

NEWS

Dead elephant found mutilated in Rangamati forest

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Rangamati

The flesh from the legs and trunk of a 60-year-old Asian wild elephant has reportedly been removed a day after it was found dead in the Bhashannadam area of Langadu upazila in Rangamati.

The elephant died on Sunday, with the Forest Department saying it was sick and had long-standing injuries.

However, locals found the mutilated carcass yesterday morning.

Wildlife researchers have alleged negligence by the Forest Department, though officials said night conditions and heavy rain made guarding the carcass difficult.

Joyal, a member of the Elephant Response Team (ERT), told The Daily Star: "There was a storm last night. During this time, someone came at night and cut the elephant's meat. The incident may have happened around 2:00 or 3:00am."

Chittagong Hill Tracts North Forest Division Divisional Forest Officer Md Rafiquzaman Shah said the act likely took place after the animal's companion moved away.

"Since it was inside the forest, there was no one there at night," he said. "Our people are going with a veterinary

surgeon. After the postmortem, we will identify those involved and take legal action."

Jahangirnagar University zoology professor Dr MA Aziz called the incident "unthinkable", adding, "The forest department should have regularly guarded the elephant's body."

He also said, "This incident happened due to the negligence of the local forest



workers and not taking the matter seriously. As a result, a message will be sent to the people that elephant organs are very valuable, and they can be taken."

He further criticised local behaviour towards the elephant's companion, saying video footage showed people chasing it away, which was "unacceptable".

Ensure fair prices of paddy Demand Patuakhali farmers

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Patuakhali

Farmers in Kalapara upazila of Patuakhali staged a rally and procession yesterday demanding fair prices for paddy, dismantling of market syndicates, and protection of farmers' rights.

Organised by the Kalapara unit of Bangladesh Krishak Samity, the programme was held at Pakhimara Bazar in Nilganj union. Upazila unit president GM Mahbub presided over the rally, joined by local farmers and organisation leaders.

Speakers said farmers spend Tk 30-32 to produce a kilogramme of paddy but are forced to sell at Tk 16-18 due to middlemen and syndicates. They added that harvester owners, citing the fuel crisis, now charge Tk 16,000-18,000 to harvest one kani of land – about Tk 6,000 more than last year – pushing farmers into hardship.

Leaders urged the government to procure paddy directly from farmers, set up union-level centres, and break syndicates. They also demanded cancellation of canal and sluice gate leases to ease waterlogging and improve irrigation.

Man held over rape

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Nandail. Four people came forward offering help, and she agreed. Later they took her to a secluded place, raped her, and left her there.

When the woman – in tears – went to Shimultoli Bazar area in Nandail the following night, a woman from a nearby area took the victim and her child to her house and provided them food and shelter for five

days, said the OC.

On information, police rescued the woman and her child on Saturday afternoon.

Later, she was sent to Mymensingh Medical College Hospital for medical tests.

Primarily, it is suspected that the woman was gang-raped, said the OC.

Drives are on to arrest the other culprits involved in the incident, he added.

I was locked up

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there. I was kept locked in a room, where five to seven men would physically torture and rape me every day," she was heard saying.

The victim also said her husband travelled there to rescue her and bring her back, but further details of the rescue were not available.

The victim's husband said she landed in KSA on March 12. Although she was sent there on the promise of domestic work, she was initially forced to herd goats in the desert.

Unable to bear the extreme heat, she had informed him of her ordeal, prompting him to contact the travel agency.

About 10-12 days later, she was relocated to a

house. However, instead of being assigned household chores, she was brutally tortured and raped there, she alleged.

After she informed him about the abuse, the husband approached the agency again, demanding her immediate return to Bangladesh.

"The agency initially demanded Tk 1 lakh for her return ticket. After much bargaining, they agreed to Tk 53,000. My wife finally returned on April 22," he said, adding that they would file a case soon after consulting with police and lawyers.

Despite multiple attempts, Badruzzaman could not be reached over the phone for comment.

Will take action over

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More than 50 Bangladeshis employed by Kawaguchi were similarly sent back last year.

The Migrant Welfare Network (MWN), a rights group, said the workers had planned a human chain in Dhaka yesterday but were asked by ministry officials to meet the minister instead.

While a delegation met the minister, joint secretary AZM Nurul Haque and the minister's private secretary Debojit Sinha, others

staged a silent human chain outside the ministry.

MWN said the minister assured that the Bangladeshi High Commission in Malaysia and relevant Malaysian authorities would be engaged to investigate unpaid wages and the blacklisting of abused victims.

He also pledged efforts to secure compensation for affected workers and said recruitment agencies involved would be investigated.

CAAB enhances

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perspective police have sent us the latter. But after getting the letter, we have asked all the managers or executive directors or directors to strengthen the existing security mechanism of their airports," said the CAAB chairman.

Police Headquarters has alerted law enforcement agencies across the country to a potential threat of attacks on key installations.

The warning, contained in an "urgent and confidential" letter issued on April 23, called for heightened surveillance and stronger security measures nationwide.

Police Headquarters warned that these individuals may carry out attacks on "state important installations", including the National Parliament, Shahbagh intersection, and various places of worship. Police and army establishments, as well as entertainment centres, were also listed as potential targets.

Currently, there are eight active airports in Bangladesh, comprising

three international airports – Dhaka, Chattogram, and Sylhet – and five domestic airports.

In addition to CAAB's own aviation security, the Armed Police Battalion (APBn), along with members of other law enforcement agencies and intelligence organisations, are responsible for security at these airports.

Absence of MP

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Jamaat-e-Islami MP Mahbubur Rahman criticised repeated delays and poor attendance, urging accountability.

Speaker Hafiz Uddin Ahmad urged MPs to be punctual, while Chief Whip Nurul Islam Moni apologised, citing a parliamentary meeting, a state programme, and accompanying the prime minister during his visit to Jashore as reasons for the absences.

The speaker reminded members that parliamentary duties must take precedence over other programmes.

A hundred frames, everlasting

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The collection covers 10 major tragedies: the Rana Plaza collapse, the Spectrum Garments factory collapse, the Nimtoli fire, the Tazreen Fashions fire, the Sitakunda fire, the Banani FR Tower fire, the Tampaco Foils factory explosion, the Chawkbazar fire, the That's It Sportswear factory fire, and the Bailey Road Green Cozy Cottage fire.

Nabila Morshed, a student of Jagannath University, stood transfixed before a haunting image at the Rana Plaza section.

"Look at this," she said quietly. "How brutal. A young woman's anklet still hangs from her foot, with a drop of blood clinging to it. The blood on her foot almost looks like Alta

(red dye). Is a human life so cheap?"

Her words found an echo in Rajib, a fine arts student from the University of Development Alternative. Reflecting on a photograph from the FR Tower fire, he said, "I saw an image where several people were hanging, gripping each other's legs, while flames raged beside them. The desperation to survive – how powerful it is. These are our people. Because of someone's greed, because of institutional negligence, they had to leave this world."

Another photograph, from the Nimtoli fire, left numerous visitors visibly shaken. It captures a large pot of biryani, with kebabs and potatoes arranged for

– some of whom may have perished in the blaze that spread from a chemical warehouse.

According to the organisers, the exhibition aims to make visible the realities of industrial disasters, highlight the lived experiences of workers, and reinforce that a safe workplace is a fundamental right. It seeks to encourage dialogue and accountability among policymakers, factory owners, international buyers, and other stakeholders to ensure a safer, more humane, and sustainable working environment.

Ultimately, the exhibition does not just document tragedy. Rather, it demands remembrance, responsibility, and reform.

EC rejects appeal of NCP's Monira

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Masud told reporters, "Monira Sharmin's appeal has been rejected. Her nomination remains cancelled."

Following the decision, Monira said she would challenge the ruling in the High Court.

"We will go to the High Court. I don't want women's representation in parliament and their political empowerment to become uncertain due to ambiguities in the law," she said.

On BNP candidate Zeeba Amina Khan's case, EC Masud said the appeal against her nomination was not valid as the appellant was not a candidate.

Meanwhile, an appeal had been filed with the EC challenging the nomination of BNP candidate Madhabi Marma. The EC heard the matter but dismissed the appeal.

The appeal was filed

by Chandra Chakma, central joint secretary of Jatiyatabadi Chhatra Dal, who alleged that Madhabi was still serving as a member of the Bandarban Hill District Council, which she claimed disqualified her from contesting.

Denying the allegation, Madhabi said she had resigned from the council on April 20.

After the hearing, Chandra Chakma told reporters, "I was told that under the law, an appeal must be filed by an aggrieved candidate, not an individual. That's why my appeal was not accepted. We will now go to the High Court."

ACCEPT NUSRAT'S NOMINATION PAPER: HC Meanwhile, the High Court yesterday ordered the Election Commission to accept the nomination paper of Nusrat Tabassum, a leader of NCP, for the reserved women's seat in the National Parliament.

The HC also issued a rule asking the EC to explain why its refusal to accept her nomination should not be declared illegal.

The bench of Justice Ahmed Sohel and Justice Fatema Anwar issued the order and rule following a writ petition filed by Nusrat Tabassum seeking its directive on the Election Commission to accept her nomination paper.

The deadline for submitting nomination papers was 4pm on April 22. However, Nusrat submitted her paper at 4:19pm. As a result, the EC did not accept her nomination for missing the deadline, Deputy Attorney General Mahfuz Bin Yousuf told The Daily Star.

Lawyers Mohammad Hossain Lipu, Zahirul Islam Musa and Md Moniruzzaman appeared for the writ petitioner during the hearing on the petition.

Bangladesh lacks 'A-status' NHRC

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By strong scaffolding, she referred to the constitution, which bans torture, the ratification of the Convention Against Torture (CAT), and the 2013 law criminalising torture.

But what is "missing" is an NHRC that can be classified as an "A status" under the Global Alliance of National Human Rights Institutions. Bangladesh's NHRC is currently "B status", which means that its independence and autonomy are hindered.

Dr Edwards said the prevention of torture involves ensuring proper safeguards in police custody.

"Someone must know you are there; you must have access to a lawyer, medical examinations, and audio-video recordings. You must be brought before a judge speedily," she continued.

"Judges are not exempt; they have obligations not to ignore torture or send people to overcrowded prisons known for violence. We need magistrates and judges to be part of this conversation," added Dr Edwards.

She stressed the need to have independent bodies to investigate instances of custodial torture.

"Investigations have to be prompt and impartial. This means they must be at 'arm's length' from the perpetrators. Torture is a unique crime. In ordinary crimes, the state acts as the protector of the victim. In cases of torture, the state is the perpetrator. This is why we need independent bodies for investigation. To put it simply, the police should not be investigating the police," said Dr Edwards.

"There is an intimate

relationship – both political and financial – and the abuse of power. I often say that torture is at the extreme end of the abuse of power," said Dr Edwards.

She called the present a "moment of great opportunity" that will "allow for democratic renewal, institutional reform, and the building of a human rights culture embedded everywhere – from the workplace and the home to the streets and your institutions."

"This period also comes with very high expectations. From my engagement with civil society and survivors, I see these expectations growing daily. It is a moment for the government and other actors to grasp this opportunity and maintain momentum," said Dr Edwards.

Mir Ahmad Bin Quasem, lawmaker for Dhaka-14, stated that the 2025 ordinance on the NHRC granted the watchdog the power to be a "national preventive mechanism", meaning that they can visit any detention centre for inspection.

He underscored that this must be brought back. Sanjida Islam Tulee who leads Mayer Daak lamented that even after crucial evidence was obtained about commanding officers from among the security forces, they ended up leaving the country, which makes her lose hope in the current justice system.

Nid Satjipanon, the Asia-Pacific Representative for the Association for the Prevention of Torture, said in Bangladesh, good laws exist, but they don't create a

preventive effect.

"One of the drivers of why torture happens is when we have a system where we believe that we need a confession to get a case moving," he said.

Other speakers too criticised the overreliance on the confessional statements obtained under Section 164.

Lawmaker Dr Mahbul Alam, who represents Kurigram-3, said, "We have to find out why police are engaging in custodial torture. Can they operate independently, or are they given instructions to obtain evidence however they can?"

He suggested that confessions taken under Section 164 must have audio and video recordings.

Advocate Badiuzzaman Tapadar, deputy attorney general, said custodial tortures extend into judicial torture. "For example, the practice of showing a person arrested in a case minutes after they had obtained bail is an obvious example of judicial torture."

Prof Muhammad Mahbubur Rahman of the Department of Law at Dhaka University said most people are not aware of their basic rights.

"For example, it is illegal for the police's Detective Branch or the Rab to keep any detainees in their custody. There are only two locations a detainee can be kept – the police station for 24 hours, following which they have to be sent to jail. This is routinely violated," said Dr Rahman.

Supreme Court lawyer Barrister Sara Hossain and former chief of the women's affair's reform commission Shireen Huq were also panel speakers.