

ILLEGAL QUARRYING ON RAHADPUR HILL

Labourer crushed to death

POST NEWS NETWORK

Jajpur/Dharmasala/Chadheidhara, Sept 14: A labourer was crushed to death under a huge pile of stones at Quarry No-4 on Rahadpur hill under Dharmasala tehsil in Jajpur district, Saturday. The deceased was identified as Ajay Singh, 30, from Kullana area of Mayurbhanj district.

The labourer was buried under the huge heap of stones which caved in due to blasting near the quarry owned by the leaseholder Sandip Chandak. The compressor machine and pipes were also crushed under the stones along with the labourer.

The incident allegedly occurred as the leaseholder was illegally extracting stones from the nearby quarry as the tehsil officials are yet to make a demarcation of the leased quarries.

On being informed, Jenapur police IIC Subhendu Kumar Sahu and Deputy Director, Minor Minerals department Jayprakash Nayak reached the spot and launched an investigation.

Notably, newly elected MLA of Dharmasala Himanshu Sekhar Sahu had written to the Dharmasala tehsildar to complete the demarcation of the leased quarries, June 8, 2024. Three months have passed since then, but



the tehsil officials are yet to take any step on the issue.

Taking advantage of the laxity of the administration, the leaseholders are illegally ex-

tracting stones exceeding the permissible limits and also beyond the leased area on the fringes of their quarries. They are making a fast buck

from such illegal extraction of black stones and the state government is losing revenue worth crores.

This is not the first instance of accidental loss of life in and around such quarries. Earlier, several labourers have died in many of the illegal quarries.

Three labourers were crushed to death under a huge stone and soil that came rolling down the Dankari hill under Dharmasala tehsil, May 16. However, authorities are yet to take any action against the accused quarry owner even after registration of a case in Jenapur police station.

Earlier, in a case filed before Orissa High Court, it was alleged that the tehsil officials are yet to lease out more than 60 quarries under the Dharmasala tehsil. As a result, fearing satellite mapping and penalty, some leaseholders are not extracting stones from their own quarries but illegally extracting stones from the non-leased quarries on the fringes of their quarries and making a windfall gain.

Several tusher units have come up in the illegal black stone quarries but the district administration and tehsil officials are staying mum despite being aware of the wrongdoings.

Elephant calf dies during treatment in Keonjhar



POST NEWS NETWORK

Keonjhar, Sept 14: A two-year-old male elephant calf, which was under treatment for the last four days, died Saturday despite efforts adopted by Forest department to save its life.

Divisional Forest Officer, Keonjhar division Dhanraj HD said the calf died at 3.00pm and its carcass was buried in the ground after post-mortem.

According to sources, Forest department officials rescued the weak and dehydrated calf deserted from its herd, September 10.

Forest department personnel tried to unite it with the herd but could not succeed as the herd did not accept it. The sick calf was unable to eat or swallow anything.

Feeding pipe was used for the calf's food intake and rectal fluid therapy was done for three days, forest officials said.

As per the advice of doctors from Centre for Wildlife, Bhubaneswar, WTI and local VAS treatment was being given. Treatment included fluid therapy and administration of multivitamins and antibiotics. Blood report showed highly compromised liver and kidneys.

Women SHG members construct village road

POST NEWS NETWORK

Keonjhar, Sept 14: Women members of the Maa Jangla Janani Self-Help Group (SJHG) from Dumurinal village under Junga panchayat in Harichandanpur block of this district came together to construct a road, sources said Saturday.

According to information received, the village lacked a proper road from Naigaita to Dumurinal, and since the existing dirt road was not maintained, villagers were facing significant difficulties in commuting. It was not even possible to ride bicycles on the kutcha road, and during the rainy season, walking was nearly impossible due to mud.

In response, the women united and decided to improve the road by compacting soil, said the group's president Bhanumati Mahanta. The group's secretary, Purmina Mahanta, mentioned that 10 members were involved in the work.



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Willagers capture croc, hand it over to Forest dept

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Kendrapara, Sept 14: Forest personnel from Rajnagar faced the anger of villagers Saturday when they attempted to rescue an estuarine crocodile that had been tied to an electric pole by the locals.

The residents of Gajarapur village under Rajnagar block had fished the crocodile out of a pond and tied it to an electric pole. The irate locals eventually handed over the crocodile to the Forest personnel, but only after receiving assurance that measures would be taken to prevent estuarine crocodiles from straying into the human settlements from their natural habitat.



The rescued crocodile was later released into the Baunsagadi river, which is known to be crocodile-infested, by the Forest personnel.

The villagers claimed they had previously informed the Divisional Forest Officer (DFO) of the Rajnagar Mangrove (Forest) and Wildlife Division about a crocodile that had entered a villager's pond.

Although Forest personnel had attempted to rescue the reptile earlier, they were unsuccessful in capturing it.

While clearing water hyacinth and weeds from the pond to catch fish, the locals netted a 5-foot-long estuarine crocodile. They tied the reptile with a rope to an electric pole along the village road.

Forest personnel rushed to the scene after being informed, but the villagers initially refused to hand over the crocodile. The reptile was eventually handed over after the Forest personnel assured the villagers that necessary steps would be taken to prevent further crocodile incursions into their village.

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Four arrested for killing python in Mayurbhanj

POST NEWS NETWORK



Baripada, Sept 14: Forest department officials Friday arrested four individuals from Kathisiri village of Kullana section within the Deuli range under Baripada forest division in Mayurbhanj district for killing a python that had strayed into the village from the Similipal sanctuary.

The action was taken after a disturbing video went viral on social media in which the individuals were seen killing and dragging the python, which is an endangered species (Schedule I).

The arrested individuals were identified as Barihal Marandi, 30, Babula Singh, 50, Mathura Marandi, 64, and Kama Marandi, 35, from Kathisiri village in Bhanupuri panchayat under Kullana police limits.

According to information received, a 10-foot-long python was moving around in the village in search of food and attempted to attack a goat. At that moment, four people killed the python on the ground. Later, the accused denied the python's meat among themselves.

The Forest department officials arrested the accused for killing an en-

dangered species and dividing its meat.

It is learnt that people, driven by superstitions, use python meat to prepare medicines. A Uma Mahesh, Divisional Forest Officer, Baripada stated that the crime scene will be recreated Sunday concerning the python's death.

He also mentioned that the wildlife criminals involved in the act have been arrested and body parts of the python have been seized. Although killing and consuming a snake listed in Schedule I under the Wildlife Protection Act is a serious crime, it is observed that the general public in the tribal-majority Mayurbhanj district is not aware of the law.

The presence of wildlife and domesticated animals is essential for environmental balance. For this reason, extensive public awareness campaigns should be conducted, and the wildlife crime laws should be strictly enforced.

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