

Rescued palm civet released into eco-park

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Sylhet

An Asian Palm Civet, locally known as Gondhogokul, was rescued by Pradhikar of Sylhet Agricultural University on Sunday evening.

The animal, which entered the locality in search of food, was released into Tilagarh Eco Park yesterday morning.

Manjur Kader Chowdhury, president of Pradhikar, an animal rights organisation, said, "On information from architect Ripon Biswas of Bagbari, our G-rescue team rescued the wounded civet which took shelter in the architect's house on Saturday evening after the animal got injured in one of its legs."

G-rescue team members -- Abdul Majid Uzzal, Sahrul Alam and Junel Ahmed -- took the civet to the veterinary hospital of Sylhet Agricultural University for treatment.

In Sylhet, civet is called Khatash. Its scientific name is paradoxurus hermaphroditus.

It is in the list of endangered animal prepared by the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) in 2008, says Pradhikar.

Manjur said Sylhet is a natural habitat for the animal. But civet is now an endangered animal because of food scarcity and deforestation.



Foraging for food, this Asian Palm civet, locally known as Gondhogokul, strayed into Bagbari residential area in Sylhet city on Sunday afternoon. The endangered and rare animal was rescued and released at Taligarh Eco Park in Sylhet yesterday.

PHOTO: STAR

QUASEM REVIEW

SC defers hearing for a month

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Supreme Court yesterday deferred for a month the hearing of a petition filed by war criminal Mir Quasem Ali seeking review of its judgement that upheld his death penalty.

The SC fixed August 24 for holding the hearing of his petition. A four-member bench of the Appellate Division headed by Chief Justice Surendra Kumar Sinha came up with the order following a petition filed by Quasem seeking a two-month deferment on the hearing.

The apex court, however, said it would not allow any time prayer further for hearing the review petition.

On June 21, the chamber judge of the apex court fixed yesterday for starting its hearing.

During yesterday's hearing Quasem's principal lawyer Khandker Mahub Hossain told the SC that he needed at least two months' time for taking preparations for placing arguments on the review petition.

He said he also prayed for time as "his chest trembles with fear" due to the country's current situation.

The chief justice asked Khandker Mahub why his chest trembled as he is a former president of the Supreme Court Bar Association and is seen promptly speaking before the electronic media.

In reply, Khandker Mahub said his car was checked for seven to eight times on the way to the SC and he also often heard metallic sounds of arms.

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At mosque, then from prison

FROM PAGE 1

Transmitting radical thoughts to Omar at the mosque went on for more than a year from 2005 to mid 2006.

Omar decided to sacrifice his life for the "cause of Islam" as nobody was there to tell him that what he got from the man was nothing but misinterpretation of his religion.

He turned into an explosives expert of outlawed terror outfit Harkat-ul-Jihad-al Islami (Huji). He was arrested in Fatullah of Narayanganj on October 25, 2014.

Under pseudonyms, Faizul and Robi, he was in-charge of a laboratory facility at Fatullah where he was making bombs. The lab was busted with his arrest.

The Detective Branch (DB) of police at that time also arrested Huji activists Md Rafique Ahmed alias Sajid, Md Nadim Ahmed alias Sumon and Md Salahuddin Ahmed in nightlong raids in Uttara and Tikatuli areas of the capital and in Narayanganj.

It could not be confirmed whether Omar is still in jail or on bail. Contacted, Deputy Commissioner (Media) of Dhaka Metropolitan Police Masudur Rahman yesterday said, "We

had arrested him and I need some time to ascertain whether he is in the jail or on bail."

Then a postgraduate student of applied chemistry department of a private university, 25-year-old Omar told The Daily Star in November 2014 how he was radicalised.

"At the mosque, I got hooked on jihad. I became ready to sacrifice my life for the cause of Islam," Omar said in an interview on the sidelines of a press briefing where he and three other arrested Huji members were produced.

And the man who instilled the idea of jihad in Omar was none other than Huji's one of the top leaders -- Mawlana Abu Sayeed alias Dr Zafar.

Probe found that Zafar along with another Huji linchpin Mufti Abdul Hannan masterminded a number of deadly attacks like August 21 grenade assaults on an Awami League rally in 2004, and blasts at Ramna Batamul in 2001, 2001 CPB rally in the capital's Paltan and 1999 Udichi programme in Jessore.

Zafar continued brainwashing Omar at the mosque at Uttara Sector-13 until he was arrested in 2006. Zafar's confinement, however, could

not stop communications between the two. Omar used to meet his "spiritual leader" in Kashimpur jail posing as a relative.

Asked if he had any trouble meeting Zafar in jail, Omar smiled and said, "It's no big deal. You just pay the jail staff Tk 500 to Tk 1,000 and they will allow you to meet and talk to anyone for an hour."

Zafar also used to phone him from jail. Asked how Zafar got a cellphone, Omar again smiled and said the jail guards let him use their phones.

"May be it was not always for money. Some jail staff might have become interested in militant ideology getting in touch with Zafar," he said.

PLAN OF DEADLY ATTACK
After law enforcers in the wee hours of May 6, 2013 flushed out Hefajat-e-Islam members, who had been occupying the Shapla Chattar, Zafar called up and asked Omar to start work on making explosives.

Zafar also told him that Md Rafique Ahmed alias Sajid would provide him with laboratory facilities and chemicals.

Rafique, who once taught at an Uttara madrasa where Zafar was the

head teacher, did accordingly.

"I started work on bomb-making. I learned the process from YouTube," said Omar.

The cost was between Tk 1.5 lakh to Tk 2 lakh and Rafique managed it. Omar didn't know the source of the fund.

This correspondent also briefly interviewed Rafique in 2014.

Both the Huji activists disclosed how the terror outfit was preparing to launch deadly attacks.

"I was making bombs meant to be exploded at Gonojagoron Mancha," Omar said.

The Gonojagoron Mancha was a youth platform, spearheaded by bloggers and online activists, demanding the highest punishment of war criminals. Its journey began in February, 2013.

To counter the youth force, propaganda was orchestrated that the Gonojagoron organisers were all "atheists". Hefajat Islam, a Qawmi madrasa-based organisation, even took to the streets demanding capital punishment for "atheist bloggers".

"Each of the bombs was able to cause huge destruction within a radius

of six to eight metres," Omar added.

Rafique said he knows that at least four Huji members had taken one-month training on arms and explosives in Pakistan in 2013-14.

He, however, had claimed that he didn't know them by name. He also said he didn't know which organisation trained them and how the fund for the travel was managed.

Zafar had close links with Pakistan-based dreaded militant organisations like Lashkar-e-Taiba, Hizbul Mujahideen and Harkatul Mujahideen.

He also had some link with the intelligence agency of a South Asian country, said a source.

Dr Zafar, an Afghan war veteran and also an accused in the August 21 grenade attack case, had been leading his followers in Huji from jail, according to Omar.

Omar, son of a retired Air Force officer, claimed after being arrested he realised that he had taken the wrong path and that is why he was sharing all this.

He said militants never change in jail, and suggested setting up correction centres for militants like that for drug addicts.

Cops make GD filing easier

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Dhaka Metropolitan Police (DMP) yesterday introduced self-duplicating general diary (GD) registry books -- a step seen as an effort to ease public suffering in filing GDs with police stations in the city.

DMP Commissioner Asaduzzaman Mia launched and distributed the new GD registry books containing preformatted forms to 49 police stations of Dhaka at an inaugural ceremony in his office.

These preformatted forms, soon to be available free of cost at all police stations, will enable hassle-free filing of GDs by Dhaka residents, hoped the commissioner.

Each of the new GD books can register 100 GDs and each pre-printed form in the book has a self-carbonating duplicate sheet underneath.

"The majority of the people suffer during filing of GDs since there's no standard format. They even pay Tk 200 to 250 for seeking help from writers who wander around police stations," observed the DMP chief.

Hoping the initiative will help eliminate misunderstandings between the police and the people, Asaduzzaman warned of taking punitive measures if any police official deliberately hassles people when they come to police stations for filing GDs.

The commissioner also said they had long been looking for a better way so the people can file GDs without any hassle. "Since the majority of the people visit the police stations for filing GDs, the police image to the people can be improved by eliminating the hassles in filing of the GDs."

He also said that alongside filing of GDs in the new preformatted forms, handwritten or computer-composed GDs will also be accepted at police stations.

"The format will make the task of filing GDs easier and more transparent," said DMP Joint Commissioner (crime) Krishna Pada Roy while speaking at the programme.

According to DMP officials, around 400 to 500 GDs, mostly by the law enforcers, are filed every day at different police stations in the capital.

The 'Papa'

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Hemingway also said he feels like the author being that he is in the same town that he lived in for so many years.

The contest attracted 140 entrants and was held at the bar, which was a frequent hangout of Hemingway's during his Key West residency in the 1930s.

Celebrity chef Paula Deen's husband, Michael Groover of Savannah, Georgia, finished in the top five. It was Groover's sixth time participating in the contest.

Deen was seen cheering on her husband from the audience inside the bar. During the contest, spectators cheered, danced and waved signs while the contestants imitated Hemingway.

While living in a Key West Spanish colonial home, Hemingway wrote several works including *To Have and Have Not* and *For Whom the Bell Tolls*.

This year, the Hemingway Days festival began on Tuesday and ended on Sunday. Aside from the look-alike contest, it included readings, book signings, a zany 'Running of the Bulls' and a three-day marlin tournament recalling the author's devotion to the sport.

Police for fencing diplomatic zone

FROM PAGE 1

"As all of these roads have alternatives, police believe that closing these roads would not cause a problem to the Gulshan residents," the letter says.

Police also argued that a large number of youths enter the area everyday to go to commercial places and educational institutions, hotels and restaurants there. A large part of them have good reasons to carry backpacks. Police believe that terrorists can melt in the crowd to carry out any terrorist activities.

Besides, residents employ up to five people like drivers and domestic helps. Terrorists can pretend to be these service people to launch attacks. "It would be impossible to check such a large number of people on a daily basis. That's why, in the interest of the nation and to ensure security of diplomats, the diplomatic enclave must be secured," police said.

GULSHAN SOCIETY TO COOPERATE
Omar Sadat, secretary general of Gulshan Society, said they were working in cooperation with the DMP and the DNCC for the sake of security, as it is a huge national concern. He said they would also ensure that the citizens' amenities are not affected.

Asked if closure of the above-mentioned roads would create traffic congestion, he said those roads are temporarily closed, but would eventu-

ally be opened and gates would be set up.

The DNCC has already agreed in principle to set up gates at nine entry points to Gulshan and four entry points to Banani to strictly monitor the movement of people and vehicles.

The Gulshan Society will provide stickers to the vehicles regularly plying the area so that it can easily identify those vehicles. Those having no stickers can also enter the area, but will have to go through thorough checks, he said.

There will also be 10 AC buses dedicated for the diplomatic zone, Omar Sadat said, adding that all passengers will be checked before they board the buses. The authorities will fix the rickshaws that will operate in the area. The background of the rickshaw pullers and the owners will also be scrutinised.

"We are working closely with the DNCC and DMP. We won't do anything that will curtail citizens' amenities," Omar Sadat said.

RESIDENTS' MIXED REACTION
A resident of Road-90, Gulshan Avenue, expressed frustration about traffic movement when she was told about the DMP decision.

"My office is in Dhanmondi. To reach there before 8:30am, I have to start at 7:15am. If some alternative roads are closed down, then I'll have to start at 6:30am," she said.

"They [the authorities] need to plan

about controlling the traffic before making such decisions," she added.

A Gulshan North Avenue resident, who lives near the United Hospital, however, welcomed the DMP's decision to close down the road leading to Kalachandpur.

"Initially, it was a narrow alley where only rickshaws plied. But now even trucks pass through the road, creating congestion for those of us who live on Road 70 and 71 in Gulshan North," he said.

He added that residents of his neighbourhood felt quite relieved when the Kalachandpur connecting road was temporarily closed following the Holey Artisan attack.

He, however, said such a decision might create difficulties in commuting for many. "The authorities should take time and conduct feasibility studies before closing down any road permanently."

A resident of Road-69 Gulshan North Avenue said diplomatic zones are protected in most of the countries in the world. "In other countries, they are built in a separate part of the city."

"I personally think that a system should be developed to protect this diplomatic zone, but then too much protection might hamper freedom of movement of the people," he added.

All three spoke to The Daily Star on condition of anonymity.

Freeing Mir Quasem is their goal

FROM PAGE 1

Security has been tightened across the country amid fear of further attacks following the two back-to-back terror operations at Gulshan and Sholakia in the span of a week.

"We have taken extra security measures to thwart possible militant attacks. Law enforcement and intelligence agencies are already on high alert," Home Minister Asaduzzaman Khan Kamal told The Daily Star last night.

He also claimed that the July 1 and the Eid day attacks were meant to foil the ongoing war crimes trial and to create instability in the country.

Earlier at a programme in the city, the home boss said the government had all the information about the conspirators behind the Gulshan and Sholakia attacks, which he said were part of a national and international conspiracy.

"Our Bangladesh has been the victim of national and international conspiracies...the evidence we've got so far are linked to the same thread," he said.

Already, several ministers, top bureaucrats and authorities of business and educational institutions wrote to the home ministry requesting additional security, the minister said.

Earlier many embassies, foreign organisations and individuals had sought additional security.

INU UNDER FIRE
Almost all ministers came down heavily on Information Minister Hasanul Haq Inu after he expressed regret over his allegation that lawmakers were involved in corruption in Test Relief (TR) and Food For Work (FFW) programmes.

He made the allegation at a conference of Palli Karma-Sahayak Foundation (PKSF) in the capital on Sunday.

At the cabinet meeting, State Minister for Labour Mujibul Haque Chunnun sought an explanation from Inu for his remarks and most of the ministers followed suit.

Following criticisms from the PM and other ministers, Inu gave a written speech apologising for his comment.

The PM then said, "An arrow shot and words uttered cannot be taken back."

Hasina also asked Housing and Public Works Minister Mosharrar Hossain to sit with the owners of all hotels and restaurants in the diplomatic zone of Gulshan and Baridhara and to remove all illegal business installations from there.

Earlier on July 10, the cabinet committee on law and order decided to shut all unauthorised educational institutions and businesses in Gulshan area.

Inu criticises some TV channels

Says they are telecasting negative news

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Information Minister Hasanul Haq Inu yesterday told the House that some private television channels telecast negative news "taking advantage of freedom of press", affecting peace and creating chaos in several instances.

In reply to lawmakers' queries, Inu however did not mention the name of any such channels.

Termining the ruling Awami League government journalist and mass media friendly, the minister also said the present administration led by Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina believes in the freedom of press.

"The media are enjoying uninterrupted freedom under the current government. The government always expects all the media to publish and telecast positive news as this responsibility comes with the freedom pertinently."

"But some channels telecast negative news taking advantage of freedom, which hampers the peace and creates chaos," Inu said in a scripted answer.

The minister also informed the House that there was no weakness in the legal system to take steps against the channels involved in negative journalism.

He added the government has already formulated the National Broadcast Policy, 2014 to bring the broadcasting channels under a coordinated structure and build an independent and responsible broadcasting system.

Besides, the government has already drafted the proposed "broadcast law, 2016" incorporating a provision of formation of an independent broadcast commission, he said.

Inu further said the government has taken a move to formulate an online mass media policy to bring illegal and unregistered online-based TV channels, online radio, online news portals and create responsibility among them.

Inu also said 105 online TV channels, 18 online radio stations and 1,717 online news portals have applied for registration so far.