

# Forest Deptt's crazy idea of afforestation in Panchagarh!

## Harmful eucalyptus planted on 9,000 acres of land

UNB, Panchagarh

Despite concern by the environmentalists, Forest Department has planted eucalyptus on some 9,000 acres of private land which remained under its "illegal occupation" for the last 38 years in Panchagarh.

President of Panchagarh Unnayan Parishad M Delwar Hossain said the department acquired the land for 100 years well before the country's independence without paying compensation to the landowners.

He said, "the land acquisition was not legal because it was not done through Land Ministry and the government can use any land only after paying proper compensation to its owners."

A number of landowners, he said, had filed a case with the district magistrate court in 1969 to get back their lands and the court announced the acquisition illegal.

"But the lands could not be returned to the owners due to political situation at the time. And even after the country's independence, no government could take any initiative in this regard," he said.

As the lands left uncultivated for long, the Forest Department has planted

eucalyptus although its plantation these days is discouraged due to its harmful effects.

However, the present government was learnt to have directed the Deputy Commissioner of the district to submit a report on whether the government would return 6,300 acres of land out of 9,000 acres to the landowners or declare the area as a permanent forest.

But the landowners said that there was no reserve forest there to announce it as a permanent forest and all the trees are now there planted by the Forest Department.

Meanwhile, the landowners brought out a procession here and after holding a rally in the Town Hall demanding return of their lands, including compensation for 38 years.

In a new development, a number of companies have set up tea gardens in the district, prompting the Tea Board to take an initiative for setting up an office here.

Considering the prospect of tea farming here, the Tea Board has also decided to provide long-term loans to the tea growers, a step hailed by the locals.

# RU Officers' Assoc polls held

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Rajshahi

Pro BNP and Jamaat-e-Islami Talukder-Kalam panel bagged 12 out of 19 posts in the biennial election of Rajshahi University Officers' Association (RUOA) held recently on the university campus.

Pro ruling Awami League and left parties Mostofa-Golam panel got the rest seven posts including Treasurer and Joint Secretary.

The successful candidates from the Talukder-Kalam Panel are President- Md Abdul Latif Talukder; Vice President- Md Mainul Ahsan; General Secretary Abul Kalam Azad; Office Secretary- Intaz Ali;

Literary and Cultural Secretary- Rebeka Aktar; Social Welfare Secretary- GM Mostofa Khan; organising secretary Md Sultan Ali; and Members- Abdur Rahim Dewan, Abdus Salam, Azhar Ali, Abdur Razzaque and Abdul Bari (2).

On the other hand, the successful candidates from the Mostofa-Golam panel are Treasurer- Khowazuddin; Joint Secretary- Sakabbar Hossain; Publicity Secretary- AKM Abdul Hy; and Members- Dr Mirza Wahed Hossain Baig, AZM Monzur Rahman Zafar, Borzahanul Islam and Jamal Ali.

493 out of 600 voters cast their votes in the election.

# Tk 64 lakh road dev project in Rajshahi

UNB, Rajshahi

A scheme has been taken up to construct eight roads in Putia upazila in Rajshahi district at a cost of Tk 64 lakh.

State Minister for Fisheries and Livestock Prof Abdul Quddus on Sunday inaugurated works of these roads which is being constructed under supervision of Local Government and Engineering Department (LGED).

These roads are: Jhalmolia-

Mollapara road, Noapara Bazar-Bhalukgachi road, Shibpur-Chhatragacha road, Pollapukur-Nandanpara road, Noapara-Singhat road, Biraladaha-Noapara Bazar road, Beelpukuria-Zamirahat road and a road on the western side of Banesar College.

Apart from this, another eight projects have been taken up involving Tk 1.8 crore to construct some more roads in the same upazila. Works on these roads will begin soon, officials said.

# Shortage of English teachers in Faridpur

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Faridpur

Shortage of English teachers has been prevailing in the district, hampering teaching of English at secondary schools, colleges and madrasahs.

Over 75 per cent non government high schools, colleges and 84 per cent senior madrasahs do not have required number of English teachers.

According to existing rules, one lecturer in English is at least required for a senior madrasah, two for an intermediate college and three or more for a degree level college.

But 95 per cent senior madrasahs and over 75 per cent non government colleges of the district do not abide by the rules owing to non availability of qualified English teachers.

Besides, the educational institution which are not financially solvent, cannot afford teachers with requisite qualification.

In most cases, the madrasah authorities have to appoint part time lecturer in English as they reportedly do not receive a single application even after advertisement in the national dailies. Thus the madrasah students are being deprived of full time teaching by the English teachers.

Moreover, in some cases the applicants do not appear before the interview board even after submitting application and receiving interview cards for the post of lecturer in English..

Students are being forced to attend private English coaching centres which is too expensive and cannot be afforded by the poor guardians.

# A break from monotonous life



PHOTO: AKHTERUZZAMAN BABLU

Though Sirajganj was turned into a district town from a sub-division a few years ago, there are no adequate recreational facilities for the town dwellers. Most of the time the people in and around Sirajganj have to remain busy in a grim battle for survival. Because the area is an erosion prone area. Winter is the harvesting season for the peasants living around the town. During this period they possess sufficient money which they earn by selling newly harvested paddy. Previously in the winter season parties of folk music including the traditional parties of Jari/ Sari, Baul songs and Jatra were arranged for the rural people here. But now those days are gone. The struggling people crave for recreation. They want to take a break from their monotonous life. Eminent singers like Abbas Uddin, Abdul Alim, Abdul Jabbar, Abdul Hadi and Shyam Sundar were their favourite singers during the old days. Band stars James, Ayub Bachchu and others have captured their places now. Recently the people here got an opportunity to enjoy an attractive musical programme on the campus of Sirajganj Government University College. The occasion was the installation ceremony of the college students union where Home Minister Mohammad Nasim was present as the chief guest and Durga Das Bhattacharya, Vice Chancellor of the National University was the special guest. James stole the show by enthraling thousands of people who came from all around Sirajganj. James is seen (left) enthraling the audience, (top right) youngsters enjoying themselves climbing on a mango tree and on-duty policeman (bottom right) trying to calm down the crazy audience.

# NEWS SNAPS

## 15 homemade bombs recovered

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Sirajganj

Fifteen homemade bombs were recovered from the house of a Jatiotabadi Chhatra Dal (JCD) activist Jewel in Hossainpur area of Sirajganj town on Thursday. Following recovery of the bombs, police arrested his mother Sahera Khatun, because they did not find Jewel and his father after raiding the house of Jewel, son of Jobayed.

Police also recovered a photograph of JCD district general secretary Rashedul Hasan Ranjan from the same house. Police suspected that the bombs were supposed to be used on the members of the law enforcing agencies and anti-hartal political party activists during hartal hours.

## Body recovered

UNB, Munshiganj

Police recovered the body of an unidentified young man from Dhaleswari river near Taltala of Sirajdikhan upazila under Munshiganj district Monday. Police suspect that the man aged about 25 years was killed by miscreants and dumped into the river.

The body with several injury marks on the head was sent to Narayanganj morgue for autopsy. A UD case was filed with Sirajdikhan.

## 25 woodcutters abducted

UNB, Bagerhat

Pirates abducted 25 poor woodcutters from Ambaria area of Swarankhola range in the Sundarbans under Bagerhat district on Sunday and demanded a ransom of Tk 50,000 for their release. The kidnappers, however, released five of the woodcutters on Tuesday to collect the ransom and threatened to kill the remaining 20 fellowmen if their demand was not met soon.

They told local journalists that members of notorious Bablu Bahini abducted 25 woodcutters when they entered into the Sundarbans for cutting woods on the day, and confined them in their den in the deep forest. According to police records, some 388 woodcutters were abducted from the area since January 10 till date. Meanwhile, police rescued 314 of the woodcutters while 19 were released after payment of ransoms in last three weeks.

## Passerby sustains bullet injury

UNB, Madaripur

A passerby sustained bullet injury during an exchange of gunshots between two groups at Tekerhat in Rajoir upazila under Madaripur district Sunday. Police said the battle took place between the supporters of two brothers Mujibur and Liakot over the construction of a shop on disputed land.

The victim, Ghani Boyati, 55, hailing from Shankardi village in the same upazila is now undergoing treatment at Upazila Health Complex. Police later arrested five people from the spot in connection with the gunfight. A case was filed with Rajoir thana.

## Absconding convict arrested

UNB, Rajbari

An absconding convict was arrested from a house at Memnagar area in Sadar upazila under Rajbari district on Friday.

On information, police arrested Tapan Kumar Bagdi, 28, of Raghunathpur village in the upazila, after raiding one of his relatives' houses at midnight. Police said he was wanted in connection with several criminal cases adding that he was sentenced to 20 years rigorous imprisonment in an arms case last year in absentia.