



WILDLIFE TRADE Ctg, CHT major hubs, Dhaka key destination

Says study published in Cambridge Univ journal

MOHAMMAD AL-MASUM MOLLA

Chattogram and the three hill districts are the main hubs of wildlife trade in Bangladesh, according to a recent study.

The study titled “Exploring market-based wildlife trade dynamics in Bangladesh” surveyed 13 wildlife markets across the country.

Of all the species collected for trading, half of them are sent to Dhaka, the study found.

Chattogram and Khulna are the two other major destinations, said the study published in a Cambridge University Press journal in November last year.

Outside the country, Thailand, Singapore, China, Malaysia, Vietnam, Laos, and Myanmar have a demand for Bangladeshi wildlife, it added.

Ranked as the fourth most lucrative crime globally, wildlife trade is valued at \$320 billion annually.

“Dhaka is the main destination for traded wildlife from seven divisions [in Bangladesh]. More than one-third of these come from the Chattogram division and approximately half of those remain within the division,” the study reads.

Wet and winter seasons were the peak time for wildlife trading.

The study, conducted in 2019, aimed to assess the extent of wildlife

SEE PAGE 6 COL 7



PHOTO: PALASH KHAN

Mindless garbage dumping and release of industrial effluents have made the Buriganga water dark and smelly. The river looks cleaner only after heavy rains in monsoon. The photo was taken from Babubazar bridge in the capital yesterday.

SEE PAGE 2 COL 1

JP timid inside JS, critical of govt outside

RASHIDUL HASAN

Jatiya Party in parliament criticises the government lightly for its mistakes. But outside, the party is highly critical of the government.

JP leaders, particularly Chairman GM Quader, at different programmes came down heavily on the Awami League government for “widespread corruption, misrule and absence of good governance in the country”.

He, however, at the Jatiya Sangsad spoke softly on other issues.

Political analysts and parliamentary experts said the JP, which took part in the 2018 national election under the AL-led grand alliance, does not want to embarrass Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina by making sharp criticism of her government as the next election equation is still not clear.

Addressing the House on the thanksgiving motion on the president's speech on February 8, Quader, also the deputy leader of the opposition, mainly focused on road accidents and air pollution.

He also urged the prime minister to give the Rangpur City Corporation mayor the status of a state minister. Towards the end of his speech, he however spoke on a serious issue like phone-tapping.

In his concluding speed at that parliament session the following day, Quader mostly talked about air pollution.

During the concluding sitting of the 20th session of the current parliament on November 6 last year, the JP chief in his 30-minute speech also didn't talk about any issues that could embarrass the government.

Instead, he spoke about the country's falling forex reserves, increasing unemployment and dengue outbreak.

Quader at a views exchange meeting with the JP leaders in the capital recently lambasted the government.

“Our government does not stand by the poor and

SEE PAGE 6 COL 3

HAJJ EXPENSE THIS YEAR

Biman blamed for costliest package ever

RASHIDUL HASAN

This year's hajj package is the most expensive in Bangladesh's history, thanks mainly to what travel agents and hajj agents say is Biman's unusually high fare.

The fare of the national flag carrier has been fixed at Tk 1.98 lakh, a rise by about Tk 60,000 from last year, driving up the hajj package cost to nearly Tk 7 lakh.

The actual expense, however, will exceed Tk 8 lakh to Tk 8.5 lakh with sacrificial animal, food and other miscellaneous costs included.

In terms of the cost of hajj package, Bangladesh has surpassed neighbouring India and Pakistan.

Pakistan has not yet made any official announcement. The Pakistan Today newspaper previously reported quoting the country's religious affairs ministry that it would be announced in early March.

The estimated price could be around one million Pakistani rupees, which is equivalent to around Tk 4

lakh, according to the report.

The hajj package that India announced in 2018, fixing 3.99 lakh rupees as the cost, remained unchanged till 2022, according to the website of Hajj Committee of India.

Indian Ministry of Minority Affairs in a notice this year said a subsidy of 1 lakh rupees would be given to each pilgrim. So, an Indian would be able to perform hajj paying not more than 3 lakh rupees, which amounts to around Tk 4 lakh.

In both India and Pakistan, the cost of airfare is between Tk 1 lakh and 1.2 lakh, sources in ATAB said.

The cost of performing hajj from Bangladesh this year under a private agency will be at least Tk 6.72 lakh, about Tk 1.5 lakh more than the minimum cost last year.

Besides, a pilgrim will have to pay an additional sum to the Islamic Development Bank in Saudi Arabia for a sacrificial animal, said the Hajj Agencies Association of Bangladesh (HAAB) last month.

SEE PAGE 6 COL 3

Scrap power deal with Adani Group 2 environmental groups urge govt

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Bangladesh Poribesh Andolon (Bapa) and Bangladesh Environment Network (Ben) demanded yesterday that the government scrap its deal with India's Adani Group to import electricity.

In a joint statement, the green organisations said importing electricity spending foreign currency will be “illogical”, noting that, nearly half of the country's power production capacity currently remains unused.

They said the conditions set for purchasing electricity from the Adani Group are “adverse” for Bangladesh and blamed the government's present “power development plan” for this.

The organisations said as per media reports Bangladesh is likely to start importing electricity from Adani's 1,600MW coal-based power plant in India's Jharkhand this week.

Under the deal,

SEE PAGE 6 COL 7

Egypt unveils hidden corridor in Giza pyramid

AFP, Cairo



Scientists have discovered a hidden passage inside Egypt's Great Pyramid, the authorities have announced.

The passage is nine metres (30 feet) in length and more than two metres in width, the antiquities ministry said in a statement.

Egypt's Tourism and Antiquities Minister Ahmed Issa told reporters on Thursday at the ancient site in Giza also known as the Khufu, or Cheops, pyramid, that the “gabled corridor” with a triangular ceiling “was found on the northern face of the Great Pyramid of King Khufu”.

The discovery was part of the ScanPyramids project, launched in 2015 as a collaboration between major universities in France, Germany, Canada and Japan and a group of Egyptian experts.

Archaeologist Zahi Hawass, Egypt's former antiquities minister, heads the committee supervising the project, which uses advanced technology to visualise hidden parts of the pyramid's interior without having to excavate it.

The technology is a mix of infrared thermography, muon radiography imaging and 3D reconstruction -- all of which the researchers say are non-invasive and non-destructive techniques.

Tigers' home dominance ends

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Bangladesh's home dominance in the fifty-over format was finally broken as England clinched the three-match series with a game in hand with a comprehensive 132-run victory in the second ODI at the Sher-e-Bangla National Cricket Stadium in Mirpur yesterday.

Chasing a mammoth target of 327 runs set by the reigning world champions, courtesy of a brilliant hundred from Jason Roy, Bangladesh fell apart in reply and were bundled out for 194 runs in 44.4 overs to suffer their second-highest defeat by margin of runs in Mirpur. Bangladesh eventually lost their first ODI home series since 2016, and it was England who had inflicted the same fate back then as the Tigers' streak of seven consecutive bilateral home series wins came to a stop.

It was always going to be a tough ask for Tamim Iqbal and his troops as they arrived to chase a huge

SEE PAGE 6 COL 1



England opener Jason Roy gestures to the dressing room after reaching his century against Bangladesh in the second ODI at the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium in Mirpur yesterday. Roy's 132 helped the visitors to a series-clinching 132-run win.

PHOTO: FIROZ AHMED

SECURITY FORUM IN DELHI

Blinken and Lavrov exchange diplomatic swipes

REUTERS, New Delhi

Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov accused the United States of hypocrisy after US Secretary of State Antony Blinken said Russia cannot be allowed to wage war in Ukraine with impunity, during a security forum they attended in New Delhi yesterday.

The top diplomats from Moscow and Washington had both attended the Group of 20 foreign ministers gathering in the Indian capital on Thursday, and met in person for the first time since Russian forces invaded Ukraine a year ago.

“If we allow with impunity Russia to do what it's doing in Ukraine, then that's a message to would-be aggressors everywhere that they may be able to get away with it too,” Blinken told the Raisina Dialogue strategic affairs forum.

Speaking at the same strategic affairs forum after Blinken, Lavrov said it was “double standards” to question Russia's action in Ukraine when the United States cited a “threat to its national interest” to justify military intervention in various parts of the world, including the war in Iraq, air strikes on Libya, and the bombing of Yugoslavia during the Kosovo conflict in 1999.

Lavrov also said the question of when Russia will negotiate an end to the war should be put to Ukraine President Volodymyr Zelensky.

“Everybody is asking when Russia is going to negotiate...

SEE PAGE 2 COL 5



Blinken

Lavrov