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'Tired of playing hide and seek with myself'

Diplomat reveals 'third gender' identity thru Facebook post

AZMIN AZRAN

A BCS cadre with the lucrative position of a diplomat, it may look as though Oalid Islam's life has few problems.

However, the story of Oalid, who was born a "third-gender person", is riveting, heartbreaking and inspiring all at once.

He identified himself as a third-gender person publicly for the first time on a Facebook post a week ago.

Speaking to this correspondent, Oalid asked to be addressed as "bhaiya (brother)", as that is what he has been used to having tried to fit into the mould of a man his entire life.

When it comes to gender identity, he prefers "third gender", "common gender", or Hijra,



Oalid Islam

SEE PAGE 6 COL 1



THE HOLY CROWN ... A hoopoe sits elegantly on a barren tree in Habiganj's Satchari National Park. Found across Africa, Asia and Europe, these majestic birds have a look as uncommon as the name. More so due to the notably large crown of feathers, tipped in black and white, on top of their heads – giving them a royal appearance. Meanwhile, the uncommon name comes from the sound it makes – a deep, haunting "oop oop oop", which in Estonian culture is said to be associated with death. However, in other cultures, the hoopoe is considered to be a sacred and faithful companion of humankind. Even in the Holy Quran, the hoopoe is mentioned twice under the name "hudhud" and is described as an intelligent messenger bird. As it is a protected bird in many parts of its vast range, the IUCN has put it in the "least concerned" category of its Red List.

PHOTO: MOSABBER HOSSAIN RIBON

EU eager to scale up partnership with Dhaka

EU ambassador calls on PM

BSS, Dhaka

European Union Ambassador to Bangladesh Charles Whiteley yesterday congratulated Sheikh Hasina on her re-election as the prime minister for the fourth consecutive term.

The partnership and cooperation with Bangladesh will scale a new height, Whiteley said while paying a courtesy call on Hasina at the Gono Bhaban in the morning.

The existing benefits, which are currently Bangladesh is getting in various sectors including environment, good governance, renewable energy, and transportation under the Global Gateway

SEE PAGE 6 COL 4 PHOTO ON PAGE 5

Sinohydro admits misuse of duty-free benefits

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Sinohydro Corporation, a Chinese state-owned company, admitted to misusing duty-free benefits in the case of equipment it brought in for Padma bridge's river training work.

As per rules, the company was supposed to send back the items it had brought into Bangladesh without paying any duty once their use had ended. But the company did not.

This prompted the Chattogram Custom House to issue eight show-cause notices to Sinohydro. The company was also given until January 4 to ship out the goods.

Sinohydro acknowledged the misuse in its response on January 14 to show-cause notices from the Chattogram Custom House. However, the misuse was unintentional.

"It is deeply regretful that we failed to deal with the above matters in a timely manner for which our head office took

SEE PAGE 6 COL 4

Residents flee as Israel pounds Khan Younis

Strikes threaten biggest hospital still functioning in the enclave; 172 Palestinians killed in 24hrs

AGENCIES

Israeli forces advancing into the southern Gaza Strip's main city pounded areas near the biggest hospital still functioning in the enclave yesterday, sending patients and residents fleeing a battle they feared would lay the city to waste.

Gaza's health ministry said 172 people had been killed in Israeli strikes in the last 24 hours, including 16 in a single strike on a house in the southern city of Rafah.

At least 326 Palestinians were also injured, the ministry added.

The heaviest battle of the year so far was under way in Khan Younis, a city that is sheltering hundreds of thousands of people who fled the north earlier in the offensive, now in its fourth month.

The charity Medecins Sans Frontieres, which has doctors at the city's Nasser Hospital, said patients and displaced people sheltering

there were fleeing in panic.

The renewed strikes came as medicine for hostages held by Hamas fighters and fresh aid for civilians entered the Palestinian territory under a newly brokered deal, mediator Qatar said. At least 24,620 Palestinians, most of them

women, children and adolescents, have been killed in Israeli bombardments and a ground offensive since October 7, according to figures from the health ministry.

Khan Younis residents said yesterday the fighting had come closer than ever to Nasser Hospital, the biggest hospital still working in the enclave, raising fears it would fall under siege and be shut like Shifa, the main hospital in the north, captured by Israeli forces in November.

Two-thirds of Gaza's hospitals, including all medical facilities in the northern half of

SEE PAGE 6 COL 3

- Death toll in enclave rises to 24,620
- Israel says battle for Khan Younis could last up to 2 months

UTTARA-MOTIJHEEL Metro to run till 8:40pm from tomorrow

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Metro rail services on the Uttara-Motijheel-Uttara route will be available from 7:10am till 8:40pm, six days a week, starting tomorrow.

With the opening of the Shahbagh and Karwan Bazar stations on December 31 last year, all 16 stations of MRT-6 are now functional.

Currently, trains operate on the Agargaon-Motijheel section from 7:30am to 11:30am and on the Uttara-Agargaon section from 8:30am to 8:30pm.

From tomorrow, the first train will leave Uttara North Station at 7:10am and the last one will leave Motijheel Station at 8:40pm.

The metro rail will remain closed on Fridays.

MAN Siddique, managing director of

SEE PAGE 6 COL 1

Webb telescope discovers oldest black hole yet

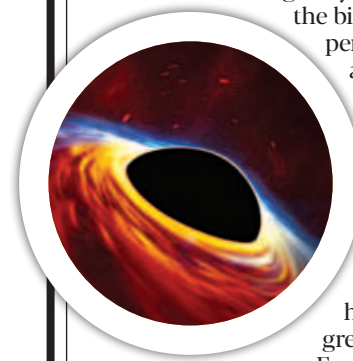
AFP, Paris

The James Webb space telescope has discovered the oldest black hole ever detected, which was thriving so soon after the Big Bang that it challenges our understanding of how these celestial behemoths form, astronomers said Wednesday.

The black hole was vigorously gobbling up its host galaxy just 430 million years after the birth of the universe during a period called the cosmic dawn, according to a study in the journal Nature.

That makes it 200 million years older than any other massive black hole ever observed, study co-author and Cambridge University astronomer Jan Scholtz told AFP. Yet it has a mass 1.6 million times greater than our Sun.

Exactly how it had time to grow that big so quickly after the Big Bang 13.8 billion years ago will provide new information "for the next generation of theoretical models" aiming to explain what creates black holes, Scholtz said.



A Palestinian woman mourns over the bodies of victims of Israeli bombardment in Rafah in the southern Gaza Strip yesterday. *Inset, People inspect the rubble of a building following an Israeli strike in Rafah.*

PHOTO: AFP

SPORT

BPL Begins today

The 10th edition of the Bangladesh Premier League will begin today at the Sher-e-Bangla National Cricket Stadium in Mirpur, with defending champions Comilla Victorians taking on Durdanto Dhaka in the first match of the day.

In the second game, last year's finalists Sylhet Strikers will square off against Chattogram Challengers at the same venue.

As usual, the country's only franchise-based T20 tournament begins on the back of promises of sporting wickets and quality cricket. However, with inclusion of some new technologies, fans can hope for a better viewer experience this time around.

STORY ON PAGE 11

চট্টগ্রাম সিটি কর্পোরেশন

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- বাসস্থানীয় গৃহস্থ পচনশীল/অপচনশীল আবর্জনা দুটি পৃথক ব্যাগে প্রতিদিন বিকাল ৪টা থেকে ৬টার মধ্যে বাড়ীর নীচে নির্দিষ্ট স্থানে রাখতে হবে। সিটি কর্পোরেশনের পরিচ্ছন্ন কর্মীরা তা সংগ্রহ করে নিকটস্থ ডাষ্টবিনে সন্ধ্যা ৬টা থেকে রাত ১২টার মধ্যে অপসারণ করবে।
- আবর্জনা প্রতিদিন সন্ধ্যা ০৬:০০ ঘটিকা হতে রাত ১২:০০ ঘটিকা মধ্যে নিকটস্থ ডাষ্টবিন/ কন্টেইনার বা আবর্জনা ফেলার নির্দিষ্ট জায়গায় ফেলুন। নির্দিষ্ট জায়গা ব্যতীত অন্য জায়গায় বা নির্ধারিত সময় ব্যতীত অন্য সময় আবর্জনা ফেলবেন না।
- আপনার বাড়ীর অগ্নি পরিষ্কার রাখার দায়িত্ব আপনার। কারো প্রতিষ্ঠান/দোকান/স্থাপনা/বাড়ীর সামনে যে কোনো ধরনের ময়লা/পলিথিন/টিসু ইত্যাদি পাওয়া গেলে চট্টগ্রাম সিটি কর্পোরেশনের আইন অনুযায়ী আর্থিক দণ্ডিত হবেন। জরিমানা আনাদায়ে, তা পরের বৎসর হোল্ডিং ট্যাক্স/লাইসেন্স নবায়নের সময় আদায় করা হবে।
- দোকান, বাড়ি বা প্রতিষ্ঠানের কোন মালামাল, নির্মাণ সামগ্রী যেমনঃ মাটি, বালি, ইট, কংকর, পাথর প্রভৃতি রাস্তা, ফুটপাথ বা মাশার উপর রাখা হলে আর্থিক দণ্ডে দণ্ডিত হবেন।
- নালা-নর্দমা, খাল, রাস্তা এবং ফুটপাথের জায়গা দখল করবেন না।
- কোন অবস্থাতেই দোকান/প্রতিষ্ঠানের বর্জ্য বাত্ব দিয়ে রাস্তা, ফুটপাথ, নালায় ফেলবেন না এবং এ বিষয়ে অন্যদেরকেও বারণ করবেন।
- যত্রতত্র গু পু, কফ, পানের পিক, সিগারেটের শেষাংশ ফেলবেন না।
- আপনার গৃহ, দোকান, ব্যবসা, ধর্মীয় বা শিক্ষা প্রতিষ্ঠান এর আশ-পাশ সার্বক্ষণিক পরিষ্কার রাখুন।
- মশার জন্মস্থান যথাঃ কোপ-বাড়, জলাশয়, ডোবা, পুকুর, নালা-নর্দমা বা পানি জমে থাকে এমন স্থানসমূহ পরিষ্কার রাখুন।
- পাইলিং এর মাটি নালা-নর্দমায় ফেলবেন না।
- পাবলিক প্রেস এবং পাবলিক পরিবহনে ধূমপান করবেন না, মাদক কে না বুনুন।
- উপরোক্ত নির্দেশনা অমান্যকারীদের বিরুদ্ধে "স্থানীয় সরকার (সিটি কর্পোরেশন) আইন-২০০৯" ও অন্যান্য আইন অনুযায়ী শাস্তিমূলক ব্যবস্থা গ্রহণ করা হবে।
- চট্টগ্রাম শহুরে সিটি কর্পোরেশন কর্তৃক নির্ধারিত স্থান ব্যতীত অন্য কোন স্থানে গোষ্ঠার, ব্যানার, ফেইন লাগানো সম্পূর্ণভাবে নিষিদ্ধ। আইন অমান্যকারীদের উপর আইনানুগ শাস্তি প্রয়োগ করা হবে।
- এই আদেশ আগামী পহেলা (০১) ফেব্রুয়ারি ২০২৪ থেকে কার্যকর হবে।

(আইন অমান্যকারীদের ব্যাপারে cccmayor@gmail.com তে ই-মেইল এর মাধ্যমে তথ্য প্রদানের জন্য নগরবাসীকে অনুরোধ করা হলো।)

চসিক/জস-১১২/২৩-২৪(৭৫০)

মোঃ রেজাউল করিম চৌধুরী
মেয়র
চট্টগ্রাম সিটি কর্পোরেশন