

Remains of trunks and logs bear testimony to recent tree felling on the bank of GK canal under the Water Development Board in Kushtia's Kumarkhali upazila.

TREE LOOTING ON KUSHTIA'S GK CANAL

1 held, drives on as action taken lately

Our Correspondent, Kushtia

Police yesterday arrested a man on charge of cutting government-owned trees on GK (Ganges-Kobadak) canal under the Water Development Board (WDB) in Kushtia's Kumarkhali upazila.

Earlier on Tuesday, WDB authorities filed a GD with Kumarkhali Police Station regarding the illegal tree felling and it was recorded as a case on Sunday, said Jahangir Alam, officer-incharge of the police station.

"We have arrested Sohrab Uddin of Chandpur village, an alleged tree feller. Drives are on to arrest other perpetrators," he said.

The move came against the backdrop of indiscriminate tree looting from the canal area. Fifteen years ago, various species of trees were planted on three kilometres of the canal union of the upazila and around 2000 of them matured, said sources in WDB and locals.

But tree looters recently started felling the trees and nearly half of those have already gone.

Visiting the area on Thursday, this correspondent found labourers cutting down trees with axes and saws while some others were taking away the logs. When asked, the labourers said Sohrab Uddin of Chandpur village engaged them in the work.

"I bought 30 jackfruit trees from Sohrab Uddin for Tk 10,000 to 12,000 each. Several people including timber traders also bought a good number of trees from the same person," said carpenter Zamir Uddin, who arranged cutting the trees.

As this correspondent talked to several WDB officials and locals about the matter, a few of them seeking anonymity pointed the finger at a sub

banks at Niyamatbari village under Chandpur assistant engineer and an office assistant of WDB.

"One morning around 20 days ago, I saw the two WDB officials putting red marks on trees and since then the tree felling continued. The two officials visited the spot almost every day and talked with the labourers and others involved in the dealing," said Akul Uddin Sheikh, a local.

The sub assistant engineer under question declined to talk about the matter and said, "The higher officials can comment on the issue, not me."

Piyush Krishna Kundu, executive engineer of Kushtia WDB, said, "We filed a case after knowing about the tree felling. Action will be taken against those involved."

There is no provision for cutting governmenttrees without following proper procedures, said Kushtia Deputy Commissioner

One gets life term for killing wife

Our Correspondent, Chapainawabganj

A court here yesterday sentenced a man to life term imprisonment for killing his wife in Shibganj upazila in 2017.

The lifer is Masud Rana, 50, son of Bahar Ali of Bhatotola village in the upazila.

The court also fined him Tk one lakh, in default, he is to suffer another one year in jail.

Additional District and Sessions Judge Shawkat Ali pronounced the verdict in presence of the convict.

According to the prosecution, Masud Rana strangled his wife Saima Khatun,32, following an altercation over a family feud on the night of December 30 in 2017.

The following day, the victim's mother Setara Begum filed a murder case against Masud Rana with Shibgani Police Station.

After investigation, Inspector Mahtab Ali of the police station submitted a charge sheet against Masud on March 23 in 2018.

After examining witnesses and evidences, the judge found Masud guilty and pronounced the verdict.

Patuakhali man held over burning wife to death

Our Correspondent, Patuakhali

A man was arrested yesterday in Patuakhali Sadar upazila after a case was filed earlier that day against him and five of his family members, over allegedly burning his wife to

The arrestee is Bashar Mridha, 32, son of Ismail Mridha of Tengrakhali village in the upazila.

His wife Kona Akhter, 25, daughter of Siraj Mridha, a disabled poor man from Hajikhali village in the same upazila, died from burn injuries at Dhaka Medical college hospital on Friday evening. She sustained petrol burns on March 2 at Bashar's house in Tengrakhali village.

Kona's father filed the case yesterday morning with Patuakhali Police Station.

According to the case statement and family members of the victim, Bashar and his family members tied Kona down with ropes and poured petrol on her before setting

Kona married Bashar six years ago. She was as his second marriage. Ever since, her husband and his family used to torture her for dowry.

On March 2, Bashar along with his father, Ismail Mridha, started to beat her up after his father complained that the food that she had served him during lunch earlier that day was inedible.

At one a stage, Bashar tied her hands and legs with rope and set her on fire after pouring petrol, extracted petrol from his motorcycle, on her.

When the ropes burnt out, Kona, while screaming for help, ran out of the house and jumped into a nearby pond. Her neighbours came out to rescued her from the pond and took her to Patuakhali 250-Bed General Hospital in the evening.

She was then transferred to Barishal Sher-E-Bangla Medical College Hospital and the next day, when her condition deteriorated, she was admitted to Dhaka Medical College Hospital. She passed away four days later.

Sudan women decry slow progress on rights since Bashir's fall

AFP, Khartoum

Sudanese women were at the forefront of the protests that toppled autocrat Omar al-Bashir but 11 months on, activists are disappointed at a lack of progress on women's

"Nothing has been done to meet women's demands," said Zeineb Badreddine.

An activist involved from the start of the protest movement that ended Bashir's three-decade rule last April, Badreddine was set to lead a demonstration in front of the Justice Ministry yesterday to mark International Women's Day.

Almost 30 years after being fired under Bashir for her "progressive ideas", she has also returned to teaching.

But despite the toppling of the Islamist regime, she says the new government lacks female representation.

When Prime Minister Abdalla Hamdok formed his government in September, he vowed to improve the situation for women despite the country's economic and social difficulties.

He allocated four of 17 ministerial positions to women, including the key foreign affairs portfolio. A woman was also named head of the

But the country's top authority, the joint civilian and military Sovereign Council charged with overseeing the transition to civilian rule, only has two female members out of 11.

"If women had better representation, they would have more voices to defend their cause," said Badreddine.

Under the Islamist regime, a notorious "public order" law was used to have women publicly flogged or imprisoned for "indecent" dress or for drinking alcohol, seen as "indecent and immoral acts".

Five to die FROM PAGE 14

identified the case as shocking and sent it to the Khulna Divisional Speedy Trial Tribunal.

According to the case statement, Toyon had gone missing on the afternoon of August 28

After his father filed the case, officials of Khalishpur Police Station arrested Md. Saiful Islam, who was accused in the case, by tracking his mobile phone. Upon interrogation, Saiful confessed that he and his associates had killed Toyon.

Police then recovered the body from a ditch. Later, the accused Saiful and the other accused, Kazi Murad Hossain, gave confessional statements under section 164 in the Metropolitan Magistrate Court.

Police later arrested the accused, with the exception of Zakir Hossain.

Sub-inspector Md Mizanur Rahman, the investigating officer of the case, charged seven people and submitted the charge sheet in the court on December 10 of the same year. Of the 22 witnesses mentioned in the charge sheet, 18 testified in

He gave it all up to set up a school

the humble philanthropist.

Although the school started its journey on January 1, 1997 as Abdul Khalek's High School, the official name was changed to Nalua Chandpur High School to enlist it under the government's Monthly Pay Order (MPO) scheme last year.

Sirajul, a freedom fighter and one of the initiators of the school, explained that as per government rules, a school, named after an individual, needs to have a considerable sum of money in its fund.

"We started the school with zero fund. The tea-stall owner's land was the only donation with which we started," he reminisced, adding that initially they did not have any money to even pay the teachers.

"Young men of the village taught at the school for free at that time," he

change the name to Nalua Chandpur to enlist the school for MPO.

The freedom fighter,

hoped that the government will take initiatives to change the name back to Abdul Khalek's High School to honour the nonagenarian's contribution.

Nalua Chandpur High School currently has 437 students and 10 teachers, of whom six have been MPO listed last year and four work on part-time basis, informed Md Rafiqul Islam, the head teacher of the school.

"The first batch of students of our school sat for the SSC examination in 2014. This year, 25 students are taking the public exam from our school," he

"Besides, construction of two academic buildings will begin this year under government funding," the head teacher added. YOUNG AT HEART

Two years after the school started its journey, a tragedy hit Abdul Khalek's

His wife Sakina Akhter died in Thus, they had little choice but to a road accident on her way to visit the school. Since then, the childless widower considers the institute as his

Every morning, he visits the school, wanders around its premises, talks with teachers and students and takes note on how things are running.

Ninth-grader Rubel Hossain of Nalua Chandpur school told The Daily Star, "The school's founder Abdul Khalek is like our grandfather. We feel proud for the great initiative he took.

Abdul had continued running his tea-stall, which was situated beside the school until 2014. Then his relatives and friends persuaded him to retire. He currently lives with his brother's

Loved and respected by all, Abdul does not feel like a 91-year-old. "I am just 27-year-old," he replies, whenever anyone enquires about his age. His powerful voice echoes his mental strength and determination.

Reflecting on Abdul's contribution, Moinul Islam, chairman of Barura upazila, said, "Abdul Khalek has established a milestone for us. We must learn from his philanthropic act. He has enlightened our upazila

Appointing New PM

Malaysia's palace denies allegations of 'royal coup'

REUTERS, Kuala Lumpur

Malaysia's palace yesterday denied allegations of a "royal coup" in appointing the country's prime minister after veteran leader Mahathir Mohamad resigned, saying the king used his discretionary powers prescribed in the constitution.

The palace was responding to an editorial in the UK daily Guardian this week that said Malaysia's king, Sultan Abdullah Sultan Ahmad Shah, had overturned a democratic election result by naming Muhyiddin Yassin as prime minister despite the opposite camp claiming a majority.

Muhyiddin was sworn in last Sunday as the head of a government formed with the support of a Guardian... corruption-tarnished party that was defeated in the last general election his cabinet early next week.

in 2018 by a multi-ethnic group. The palace said it went beyond

its "call of obligation" by meeting all lawmakers and the leaders of various political parties before the king arrived at his decision that Muhyiddin was the person likely to command a majority in parliament.

"It was only after this rigorous and open process of consultation, fully in accordance with the Federal Constitution, that His Majesty exercised his discretion under the Federal Constitution to appoint a new Prime Minister," the palace, Istana Negara, said in a statement.

"Hence, by no means can this process be regarded as a "royal coup" as questionably asserted by the

Muhyiddin is expected to unveil

Special aid for teachers

Senator Frank Church says that he hopes the resolution would speed up US recognition of Bangladesh. He adds that the resolution is a vehicle for expressing the widespread sympathy and understanding in the senate for US recognition of Bangladesh.

RS. 3.66 CR LOSS TO SCHOOL, COLLEGES

The nine months of occupation of the Pakistan army in Bangladesh had caused partial or total damage to 3,457 out of a total of 34,139 educational institutions in Bangladesh, involving an estimated loss of Rs.3.66 crore,

informs a spokesman of the education

BANGLADESH BIMAN RESUMES SERVICE

Bangladesh Biman resumes domestic service with six flights between Dhaka and Chittagong and Dhaka and Sylhet today. Bangladesh Biman procured two Fokker friendship aircraft from India for domestic flights, which remained suspended since last month following the Dakota Air Crash.

MEMORIAL TO FREEDOM **FIGHTERS**

The government plans to construct memorials, one near Savar

fighters and the other at Bhaberpara in Meherpur, enshrining the memory of the first declaration of the government of free Bangladesh. SOVIET HELP TO RESTORE

dedicated to the unknown freedom

PORTS OF CTG, CHALNA

Communication Minister M Mansoor Ali discloses today that a Soviet expert team will shortly come to Bangladesh to salvage the sunken vessels in its waters, particularly at the ports of Chittagong and Chalna.

SOURCES: March 10, 1972 issues of Dainik Bangla, The Daily Ittefaq, Azad, Morning News, The Bangladesh Observer and Purbodesh.

UK to deliver post-Brexit budget under virus cloud

Britain unveils its first post-Brexit budget on Wednesday and analysts expect Prime Minister Boris Johnson to press ahead with major spending on infrastructure, despite the economic fallout from the coronavirus. Finance minister Rishi Sunak,

who will present the budget after his predecessor Sajid Javid resigned unexpectedly last month, is also scheduled to outline emergency funding measures in the battle against COVID-19. Before the novel coronavirus hit

the headlines, Chancellor of the Exchequer Sunak had said the budget "will deliver" on recent government promises of "unleashing the country's potential".

However, the government has now delayed publication of its National Infrastructure Strategy -- a more long-term outlook on improving British transport connections while achieving net-zero emissions nationwide by 2050.

In the immediate term, 39-yearold Sunak's task is to carry out Johnson's goal of boosting improved productivity in cities outside London via massive infrastructure projects, such as the new high-speed railway

Javid resigned, and was replaced by his deputy Sunak, after Johnson offered to keep on the former

Australia

through this tournament," skipper Meg Lanning said. "There were definitely some tough times there but we stuck together as a group.

For India, who lost the one-day World Cup final to England at Lord's three years ago, their wait for a maiden global trophy in women's cricket will

"Today was unfortunate for us," to keep trusting ourselves."

chancellor only if he sacked all of his political advisers.

The prime minister wants greater say over Treasury policy following the Conservatives' victory in the general election in December that finally unlocked Brexit and allowed Britain to quit the European Union on January 31.

"Sunak won't sit on his hands in the budget, in the face of the meltdown in financial markets and growing concerns that the coronavirus is developing into a pandemic," said Ruth Gregory, economist at Capital Economics research group.

DB to submit

FROM PAGE 14

handed over to the DB and placed on a seven-day remand the next day. Police will bring three charges against the lone accused Majnu in the

harge sheet. "The charges include rape, attempt to murder and theft," said DC Mashiur Rahman

Regarding the evidences, DC Mashiur said the victim's statements completely matched with the profile of the accused and "the biological evidence" reserved at the One Stop Crisis Centre also matched with the accused.

International Mobile Equipment Identity (IMEI) number of the lost cell phone provided by the victim also matched with the IMEI number of the phone recovered from the accused's possession," he added.

Earlier at a press briefing, Rab said the arrestee, Majnu, is a serial rapist and he had earlier raped several female beggars and intellectually challenged women near the same

According to law enforcers, Majnu was born in Noakhali's Hatiya upazila and came to the capital about 12 years

His father died a couple of years ago and his mother lives in Noakhali, but he has recently been out of touch with his family, they said, adding that Majnu used to work as a day-labourer and mug people.

Biden, Sanders enter key phase

from erstwhile rivals Pete Buttigieg, Klobuchar and Michael Bloomberg, said he was best positioned to "unite this party," promising not to turn "this primary into a campaign of negative attacks."

"That will only re-elect Donald Trump if we go that route," he said. Meanwhile, Senator Kamala Harris endorsed Biden for the nomination

yesterday, while Sanders won the backing of civil rights leader Jesse Jackson. BERNIE FIRES UP HIS CROWD Sanders, speaking to an equally

enthusiastic crowd in Chicago,

underlined his differences with Biden,

without directly attacking him. "Joe Biden is a friend," he said. "I have known him for many years. But we have records, we have a different vision. The American people will hear about it."

With the primary now "down to two people," the progressive Vermont senator said, "it is important for the American people to understand the differences between us -- in terms of our record, in terms of our vision for the future.

Sanders is a democratic socialist who wears his uncompromising positions -- government-run health care for all, higher taxes on the wealthy and free university tuition -- proudly on his sleeve.

himself on his ability to work with Republicans. He is more middle-ofthe-road on key issues like health care, where he favors expanding existing insurance programs, and less punitive additional taxes on the wealthy. At a later rally in Flint, Michigan,

Sanders focused on the differences" he has with Biden. These include what Sanders says is Biden's support for bad trade deals that cost the United States "over four

million good paying jobs. 'I stood with the unions, the working families of this country" and voted against the trade deals, Sanders

The Vermont senator also blasted

Biden for voting in favour of the Iraq

conflict. "I led the opposition to the war in Iraq," Sanders said. Amy McDowell, 40, who was at the rally, said after South Carolina and the numerous endorsements for Biden, "I feel like we can see exactly who the

establishment is comfortable with. Can Sanders win on Tuesday in Michigan? "You know, we've got a war to fight. But I still think Bernie has the support of his people," she said. In addition to Michigan -- the

biggest prize -- and Missouri, Idaho, Mississippi, North Dakota, and Washington state hold Democratic primaries on Tuesday. Illinois, where Sanders first spoke,

Biden is a centrist who prides does not hold its primary until March 17, two days after the next Democratic debate, to be held in Phoenix, Arizona.

Hawaii congresswoman Gabbard is still on Democratic ballots, but trails so badly that she has not qualified for the debate.

That would leave Sanders and Biden in their first head-to-head encounter of the long campaign season

Stanford Univ shifts classes online amid virus fears

AFP, Los Angeles

Stanford University has informed students that beginning today, classes will be held online for the remainder of the winter quarter because of the growing spread of the new The prestigious school located

in northern California made the

announcement Friday evening, saying

that it expects "confirmed cases of

COVID-19 will continue to grow in our region and perhaps in our university community.' It said large group events at the school that has some 16,500 students will also be cancelled or adjusted.

said Harmanpreet Kaur. "I still have a lot of faith in my team ... We just need

We've had everything thrown at us