

Editor (The Daily Star)
Mahfuz Anam
Editor (Star Weekend)
(Dilshad) Elita Karim
Staff Writers
Anika Hossain (Sub-editor)
Ananta Yusuf
Md Shahnawaz Khan Chandan
Fayeka Zabeen Siddiqua
Naziba Basher
Apurba Jahangir
Regular Contributors
Farah Ghuznavi
Sharbari Ahmed
Nadia Kabir Barb
Andrew Eagle
Staff Photographers
Prabir Das
Kazi Tahsin Agaz Apurbo
Graphics & Illustrations
Manan Morshed
Make-up
Md Saiful Islam
General Manager, Production
Selim S H Chowdhury

Published by the Editor from
Transcraft Ltd, 229, Tejgaon
Industrial Area, Dhaka on behalf
of Mediaworld Ltd., 52 Motijheel
C.A., Dhaka-1000.



PHOTO: MOHAMMAD PONIR HOSSAIN

“Alone we can do so little; together we can do so much”
– Helen Keller, author, political activist, and lecturer.

SNAPSHOT

ANIMAL WELFARE |

The word 'reptile' may evoke a reaction of disgust in most people, but in Shahriar Caesar Rahman it evokes happy, loving emotions. “Not just reptiles. Any animal evokes that emotion in me. I've always loved animals. Instead of having normal play things as a child, I used to play with the chickens that lived around my home.” Caesar always felt one with nature. There are times you would catch him leaving his humble abode to go take a nap on beds of grass instead. “People would make fun of me as a child, saying that if I'm always so involved with animals, I will never have a future.”

species. They've been carrying out this project in Lawachhara, Sylhet, Chittagong Hill Tracts, the Sundarbans and adjacent areas. The project is conducted in collaboration with CARINAM, Bangladesh and Forest department of Bangladesh. The goals of the project are to assist with effective conservation of Burmese Pythons in their native range by collecting ecological information, to raise awareness about the decline in population of Burmese Pythons and their importance among local people, to provide training in conservation research techniques, to formulate a sustainable model to mitigate python-human conflict, and to mitigate

radio frequency to help find the location of each python. This method of tracking is called Radio telemetry, and is in no way harmful for animals. “This process will help us know the lives of these snakes. The more we know about them and how they survive, the easier it will be for us to end human-python conflict. Our country is blessed with uncommon and beautiful species such as the Indian, Burmese and Reticulated pythons. They are all listed as vulnerable and are opportunistically hunted by indigenous people. Instead of killing them off, we should do everything in our power to conserve them.” says Caesar.

frequently hunted for consumption by the locals. Caesar travelled to the corners of the Hill Tracts and spent time with locals. There he found that these people did not have any intention to harm the animals, but only used them as a source of food. Caesar made them realise how much of a special species it was that we were blessed with and convinced the locals to help conserve instead of consume. With the permission of four of the village heads, he taught the locals the methods of conservation and even gave them equipment which they dutifully handled. “Even the dogs they used for hunting are now trained to save the turtles instead.”



Men who used to hunt turtles now releasing them back to the wild.
PHOTO COURTESY: ECO GUARDIAN PROGRAM



Shahriar Caesar Rahman

says Caesar. “The locals of the villages are now very supportive. They have even signed a contract to help conserve the animals. In return for their loyalty and support, I have opened up primary schools for the children of their village, but we still need some funding to make them bigger and better.”

In this day and age, individuals like Shahriar Caesar Rahman are the very few who can help restore faith in humanity. With no intention to acquire fame and money, he works relentlessly to save the lives of humans and animals alike by bridging the gap between them. From the remote corners of Bandarban, all the way in the midst of a chaotic Dhaka, brave and determined Caesar has been making a difference worth every praise. ■

MAILBOX

thestarmagazine@gmail.com

Why Must they Wait So Long?

It is a commendable initiative of the government that over one hundred thousand students of primary and junior classes receive government stipend based on their brilliant result in the PSC and JSC exams. However, the process they have to go through to get the money is very discouraging. For instance, the stipend money of the students of the academic year, July 1, 2014 to June 30, 2015, has not been paid to the students yet. In many remote areas, the students get the money two or three years after the result. Why is the government making such delays and de-motivating so many brilliant students?

*Md Ashraf Hossain
Ramna, Dhaka*

Breaking Our Own Backbone

The article titled “Breaking Our Own Backbone” (published in July 31, 2014) was very informative and well-written. It is very unfortunate that brutality against children has accelerated in Bangladesh in an appalling rate. Mob biting, torture to death, rape; these sort of heinous crimes now are being committed against children on a regular basis. Due to corruption in law enforcement agencies and lack of justice, most of the criminals are roaming freely showing no regard to law. We need drastic actions and exemplary punishment against the perpetrators.

*Arman Rashid
Mohammadpur, Dhaka*



PHOTO: KAZI TAHSIN AGAZ APURBO



PHOTO: KAZI TAHSIN AGAZ APURBO

The Zoo that is Not

I am really grateful to the Star Weekend and the writer for writing about condition of the animals in the Bangladesh National Zoo (Published in July 31, 2015). However, my point is putting wild lives in congested cages for displaying to public is simply outrageous. Less than a century ago, Europeans used to exhibit indigenous Africans and Americans in the zoos as wild animals. Now, this inhuman practice has been abolished. We should keep in mind that the practice which we consider immoral for ourselves is also harmful for other living beings. I think all the zoos should be abolished and we should replace them with safari parks or national parks.

*Sarah Farhana
Niketan, Dhaka*

The opinions expressed in these letters do not necessarily represent the views of the Star Weekend.

He completed high school and half of his college education in the United States, where he was majoring in Biology. “In the US, I realised my real thirst for adventure and nature. I started working there for animal conservation in sanctuaries. I learned a lot about what I love there.” shares Caesar.

“The reason I work mostly with reptiles is how neglected they are. The moment people think of snakes, frogs, lizards or turtles, they squirm. I want to build a bridge between humans and every kind of wildlife.”

After coming back to Bangladesh, in 2011, with the support of Oriante Society, Caesar began the Python Project with a mission to conduct research and promote conservation of reptiles in Bangladesh, with the Burmese Python as their flagship

PRESERVING SYNERGY

NAZIBA BASHER

python hunting throughout Bangladesh and beyond.

For the project, Caesar and his team members located and collected pythons and gave them different names. Each python then had a tracker surgically implanted into them, which transmits

Another project Caesar launched, the Eco-Guardian Programme, is for the rare Elongated Turtle, amongst other species, which are not only endangered in Bangladesh but are also dying out globally. These turtles are found mostly around the Chittagong Hill Tracts and are

BSRM the ultimate steel
XTREME SAFETY FOR THE NEXT GENERATION
www.bsrm.com
BSRM Xtreme
Feel safe with Xtreme inside