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## RANGUNIA FOREST

# Plundered by illegal loggers



MOSTAFA YOUSUF, Chattogram

People living near Chiria Reserve Forest are sometimes woken up at night by the sound of trespassers felling trees on the hills.

But the sound does not seem to be heard by the officials who are supposed to protect the hill forests in Rangunia upazila of Chattogram.

"During the Eid holidays earlier this month, I woke up one night and went up a hill to see what was going on. But the thieves chased me away when they saw me," said a 56-year-old man, who requested not to be named, fearing attacks by what he said were organised gangs.

The illegal logging he talked about took place just about a hundred yards away from Rangunia Range Office in Sharaf Bhata union under Chattogram South Forest Department.

During a recent visit, this correspondent saw six new stumps of teak

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PHOTO: REUTERS

## RUTHLESS BAYERN CROWNED EUROPE'S KINGS

Bayern Munich made Champions League history by winning the final 1-0, courtesy of Kingsley Coman's 59th-minute strike, against Paris Saint-Germain at the Estadio da Luz in Lisbon yesterday. The Bavarians became the only team to lift European club football's elite trophy without losing or drawing a single match in the competition. The German outfit kept the world's most expensive attack at bay, stopping them from scoring for the first time in 35 Champions League matches.

## Govt moves to normalise bus service

TUHIN SHUBHRA ADHIKARY

Although the number of new infections and deaths from Covid-19 are still on the rise, authorities concerned have undertaken moves to normalise operations of public transport.

Bangladesh Road Transport Authority (BRTA) has already written to the road transport and bridges ministry to take necessary steps regarding transport owners' proposal to operate buses at full capacity at previous fares.

The ministry will now forward the proposal to the cabinet division. As per a circular of the division issued on August 3, public transport would continue to operate on a limited scale till August 31, so an approval from the division would be required for normal operations of public transport, officials said.

The move came as bus owners last week wrote to the ministry and BRTA to allow them to operate their vehicles at full capacity at

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## Zia 'involved in Bangabandhu killing': PM

UNB, Dhaka

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina yesterday renewed her allegations that Khaleda Zia was involved in the August 21, 2004, grenade attack as her husband Ziaur Rahman was behind the August 15, 1975 killings.

"Ziaur Rahman was involved in the killings of the Father of the Nation, four national leaders...he killed army personnel through coups one after another. Khaleda Zia just did the same thing after coming to power," she said.

The Prime Minister said this as she joined a discussion virtually from her official residence Ganobhaban.

Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman Birth Centenary Celebration National Implementation

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## Return of normalcy their only hope

78,043 expatriates come home since April as pandemic keeps ravaging livelihoods

JAMIL MAHMUD

At least 78,043 Bangladeshi workers returned home from 26 countries since April amid the economic fallout of the coronavirus pandemic, according to statistics of the expatriates' welfare ministry.

Of them, 44,695 returned from nine countries, including the United Arab Emirates, Qatar, Malaysia, the Maldives and Iraq, as they either lost their jobs or there was no prospect of getting work.

Many of them were sent back by their employers who promised to rehire them once normalcy returns, said the ministry which shared the data with the media yesterday.

It was prepared based on information collected from the returnees between April 1 and August 22 by the Expatriates' Welfare Desk that the ministry set up at Hazrat Shahjalal International Airport. The returnees include 4,732 female workers.

The highest number of workers -- 25,653 -- returned from the UAE followed by 15,389 from Saudi Arabia.

Most of the returnees from the UAE mentioned that they were sent back by their employers or companies that promised to hire them again once the situation becomes normal. The others said they came back on vacation.

On the other hand, the majority of the returnees from Saudi Arabia came back with "out-pass" after serving jail terms for various offences, the ministry said.

Besides, 7,329 migrant workers came back from Kuwait. Most of them returned under a general amnesty programme after they became undocumented, it added.

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## Mother, son, daughters beaten up, humiliated

Local union chairman allegedly pulled the strings

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Cox's Bazar

Five people, including three women, have been tortured in broad daylight following a "cattle theft" incident at Harbang union in Cox's Bazar's Chakoria.

The five, including four of a family, were paraded through villages after their hands and waists were tied by ropes on Friday.

A mother, her son and two daughters are among them.

The incident was orchestrated following alleged instructions of Harbang Union Parishad Chairman Miranur Islam.

Miranur, also the Awami League president of the union, himself allegedly beat them up.

After torturing them at the union parishad, the five were handed over to Harbang police outpost.

Video footage and some images of Friday's incident went viral on social media on Saturday night, creating a huge outcry across the country.

Locals caught the five in Lalbridge area from a CNG-run auto-rickshaw around

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## Pradeep made fortune, wife washed dirt off it

Finds ACC probe into their illegal wealth

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

When he was the officer-in-charge of Teknaf Police Station, Pradeep Kumar Das used to make money from bribes and corruption.

His wife Chumki Karan, under the disguise of businesses, had been legalising the ill-gotten property of her husband who is accused in ex-major Sinha Rashed Md Khan killing case.

Their misdeeds came to the fore through an enquiry into their wealth by the Anti-Corruption Commission (ACC).

In the enquiry, the ACC found that Chumki amassed Tk 3.95 crore of wealth from her husband's "illegal income".

ACC Assistant Director Riaz Uddin yesterday filed a case against Chumki and Pradeep with the ACC's Chattogram office.

The commission had begun the enquiry in 2018. Chumki and Pradeep were asked to submit wealth statements on April 9, 2019. She submitted the statement on May 12, 2019.

Asked why they are filing the case over a year later, Riaz said for the sake of proper enquiry they had to examine all necessary documents.

Pradeep was withdrawn on August 5 from Teknaf Police Station after he was sued for killing the former major. He surrendered before a Cox's Bazar court on August 6.

The Daily Star obtained a copy of the complaint filed against his wife Chumki.

According to the case statement, Chumki showed that her father had given her a six-storey building in Patharghata area of Chattogram on August 1, 2013.

Chumki has two brothers who did not get any "mentionable" property from her father, finds the ACC.

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Monorom Polok, son of jailed photojournalist Shafiqul Islam Kajol, holding the symbolic bars of a jail cell in front of the Central Shaheed Minar yesterday demanding Kajol's release.

## Ailing Kajol stuck in jail hospital

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Not knowing how ill is his father and whether or not he is receiving proper medical care are now Monorom Polok's biggest fears.

In the second week of August, he had spoken to his father, photojournalist Shafiqul Islam Kajol, on the telephone and learned that his father's left arm was becoming paralysed, that he was vomiting frequently and at times he was vomiting blood.

On August 10, his lawyer petitioned Dhaka Chief Metropolitan Magistrate (CMM) court to transfer Kajol to Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujib Medical College University (BSMMU) for a checkup and treatment.

Metropolitan magistrate Rajesh Chowdhury heard the prayer and instructed the jail authorities to provide Kajol treatment according to the Jail Code, reports our court correspondent.

The court did not specify

PHOTO: PRABIR DAS

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**Rejoinder from JHM-International Ltd.**

On August 19, 2020 a national daily newspaper of Bangladesh published a report with headline "JHM Group Involved in 'Illegal cash transaction' in India. JHM International's top management has however noticed the news. The news published is misleading, misrepresented with fabricated information leading to hampering reputation of our organization.

I, Md. Mehedi Hasan Biplob (Deputy Managing Director) of the company, do hereby clarify the modus operandi of our organization, JHM International Ltd. is a 100% FDI company and is practicing fair business in Bangladesh complying all the laid down business rules and regulation of Bangladesh Government, we import high quality coal and aggregate from different parts of the world and is supplying the same to different Public and Private sector clients. To the best of my knowledge JHM International has never defaulted in paying duties and taxes to Bangladesh Government.

Apart from business activities JHM International is patronizing various social activities as a part of their CSR program. JHM International has also played an instrumental role by supplying food and other sanitizing commodities in different parts of Bangladesh to fight Pandemic of COVID-19.

It was also stated in the news that JHM Group is blacklisted in India, which is completely baseless, imaginary and fallacious. I as the Deputy Managing Director of the company strongly condemn and protest publishing such a derogatory, defamatory image tarnishing news against any of our organization. If this is not ceased at once it will amplify a wrong message to other foreign investors which will discourage all the initiatives of the present benevolent government in building a prosperous country.

Md. Mehedi Hasan Biplob  
Deputy Managing Director  
JHM-International Limited.