



ZOBAER HOSSAIN SIKDER

A newborn baby crocodile with her mother at Chittagong Zoo drew huge enthusiasm as well as attention of both the visitors and zoo authorities after death of two crocodiles within a span of six months.

Mugging on the rise

SHAHIDUL ISLAM

Incident of mugging is on the rise in the port city of Chittagong. Not a single day was passing without mugging, spelling sense of fear and panic on the city dwellers.

The newspapers almost everyday publish reports on mugging taken place within the purview of 12 thana areas of Chittagong Metropolitan Police (CMP). And many remain unreported.

The miscreants use the Compressed Natural Gas (CNG) auto-rickshaw as a vehicle of their crime and rickshaw passengers are their targets. The four-stroke vehicle is fast and can easily intercept rickshaws from behind and whisk away.

Patrol police, in most of the cases, are found play role of mere spectators and hardly respond to the need of the cause.

According to police record, only 10 incidents of mugging occurred in December and 24 in January. However, unofficial sources said the figure would be higher in January as many incidents were not recorded or

reported.

In January, incidents of mugging took place every alternate day. Some 'compassionate' muggers have even made phone calls to the victims as an acknowledgement of the booty!

On January 24, the muggers on board a CNG taxi intercepted the car of businessman Fasiur Rahman at around 2.00 pm in front of Makki Mosque near Panchlaish Police Station and took away Tk 2 lakh at gunpoint.

The muggers stabbed and snatched Tk 17,000 from one Mohammad Ibrahim on January 23 at Chhotopool area under Halihsahar thana as he tried to resist them. Ibrahim was rushed to Chittagong Medical College Hospital (CMCH) in a critical condition.

On January 22, wife of Chittagong University teacher Shamsul Alam, was mugged at around 7.00pm at Prabantak Crossing. The muggers on a CNG decamped with her vanity bag that contains Tk 5,000, two gold chains and important documents when she was going in a rickshaw. The miscreants later thanked her over phone for the money.

Daisy Moudud, Sub-editor of

the Daily Purbokone, was mugged for the fourth time in two years, the latest one on January 20. Daisy was going to Ispahani School and College to pay the admission fee of her son, a student of class VIII. One stretching hand from a CNG took away her vanity bag with Tk 6,000 and a mobile phone as her rickshaw reached in front of Aarong Show Room near GEC Crossing.

On January 20, three incidents took place at 3.00am at Badurtala and at 8.45pm at Enayet Bazar. Azadi staff Nizamuddin and expatriate couple Tapash and Tanushree Dev were the victims.

Newspaper hawkker Shamsul Haq was mugged Tk1600 and a wristwatch at Sirajuddowla Road in the early hours of January 18.

Two muggers posing as old friends made one Emdadul Haq their victim in front of Chittagong Press Club on January 12 morning and took Tk 9500 yielding knife. Emdad was there to deposit the money at Agrani Bank, Press Club branch.

Mugging also occurred at Golpaha area on January 11, at Pahartali Panjabi Lane on January 9, at Momin Road on

January 5 and January 1. However, unconfirmed sources claimed that many more incident of mugging have taken place that were not reported at all.

The most daring mugging took place at city's Sholakbaha area on December 27 morning when the miscreants riding a microbus intercepted the car of Fulkoli and took away Tk 6,00,000 (six lakh) at gunpoint. The Fulkoli staff were going to a nearby bank to deposit the money.

On December 17 and 15 two mugging happened inside two passenger buses at GEC and WASA intersection. The muggers in guise of passengers looted the passengers at gunpoint.

Muggers stabbed businessman Abul Kalam at Agrabad Mistripara area on the night of December 11 and took away Tk 20,000, a gold chain and mobile phone from him.

When contacted Assistant Commissioner (DB) of CMP Mohammad Shafique Uddin Chowdhury said that police patrol was strengthened at different city points to check the rise of mugging.

ST MARTINS ISLAND

St Martins: Country's lonely outpost

MUHI UL ALAM

St Martins, lying about three-

hours' boat journey to the south of Teknaf, a five-square kilometer fishing island, which has recently captured the imagination of the tourists in general, is where writer Humayun Ahmed had built a resort house in the 1990's, acting as the pioneer.

The island almost shell-shaped but for a connecting strip with the coral island, offers wonderful empty beaches washed by the sea, hoards of live shells, fresh coconuts, and a ravishingly beautiful night, if the moon shines or even not.

The island is unbelievably serene with a cool pleasant wind blowing all night, and a little eerie too for the sound of the waves,

which you can hear (nay, even touch) from your room at Hotel Abakash or from any other dormitory.

The island holds forth virgin charms, yet though the best beaches where the waves lap on adorably on the bathers do seem slightly wrongly located.

At St Martins the sunrise and the sunset occur at the wrong ends of the island, that is, the beaches at these two ends are difficult to walk on for the coral reefs. The water of the sea anytime is a brilliant blue, and near the coral island the white beds of the corals can be seen through the transparent water.

The island has a small population of 6,000 people, and it is a union with an elected chairman. A small contingent of police is stationed here, quite sufficient as the

island is peaceful. Most of the families are engaged in fishing, besides growing coconut gardens. The people are illiterate and simple-minded, but quick-tempered and certainly intimidating.

An unverified story goes that writer Humayun Ahmed was not much taken to by the islanders, his modern attitudes having arisen their dislike. Humayun's bungalow is now vandalised, doors and windows gone. Prospero's culture will not take its hue on the islanders (and, it's true for the whole country!)

The only highway inside the island must be that three-kilometer long road built of concrete slabs starting at the fish-market and ending at Hotel Abakash. It's about a foot high from the ground with no supporting mud

bed on the edges.

So, when the sea-truck from Teknaf unloads the tourists at the island in the early afternoon, the van-rickshaws become mad to catch passengers, and on this dangerously narrow strip of a road they run, overtake, collide, skid and fall and, sometimes, break down causing injury to the helpless tourists. At night, if the moon is not shining, these van-rickshawals simply drive in the dark without a light. The whole thing is pure aggression, and you may like it for that all the more.

In the fish-market at the entrance of the island there are a dozen restaurants selling freshly fried lobsters, crabs, flying fish and other indigenous fishes. Rice is thick grain, and with dal and fish at Salam Meah's Park Restaurant you will surely win the bargain for your meal.

After dinner, you again mount on a van-rickshaw to return to Hotel Abakash awaiting the most precious night of your life, only to discover the ruining fact that a generator, howling in a disagreeable manner, supplies electricity to the Hotel until ten or eleven at night.

In the end, the generator goes to sleep, calmness sweeps back, and you pull up a chair in front of your room, resting your legs onto the railing of the corridor, for a whole-night rapture with the sea, and a line from Jibananda floats itself into your memory: "Samudrer jaley deha dhuye nia tumi ki ashibe kache priya?" (Oh dear, won't you come to me after washing your body in the seawater?).



STAR PHOTO

Introduction of KEARI Sindbad, a SOLAS (safety of life at sea) ship of KEARI Limited, in Teknaf -Saint Martins route is a remarkable addition to the tourism sector in greater Chittagong. The sea going (classed) passenger vessel starts operating in this route today.

theweekthatwas

Health camp at Banshkhali

Lions Club of Chittagong City and Leo Club of Chittagong Port City organised a health camp at Burumchhara in Banshkhali on Wednesday.

A total of 150 poor patients were treated free of cost there.

Cabinet treasurer of Lion District 315 B-4 Badiuzzaman Khan Nonny was present as chief guest at the camp. Lions Club President Ashraf Ali Ashu and Leo Club President Mohammad Habibullah also attended.

Tribute to MR Siddiqui

Speakers at a memorial meeting paid rich tribute to former minister and freedom fighter MR Siddiqui. They called him one of the pioneers of Lionism in Bangladesh and a rare personality.

Lions Club International organised the meeting at Taheruddin Memorial Hall of Chittagong Lions Foundation on Friday in observance of his 12th death anniversary. Governor of Lions District 315 B-4 Rafique Ahmad chaired the meeting. Nazmul Haq Chowdhury, M Shamsul Haq, Kazi Akramuddin Ahmad, SM Ishaque, Badiuzzaman Khan and Nurul Huda also spoke.

Road dev work starts

Development works of Anderson Road and Habilder Yar Mohammad Road in Shikarpur Union under Hathazari Upazila was started on Friday.

Whip of Jatiyo Sangsad Syed Wahidul Alam MP inaugurated the Tk 16 lakh works under the Local Government Engineering Department.

Wahid in his speech as chief guest said people of this locality will be

greatly benefited after completion of the development works and it would reduce their trouble. "Good communication is the key to any development of an area or locality," he said.

Shikarpur UP Chairman Harunur Rashid presided. Hathazari Upazila Nirbahi Officer M Jahiruddin Babar, Acting Principal of Kuwaish Burishchar Degree College Mohammad Ali, Engineer Ashraf Islam and politician Noor Mohammad also spoke.

Khelaghar concerned

A meeting of Khelaghar Chittagong City Unit was held on Wednesday to discuss different organisational activities at its office.

Khelaghar leaders expressed

concern over the overall socio-economic and political situation of the country. "The country is passing one of the crucial junctures when deterioration of law and order took a turn from bad to worse," they said.

Poet Ashish Sen, Nasru Kamal Khan, Monjurul Alam, Rupak Chowdhury, Anup Roy and Sabera Shabnam Maina also spoke. Professor Mohammad Jahangir presided.

Labour leaders demand dues

Labour leaders of Asiatic Cotton Mills at a meeting demanded immediate payment of dues and other benefits of its workers on Thursday.

Advisor of the organisation Mahabbat Ali Khan and Solaiman Majumder were present as chief and special guests. Labour leaders Abdus Sattar, Abdul Mannan, Abul Khair,

Shahadat Hossain, Nurul Huda, Nurul Alam and Abul Kashem addressed. Sraniak League President Mansur Ahmad chaired the meeting.

They said that the mill authorities were dilly-dallying for long to pay the dues and arrears estimated at Tk 15 crore to its workers, although the mill went to lay-off in 1993. "Besides, the authorities are now trying to sell the land property," they added.

The labour leaders warned the authorities to refrain from selling the property without making full payment of its workers.

Reception to expert on drug addiction

Speakers at a reception ceremony stressed the need for unified policy to fight drug addiction and help treat the addicts in proper way.

ARK, an organisation to help rehabilitation of drug addicts, organised the function on Thursday at its Salimpur CDA Residential Area Office to accord reception to Dr Efram Milanese, an expert on prevention of drug addiction and consultant of Caritas, Germany.

Dr Efram said drug addiction is a universal problem and it took a serious turn in Germany. "But one of the basic difference is that drug addicts are treated at the government-supervised rehabilitation centres in Germany whereas they are to languish in prisons in Bangladesh," he said.

"A change in this regard is needed urgently," Dr Efram added. Administrator Bakul De Costa of 'Baraka', a drug preventive centre in Dhaka, Chief Executive of ARK Parvez Ahmed, Director Shahjahan Siddiqui and Sihabul Huda Chowdhury

addressed the function.

BSTI raids Chaktai, Khatunganj

A joint team of Bangladesh Standard Testing Institute (BSTI) and Consumers Association of Bangladesh (CAB), Chittagong carried out a raid against sub-standard and illegal items at Chaktai, Khatunganj and Bakalia areas recently and identified 19 products of 11 institutions as illegal and having no proper licenses.

The institutions were: Chittagong Masallar Mill, Rinku Enterprise, Shah Amanat Products, Abul Kashem Masallar Mill, Diamond Masalla Products, Lucky Masalla Products, Kanta Masalla Products, Arafat Flour Mill, Shapla Coconut Oil Crusher, RMI Food Products and Mahan Dairies Limited.

BHMA leaders meet FM

Newly elected office-bearers of Bangladesh Homeopathic Medical Association (BHMA) called on Foreign Minister M Morshed Khan at his Chandgaon residence on Wednesday and sought his cooperation.

The FM gave a patient hearing to them and assured of his sincere help. He urged them to work hard to keep equal pace with the modern medical science.

BHMA President Dr Sagar Chandra Dey and General Secretary Dr SK Dev Sajal led the team. BHMA Senior Vice-President Dr Ruhul Amin Bhuiyan, Advisor Dr Abdul Malek, BNP South District President Ahmad Khalil Khan, Senior Vice-President of Chittagong Chamber of Commerce and Industry

(CCCI) Ershad Ullah, Director of Krishi Bank Morshedul Alam Quaderi and city BNP Joint Secretary Abu Sufian were present.

65 pc blood comes from professional donors

Leaders of Sandhani, Chittagong Medical College (CMC) Unit, revealed that about 65 per cent blood against the demand in Bangladesh are collected from professional blood donors who carry viruses of different diseases.

"Of them, 28 per cent used to carry Hepatitis and 30 per cent different sexual diseases," they said at a briefing on Thursday on the occasion of Sandhani's 27th anniversary.

Sandhani Publication Secretary Mashur Rahman Sagar read out a written statement while Manoj Chowdhury, Rehnuma Nasim, Munmun Chowdhury, Uthpal Kumar Barua, Dr Nazim Akhtar and Mohammad Ali Biplob answered to the queries.

They said at present the yearly demand of blood in Bangladesh is 2.50 lakh bags and it is around 30,000 bags in Chittagong. "Of this, Sandhani CMC Unit collected 6,160 bags in 2003, one-fifth of the total demand here," they added.

Engineers urged to reduce system loss

Chief Engineer of Power Development Board, Chittagong Southern Zone, Liakat Hossain Baro Bhuiyan at a meeting urged engineers and CBA leaders for giving their best to ensure better customer services and help reduce system loss to an expected

level.

He also sought their cooperation in this regard at the meeting at Bidyut Bhaban on Thursday morning.

Superintendent engineers Abdus Sattar and AHM Aminul Islam, Deputy Director (Admin) Mohammad Nurul Hoque, Assistant Director (Public

Relations) SM Kamrul Islam Khan, CBA leaders Abdullah Harun Akhanji, Syed Abul Hasheem and Shamsul Alam Chowdhury were present.



STAR PHOTO

Two former students render song at the first reunion of Ispahani Public School and College at the Chittagong Club auditorium on Saturday.



STAR PHOTO

Jazz musician Kate Petard enthralled the audience at a concert organised by British American Tobacco Company Limited at Hotel Agrabad in the city on Saturday.