

Cumilla univ fined for hill cutting

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

Department of Environment (DoE) yesterday fined Cumilla University Tk 3 lakh for cutting hills, violating the law.

The fine was imposed after a hearing at DoE's office in Khulsi of port city.

Moazzom Hossain, DoE Chattogram's director, said the university authorities cut hills without environmental clearance from DoE, which is a clear violation of the Environment Conservation Act, 2015.

The amount of the fine was determined after assessing the damage caused to the environment.

In another decision, steel manufacturer GPH was fined Tk 50,000 for polluting the environment of Sitakunda upazila by releasing untreated air from its factory at Kumira area.

Additionally, few other companies were fined on various grounds, he said.



With a demand to save Shitalakshya river from pollution and illegal grabbing, a sampan (boat) rally was brought out in the river in Narayanganj yesterday. Bangladesh Mahila Parishad organised the event. Members of the parishad's Narayanganj unit also submitted a memorandum to the city mayor, deputy commissioner and superintendent of police in this regard.

PHOTO: STAR

Act now to save Karnaphuli, Halda

Speakers urge govt at Ctg workshop

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

The government must take immediate steps to save the Karnaphuli and Halda rivers from pollution and encroachment for the greater good of the country, said speakers yesterday.

They made the demand at a workshop on watershed management, organised by International Union of Conservation of Nature (IUCN) at the World Trade Centre in port city.

Watershed management is a term used to describe the process of implementing land use and water management practices to protect and improve the quality of water and other natural resources within a watershed by managing the use of those resources in a comprehensive manner.

Prof Kamal Hossen of Institute of Forestry and Environmental Science at Chattogram University said watersheds (an area or ridge of land that separates waters flowing to different rivers, basins, or seas) are degrading due to various manmade reasons.

"Over population, industrialisation, rampant hill cutting, deforestation, use of pesticides and pollution are contributing to the degradation of watershed, without which we will be devoid of water in future," he said.

Besides, large-scale deforestation is resulting in hillslides, claiming lives of many every monsoon, he said. It also contributes to siltation for which flash floods occurs in the hills, he added.

He emphasised saving the two key rivers [Karnaphuli and Halda] of Chattogram for watershed conservation.

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AL, BNP candidates submit nomination papers for CCC polls

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

Awami League nominated mayor candidate Rezaul Karim Chowdhury and BNP's candidate Shahadat Hossain submitted their nomination papers to the returning officer of Chattogram City Corporation polls yesterday.

Yesterday was the last day of submission.

AL Chattogram city unit president Mahtab Uddin Chowdhury, vice president Khorshed Alam Sujon and general secretary AJM Nasir Uddin, among others, were with Rezaul during the submission.

Rezaul told journalists that he had respect for all candidates. "The stronger the candidates will be, the competition [in the polls] will gain more momentum," he said.

Meanwhile, Shahadat was also accompanied by senior BNP leaders. Afterwards, he told journalists that the administration "was favouring the AL candidate".

"The AL candidate gets permission to hold rally anywhere, but we can't," he said.

Shahadat also demanded that the polls date be changed as many people may leave the port city, getting four consecutive days of holidays from March 26.

"If the Election Commission wants to increase voter turnout, it should change the date to March 31 instead of March 29," he said.

Four Savar cops among eight sued over 'release of arrested kidnappers'

JNU CORRESPONDENT

Eight people -- including four officers of Savar Police Station -- were sued yesterday on charges of releasing the kidnappers of publisher and editor of a monthly magazine.

Md Riaz Uddin, also a human rights activist, filed the case with the court of Dhaka's Senior Judicial Magistrate Mst Kamrun Nahar.

The accused are Savar Police Station Officer-in-Charge (OC) AFM Sayeed, Inspector Zakaria Hossain, sub-inspectors Poly and Md Enamul Haque while the alleged kidnappers are Bristy, Shudhangso Ray, Nayan Kumar and Rony.

After hearing, the magistrate took cognisance of the case.

She recorded the complainant's statement and instructed Additional Superintendent of Police (ASP) of Dhaka district to investigate the matter.

The senior judicial magistrate also asked the ASP to submit a report before the court by April 30.

According to the complaint, on February 3, one Bristy and her associates kidnapped Riaz Uddin, editor of Manabdhikar Khobor, and tortured him.

At one stage, they demanded Tk 5 lakh as ransom, and later released Riaz Uddin in Savar after not getting the money.

Following the kidnap, the man filed a complaint with Savar Police Station the same day.

SI Md Enamul Haque arrested Bristy, Nayan, Rony and an unknown woman for their involvement in kidnapping Riaz on that evening, the case statement adds.

Riaz, however, alleged that police tried to coerce him into settling the matter with the four arrestees, and that they released the kidnappers after receiving bribe from them.

Contacted, OC Sayeed said, "The matter is not true."

India pressing Myanmar for Rohingya's safe return: envoy

PORIMOL PALMA, from Cox's Bazar

India is pressing upon Myanmar for safe, secure and sustainable return of Rohingyas to Rakhine State, said Indian High Commissioner to Bangladesh Riva Ganguly yesterday.

"We are pressing upon the Myanmar government for Myanmar and Bangladesh to bilaterally solve the issue and for the safe, secure and sustainable return of Rohingya refugees," she said during a relief distribution ceremony at a refugee camp in Kutupalong, Cox's Bazar.

The Rohingya refugees were provided with 1,000 sewing machines, 100 family tents, 32 office tents and 32 search-and-rescue kits.

This is the fifth installment of relief materials for the refugees since the Rohingyas fled a brutal military crackdown in Myanmar's Rakhine State two and a half years ago.

India also helped Myanmar in building prefabricated homes so Rohingyas can have a sustainable life once they return home.

Two repatriation efforts failed as Rohingyas say the situation in Rakhine is not safe and conducive for their return, and that they do not have



Indian High Commissioner Riva Ganguly hands over a sewing machine to a Rohingya woman at a refugee camp in Kutupalong, Cox's Bazar yesterday.

PHOTO: COURTESY

a guarantee of citizenship. At the event, State Minister for Disaster Management Dr Enamur Rahman lauded India for its humanitarian assistance for the Rohingyas, but stressed that stronger Indian support is a must for speedy repatriation. India stood by Bangladesh during the Liberation War and sheltered about one crore refugees in 1971, he said, expecting that India would similarly help Bangladesh in repatriation of the Rohingyas. In response, Riva Ganguly said India has always stood by Bangladesh and will continue to do so, not only on the Rohingya issue but in the development of the country. She said India, Myanmar and Bangladesh have been working on

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Awami League and BNP mayor candidates Rezaul Karim Chowdhury (left) and Shahadat Hossain (right) submitted their nomination papers to the returning officer of Chattogram City Corporation polls yesterday. Flanked by party leaders and activists, both aspirants also spoke to locals and media afterwards.

PHOTO: RAJIB RAIHAN

Language hero Malek admitted to BSMMU

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Mymensingh

Khandakar Abdul Malek Shahidullah, a Language Movement veteran from Mymensingh, is undergoing treatment at Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujib Medical University (BSMMU).

The 85-year-old was admitted there for better treatment on Tuesday, family sources said.

Malek's right arm and leg became paralysed after he had a stroke in October last year. He has been bedridden since he had another stroke two months later, said his youngest son Khandakar Manzur Malek Sudipta.

Afterwards, the language hero was admitted to Mymensingh Medical College Hospital from where he was released 10 days later, said Sudipta.

At BSMMU, several tests have been conducted. After getting reports, a medical board will decide to start his treatment, Sudipta quoted doctors as saying.

"Following an initiative by former law minister Abdul Matin Khoshru, also presidium member of Awami League, we took him to the hospital," said Sudipta.

Suraiya Malek, wife of the Language Movement veteran, said, "The government should take the responsibility of my husband's treatment. In this regard, we appealed to them on various occasions."

Malek was only 17-year-old in 1952 when the Language Movement demanding Bangla as a state language broke out.

Malek, a ninth-grader at that time, and eight of his fellows were expelled from Cooperative High School in Jamalpur for taking part in a procession in Dewanganj.

Electrocuted SSC candidate loses battle for life at DMCH

He came in contact with overhead wire while crossing under-construction footbridge

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Savar

An SSC examinee, who was electrocuted while walking on an under-construction footbridge to cross Nabinagar-Chandra highway in Savar on February 23, succumbed to his burns at Dhaka Medical College Hospital yesterday.

Junaid Hassan, son of Gafur Hossain, was a student of Anjona Model High School in Kabirpur area.

Police and family members said around 6:30pm on the day, Junaid was crossing the highway in Baroiara area. He came in contact with a live wire, hanging low overhead. He was taken to DMCH right away with 90 percent burns. He passed away around 6am yesterday, said doctors.

Talking to The Daily Star, many locals, including students, said they are using the under-construction footbridge as there is no other way to cross the road there.

The work is going on for the last three months, they said, adding that to cross the road, they have to walk a long distance.

They alleged that live wires of Rural Electrification Board hang precariously over the footbridge and there is no protection or safety measures at the construction site. Many also said the authorities concerned should have closed access to the footbridge, or alert people of the danger.

"I lost my only son due to negligence of the construction firm and rural electrification officials," Gafur Hossain said.

Contacted, Amir Hossain, executive engineer of Manikganj Roads and Highways Division, said, "Construction work of the footbridge is not completed yet, which is why it's not opened to public."

"We are investigating if there is any negligence of constitution firm or rural electrification office," he added.

Officials of the local electrification office was issued a letter to remove the wires but they did not do so, he claimed.

Contacted, Sulaiman Hossen, deputy general manager of Rural Electrification

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