

THE SHY BLOODSUCKERS... The oriental garden lizard (locally known as rakta chosha), commonly found on trees, shrubs and human settlements, prefer living in solidarity and are territorial. They have a highly variable and admirable colouration, starting from brown to yellowish olive near the limbs slowly warming up to the vibrant orange around its dorsal crest that tappers towards its long tail. Calm and timid, these insectivore reptiles are on the verge of extinction as most humans prefer to drive them away or kill them due to social stigmas surrounding their myths of origin. The photo was taken yesterday at the Khulna Home Economics College campus in the district's Khalishpur.

'They amassed Tk 50 lakh from a European country'

Says Rab; financial chief of Jama'atul Ansar among three arrested

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The new militant outfit, known as "Jama'atul Ansar Fil Hindal Sharqiya," has managed to amass approximately Tk 50 lakh from a European country under the guise of constructing mosques, madrasas and orphanages.

The Rapid Action Battalion (Rab) recently revealed these findings following the arrest of three members, including the head of the outfit's financial wing, Mosharaf Hossain, also known as Rakib, aged 34.

Rakib, along with his accomplices Jakaria Hossain, 29, and Ahadul Islam Majumder, 22, was apprehended by Rab during a search at the Rajendrapur check post on Monday night while en route from Gazipur to the Madhupur forest in Tangail for outfitrelated activities.

A foreign-made pistol, Tk 12.40 lakh and documents were seized from the suspects, said Commander Khandaker Al Moin, director of Rab's legal and media wing,

Investigations have revealed that the outfit utilises the funds collected to establish businesses and allocate a significant portion, approximately Tk 17 to 19 lakh, towards the purchase of firearms for

training exercises for its members.

There are indications that the outfit has shifted its operations from the hilly areas of Chattogram to the mainland, where they are currently plotting armed attacks, added

Rakib, the arrested financial wing chief, became involved in militancy in 2015 while residing in the Middle East. Upon returning to the country, he joined the Sharqiya outfit and eventually rose to the position of the financial wing's head.

According to Moin, the outfit has sought refuge in the hilly regions of Chattogram and has been receiving armed training in collaboration with the Kuki-Chin National Front (KNF), having made financial arrangements with them since October of the previous year.

Apart from the aforementioned donors, the outfit also collects funds from their relatives and friends living abroad, and occasionally in person when these individuals visit the country, stated Moin.

The Rab's investigation into a series of eight missing persons in Cumilla on August 23 last year led to the discovery of the outfit's presence. Subsequently, Rab disclosed the identities of 55 members who

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KHULNA CITY POLLS

New manifesto, old pledges

Khaleque wants to implement unfinished dev projects

DIPANKAR ROY and ASHIK ABDULLAH APU

Talukder Abdul Khaleque, the ruling party's candidate for the mayoral position in the upcoming Khulna city polls on June 12, has presented electoral pledges similar to those in his 2018 manifesto for

These pledges include addressing the city's waterlogging crisis, improving waste management, and creating a green and environment-friendly city.

During his previous five-year tenure as mayor of the Khulna City Corporation (KCC), the progress made in resolving the waterlogging issue stands at approximately sixty percent, while waste management projects have only achieved a mere 25 percent progress. Furthermore, a project aimed at addressing the impacts of climate change, initiated during Khaleque's tenure, has not yet commenced.

Just before assuming office, the former KCC mayor received a surprising allocation of around Tk 823 crore for tackling the city's waterlogging problem. Approved by Ecnec (Executive Committee of the National Economic Council), the "Drainage System Development (Phase I)" project aimed to eliminate waterlogging in Khulna.

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Awami League candidate Talukder Abdul Khalegue unveiling his manifesto yesterday. PHOTO: HABIBUR RAHMAN

BARISHAL CITY POLLS

Is the nephew playing for other side?

Allegations arise over Hasanat, Sadiq giving rival candidate Tk 3cr; AL denies it



Senior AL leaders campaign for party candidate in Barishal city.

SUSHANTA GHOSH and MD ABBAS

ongoing conflict between Abul Khair any hindrance," he added. Abdullah, the Awami League mayoral candidate, and his nephew, incumbent mayor Serniabat Sadiq Abdullah, has reached new heights ahead of the upcoming Barishal City Corporation election on June 12.

Adding fuel to the already blazing fire, a recent allegation has emerged, claiming that Sadiq and his father Abul Hasanat provided Tk 3 crore to the campaign of the Islami Andolon Bangladesh (IAB) mayoral nominee.

Anisur Rahman Sharif, a member of ward-14-unit AL and a councillor candidate, made the claim during a press conference on Sunday, turning the spotlight further on the family feud.

"Sadiq and Hasanat Abdullah called the IAB candidate to Dhaka and handed him Tk 3 crore, intending to defeat the AL-nominated candidate Abul Khair Abdullah," he said.

"If Khair is defeated, Sadiq will be able to continue his misdeeds in Barishal again without

Furthermore, Sharif accused Abul Hasnat Abdullah of offering Tk 5 crore to central BNP executive member Ebaidul Haque Chan to run against the ruling party candidate.

Sharif, once known as a loyal supporter of Hasanat and Serniabat Sadiq, has now seemingly switched sides and aligned himself with State Minister for Water Resources Zahid Faruque, who has been endorsing Khair, in line with the party's

Adding another twist to the saga, Sharif alleged that Sadiq aided 10 councillor candidates by providing them with Tk 30 lakh to run against the followers of Zahid in various wards.

However, senior leaders of AL in the city have dismissed these allegations, stating that there is no evidence to support them.

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BNP expels 43 leaders

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Sylhet

BNP expelled its 43 present and former leaders for participating in the Sylhet City Corporation polls by violating the party's decision to boycott five city

Of the 43, one is the independent mayoral candidate Salah Uddin Rimon, who is a member of ward-27 unit of BNP in Sylhet city.

BNP's Senior Joint Secretary Ruhul Kabir Rizvi sent 43 separate expulsion letters to the participating Sylhet BNP and unit leaders.

Abdul Quiyum Chowdhury, president of Sylhet district BNP, confirmed the development.

"BNP boycotted the polls for mayor and councillor posts in five city corporations as part of its anti-government movement. These leaders have been permanently expelled for violating the party's decision and we hope that no other leader will support them in the election," he said.

Six are incumbent councillors -- Syed Tawfiqul Hadi, Farhad Chowdhury Shamim, Nazrul Islam Munim, ABM Zillur Rahman, Ruksana Begum Shahnaz, and Abdur Rakib Tuhin.

96 more hospitalised with dengue

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

At least 96 dengue patients were hospitalised in the last 24 hours till yesterday morning.

With the new cases, a total of 2,573 people were hospitalised so far this year, of whom 703 are from outside Dhaka, according to the Directorate General of Health Services.

Total number of dengue deaths this year is 17

Some 413 dengue patients are still undergoing treatment while a total of 2,143 dengue patients were released from hospitals and of them 639 are from outside Dhaka.

More effort needed for access to clean water **Experts tell event**

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

enhance progress towards improving access sustainable sanitation, and hygiene (WASH) services Bangladesh and attaining sustainable development goal 6 (SDG 6), United Nations office for Project Bangladesh Services (UNOPS) and WaterAid yesterday jointly hosted

SDG Cafe's Third Episode. The roundtable titled "Bangladesh's Journey Ensuring Access Sustainable WASH Services" was hosted at the capital's UNOPS office premises.

Hasin Jahan, country director of WaterAid, said, "Access to clean water is the most basic human Although requirement. Bangladesh has made great progress in water coverage, more efforts are needed to increase clean water accessibility."

2,000 CCTV cameras to be set up in 289 centres in Khulna

With only four days left, the Election Commission has started to install around 2,000 CCTV cameras in all the 289 centres aiming to monitor the Khulna City Corporation polls from the EC office in Dhaka.

The EC has decided to use the electronic voting machines in all the centres of KCC election, scheduled for June 12.

Assistant returning officer Faraji Benazir Ahmed said the EVMs have already arrived in Khulna. A total of 5,485 officers have already been trained

The chief election commissioner and other commissioners will monitor the polls from Dhaka,

according to EC officials in Khulna Regional Office. Md Alauddin, returning officer of KCC polls, told the news agency that currently the KCC has 5,35,528 voters. A total of 1,732 polling booths will be set up at 289 polling stations under 31 wards for holding the election.

He also said some 289 presiding officers, 1,732 assistant presiding officers and 3,464 polling officers will be deployed.

One CCTV camera is being set up at each polling station while one is being installed at each of the 1,732 polling booths, he added.

The EC has banned the movement of motorcycles in the Khulna metropolitan area from June 10 midnight to June 13 midnight, he said.

Besides, other vehicles -- including bus, truck and cars -- will be prohibited for the next 24 hours from 12:00pm on June 11.



With a smile on his face, Shahbuddin, a malai kulfi (ice-cream) seller, sets out to serve the city dwellers with the chilled creamy goodness in Barishal city's Muktijoddha Park every day. He said he makes Tk 700-1,000 in profit daily and also gets to watch his customers' faces light up with joy as soon as he hands them a kulfi from his pot. This photo was taken recently.