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Birds long dead, money meant for their feed ‘embezzled’

MOSTAFA YOUSUF

Forest department officials have shown dead exotic birds of an aviary in Chattogram as alive in documents allegedly for six years embezzling the money meant for bird feed.

The Sheikh Russel Aviary and Eco Park was inaugurated in 2013 with 740 exotic and 199 native birds in Rangunia upazila.

But a committee formed in February this year to count the birds found only 183, most of which are mallards and ducks, according to Shitol Pal, assistant conservator of forest, who was the member secretary of the committee.

On paper, the park had 30 species of exotic birds, but in reality, the committee found only five: pelican, jandaya parakeet, bar-headed goose, and blue and gold macaw. There were also 169 turtles in the lake.

According to records obtained by The Daily Star, the park spent about Tk 3.08 lakh to feed 740 birds for just 18 days in January and the park authority allocated Tk 50 lakh for bird feed in the 2022-2023 fiscal year.

An employee of the park, who feeds the birds, said the feed mostly contains grain husks and a small amount of bananas, sunflower seeds and eggs that doesn't cost more than Tk 80,000 a month.

Employees of the park on 520 acres of hilly area said most of the birds died during a 2016 cyclone that damaged all the cages. But the losses were not recorded on paper.

The birds listed by the committee include mallards and ducks 78, quail 26, local parrot 17, common peafowl 17 and turkey 11.

Contacted, Rangunia Range Officer Masum Kabir, who was in-charge of the park at different times from 2020 to January 2023, did not give a direct answer when asked why there was such a discrepancy between the number of birds found by the committee and the number shown on food ration documents.

He claimed the birds died at different times and the list was revised regularly.

When he was reminded about the January diet chart that mentioned 740 birds, he said ducks were bought to restore the stock. He didn't directly answer when asked about the mention of exotic birds on documents.

A day after the committee counted the birds, the contractor supplied the ducks, he said, adding that the park now has the number of birds mentioned on paper.

According to records, M/S Meem Traders has been supplying feed to the park since it was established.

Asked how many birds his firm has been supplying the feed for, Babul, the proprietor, said he would not answer the question and told this reporter never to call him again.

Alimul Raji, the veterinarian of the aviary, said it was difficult for the exotic birds to cope with the climate.

Most of the birds flew away or died during cyclone Roanu in 2016. Besides, a landslide coupled with heavy downpour damaged four cages, but no list was prepared of the remaining birds, he added.

On paper, the park had 30 species of exotic birds, but in reality, the committee found only five: pelican, jandaya parakeet, bar-headed goose, and blue and gold macaw.



DAYTIME OWL

A short-eared owl, also informally called “shortie”, poses for the camera in Rajshahi’s Padmar Char. These birds are diurnal -- unlike most owls, they prefer to be out during the daytime to hunt for food, mainly small mammals, in grasslands or marshlands. The short-eared owl has one of the most widespread distributions among owls and can be found in every continent except Australia and Antarctica. As their name suggests, they do have ear tufts but are often not clearly seen. However, if taken by surprise, or to deter predators, the owls erect the tufts to resemble horns. Short-eared owls are in the “least concern” category of IUCN’s red list, but their numbers have been declining in many areas over a long period due to habitat loss.

PHOTO: TIMU HOSSAIN

Iran, KSA vow to bring Mideast ‘security, stability’

Top envoys of the two countries meet in China

AFP, Beijing

Top diplomats from Middle East rivals Iran and Saudi Arabia met in Beijing yesterday, pledging to work together to bring “security and stability” to their turbulent region following a surprise China-brokered deal.

In a joint statement released after talks between Iranian Foreign Minister Hossein Amir-Abdollahian and Saudi counterpart Prince Faisal bin Farhan, the two sides vowed to continue to work together to improve ties.

“The two sides emphasised the importance of following up on the implementation of the Beijing Agreement and its activation in a way that expands mutual trust and the fields of cooperation and helps create security, stability and prosperity in the region,” said the statement.

Tehran and Riyadh announced a Beijing-brokered agreement in March to restore relations that had been severed seven years ago when protesters in Iran attacked Saudi diplomatic missions.

The ministers’ visit to Beijing came as French President Emmanuel Macron and EU chief Ursula von der Leyen were also

Saudi Arabia, the world’s biggest oil exporter, and Shia-majority Iran, strongly at odds with Western governments over its nuclear



Iranian FM Hossein Amir-Abdollahian, right, meets Saudi FM Prince Faisal bin Farhan Al Saud in Beijing, China yesterday.

PHOTO: REUTERS

in the Chinese capital, seeking to make Europe’s case in a meeting with Xi Jinping for bringing an end to the conflict in Ukraine.

The shock rapprochement between mainly Sunni Muslim

activities, has the potential to reshape relations across a region characterised by turbulence for decades.

The two sides “negotiated

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Sarcophagus of Pharaoh Ramses II unveiled in Paris

AFP, Paris

The sarcophagus of ancient Egyptian pharaoh Ramses II was unveiled to reporters in Paris yesterday following its rare journey outside of Egypt.

The ornate coffin will be on show to the public in the French capital from April 7 to September 6.

Benedicte Lhoyer, scientific advisor to the exhibition, told AFP the “exceptional” loan was thanks to “an unprecedented cooperation between France and Egypt”.

The Ramses II exhibition is on a tour that includes the United States and Australia, but only France is receiving the sarcophagus, in recognition of the assistance from French scientists who helped save the mummy from decay following a previous visit to Paris in 1976.

The mummy itself has stayed behind this time, since Egyptian law now forbids transporting royal

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Special Magazine From The Daily Star

Tangail AL leader sued for raping teen

OUR CORRESPONDENT

An Awami League leader, also elder brother of a ruling party lawmaker in Tangail, has been sued over the rape and torture of a teenager.

According to the case statement, the 17-year-old victim is now pregnant due to the rape.

The accused, Golam Kibria Boro Monir, is vice-president of Tangail town AL and secretary general of the district’s Bus-Minibus Owners’ Association.

He is the elder brother of Tanvir Hasan Soto Monir, a Tangail 2 AL lawmaker.

Monir’s wife Nigar Aftab was also accused of torturing the girl, according to the case filed with Tangail Sadar Police Station early yesterday.

The victim, who used to live alone since the death of her parents, is allegedly a relative of the accused.

Banking on the fact that she was alone, Monir would stalk and keep a close watch on her. On December 17, he called and asked her to come to his home in the town’s Purbo Adalatpur area, reads the case statement.

When she went there, he raped her at gunpoint and took photographs. He then released her but not without a warning that he would publish the photos on social media if she shared the matter with anyone.

Boro Monir raped the girl multiple times in phases



Boro Monir

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**WE
DEEPLY
MOURN**



Rokia Afzal Rahman
(24 September 1941 – 5 April 2023)

ICC Bangladesh The world business organization is deeply shocked and grieved at the sad demise of Mrs. Rokia Afzal Rahman, ICC Bangladesh Vice President and Former Advisor to the Caretaker Government of Bangladesh. She died in Singapore at around 2.00 a.m. on Wednesday, 5 April 2023. Inna lillahi wa inna ilayhi raji'un.

Mrs. Rokia Afzal Rahman started her career in 1962 as a Banker, she was one of the few women who chose to be a banker and became the first woman Bank Manager in 1964. She was a sponsor Director of MIDAS Financing Limited, Director in Reliance Insurance Ltd., Chairperson of Media World Limited the owning company of The Daily Star, Director in the Mediastar and ABC Radio. Mrs. Rahman also served for three years as Member of the Board of Directors of Bangladesh Bank. She was also Members of the Board of a number of NGO's: BRAC, Manusher Jonno Foundation, Bangladesh Freedom Foundation and NGO Foundation.

In 1980 Mrs. Rahman ventured into her own agro based industry. As Chair and CEO of two agro industries she worked with 15000 small farmers. She facilitated loans to farmers by standing as guarantor to a commercial bank taking loans for them and retailing the loan to them.

Mrs. Rahman was founder President of the first Women Entrepreneurs Association in Bangladesh (formed in 1994), Bangladesh Federation of Women Entrepreneurs' (BFW) – formed in 2006. In 1996 she formed Women in Small Enterprises for development of small enterprises.

Mrs. Rahman has been in the ICC Bangladesh Executive Board as Vice President since 2012. She also served as President of Metropolitan Chamber of Commerce and Industry, Dhaka.

May Allah SWT rest her soul in peace, in Jannatul Ferdous, Aameen.

ICC Bangladesh International Chamber of Commerce – Bangladesh
The world business organization

