



Python, fishing cat rescued from Moulvibazar villagers

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Moulvibazar

A python was recovered from a village house at Rajnagar upazila here on Sunday and later released into the jungle.

The snake was found in the residence of Abid Ali in Tengra village. On information, the forest officials rescued the reptile and freed it.

In recent months, vil-

lagers have trapped a number of wild cats and pythons. In most cases, people kill those poor things. Wild animals enter search of food often enter human habitation, as food chain in the forests has been disturbed.

Earlier on Friday, villagers at Kulaura in the district caught another python. Forest department officials

said people have damaged both the eyes of the reptile. It was now under treatment at the department.

People of Amirpur village under Rajnagar caught a fishing cat from a house of the village last Thursday. They severely beat the animal. Forest officials recovered the fishing cat and released the animal into Lawachhara reserve forest.

SNIPPETS

Housewife murdered

A CORRESPONDENT, Lalmonirhat

A woman was strangled allegedly by her gambler husband at Sarolkhan village of Sarpukur union in Aditmari upazila yesterday. Police recovered the body and sent it to Lalmonirhat hospital morgue for autopsy. The victim was identified as Ayesha Begum, 30. Police said Saidul Islam pressed a week ago his wife Ayesha for bringing Tk 10 thousand from her parent's house. As she failed to bring the amount, the couple locked in frequent quarrels. On the fateful night, Saidul strangled his wife in sleep at her bed, police said. Locals said Ayesha was blessed with a son and a daughter.

2 die from burn injuries

UNB, Bogra

Two people, including a woman, who received burn injuries on Wednesday and Thursday in separate incidents in Bogra and Naogaon, died at Shaheed Ziaur Rahman Medical College and Hospital on Sunday and Saturday. In Bogra, Rostam Ali, 65, of Nishindara village in Gabtali upazila received burn injuries on Wednesday while he was warming himself by the fire during the biting cold. He was rushed to the hospital where he died at 5:00am on Sunday. In another incident in Naogaon, Fancy Begum, 30, of Chougat village in Dhamoirhat upazila received serious burn injuries on Thursday while she was cooking at her kitchen. She was admitted to the same hospital where she died at 9:00am on Saturday.

Nine cow lifters held

UNB, Sirajganj

Police, in a special drive on Saturday night, arrested nine cow lifters along with six cows and a truck at Kandapara village in Salanga upazila. The arrestees are Saiful Islam, 40, Shahidul Islam, 37, Aslam, 42, Sumon, 30, Asad, 35, Sagar, 32, Salam, 35, Jhantu, 38, and Milon, 28. They hailed from Kandapara, Masimpur and Islampur villages of the upazila. Police said an organised gang took away six cows from Deobhog village on Friday night. Later, acting on secret information, they raided a house and arrested Saiful, the gang leader. As per his confessional statement, the law enforcers arrested the other members of the gang and recovered the cows. They also seized the stolen truck from their possession.

Lawyers boycott courts

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Netrakona

The lawyers of Durgapur Bar Council are boycotting judicial magistrate's court, executive magistrate's court and assistant judge's court in Durgapur from Thursday demanding removal of the officer-in-charge (OC) of Durgapur police station. The lawyers started the programme after a group of criminals allegedly hired by the OC attacked advocate Abdur Razzak of Durgapur Bar Council on January 19 and injured him for filing a criminal case with Durgapur Judicial Magistrate's Court against OC Abdul Karim the day before. Hazrat Ali, president of Durgapur Bar Council said the court boycott programme will continue until removal of OC Karim. Contacted, Police Superintendent of Netrakona Sheikh Nazmul Alam told this correspondent the allegations against the OC is being investigated.

BCL at RU brings out procession defying ban

A RU CORRESPONDENT

Bangladesh Chhatra League (BCL) Rajshahi University (RU) unit yesterday brought out a procession on the campus defying restrictions imposed by the authorities.

Witnesses said leaders, activists and outsider BCL men took out the procession at around 12:30pm on the occasion of its council scheduled for January 27.

Leaders and activists of Samajtantrik Chhatra Front, Jasod Chhatra League, Chhatra Union and Chhatra Moitree yesterday alleged that BCL brought out the procession in presence of the law enforcers.

They also criticised the university authorities for not taking any action against the BCL men for violating restrictions on rallies and processions on the campus.

They demanded immediate withdrawal of restrictions on the activities of the student bodies.

They also demanded exemplary punishment to the BCL cadres who killed Polytechnic Institute Chhatra Moitree leader Rezanul Islam Chowdhury Sunny on January 7.

Leaders of Samajtantrik Chhatra Front said they were not allowed to observe the founding anniversary of their organisation on the campus on January 21 due to the restrictions, but the authorities are quite silent about the BCL.

The university authorities imposed restrictions on the activities of the student bodies on May 12, 2009 for an indefinite period following a clash between Bangladesh Chhatra League (BCL) and Islami Chhatra Shibir (ICS) on the campus on March 13, 2009. Shibir leader Sharifuzzaman Nomani was killed in the clash.

RU BCL President Ibrahim Hossain Moon said they held procession, taking permission from the authorities. When contacted, RU Proctor Prof Chowdhury Zakaria said he was not aware of it.

Arms recovered from three Ctg districts

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

Members of the Rapid Action Battalion (Rab) in separate drives recovered seven firearms and four cartridges from Lohagara upzila in the district and Lama in Bandarban yesterday and the day before.

Receiving information that an armed gang gathered at Hazi Rasta Bazar under Lohagara upzila in the district, a team of Rab-7, Chittagong, raided the area at around 5:30am.

Sensing the presence of the elite force, the criminals fled the scene leaving four single-barrel guns and four cartridges. The Rab men then searched the area and found the arms and ammunition under a bridge on the Chittagong-Cox's Bazar highway.

In another drive, the elite force arrested one Bashir Ahmed, 40, son of Late Rahmat Ullah of Lama upzila in Bandarban, for his suspicious movement in the city's

Chandgaon area at around 5:00pm on Sunday.

On Bashir's confession, the Rab men carried out a drive at his village at Haidernasi under Lama upzila and recovered two single-barrel guns and a double-barrel gun from beside a canal.

Two separate cases were filed with the police stations concerned, Rab sources said.

Meanwhile, Ukhia police yesterday arrested four robbers with arms and ammunition and recovered a microbus the gang used for robbery at different areas of Cox's Bazar district, according to a correspondent.

Police raided different areas of the upzila after a gang of robbers looted passenger buses on Cox's Bazar-Teknaf highway early Saturday.

They arrested the four Robbers from a den after a brief exchange of fire between the two sides.



Ukhia police arrested four robbers with arms and ammunition yesterday. They also recovered a microbus the gang used for robbery at different areas of Cox's Bazar district.

FIRE IN SIX DISTRICTS 60 shops, seven houses gutted

STAR NATIONAL DESK

Around 60 shops including a godown and seven houses were gutted in fire in six districts in last four days.

Our Staff Correspondent in Sylhet reports: Twenty business establishments were gutted in a big fire at Beanibazar upazila headquarters Sunday midnight.

Locals and Fire Service sources said the fire originated from the grocery shop belonging to Hossain Ahmed around 11:30 pm and soon spread to the adjacent shops.

Fire fighters from adjacent Barlekha upazila in Moulvibazar district reached the spot at about 12:30 pm but failed to douse the fire.

Locals also failed to do anything for absence of any water source nearby.

A number of cloth stores, hardware and grocery shops were gutted in the busy commercial area causing an estimated damage of Tk one crore.

Two shops were gutted in a fire at Chandpur Puran Bazaar early yesterday, according to a correspondent.

Station officer of Chandpur South Fire Service Md Afsar Uddin said, the fire originated from an electric short circuit at a factory in fish market area in Puran Bazaar at around 4:00 am. It took more than an hour to bring the fire under control.

The chanachur factory belonging to Ratan Saha and a cosmetics shop of Bhola Nath were gutted in the fire.

Fire Service sources said the extent of damage will be not more than Tk 50,000. However, the owners of the two shops put it at Tk 5 lakh.

In Sylhet, a devastating fire at Maddybazar in Bianibazar poura area gutted 35 shops early yesterday, reports UNB.

Locals said the fire originated from the grocery shop of

Hossain Ahmed at about 12:45am and soon engulfed the adjoining shops.

On information, two fire fighting units from Barlekha upazila of Moulvibazar and South Surma upazila of Sylhet rushed in and put out the flame at about 3:00am with the help of local people.

Some 25 people received burn injuries while extinguishing the blaze.

The affected shop owners put the extent of loss in fire at Tk 5 crore.

A Gopalganj report adds: Six rooms of a house were gutted in a fire at Salinabakha village in Muksudpur upazila early Saturday.

Locals put out the blaze after several hours of frantic efforts.

House owner Hossain Sheikh said the fire broke out at a room from an electric short circuit at about 3:00am and soon engulfed the other rooms.

In Gazipur, a fire gutted a jhut (garment factory waste) godown and several shops at Lamapara Bazaar in Tongi Friday morning.

Locals said the fire originated from the butt of a burning cigarette at the godown and soon engulfed other establishments.

On information, firefighters rushed to the spot and doused the blaze after an hour of frantic efforts.

The extent of loss caused by the fire was estimated by the victims at Tk 10 lakh.

In Comilla, six dwelling houses were gutted in a fire at Bhangar Puskorani village in Chouddagram upazila Friday night.

Locals said the fire broke out from an electric short circuit at the house of Shamsul Haque and spread to other adjacent houses.

The victims claimed that the loss caused by the fire could go up to Tk 8 lakh.



PHOTO: STAR

Vehicles get stranded on both sides of Mohananda Bridge yesterday as transport workers block Chapainawabganj-Sonamasjid road protesting hike in toll of the bridge.

Transport workers protest raising of bridge toll

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Chapainawabganj

Traffic movement on Chapainawabganj-Sonamasjid highway was disrupted for about three hours yesterday as transport workers blocked the highway protesting rise in Mohananda Bridge toll.

Several hundred buses, trucks and other vehicles got stranded on both sides of the bridge, causing immense sufferings to the passenger and hampering smooth sup-

ply of goods.

Sources said the drivers and helpers of buses, minibuses, trucks and trolleys came to know that Roads and Highways Department has increased bridge toll from Sunday midnight when they reached toll plaza in the morning.

They became agitated and put up barricades, keeping vehicles haphazardly at Rahanpur and Borogharia points of the highway. On information, police rushed to the spots but failed to restore

communication.

Bus and truck drivers alleged that the authorities concerned increased toll without prior notice.

They withdrew barricades at around 9:30am after local administration assured them of taking necessary steps in this regard.

Deputy Assistant Engineer of Chapainawabganj Roads and Highways, Afzal Hossain said they withdrew increased toll rates of Mohananda Bridge following a request of local administration.

Orange becoming a cash crop for Thakurgaon, Panchagarh farmers

QUAMRUL ISLAM RUBAIYAT, Thakurgaon

Commercial cultivation of orange gains popularity among the farmers of Thakurgaon and Panchagarh as its cultivation proves more profitable than many other traditional crops.

Around 30 tonnes of orange have been produced in the two northern districts this season while several hundred people are also planting orange trees around their homes, local agricultural officials and farmers said.

They said at least 600 orange trees have started bearing fruits in the two districts. Around 74 hectares of land have so far been brought under orange cultivation in Thakurgaon while 104 hectares in Panchagarh, they added.

The popular fruit has the potential to become a cash crop for farmers in the districts, according to horticulturists of Orange Orchard Development Project.

While talking to This correspondent, Kanailal Barman, 45, an orange grower of Dakkhin Bathina village under Sadar upazila in Thakurgaon, said he has already sold 4,000 oranges from his orchard this season at the rate of Tk 800 per hundred.

He said taste and size of orange produced in his orchard are similar to the imported one.

Kanailal said he planted 50 orange saplings on 5.5 decimal of land in front of his house in 2002. Of them, 43 trees grew well but failed to bear fruits

even after four years, he said.

"I later went to the office of Orange Orchard Development Project and sought advice from the concerned officials. According to their advice, I have taken care of the trees. Now 22 trees bear fruits," said Kanailal.

He said many people of his village have started cultivation of orange as a cash crop after seeing his orange orchard.

An orange tree usually starts bearing fruits within 3 to 4 years. So the farmers can get fruits in a short period of time. About Tk

11,000 is needed for developing an orange orchard on a bigha of land, officials said.

Lutfar Rahaman, another orange grower of Shenihari village in Sadar upazila of Thakurgaon, said he planted some orange trees in front of his house seven years ago. Of them, a tree bears around 1,000 fruits this season and he sold those fruits at a local market at the rate of Tk 10 per piece.

The Horticulture Department, district agriculture department and Orange Orchard

Development Board have taken steps to help orange farming flourish in the two districts.

About 2,652 hectares of land in Thakurgaon and 1,450 hectares in Panchagarh are ideal for orange cultivation, officials of Orange Orchard Development Project (ODP) said.

In Thakurgaon, 3,360 people were provided with necessary training on orange cultivation while 40,000 saplings were distributed among the farmers.

In Panchagarh, ODA has provided training for 4200

people while 50,000 orange saplings have been distributed among the farmers.

Md Mizanur Rahaman, horticulture development officer of Thakurgaon ODP, said drip irrigation is needed to grow the plants properly and develop good quality of fruits.

Dr Bimol Kumar Pramanik, assistant horticulture development officer, said cold weather is good for producing good quality of orange and temperature should be between 13 and 38 degrees Celsius.

