



Now a tiger dies at Gazipur Safari Park

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Gazipur

The authorities at the Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujib Safari Park in Gazipur concealed the news of the recent death of a tiger, raising questions about the state of care the animals are being given at the facility.

The male tiger, which was one of the 10 at the park, died on January 12, according to Md Iqbal Hossain Sabuj, a lawmaker of Gazipur-3 constituency, who learnt of the matter from members of the probe committee formed by the ministry of environment, forest and climate change over the death of 11 zebras this month.

"Many animals are dying but the authorities are concealing the information," Sabuj told reporters yesterday.

A sample of the corpse has been sent for lab tests, said Md Zahidul Kabir, project director of the park.

"Since we haven't got the lab report in hand, we didn't disclose the matter," he added.



Two zebras in the Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujib Safari Park in Gazipur. Eleven out of 31 died this month. According to the authorities, seven died from diseases and the rest after fighting with each other. There were 70 animals, including the zebras, in the park's African Safari section. This photo was captured yesterday.

PHOTO: ABU BAKAR SIDDIQUE AKAND

Ensure justice seekers are not harassed

President Hamid tells judges, lawyers

UNB, Dhaka

President Abdul Hamid yesterday urged judges and lawyers to work together to ensure that justice seekers are not harassed.

"People come to you for seeking support in solving their problems and getting justice. So you have to be careful so that no one is harassed," he said in a virtual address to the inauguration ceremony for the Chief Judicial Magistrate Court Building and the "Rastrapati Abdul Hamid Building".

Law Minister Anisul Huq presided over the programme of the Kishoreganj District Lawyers Association.

Hamid said not only the rule of law in the country, but also the establishment of good governance as per the expectations of people should be the goal of all.

The benefits of the Liberation War must be delivered everywhere by establishing the rule of law and justice, he said.

Saying there is no alternative to an independent judiciary in establishing the rule of law, Hamid said the present government is very sincere in ensuring the independence of the judiciary.

Special attention has been given to increasing the number of judges, training and resolving the

SEE PAGE 4 COL 3

Russia wants 'respectful' ties with US

Says Lavrov amid tensions over Ukraine; UK readies tough sanctions on Moscow

AFP, Moscow

Russia said yesterday it wants "mutually respectful" relations with the United States and denied posing a threat to Ukraine, as the UK said it was preparing fresh sanctions against Moscow.

Tensions have soared between Moscow and Washington after Western governments accused Russia of amassing tens of thousands of troops on its border with ex-Soviet Ukraine.

"We want good, equal, mutually

"I have ordered our Armed Forces to prepare to deploy across Europe next week, ensuring we are able to support our Nato allies on land, at sea and in the air... Ukraine must be free to choose its own future."

UK Prime Minister Boris Johnson

respectful relations with the United States, like with every country in the world," Russia's Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov told Russian TV yesterday.

Western leaders have scrambled to diffuse the crisis by reaching out to Russian President Vladimir Putin, while also vowing unprecedented sanctions should Moscow launch an attack.

Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky has called on the West to avoid stirring "panic" in the face of the Russian troop build-up, while his foreign minister Dmytro Kuleba said it was important to remain "firm" in talks with Moscow.

Britain said it is preparing to unveil sanctions against Moscow that would target companies close to the Kremlin. "There will be nowhere to hide for Putin's oligarchs," UK Foreign Secretary Liz Truss said yesterday. Britain's PM Boris Johnson is considering the biggest possible offer to members of the Nato defence pact in the Nordics and Baltics, which would double troop numbers and send defensive weapons to Estonia, his office said.

"This package would send a clear message to the Kremlin - we will not tolerate their destabilising activity, and we will always stand with our Nato allies in the face of Russian hostility," Johnson said in a statement.

Russia, however, has repeatedly denied planning an attack and said it's not looking to start a war.

First all-EVM UP polls today

Voters confused about machines, EC deploys law enforcers to contain violence

MOHIUDDIN ALAMGIR

The sixth phase of the union parishad polls will be held today amid confusion among voters about how to use Electronic Voting Machines.

Tension is also running high in many unions over the possibility of violence during today's elections to 218 union parishads.

According to media reports, at least 96 people have so far been killed and several hundred injured in violence over the ongoing staggered UP polls, which began in June last year with the first part of the first phase.

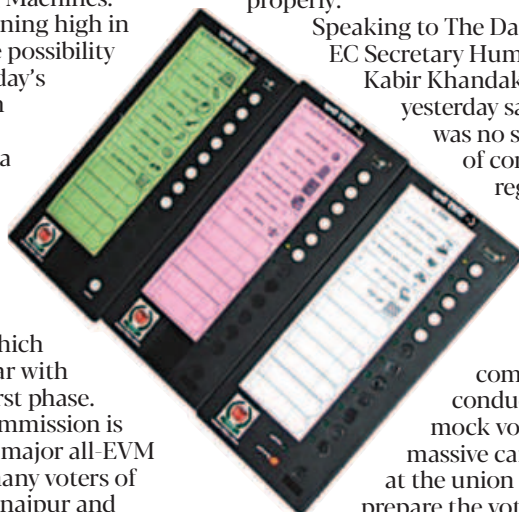
As the Election Commission is all set to hold its first major all-EVM polls in rural areas, many voters of different unions in Dinajpur and Mymensingh said they were confused about how to vote through EVMs.

About 42 lakh voters of 218 unions in 22 districts are expected to cast

their votes today.

A farmer of Phulpur upazila's Poyari union said EVMs are new to them and he is doubtful about whether his vote would be cast properly.

Speaking to The Daily Star, EC Secretary Humayun Kabir Khandaker yesterday said there was no scope of confusion regarding EVM use as the



commission conducted mock voting and massive campaigns at the union level to prepare the voters.

He added that an adequate number of law enforcers have been deployed at the unions to keep the law and order under control.

Elections to the chairman posts of 12 UPs will not be required as candidates have already been elected unopposed, according to EC data, which also showed that 100 UP members and 32 candidates for women's reserved seats were also elected uncontested.

At least 1,199 candidates are running for chairman posts, 2,559 for reserved member seats for women and 7,846 for member posts.

The contest would presumably be between Awami League, its party rebels and Jatiya Party candidates as the BNP is not taking part.

So far, AL has been dominating the polls in terms of winning the chairman posts.

The EC has announced the unofficial results of 3,677 UPs in the previous five phases.

AL chairman nominees won in 2,015 UPs and independents in 1,597.

Party insiders said most of the independents are "disgruntled AL men".

Polls to 137 UPs will be held in the seventh phase on February 7.

Record 21st for Nadal

AFP, MELBOURNE

Rafael Nadal roared back from two sets down to win a titanic five-set duel with Daniil Medvedev and claim a record 21st Grand Slam men's title in the Australian Open final on Sunday.



The Spanish great looked dead and buried as the Russian world number two carved out a two-set lead but Nadal surged home for one of his mightiest comeback wins 2-6, 6-7 (5/7), 6-4, 6-4, 6-4 in 5hr 24min on Rod Laver Arena.

Nadal came out on top in the physical war of attrition to move ahead of era rivals Novak Djokovic and Roger Federer on the all-time list of men's major winners.

Djokovic missed his chance to improve on his nine Australian Open wins when he was deported over vaccination issues on the eve of the tournament, while Federer is injured.

It was one of the 35-year-old Spanish warrior's greatest title victories in his 29th Grand Slam final winning his second Australian Open, 13 years after his first in 2009.

Nadal also became only the fourth man to win each of the four Grand Slams twice and the third oldest man in the Open Era to win a Grand Slam title, behind Ken Rosewall and Federer.



A palash (Butea monosperma) tree blossoms near the Central Shaheed Minar in the capital, heralding spring. Pahela Falgun, the first day of the season, according to the Bangla calendar, falls on February 14. The photo was taken yesterday.

PHOTO: ANISUR RAHMAN

PROFESSIONAL DRIVING LICENCE

Dope test begins countrywide

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Bangladesh Road Transport Authority yesterday started the process to take negative dope test reports before issuance or renewal of professional driving licenses.

On the first day, BRTA officials provided the license seekers with a form to fill up and asked them to go to the designated hospitals for carrying out the dope test.

After receiving the report, the applicant will submit it to the BRTA office concerned and the hospital authorities will also send a copy to BRTA.

If the test result comes out negative or does not contain any negative comments, the applicant would be eligible for getting a professional driving license.

BRTA started the process, which may face huge challenges due to the lack of testing facilities and preparations at the designated hospitals in the capital.

According to a decision of the authorities concerned, negative dope test reports from government-affiliated hospitals or laboratories will be mandatory to get or renew professional driving licences from today.

Six government hospitals were designated for the dope tests in the city.

The Daily Star contacted the authorities of five of the hospitals on

SEE PAGE 4 COL 4