



Dozen hurt as pro-AL, BNP-leaning lawyers scuffle at SCBA

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Pro-BNP and Awami League-leaning lawyers scuffled once again yesterday during separate programmes on the Supreme Court Bar Association (SCBA) office premises.

The incident, which left about a dozen lawyers injured, took place after pro-BNP lawyers held a press conference at the association's South Hall protesting Wednesday's court verdict in a graft case against BNP acting chairperson Tarique Rahman and his wife Zubaida Rahman.

The office room of the SCBA secretary was ransacked and some windows were vandalised allegedly by pro-BNP lawyers in the afternoon, said witnesses.

Chaos broke out as lawyers from both camps staged demonstrations and brought out processions.

Leaders of Bangabandhu Awami Ainjibi Parishad and Bangladesh Jatiyatabadi Ainjibi Forum blamed each other for the incident.

SCBA Secretary Abdun Nur Dulal, also a leader of the Ainjibi Parishad, alleged that pro-BNP lawyers, led by AM Mahbub

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The office of the Supreme Court Bar Association was vandalised after a scuffle broke out between pro-BNP and pro-Awami League lawyers on the association premises yesterday.

PHOTO: COLLECTED

STOPPING PROPAGANDA EC to work with Facebook

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Authorities of Facebook's parent firm Meta want to assist the Election Commission in containing the negative campaign centring the upcoming 12th parliamentary election, EC officials said yesterday.

After announcement of the polls schedule, the social media giant can help by removing misinformation, hate and communal speeches from Facebook,

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TECH & STARTUP

Dear readers,
As you may know, Toggle has discontinued its print edition, with the last publication released on July 28, 2023. However, we're excited to inform you that we have transformed into Tech & Startup, with a primary focus on delivering tech content to the larger tech community in Bangladesh and beyond through the digital realm.
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Wagner fighters seek to unsettle Nato's flank

Says Polish PM; Russia downs 7 Ukrainian drones near Moscow

AGENCIES

Fighters from Russia's private Wagner mercenary force are being moved close to Nato's eastern flank to destabilise the military alliance, Poland's prime minister said yesterday.

Wagner soldiers have begun training with the Belarus national army, prompting Poland to start moving more than 1,000 troops closer to the border. On Tuesday it accused Belarus of violating its airspace with military helicopters.

"We need to be aware that the number of provocations will rise," Mateusz Morawiecki said after meeting Lithuanian President Gitanas Nauseda in eastern Poland.

"The Wagner group is extremely dangerous and they are being moved to the eastern flank to destabilise it."

The politicians met in the Suwalki Gap, a sparsely populated but strategically important area of Polish territory between Belarus and the Russian exclave of Kaliningrad that joins the Baltic states to other Nato members.

Nauseda said the number of Wagner fighters in Belarus could be higher than 4,000.

"We must not only talk about measures at the national level but also ... what should be done if this situation becomes even more complicated, including the closure of the

border with Belarus," Nauseda said. "This should be done in a coordinated manner between Poland, Lithuania and Latvia."

Belarus allowed Russian President Vladimir Putin to use its territory as a launch pad for the Ukraine invasion, but has not committed its own troops to the war, reports Reuters.

Meanwhile, Russia said yesterday it had downed seven drones over the Kaluga region, less than 200 kilometres southwest of Moscow, amid a surge in Ukrainian drone attacks targeting the capital.

The defence ministry said it had foiled "a terrorist attack with drones" in the region. Regional governor Vyacheslav Shapsha confirmed on the Telegram messaging app that seven drones had been shot down. There were no casualties, he added.

As Moscow's offensive in Ukraine stretches into its second year, drone attacks on Russian cities and towns have multiplied.

The European Union has called on G20 countries to push Russia to resume a deal allowing Ukraine grain exports through the Black Sea, a letter seen by AFP yesterday said.

EU foreign policy chief Josep Borrell told G20 top diplomats that Russia's agricultural sector was the "main beneficiary" of Moscow's withdrawal from the UN-brokered agreement.

The European Union has called on G20 countries to push Russia to resume a deal allowing Ukraine grain exports through the Black Sea.

EMBEZZLING TK 23CR Ex-Basic Bank chairman, 13 others charged

STAR REPORT

The Anti-Corruption Commission has pressed charges against former chairman of Basic Bank Abdul Hye Bacchu and 13 others in a case filed in connection with the embezzlement of Tk 23 crore.

The other accused are the bank's sacked managing directors Kazi Faqurul Islam and Shah Alam Bhuiyan, deputy managing directors Fazlus Sobhan and A Monaem Khan, assistant general managers Md Jalal Uddin, ASM Anisur Rahman Chowdhury, Sadia Akhter Shahin, and Rumana Ahad, and former general manager Md Ali Chowdhury.

Along with them, Ashraf Ahmed, managing director of Ahmed Oil Mills Ltd, its directors Nasrin Jahan Ratna and Iqbal Hossain Bhuiyan; managing partner of SD Survey Farm and its chief surveyor and partner Md Faruk are also accused in the case.

Md Ali, Iqbal Hossain, and Fazlus Sobhan are currently on bail, while Bachhu and 10 others are absconding.

On July 31, ACC Deputy

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Bangladeshis will decide on how polls to be held: India

OUR CORRESPONDENT, New Delhi

It is the people of Bangladesh who will have to decide how the next national polls would be held there, said India yesterday, expressing hope that it would be held peacefully.

In its first official comment over the recent developments in the run-up to the elections in Bangladesh, it, however, declined to remark on the caretaker government issue.

Arindam Bagchi, spokesperson of India's Ministry of External Affairs, made the comments during the weekly media briefing in New Delhi.

"Look, I think there are multiple activities going on [in Bangladesh], people are perhaps commenting on it," he said, referring to the comments made by some diplomats regarding the national polls in Bangladesh.

"The whole world may be commenting on it, but India is India and we have a very special relationship with Bangladesh. What happens in Bangladesh, impacts us," Bagchi said, adding the election and the democratic process in Bangladesh have to be decided by the people there.

He said, "Of course, we are closely monitoring [the situation in Bangladesh]. We have a High Commission there....We hope that there is peace and no violence and the elections are held as per plans."

"On the issue of caretaker government and all, I certainly don't have any comment on it," the MEA spokesman said.

Massive ancient whale fossil discovered in Peru



AFP, Lima

A newly discovered whale that lived nearly 40 million years ago could be the heaviest animal to have ever lived, based on a partial skeleton found in Peru, scientists said on Wednesday.

The modern blue whale has long been considered the largest and heaviest animal ever, beating out all the giant dinosaurs of the distant past.

But Perucetus colossus -- the colossal whale from Peru -- may have been even heavier, according to a study published in the journal Nature.

Extrapolating from some massive bones found in the Peruvian desert, an international team of researchers estimated that the animal had an average body mass of 180 tonnes.

That would not take the heavyweight title by itself. The biggest blue whale ever recorded weighed 190 tonnes, according to Guinness World Records.

But the researchers estimated the ancient whale's weight range was between 85 and 340 tonnes, meaning it could have been significantly larger.

TEESTA WATER SHARING ISSUE

Dhaka is now hopeful

Indian parliamentary body asks its external affairs ministry to 'address it at the earliest'

DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT

Dhaka sees a ray of hope for resolving the long-standing Teesta water-sharing issue with Delhi as an Indian parliamentary committee has recommended the government address the matter.

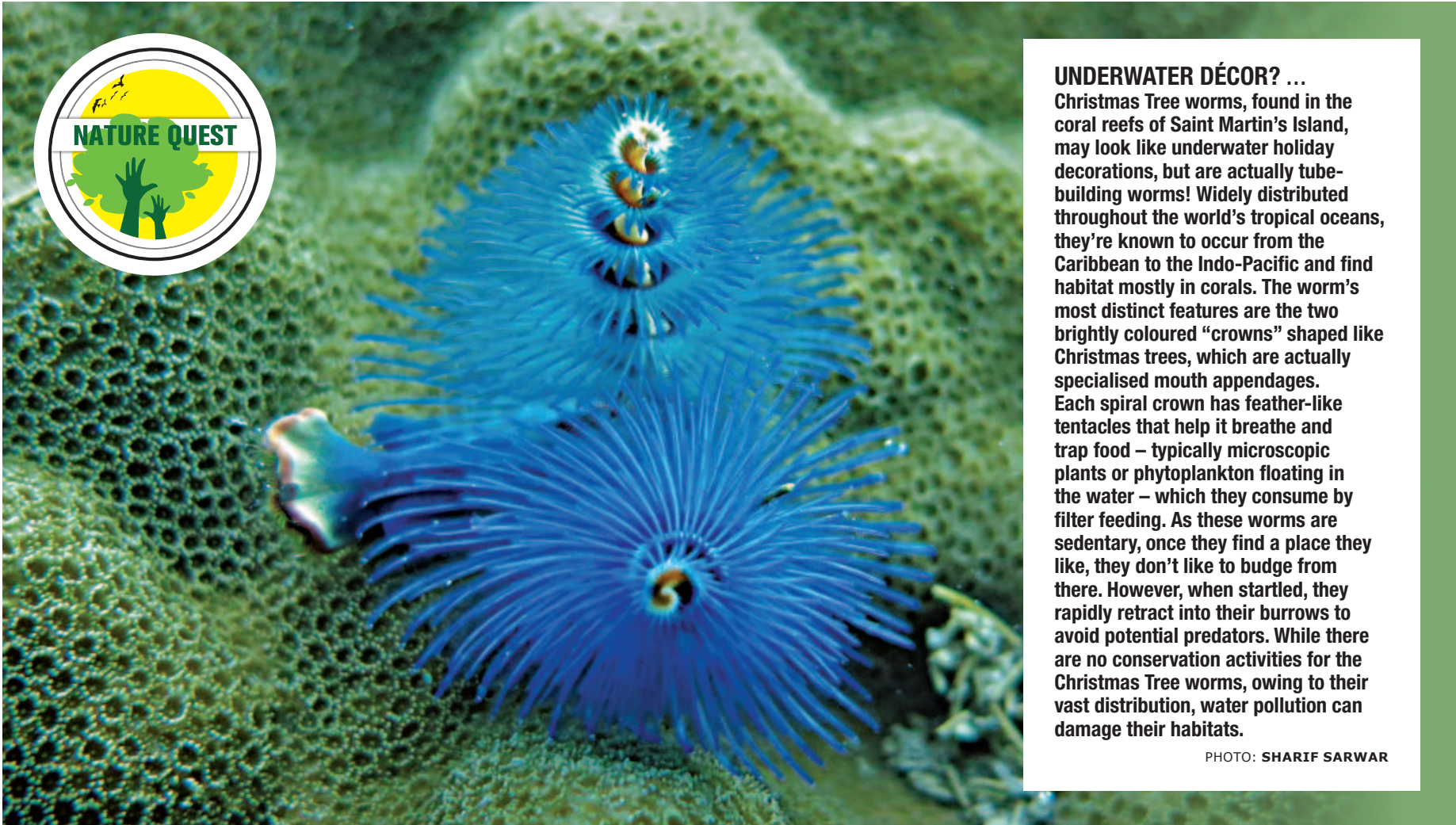
"This recommendation has generated hope. This is a significant development as MPs from all parties, including BJP, Congress and Trinamool Congress, are there in the committee," Bangladesh foreign ministry spokesperson Sehel Sabrin told reporters at the weekly media briefing yesterday.

Dhaka is hoping to step up diplomatic efforts to resolve the issue, she said.

The Indian parliamentary watchdog recommended the country address the Teesta water-sharing issue "at the earliest" for improved bilateral ties with Bangladesh.

The committee, in its 22nd report submitted to parliament on July 25, asked the external affairs ministry "to initiate meaningful dialogue with Bangladesh on a regular basis to arrive at a consensus in the Teesta matter, and the progress/outcome may be informed to the committee".

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UNDERWATER DÉCOR? ...
Christmas Tree worms, found in the coral reefs of Saint Martin's Island, may look like underwater holiday decorations, but are actually tube-building worms! Widely distributed throughout the world's tropical oceans, they're known to occur from the Caribbean to the Indo-Pacific and find habitat mostly in corals. The worm's most distinct features are the two brightly coloured "crowns" shaped like Christmas trees, which are actually specialised mouth appendages. Each spiral crown has feather-like tentacles that help it breathe and trap food – typically microscopic plants or phytoplankton floating in the water – which they consume by filter feeding. As these worms are sedentary, once they find a place they like, they don't like to budge from there. However, when startled, they rapidly retract into their burrows to avoid potential predators. While there are no conservation activities for the Christmas Tree worms, owing to their vast distribution, water pollution can damage their habitats.

PHOTO: SHARIF SARWAR