unsuccessful breeding.

These highly social creatures roost and feed together, and will even encourage other jackdaw to follow them if they find a good source of food.

"This study provides important evidence that animals use social learning to assess the level of risk posed by individual humans," researchers wrote in the paper.

"Understanding how social learning shapes antipredator responses is vital to predicting and mitigating the effects of human activity, and provides valuable insights into how cognitive abilities influence adaptation to changing environments."

GK Shamim

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land grabbing under the headlines "Last six Marma families evicted" and "3 indigenous villages face land grabbing" on August 9 last year and July 28 this year respectively.

The reports said the authorities of Sylvan Wye Resort and Spa Ltd allegedly evicted the last six families of Saingya Marma Para while another 170 families of nearby Saingya Tripura Para, Laimi Para, and Hati Bhanga Para faced threat of eviction.

The resort owner intends to construct a 5-star hotel in the area, the reports said.

Leaders of the indigenous communities alleged that the resort authorities have already grabbed 250 acres of land in the Paras, which are cradled in the scenic hilly landscape and close to the town centre.

The Daily Star has obtained a copy of a Sylvan Wye document that shows GK Shamim is one of the directors of the resort.

Contacted, Jashim Uddin Montu, chairman of the resort, confirmed the matter and said GK Shamim invested around Tk 2 crore in building the 5-star hotel.

Refuting the allegation of land grabbing, Jashim claimed that he bought 60 acres of land from the indigenous families, taking permission from the authorities.

He also accused the villagers of illegally entering "his land".

But how he bought the land remains a mystery because only permanent residents of the hill district are eligible to buy land there.

A gazette notification published on August 3, 1989 states that no land shall be transferred to a person who is not a resident of the hill district.

Indigenous leaders said they submitted complaints to the district administration several times in the past, but to no avail.

Joseph Tripura of Saingya Tripura Para said, "We went to the local administration, but it did not pay any heed to our complaints. It seems the administration has been bribed by Shamim and his men."

Birendro Tripura, headman of the Para, said, "We receive death threat whenever we protest land grabbing."

Talking about the issues, noted lawyer Barrister Jyotirmoy Barua said, "Influential local public representatives give shelter to land grabbers, including businessman like GK Shamim. It is nothing but a part of the continuous process of grabbing land in the Chattogram Hill Tracts."

Asked, Bandarban Additional Deputy Commissioner Md Shafiqul Alam said, "We received allegations against Sylvan Wye Resort and Spa Ltd. We have also been informed about GK Shamim's involvement in land grabbing."

He denied the administration's involvement with land grabbers.

On Friday, SM Golam Kibria Shamim was held, during a raid at his office in the capital.

He faces charges of tender manipulation, extortion and running drug and gambling rackets.

When he was being arrested, he introduced himself as a central Jubo League leader.

But the youth front of Awami League said he was not.



A Pakistani man carries his injured daughter as she survived following an earthquake on the outskirts of Mirpur in Pakistan-controlled Kashmir yesterday. Rescuers battled along badly damaged roads and combed through toppled buildings to reach victims of the earthquake that killed at least 38 people and injured hundreds more in northeast Pakistan.

PHOTO: AFP

Humanity must rescue

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Seas have grown acidic, potentially undermining their capacity to draw down CO₂; warmer surface water has expanded the force and range of deadly tropical storms; marine heatwaves are wiping out coral reefs, which are unlikely to survive the century.

Most threatening of all, accelerating melt-off from glaciers and especially Earth's ice sheets atop Greenland and Antarctica are driving sea level rise.

'A WORLD OF HIGHER SEAS'
Since 2005, the ocean has risen 2.5 times faster than during the 20th century. The rate at which the waterline rises will quadruple again by 2100 if carbon emissions continue unabated, the report found.

"Regardless of emissions scenarios, we face a world of higher sea levels," said co-author Bruce Glavovic, a professor at Massey University, New Zealand, noting that humanity is concentrated on the world's shorelines.

"It doesn't take a big rise in sea level to lead to catastrophic problems," he added. "Sea level rise is not a slow onset problem -- it's a crisis of extreme weather events."

By 2050, many coastal megacities and small island nations will experience what were formerly once-a-century weather disasters every year -- even with an aggressive drawdown of greenhouse gas emissions.

And by mid-century, more than a

billion people will be living in low-lying areas vulnerable to cyclones, large-scale flooding and other extreme weather events amplified by rising seas.

HEFTY PRICE TAG
Some cities, such as New York, are planning to spend tens of billions of dollars -- and probably far more -- to shore up their defences.

Indeed, building dikes and levees along with other measures would reduce the risk of flooding caused by sea level rise and storm surges over the next 80 years 100- to 1,000-fold, according to the IPCC report's 42-page Summary for Policy Makers.

But with a hefty price tag: up to hundreds of billions of dollars a year.

For many megacities and sprawling delta cities in the developing world, however, an engineered solution will be impractical or prohibitively expensive.

Under the IPCC's consensus rules, all countries must sign off on the language of the report's executive summary, designed to provide leaders with objective, science-based information.

The five-day meeting in Monaco went deep into overtime when Saudi Arabia objected what might have been a routine reference to the October 2018 IPCC report on the feasibility of capping global warming at 1.5 degrees Celsius.

The 2015 Paris Agreement calls for capping global warming at "well below" 2 C, and 1.5 C if possible.

Dice rolling in thru' legal cracks

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Sons, said they represented the importer while getting the consignment released and did not know what was being brought in.

Pushpita Enterprise had a consignment of poker chips released from the ICD at Kamalapur last year, officials said.

Asked, its proprietor Palash said he could not remember importing any such thing.

Ahsanul Azim, proprietor of A3 Trade International, told The Daily Star, that his company imported three "poker sets" and "roulette sets" through Benapole in November 2017.

He added that two people from Gulshan and Mirpur bought them from him. He said he has detailed information about the buyers.

Most of the equipment were imported from China and some from Thailand. Investigators suspect that foreign participants of international trade fairs, people who import capital machinery could have imported the equipment.

Investigators are quizzing the importers, looking for documents, and trying to locate the equipment, officials said.

They are also investigating whether the equipment were bought through money laundering.

Officers suspect that the importers sold the equipment to the clubs, CIID

Director General Shahidul Islam said. However, more gambling equipment may have been imported through false labelling.

"We suspect that the actual price of the goods has not been mentioned to evade duty," said a CIID official.

Price of a roulette table set, for instance, would be more than \$100,000, the official said.

According to a document obtained by this paper, a roulette table set was imported with an invoice value of just \$400.

Several coin-operated machines were imported and the CIID was examining whether those were slot machines or arcade games.

According to the Public Gambling Act of 1867, gambling houses are prohibited. But the Import Policy Order 2015-18 does not list gambling equipment as prohibited or controlled goods.

As a result, the goods were released.

IS IT LEGAL?
Two supreme court lawyers termed import and clearance by customs unlawful.

AM Aminuddin, president of Supreme Court Bar Association, said since gambling is prohibited, import of anything related to gambling cannot be allowed.

"As these are also not listed as importable goods in the IPO [Import Policy Order], casino-related items cannot be imported," he said, adding,

"And if customs gives clearance to anything related to casinos, it had violated the law."

SC lawyer Jyotirmoy Barua said since gambling is not allowed by the constitution and law, import of such items is also not allowed.

"These machines and items cleared for release were not imported only for keepsake. Customs should have asked questions like who would use them? How would these items be used when there is no law that allows casinos in the country?" he asked.

He said customs should have sought clarification from the law ministry or the attorney general's office.

"It appears that all quarters took advantage of the law owing to its ambiguity," said Jyotirmoy.

Mohammad Golam Sarwar, lecturer of the department of law at Dhaka University, said, "Customs officials could have used their discretion and done due diligence before clearing the items for release."

A senior official of the NBR said the officials should have applied common sense.

"Customs officials should have questioned importers and asked for permits from ministries concerned," the official said, seeking anonymity.

"If anyone clears goods based only on Import Policy Order, they have to take responsibility for it ...," the official said.

Asked about the import of "roulette sets" and "poker sets", Mohammad Belal Hossain Chowdhury, commissioner at Benapole Customs House, claimed that his department examined the consignment and found that most of the items were toys and weighed between 260gm and 1.6kg.

Dhaka Customs House Commissioner Moazzem Hossain said his office would examine the import and clearance of gambling-related items and take steps.

Anwar Hossain, commissioner of Customs House at ICD Kamalapur, said, "We released the goods as per the order, since the order did not mention that casino-related equipment was prohibited."

"We only enforce the law. The decision has to be taken by the Ministry of Commerce..." he said.

NBR officials said the Import Policy Order is renewed every three years. As the new order 2019-2021 is yet to be finalised, there is scope for changes.

Commerce Secretary Jafar Uddin said the ministry was looking into how the equipment were imported.

WHAT'S NEXT?
Lawyer Jyotirmoy said a substantive law was required regarding casinos.

Lecturer Sarwar said the colonial public gambling law failed to address various facets of gambling that are emerging in this digital age. He recommended enacting a new law.

Corruption

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mosquito drives with adulticide, as chances of irregularities were higher in purchasing the adulticide.

People's attention is easily drawn during application of adulticide, which is another reason for giving more importance to it, he said.

Aedes mosquitoes need to be controlled via environment management, organic management, with mechanical method, and by applying chemicals. But the two city corporations apply chemicals only, the TIB report said.

According to experts, applying larvicide is 80 percent effective. But Dhaka south and north city corporations conducted anti-mosquito drives giving emphasis on adulticide, which is only 30 percent effective.

Corruption and irregularities were evident at every stage of purchasing insecticides of the two city corporations, the survey said.

According to the study findings, the necessary government rules were not followed properly in buying insecticides.

Dhaka South City Corporation (DSCC) bought insecticides from a company that was blacklisted by Dhaka North City Corporation (DNCC). The DSCC lost 40 percent of its money spent on insecticides in 2018-2019, the report said.

The DSCC bought insecticide for Tk 378 a litre from Narayanganj Dockyard and Engineering Works Ltd. Agroproducts Ltd, which supplied the insecticide to the company, offered DNCC Tk 217 per litre, which means the DSCC lost Tk 161 per litre by buying from a third party, it said.

TIB added that in many cases, insecticides and fuel of fogger machines were sold and larvicide was discarded.

The field-level workers also took Tk 50 to Tk 200 to apply adulticide at garages or on ground floors of buildings, the report said.

At the press conference, TIB made some recommendations to the authorities concerned for controlling Aedes mosquitoes.

There should be a work plan involving all stakeholders and everyone's responsibilities must be clear in the plan.

The existing laws have to be amended, and real estate companies and government and private organisations need to be instructed what to do about controlling mosquitoes. There must be a provision for punishing those who fail to comply.

The city corporations will have to identify hot spots of Aedes mosquitoes each year after conducting surveys with the help of Directorate General of Health Services and icddr. Necessary steps will have to be taken immediately based on the survey findings.

Surveys on Aedes mosquitoes have to be carried out outside Dhaka as well. The authorities concerned may take the help of local universities, entomologists and private research organisations.

Trump asked for a 'favor'

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top prosecutor, Viktor Shokin, because he was seen as not tough enough on corruption.

"Biden went around bragging that he stopped the prosecution so if you can look into it... It sounds horrible to me," Trump told Zelensky in the call.

The transcript, which is a summary rather than a word-for-word record, did not show Trump explicitly tying aid to Ukraine to Zelensky probing Biden, which has fed the calls to impeach the US leader.

But the two did discuss aid, which had been frozen by Trump at the time and was only released in recent weeks.

The memo also shows Trump asking Zelensky for a "favor" on an issue unconnected to Biden -- just after noting that the US had been "very, very good to Ukraine."

Democratic leader Nancy Pelosi announced the launch of impeachment proceedings Tuesday, alleging that Trump had betrayed his country in seeking Ukraine's help to find dirt on Biden, the leading Democratic candidate for the November 2020 presidential election.

The White House was scrambling though to defend Trump, who faces the possibility of becoming the third US president in history to be impeached.

In New York to attend the United Nations General Assembly, Trump

branded the impeachment probe the "single greatest witch hunt in American history... a disgraceful thing."

The White House was stunned when Pelosi, the powerful speaker of the House of Representatives, suddenly abandoned months of resistance and announced the impeachment investigation.

Only two presidents in US history have been impeached, Andrew Johnson in 1868 and Bill Clinton in 1998, deeply tarring both of their legacies.

Pelosi declared the formal investigation 11 days after the news that an anonymous US intelligence official had filed a formal whistleblower complaint on Trump's alleged double-dealing with Ukraine, tying aid to the country for dirt on Biden.

"The actions of the Trump presidency revealed the dishonorable facts of the president's betrayal of his oath of office, betrayal of our national security, and betrayal of the integrity of our elections," she said.

With the call transcript not a verbatim record, Democrats made clear its release would not satisfy their investigation into whether the US leader broke the law.

They demanded the full release of the whistleblower complaint, even as the Justice Department declared that it showed no wrongdoing and said "no further action was warranted."

Pelosi had resisted pressure from the

party rank-and-file for impeachment, preferring to focus their energies on the presidential and congressional elections next year as the public has shown little taste for a full-blown congressional probe into Trump.

A Quinnipiac poll released Wednesday said that only 37 percent of voters support impeaching Trump while 57 percent oppose, even if more than half disapprove of the US leader's performance.

But Pelosi said there was now strong evidence of Trump's wrongdoing.

"No. You *don't* ask foreign governments for help in our elections. That *is not* right," she tweeted yesterday.

3 sent to jail

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Narayanganj's Ruppangj upazila.

The arrestee is Liton Miah, 45, of Narayanganj's Shantinagar area, said a press statement of Rab-11.

The victim's mother filed a case with Ruppangj Police Station on Monday.

According to the case statement, Liton took the girl to his house luring her with chocolates. He then raped the girl and threatened her not to share her experience with anyone.

The girl only shared the incident when she became sick and asked, added the case statement.

PWD additional

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a senior NBR official, preferring anonymity.

The tax authority stepped in to check the bank details of Dey a day after the public works ministry made him OSD.

An instruction has already been sent to banks asking for information on Dey's and his wife's accounts, the official said.

Dey is the third PWD engineer to face investigation by tax authorities. On Tuesday, the NBR asked for the details of two former top engineers of PWD -- former chief engineer Md Rafiqul Islam and former additional chief engineer Abdul Hye.

This correspondent could not reach Dey for comments despite several attempts.

PWD contractor SM Golam Kibria Shamim was arrested on Friday on charges of tender manipulation, extortion, and running drug and gambling rackets in one of the three cases filed against him on Saturday.

Shamim was later taken on a ten-day police remand.

His construction firm GKB and Company (Pvt) Limited is implementing at least 15 large construction projects of the government, involving around Tk 3,000 crore, said the company's marketing manager Shafaath Hossain on Saturday.

Journo killed as Afghan election campaign season ends

AFP, Kandahar
An Afghan journalist wounded by a roadside bomb as he headed home from work has died, officials said yesterday, as candidates standing in this weekend's presidential election campaigned for the last time.

Abdul Hamid Hotaki, a news presenter for a local radio station in Kandahar, was caught by a blast near a campaign office for Afghan President Ashraf Ghani late Tuesday.

Provincial spokesman Baheer Ahmadi told AFP that Hotaki and seven other civilians were rushed to hospital, but died hours later.

Four people died in the blast -- including a child -- Afghanistan's interior ministry said, blaming the Taliban for the bombing.

Afghans head to the polls Saturday to decide whether Ghani, who was elected in 2014, should be awarded a second term.

As in the past, however, the election has been marred by deadly violence.

Another blast also hit a Ghani campaign office in Lashkar Gah in the southern province of Helmand yesterday, wounding at least three people, the local police chief spokesman said.

Neither blast was immediately claimed by the Taliban, though the insurgents have previously warned Afghans not to vote in the election and said their fighters would target election campaigns as well as polling stations.

The first day of campaigning saw the Taliban target Ghani's running-mate Amrullah Saleh in an attack that killed 20 people in July.

Last week another 26 people were killed in the central province of Parwan near Kabul when the Taliban targeted a Ghani rally.

The election season officially

ends at midnight, before polls open Saturday morning.

Afghanistan is considered one of the world's deadliest places for journalists.

At least 15 Afghan journalists and media workers were killed in 2018, making it the deadliest year for the country on record, according to Reporters Without Borders (RSF).

AFP's chief photographer in Afghanistan, Shah Marai, was among 25 people killed along with eight other journalists in a bomb attack in April 2018.

Seven children

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The bodies were handed over to the family members for burial, OC Nazrul said, adding that the boat capsized due to strong current in the Haor.

Termining the incident "tragedy", Derai Upazila Nirbahi Officer Biswajit Deb said the district administration handed over Tk 10,000 to all the victims' families.

Further support for burial will also be provided, he added.

Afzol Miah, a survivor of the accident, said they were going to attend a bridal party in another village of the same upazila. All the members died in the accident were relatives of each other.