

# One in every five

FROM PAGE 16  
percent of bird species are traded, both as companion animals and for their use in medicine.

There is a growing demand, for example, for the ivory-like casque of the helmeted hornbill, which has resulted in tens of thousands being traded since 2012.

The authors predicted that future trade, both legal and illegal, will add up to 3,196 more species to the list, mainly threatened or endangered, based on similarities with currently exploited species -- for example, the African pangolin, which started to be exploited after Asian pangolins became harder to find.

"Often, species are flagged for conservation only after a severe decline is documented," they concluded.

# UK PM

FROM PAGE 16  
Others suggested he could ask one of the EU leaders to veto the extension, which requires unanimous support.

According to the documents submitted to the Court of Session in Edinburgh, Johnson says he accepts "he is subject to the public law principle that he cannot frustrate its purpose or the purpose of its provisions."

"Thus he cannot act so as to prevent the letter requesting the specific extension in the act from being sent," the court document says.

Maugham said despite that, the court itself could still decide "to sign the letter for the prime minister" if Johnson still tried to stick to his promise to leave on October 31.

He and others behind the case also want the court to require Johnson to seek an extension to avoid leaving the EU without a deal.

A full hearing would be set for Tuesday if the judge decided to issue a formal ruling in the case, Maugham said.

# Bring city bus

FROM PAGE 16  
Rajib was a 3rd year student of Government Titumir College. He died on April 17 last year after losing his right arm while a bus of BRTC and another of Sajan Paribahan were trying to overtake each other in the capital's Bangla Motor.

In the full text, the HC asked BRTC and Sajan Paribahan owner to pay in two months Tk 25 lakh each to Mehedi Hasan Bappi, 16, and Abdulla Hridoy, 15, the brothers of Rajib.

The verdict said trip based or daily payment based appointment of public bus drivers should be banned, and a company should recruit them with a monthly salary.

The court also ordered the authorities concerned to run vision and drug tests at the time of granting and renewing licences for drivers of all vehicles.

"The respondents shall install closed circuit (CCTV) cameras on different maximum points of the major roads, especially in the strategic locations of all the metropolitan cities. This will help investigation system and also in traffic management and operation system. The respondents shall install passenger sheds," the full verdict says.

The HC directed that the bus doors shall remain closed while on the move, and it shall be opened only at the particular or specific stops.

"The respondents shall arrange for sudden/random dope test (s) of the driver(s) of all kinds of vehicles on various points where they used to check relevant papers of the vehicles."

The full text also said the authorities must prevent the drivers of the vehicles, except for ambulances and fire service vehicles, from using horns in front of educational institutions, hospitals and residences.

No vehicle should be allowed to stop for passenger boarding or dropping on active roads, according to the verdict.

BRTC's lawyer Muniruzzaman said BRTC is yet to pay the compensation to Rajib's family as it will move an appeal before the Appellate Division of the Supreme Court, challenging the HC directive.

# Satyapriya

FROM PAGE 16  
departed soul.

Besides, Road Transport and Bridges Minister Obaidul Quader, various social organisations, Buddhist associations and the community leaders also grieved his death.

Buddhist community of the country mourned their deputy Sangharaja, means the deputy supreme patriarch.

The body of Satyapriya was taken to Central Sima Vihar in Cox's Bazar's Ramu upazila yesterday afternoon where he served as the abbot for a long time, reports our correspondent in the district.

"The body will be preserved in a coffin until tomorrow so that his followers around the world can see it for the last time, said Progananda Bhikkhu, assistant director of Sima Vihar, adding, "He will be buried about one-and-a-half months later."

Satyapriya, also the president of Bangladesh Sangharaja Bhikkhu Mahasabha, was one of the victims of the Ramu attack in 2012.



**Palestinian demonstrators burn tyres in front of Israel's controversial separation barrier in Bilin in the occupied West Bank yesterday, during a protest against settlement construction and in solidarity with Palestinian prisoners held in Israeli jails.**

PHOTO: AFP

# 95pc structures in Rajuk area non-complaint

FROM PAGE 16  
available road space, he said.

Then there is another precondition that a landowner is not eligible for a building approval if the plot is not on at least a 20-foot wide road.

According to a survey, of a total of 13,525km roads in the DAP area, width of only 12 percent roads is 20-foot and more.

"So, by default, such arbitrary rules render 95 percent houses illegal," said Neaz adding that legally those cannot get water, electricity and gas supplies and are denied housing loans.

Prof Adil Mohammed Khan, who conducted a study on density zoning for the ongoing DAP preparation, said, "About 80 percent of the master plan area is growing unplanned with messy development and poor living conditions posing danger to people and the environment."

It is unrealistic and impractical on

Rajuk's part to try to enforce control over such an extensive area, he said, adding that building plan and development control in the fringes of the master plan area should be left to municipalities with required professionals.

The survey -- conducted by an urban planning consultancy firm hired by Rajuk -- found more than 83 percent of the structures in the said jurisdiction to be one-storey.

Two to six-storey structures constitute about 15 percent, while less than one percent of the structures are seven to ten-storied and above. Buildings with ten-storey and above height constitute a meagre 0.15 percent of the total.

The figure includes even one-room and one-storey structures.

Apart from the core Dhaka city area, Rajuk area also includes Narayanganj, Keraniganj, Tongi, Savar and Badda.

Khondker M Ansar Hossain, who worked as a senior urban planner on the first DAP preparation, said that these findings expose the hollowness of Rajuk as a building regulator.

Population density in about 70 percent of Dhaka city corporation area is nine times higher than it can ideally accommodate, said Prof Adil Mohammed Khan, who is also general secretary of Bangladesh Institute of Planners, mentioning the ideal density to be 120 to 200 inhabitants per acre.

Contacted, immediate-past Rajuk chairman Md Abdur Rahman in April said that the number of unapproved structures was not correct and that he would find out the correct figure.

Contacted two weeks later, he said, "I could not manage time to check it."

As to Rajuk's attempt to cover a so

vast area, he said it was a matter of government decision.

He, however, at a seminar at the Bangladesh Institute of Planners in early August last year had agreed that 80 percent of the capital city area was being developed unplanned.

According to a 2006 survey for drawing up the detailed area plan, the number of structures in Rajuk area was 11, 96,000. The survey conducted during 2016-17 for revision of DAP found 21,46,000 structures in the said area.

So, over a decade, 9.5 lakhs structures were built in the said area of Rajuk master plan, with a yearly average increase of 95, 000 structures.

Rajuk issued 12,527 building approvals in three years until June 2017, according to its annual reports. On annual average, this figure constitutes less than five percent of the structures built annually.

# Hong Kong bans face masks

FROM PAGE 16  
opened fire when he was surrounded in his car and attacked by protesters, a petrol bomb exploding at his feet.

"A large crowd of rioters attacked a plainclothes officer. He fell into the ground, then got beaten by a lot of people. Under this life-threatening situation, the police officer fired a live round for his safety," police said in a statement.

The entire subway network was also suspended, leaving protesters, locals and Friday night revellers stranded.

Online forums used by protesters filled with angry comments and vows to hit the streets over the three-day weekend.

"Youngsters are risking their lives, they don't mind being jailed for 10 years, so wearing masks is not a problem," a 34-year-old office worker wearing a surgical mask, who gave her first name as Mary, told AFP.

Beijing threw its backing behind the ban, which it described as "extremely

necessary".

"The current chaos in Hong Kong cannot continue indefinitely," Yang Guang, spokesman for the Hong Kong and Macao Affairs Office of China's central government, said in a statement.

"An important moment has come for stopping the violence with a clearer attitude and more effective measures," he added.

Critics said Lam's move was a major step towards authoritarianism for Hong Kong, which has been governed by China under a "one country, two systems" framework since British colonial rule ended in 1997.

"This is a watershed. This is a Rubicon," pro-democracy lawmaker Claudia Mo told AFP.

"And I'm worried this could be just a starter. More draconian bans in the name of law could be lurking around the corner."

Prominent democracy activist Joshua Wong said the law "marks the

beginning of the end of Hong Kong".

"It is ironic that a colonial-era weapon is being used by the Hong Kong government and the Chinese Communist Party," he told AFP.

Pro-Beijing lawmakers and police associations welcomed the ban.

The last time the law was invoked was during riots in 1967 -- a period where more than 50 people were killed in a year-long leftist bombing and murder spree.

Hong Kong's protests were ignited by a now-scraped plan to allow extraditions to the mainland, which fuelled fears of an erosion of liberties promised under "one country, two systems".

After Beijing and local leaders took a hard line, the demonstrations snowballed into a wider movement calling for more democratic freedoms and police accountability.

Protesters have used face masks to avoid identification and respirators to protect themselves from tear gas.

The ban came after the worst violence of the year on Tuesday, when China celebrated 70 years of Communist Party rule. During clashes, an officer shot and wounded a teenager -- the first such shooting since the demonstrations began.

The new law, which Lam said would take effect at midnight, threatens anyone wearing masks at legal and unsanctioned protests with up to one year in prison.

People can still wear masks in the street, but must remove them if asked to by police.

Exemptions are available for religious and medical reasons and for those who need masks to do their jobs -- such as reporters.

Lam said she did not rule out further laws under the emergency provisions if the violence worsened. Even moderate protesters have already shown a willingness to break the law in large numbers, appearing at unsanctioned rallies in their tens of thousands.

# Russia's Medvedev says Cuba can 'rely' on Moscow

AFP, Havana  
Russian Prime Minister Dmitry Medvedev yesterday told Cuba it could rely on Moscow's support as he began a two-day visit, with Havana looking to shore up aid amid severe fuel shortages it blames on US sanctions.

"In Russia, Cuba has partners and dependable friends," Medvedev told a news conference.

"With President Miguel Diaz-Canel we've decided to reinforce our strategic cooperation," he added, unveiling agreements covering scientific cooperation, customs, nuclear medicine and the railway sector.

Diaz-Canel announced he would travel to Moscow at the end of the month to meet his Russian counterpart Vladimir Putin.

Medvedev's visit comes at a crucial juncture for Cuba as it faces fuel shortages due to a US embargo -- first imposed in 1962 -- targeting ships transporting Venezuelan oil, Cuba's main supplier of crude.

Washington accuses Cuba of providing military support to Venezuela President Nicolas Maduro, whom the US is trying to oust in favor of his domestic rival Juan Guaido.

In recent weeks, hours-long queues have formed at service stations, the number of buses and trains running have fallen, air conditioning has been

turned off in state companies and many state employees have been told to stay at home.

- Pivotal importance -

This crisis -- which the government says is "cyclical" -- underlines the importance of solidarity offered by allies China and Russia, whose Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov visited the island in July.

"Russia's importance to Cuba has risen, both because of its status as a super power with the right to veto at the UN Security Council, and because it's a major producer of oil," said Arturo Lopez-Levy, a political analyst and professor at the Gustavus Adolphus College in Minnesota.

Russia's influence in Cuba waned with the break-up of the old Soviet Union three decades ago but it has been making a comeback.

Commercial exchanges increased by 34 percent in 2018 to \$388 million and that figure should approach \$500 in 2019, according to Russia's Deputy Prime Minister Yuriy Borisov.

But "Cuba needs to solve its economic imbalance and make progress with reforms in order to reduce its vulnerability," said political scientist Carlos Alzugaray, pointing to Havana having merely substituted the Soviet Union with Venezuela for its economic dependence.

- 'US irritant' -

Moscow is third behind the European Union and China as Cuba's biggest trade partners.

In recent months it lent Cuba \$40 million to help modernize the military industry and announced a plan to invest \$1 billion between now and 2030 to renovate Cuba's rail network, as well as establishing agreements with Havana on nuclear power and cyber-security.

"The Russians are a lot more obvious about what they are trying to do -- that is to be an irritant to the United States," said Ric Herrero, executive director of the Cuba Study Group, which aims to foster relations between Washington and Havana.

For its part, China is also prepared to use Cuba to further its geo-political aims.

"The Chinese are advising the Cubans in technology, artificial intelligence, research, biotech, medicine," said Herrero.

"We know China has used and can use other countries' economic dependence on them as a political tool."

On Tuesday, China's ambassador to Cuba, Chen Xi, said that "China is supporting and will always support... the Cuban people in their socialist efforts."

According to Herrero, the current outlook makes the bellicose approach to Cuba taken by the administration of US President Donald Trump more questionable.

# Mexico top court justice resigns over suspicious bank deposits

AFP, Mexico City  
Mexican Supreme Court Justice Eduardo Medina Mora resigned Thursday amid an investigation into claims he transferred millions of dollars into bank accounts in Britain and the United States.

"The Presidency of the Republic confirms that President (Andres Manuel) Lopez Obrador accepted the resignation of Justice Eduardo Medina Mora and will submit it to the Senate for their analysis," a government spokesman said, without mentioning the cause for his departure.

According to the Mexican constitution, resignations of Supreme Court justices are submitted to the president, and if accepted, sent to the Senate.

The law says such judges may only resign for "grave reasons."

Medina Mora, 62, was appointed to his position in 2015 by then-president Enrique Pena Nieto for a 15-year tenure.

In June, Mexican media reported that Medina Mora was suspected of having made 103 million-peso (\$5.2 million) transfers to bank accounts in the US and Britain that were not reported in his financial declarations.

# Fossil of giant

FROM PAGE 16  
jaws. The latter is broken and its presence has been inferred from CT scan data.

Researchers have named the pterosaur *Ferrodraco* -- Latin for "iron dragon". Bob Elliot, a sheep farmer, discovered the remains in Winton, Queensland in early 2017.

He alerted a local museum and volunteers carried out an excavation of the area.

Pentland has helped to write an article about the discovery in the journal *Scientific Reports*.

She said the winged reptile lived in the Winton area, 96 million years ago, "in a conifer forest with floodplain and river channels".

"[The forest] was inhabited by long-necked sauropod dinosaurs, carnivorous theropods, ornithomorphs and ankylosaurs."

The creatures in the forest would have included the *Tyrannosaurus rex*, the researchers said.

There are 15 known pterosaur fossils in Australia. "With a total of 30 bones preserved, or 10 percent of *Ferrodraco*'s skeleton, the number of pterosaur bones reported from Australia has now tripled," Pentland said.

The skeleton has been placed on display in the Australian Age of Dinosaurs Museum.

David Elliott, the museum's co-founder, said the discovery was one of the organisation's most exciting additions.

"The Winton area has produced the majority of Australia's large dinosaur fossils so presenting a significant pterosaur skeleton alongside the giants with which it co-existed is a huge bonus for science, education and regional tourism," he said.

# 130 more back

FROM PAGE 16  
officials of Brac Migration Programme arranged their food and assisted them at the immigration office, Tanvir added.

The Ministry of Expatriates' Welfare and Overseas Employment are working to reintegrate the returned workers to the workforce so that they can lead a normal life, the BMET official also said.

Quoting several migrant workers, Brac Migration Programme head Shariful said Bangladeshi workers have been facing crackdown in Saudi Arabia over the past several days.

Even those who have the Iqama (valid work permit) in that country were also detained and sent to a deportation camp, Shariful said, adding that

"Their employers did not take any effective measures even after being informed of their detention, he added.

Local police detained several workers while they were returning home from work, he further said, quoting the workers.

Besides, many undocumented migrant workers who stayed in the oil-rich country for several years were detained and sent back home, he added.

Asked about the allegations, BMET official Tanvir said the labour wing of Bangladesh mission in Saudi Arabia was looking after the welfare of Bangladeshi migrant workers there.

On September 15, some 175 migrant workers returned home in a flight from Saudi Arabia.

Two days later, another 160 Bangladeshi workers returned home from the Middle Eastern country.

Saudi Arabia is home to around 11 lakh Bangladeshis, according to an unofficial estimate.

# Gunmen abduct eight from Nigeria school: police

AFP, Kano  
Gunmen abducted six girls and two staff members Thursday from a boarding school in a northern Nigerian region notorious for banditry and ransom kidnappings, police said.

Armed men gained entry into the Engravers College, a mixed boarding school in a remote area just south of the city of Kaduna, police spokesman Yakubu Sabo said.

"(They) took away two staff of the college and six female students to an unknown destination," Sabo said.

The school, which hosts girls and boys, is located far to the west of an area notorious for attacks by the Boko Haram jihadist group.

Boko Haram grabbed headlines around the world in 2014 for the abduction of 276 schoolgirls from the remote northeastern town of Chibok in Borno state.

The police said they had deployed units "to the area for possible rescue of the victims and arresting the perpetrators."

It said officers were "doing everything possible to secure the release of all the victims unhurt."

The bursar at the school confirmed the kidnapping to AFP.

"Unknown gunmen broke into the school around 12:10 am (2310 GMT) and took away six female students and two staff who live inside the school," Elvis Allah-Yaro said.

Abductions for ransom are common in Nigeria and the highway from the capital Abuja to the city of Kaduna has seen a surge in attacks by armed criminals, but raids on schools are rare.