

Enjoy Your Golden Years with
SENIOR CITIZEN PUBALI DEPOSIT SCHEME (SCPDS)

- ✓ Any Bangladeshi individual aged 59 years and above can open account under this scheme.
- ✓ Attractive Interest Rate [6 months FDR rate plus 1% p.a.]

পূবালী ব্যাংক পাবলিক লিমিটেড
PUBALI BANK PLC.

Open your Account from anywhere

PI a PUBALI BANK apps

For details visit www.pubalibangla.com or contact nearest branch, sub-branch or Islamic banking window | No charges in Transactions

DON'T PANIC refrain from killing Russell's Viper

Environment, health ministries urge people

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Amid growing concerns over the recent sightings of Russell's Viper (Chandrabora) in various parts of the country, the environment and health ministries have urged people to remain calm and refrain from killing snakes.

The environment ministry have also issued a set of guidelines in this regard. **STAY CALM AND INFORMED** Health Minister Dr Samanta Lal Sen yesterday urged all not to panic over the presence of Russell's Viper snakes. At a virtual meeting with health officials, he said timely intervention can fully and quickly cure snakebite victims. He also instructed public hospitals to maintain an adequate stock of anti-venom.

"The most important task is to take snakebite victims to a doctor at the quickest possible time... timely medical intervention can fully cure snakebite victims through proper treatment, said the minister.

ECOLOGICAL IMPORTANCE

The environment ministry advised the public to avoid destroying the habitats of Russell's Viper. According to the ministry, natural predators like mongoose, monitor lizard, forest cat, eagle and crane help control the viper population. The killing of these predators has contributed to an increase in viper numbers.

Russell's Viper is protected under the Wildlife (Conservation and Security) Act, 2012, as it plays a crucial role in controlling rodent population and its venom is used to produce life-saving medicines. Killing these snakes is a punishable offense.

HABITAT AND BEHAVIOUR

Russell's Viper typically inhabits lowland grasslands, thickets, open forests, and agricultural areas, generally avoiding human settlements.

Their earth-coloured bodies make them difficult to spot, increasing the risk of accidental encounters.

These snakes are good swimmers and can spread to different regions through river currents and floods. The public is advised to be cautious, especially in flood-prone areas.

MISINFORMATION AND MISIDENTIFICATION

In several districts, fear of Russell's Viper has led to the mistaken killing of other snakes. In Chattogram, locals killed a five-foot-long Burmese python, mistaking it for a viper.

Mahmud Hossain, an officer at Chunati Wildlife Sanctuary, attributed the incident to misinformation on social media.



SAFETY GUIDELINES TO PREVENT SNAKEBITES

- ➔ Avoid tall grass and bushes
- ➔ Wear protective clothing
- ➔ Carry torch, flashlight at night
- ➔ Maintain clean surroundings
- ➔ Handle fallen debris with care
- ➔ Do not confront snakes
- ➔ If needed, call National Helpline at 333

STEPS TO TAKE AFTER SNAKEBITE

- ➔ Minimise movement
- ➔ Clean the wound
- ➔ Remove restrictive items
- ➔ Avoid harmful interventions
- ➔ Seek immediate medical help
- ➔ Stay calm, do not panic
- ➔ Antivenom is available at govt hospitals

"There is a lot of misinformation circulating on social media on Russell's Viper, which led people killing the python. Even though no such snakes [viper] are in the area, people are panicked and getting misled by Facebook posts," he added.

Shahriar Caesar Rahman, CEO of Creative Conservation Alliance, emphasised the need for proper research to confirm any increase in viper numbers. "Killing a snake is not a solution, we need to focus more on medical treatment," he added.



The Eid vacation is over. Holidaymakers have started returning to the capital after celebrating Eid-ul-Azha with their families at their hometowns. The photo was taken at Kamalapur train station yesterday. PHOTO: AMRAN HOSSAIN

Climate budget still not enough

Speakers tell event; propose 5pc pollution tax

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The allocation for the environment ministry has decreased by 2.35 percent in the upcoming budget compared to last year, if inflation is accounted for, said experts at a programme yesterday.

Despite needing 5 percent of GDP for climate issues, only 0.706 percent has been allocated for climate action, down from last year, they added.

"Climate-related funding is declining despite an increase in heatwaves, floods, and cyclones," said M Zakir Hossain Khan, founder and chief executive of Change Initiative.

He pointed out that although the proposed budget for the environment ministry is Tk 52 crore higher than the 2023-2024 fiscal year, the allocation has effectively decreased due to inflation.

At a press conference organised by CHANGE Initiative in the capital yesterday, Zakir presented findings of a research.

He said while Bangladesh aims to achieve 4,114.2 megawatts of renewable

In the 2023-2024 fiscal year, the operating budget of the environment ministry was 8.61 percent of the total budget. This has decreased to 6.78 percent in the upcoming proposed budget.

energy by 2030, the proposed 2024-2025 budget allocates only Tk 100 crore, or 3.2 percent, for this goal.

Bangladesh faces a climate financing gap of \$23.4 billion per year, which rises to around \$40 billion per year when considering the economic impact of lost working days due to disasters.

"International funding is significantly insufficient to cover this shortfall," he added.

In the 2023-2024 fiscal year, the

FLASH FLOOD IN RANGPUR Teesta water recedes but still flowing above danger level

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Dinajpur

While the water level of the Teesta river has receded significantly in the last 24 hours, it is still flowing above the danger level in Rangpur's Kaunia upazila.

As of yesterday, the river was flowing 20 centimetres above the danger level at Kaunia point. It was flowing 52cm above the danger level on Friday, according to the Water Development Board (WDB) in Rangpur.

The water level at the upazila's Dalia point has decreased significantly due to no rain, but it is very close to the danger mark.

Following torrential rains upstream, about



SEE PAGE 4 COL 2



Abul Hossain displays his specialised fishing nets, known locally as "Khepla Jaal," at a haat in Khulna. With 54 years in the trade, his handcrafted nets sell for Tk 1,200-2,000 each, depending on size and quality. The photo was taken in Dumuria upazila yesterday. PHOTO: HABIBUR RAHMAN

DHAKA, DELHI RAIL TRANSIT Trial run to begin next month

Says Indian Foreign Secretary Vinay Kwatra

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

An Indian goods train will begin its trial run through Bangladesh next month, as the two neighbouring countries have agreed to utilise each other's rail lines under rail transit facilities.

The train will travel from Gede [West Bengal] - Darshana [Bangladesh] to Chilahati [Bangladesh] - Haldibari [West Bengal] cross border interchange point, said Indian Foreign Secretary Vinay Kwatra.

Besides, a new train service would be launched between Rajshahi and Kolkata and a bus service between Chattogram and Kolkata, he said.

He was briefing media after the two countries signed and renewed 10 MoUs during Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina's two-day visit to India.

One of these MoUs was signed between Bangladesh and the Indian railways ministry for railway connectivity.

Currently, Indian trains, under the transshipment facility, carry goods and passengers up to the India-Bangladesh border. From there, Bangladesh Railway's locomotives pull the coaches into Bangladesh and drop off passengers or



Besides, a new train service would be launched between Rajshahi and Kolkata and a bus service between Chattogram and Kolkata, he said.

unload goods before taking the coaches back to the border.

Once India is allowed rail transit through Bangladesh under the new MoU, its trains will be operated from one part of India to another via Bangladesh.

"We believe that connectivity can transform geographical proximity into new economic opportunities, not just between India and Bangladesh but also for

SEE PAGE 4 COL 7