



LAND ACQUISITION Graft allegation against health minister, family 'regrettable' Says JP MP in JS

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Jatiya Party MP Pir Fazlur Rahman, referring to a government land acquisition deal involving the health minister and his family, yesterday said corruption is rife in the country's land sector.

While participating in the discussion on the "State Acquisition and Tenancy (Amendment) Bill, 2023, the opposition MP, terming a report against Health Minister Zahid Maleque as "regrettable", demanded the land minister look into the corruption in the sector.

Fazlur said corruption is rampant in districts where there are land acquisition projects.

He said it is understandable that land needs to be acquired for various development projects undertaken by the government but the government has to tackle corruption there.

Referring to the recently published

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In-patients and potential patients, along with their attendants, crowd the pathology section for platelet counts and blood tests to check for dengue at Mugda Medical College Hospital. With dengue cases soaring exponentially, hospitals across the city have been struggling to provide proper treatment facilities to those in need. The photo was taken yesterday morning.

PHOTO: ANISUR RAHMAN

FOREIGN MISSION IN KSA Deputy secy sacked on rape charges

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The government sacked a deputy secretary for raping multiple female domestic workers who were sheltered at the safe home of the Bangladesh Embassy in Saudi Arabia.

As the allegation of rape against Deputy Secretary Mehedi Hasan, a former counsellor at the embassy, is found to be true, he is dismissed from the job, according to a circular issued by the public administration ministry yesterday.

As per the Government Employees (Discipline and Appeal) Rules-2018, Mehedi will be unfit for any government job in the future.

He was withdrawn from the embassy on January 24, 2021, amid allegations of raping women who were earlier tortured by their Saudi employers.

He was suspended on February 8 that year and asked to explain his conduct the following month.

The public administration ministry later initiated departmental proceedings, and an investigation found that he asked the women vulgar

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Four lives lost as ambulance, truck collide

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Faridpur

Four people were killed and three others injured in a head-on collision between an ambulance and a truck in Gopalganj Sadar upazila yesterday.

The deceased are Shamsul Alam, 60, a retired doctor of Khulna Shipyard; his attendant Jewel Hossain, 36; ambulance driver Momin Khan, 42; and his assistant Faisal, 25.

Shamsul was on his way to a hospital in Dhaka for treatment, said police.

Talking to this newspaper, Shamsul's son, Riyadul, said his father had been suffering from psychological disorders for the past few years and was under the care of doctors at a private clinic in Dhaka's Keraniganj.

"As my father's mental state started deteriorating the clinic authorities sent a five-member team to take my father to the clinic," said Riyadul.

"They picked up my father from our home in Khulna in the morning and started heading towards Dhaka in the ambulance. Later, we came to know that the ambulance got into an accident," he added.

The ambulance collided head on with a truck in the Miapara area on the Dhaka-Khulna Highway at around 6:45am, said Javed Masud, officer-in-charge (OC) of Gopalganj Sadar Police Station.

The ambulance driver died on the spot, and six others were injured.

The police, with the help of firefighters, rescued the injured and sent them to Gopalganj Sadar Hospital, where on-duty doctors declared three people dead, the OC added.

The truck driver, Mohammad Ali, was also injured and is receiving treatment at Gopalganj Sadar Hospital.

Speaking to this newspaper, he said: "I, along with two others, was transporting an excavator to Khulna from Dhaka. When we reached the Purba Miapara area, the ambulance suddenly got onto the wrong lane, and we crashed into each other."

Capacity charge is model of robbery

Says IMED in a report on the power sector

REJAUL KARIM BYRON and ASIFUR RAHMAN

The practice of paying capacity charges to power plants is a "model of robbery" and is a reflection of ill-motivated contracts, said the Implementation Monitoring and Evaluation Division (IMED) in a report recently.

"This system is not sustainable," the report said.

The government has paid Tk 90,000 crore in capacity charges in the last 14 years, which is increasing every year.

In the last 12 years, the Bangladesh Power Development Board (PDB) has made a loss of Tk 154,190 crore. But its losses would amount to Tk 113,532 crore in fiscal 2021-22 and 2022-2023.

It is a "false claim" that if the system of capacity payment does not exist, investment in the power sector will not come.

Only two conditions are enough to attract investment: allowing the private power producers to sell electricity at a higher rate of 25 to 50 percent depending on the location and a minimum offtake of one-fourth or half the electricity generated.

The report found only 56 percent of the total power generation capacity was being used.

There will be no solution to the

fund crisis in the power and energy sector until the government does not stop the high payment for per unit electricity, capacity charges, fuel supply and selling lands to them at low cost, easy bank loan, duty-free import opportunity etc, it said.

The report also blamed the indemnity act of 2010 on the power sector.

"This is a barrier to accountability -- the per unit production cost of some power plants goes past Tk 100. Such mischief should be stopped immediately."

The report reviewed the progress of 67 power division projects taken from 2013 by PDB, Power Grid Company of Bangladesh, Desco, DPDC, NESCO, Sreda, EGCB, Power Cell, Rural Electrification Board, RPCL and so on.

"The situation is disappointing," it said.

Even after seven years, some projects' implementation is just 10 percent. None of the projects made any progress in the first year.

There are separate agencies to implement the power transmission and distribution infrastructure, but due to a lack of coordination, some power plants are sitting idle after completion in the absence of transmission and distribution systems.

It is a "false claim" that if the system of capacity payment does not exist, investment in the power sector will not come.

Rohingya leader killed in Ukhiya camp

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Cox's Bazar

A Rohingya community leader was stabbed and shot dead at the Ukhiya refugee camp in Cox's Bazar last morning.

Ebadullah, 40, was a sub-majhi of Camp A9 under Camp 1W, said Inspector Arifur Rahman of Armed Police Battalion-14.

"Some 8-10 masked criminals chased Ebadullah and caught him at his house. They stabbed him indiscriminately and shot him. He was rushed to a nearby NGO-run hospital, where doctors declared him dead," the inspector said.

The reason behind the attack and the identity of the criminals still remain unknown, he said.

On June 17, another Rohingya leader was killed.

Noor Hossain Bhutto, 42, a sub-majhi of 9D block at camp-2 in Kutupalong, was believed to be murdered over previous enmity.

At least 48 Rohingyas, including 16 Majhis, 11 ARSA members and a volunteer were killed in clashes or gunfights in the last six months in Rohingya camps in Cox's Bazar.

Giant stone artefacts found on rare Ice Age site in Kent



INDEPENDENT.CO.UK

Researchers have discovered some of the largest early prehistoric stone tools in Britain, including a foot long handaxe almost too big to be handled.

The excavations, which took place in Kent, revealed prehistoric artefacts in deep Ice Age sediments preserved on a hillside above the Medway Valley.

The researchers, from UCL Archaeology South-East, discovered 800 stone artefacts thought to be more than 300,000 years old, buried in material which filled a sinkhole and ancient river channel.

Two extremely large flint knives described as giant handaxes were among the unearthed artefacts.

Handaxes are stone artefacts which have been chipped, or knapped, on both sides to produce a symmetrical shape with a long cutting edge.

It is believed that this type of tool was usually held in the hand and may have been used for butchering animals and cutting meat.

The two largest handaxes found at the Maritime site have a distinctive shape with a long and finely worked pointed tip, and a much thicker base.

BOTCHED C-SECTION Central Hospital sues Dr Sangjukta for defamation Seeks Tk 500cr compensation

COURT CORRESPONDENT

The Central Hospital is suing doctor Sangjukta Saha for Tk 500 crore for her "defamatory remarks" about the hospital following the deaths of Mahbuba Akter Akhi and her newborn.

Didarul Alam, secretary of the hospital, filed the law suit with Dhaka's First Joint District Judge's Court yesterday.

After a hearing, Judge Md Masudul Haque accepted the case and asked Sangjukta to submit a written statement against the suit by July 25.

According to the lawsuit, Sangjukta, at a press conference on June 20, blamed Central Hospital for the deaths of the mother and her newborn.

She said the authorities did not take her consent, verbally or in writing, while admitting Akhi on June 10.

The authorities also lied about her presence at the hospital, she claimed.

"I was not in Bangladesh during the operation. How could I be responsible if I was not there? It is totally the responsibility of the hospital. To cover up the real incident



Sangjukta Saha

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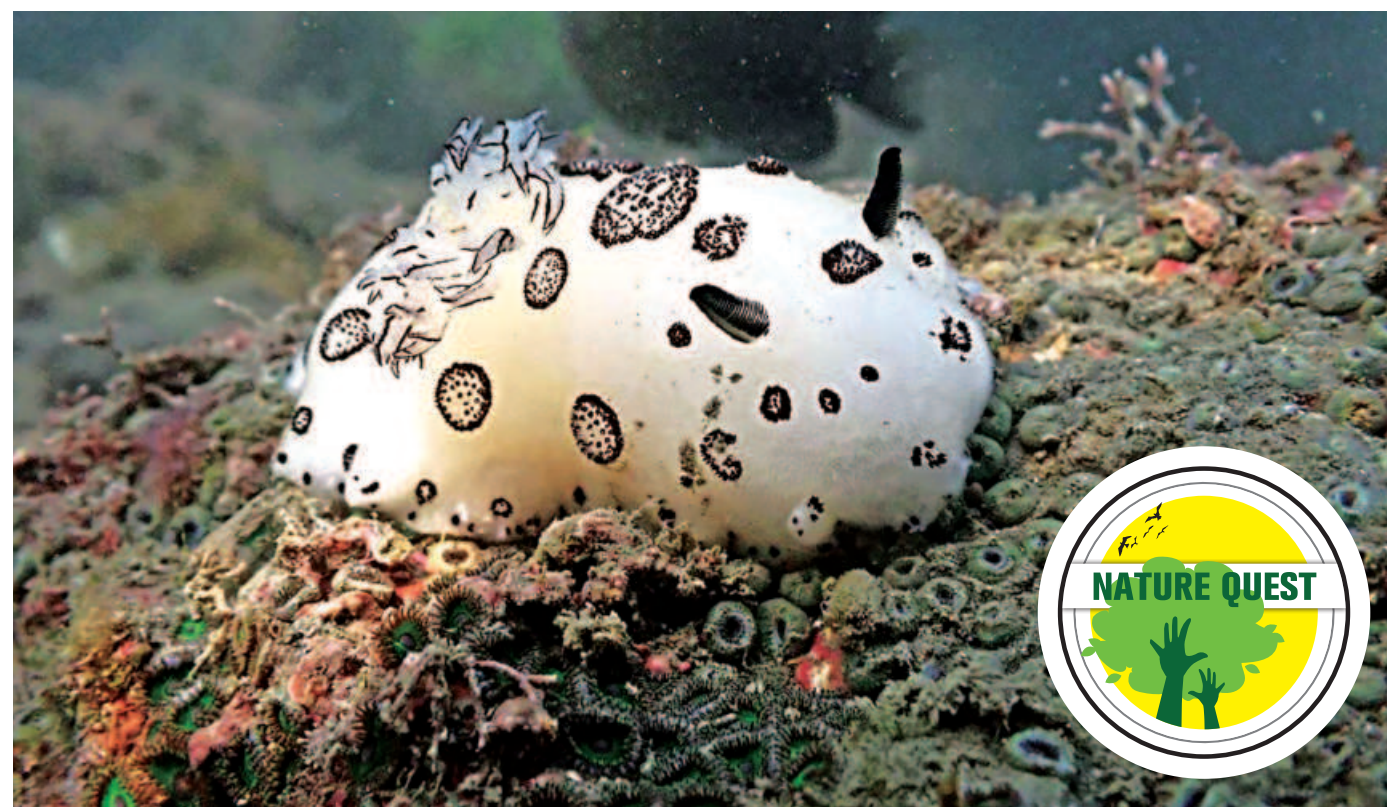


PHOTO: SHARIF SARWAR

BUNNIES OF THE SEA ... Spotted around 7-8ft under the Bay of Bengal in Saint Martin's Island, this is a sea bunny slug, scientifically known as Jorunna parva. Found mainly across the Indo-Pacific region, these tiny, shell-less molluscs are termed the "cutest" sea creatures. However, they're a threat to predators due to high toxicity, which comes from some of the food they consume -- such as toxic sea sponges. Their fuzzy "rabbit ears", for which they get their name, are actually sensory organs -- rhinophores -- that help them detect food and potential mates. They are, however, hermaphrodites -- with both male and female genitalia. So, they can be a mother to one offspring and father to another. Sea bunnies are vital for ocean health, as they consume algae and control its growth in their habitats. But habitat loss, overfishing and climate change still threaten their populations.

Reshuffle in admin 9 DCs appointed, one transferred

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The government yesterday appointed nine new deputy commissioners and transferred one.

The move is considered significant as the DCs will be the returning officers in the districts during the next general election slated for January.

This is the first time the government has appointed officers from the 27th batch of BCS as DCs. They were recruited during the Fakhruddin Ahmed-led caretaker government, and they got appointments in 2009 when the Awami League was in power.

Of the 10 officers, three were assistant personal secretaries (APS) to ministers, one was the APS to a mayor from the AL, and another one was the APS to principal secretary to the Prime Minister's Office (PMO).

Anisur Rahman, a 24th batch officer who was the DC of Gazipur, has been transferred to Dhaka.

According to a gazette notification issued by the public administration ministry, Shah Mozahid Uddin, APS

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