

CG urged to stop housing project at reserve forest

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Environmentalists at a press conference yesterday urged the caretaker government (CG) to take immediate steps to stop illegal construction of housing facilities for government officials at the reserve forest area in tourist town Cox's Bazar.

A vested quarter of government officials has already grabbed 51 acres of reserved forest and started cutting the hills in the area, said Fazlul Kader Chowdhury, convener of Cox's Bazar Bachao Andolon (Campaign for Saving Cox's Bazar).

As there is legal barrier in the

use of any land of reserved forest, the officials are constructing the structures in the pretext of 'leasing' the land, he said, adding that there is no provision for leasing out any forestland.

In a bid to stop destruction of forestland, environmentalist working at Cox's Bazar filed writ petitions in the High Court (HC) against the officials concerned as the local police was unwilling to file case against the top ranking government officials.

The illegal construction was temporarily stopped due to a stay order of HC, Chowdhury said.

But as the civil rights are now postponed due to state of emer-

gency, the vested quarter has got a free hand to continue their construction, he added.

In view of the importance of reserved forest for the area, the government in 1995 termed it 'ecological critical area', but the local administration did not take any measure in this regard, said Chowdhury.

Sharmina Reshmin, Muazzem Hossain Shakil, Saiful Islam Chowdhury, Mahidul Haque Khan, Syeda Rezwana Hasan, Aminur Rasul Babul and Abul Kashem also spoke at the press conference organised by Cox's Bazar Bachao Andolon at Dhaka Reporters' Unity auditorium in the city.

Three shot in city

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Three people received bullet wounds when criminals fired indiscriminately in Free School Street area at Hatirpool in the city last night.

Two of the wounded--Ripon Hossain, 30, and Abul Kashem, 40 -- were rushed to Dhaka Medical College Hospital while the other victim, Sirajul Islam, 35, was admitted to a local clinic. They received bullets in different parts of their bodies.

Witnesses said a gang of four criminals riding in two motorcycles arrived in Pukurpar area at around 9:30pm and asked around to know the whereabouts of a manpower agent, Shahabuddin. But none of the locals asked could give the answer.

The outraged youths then sprayed bullets indiscriminately before leaving the scene.

Traffic sergeant detained in Ctg for taking bribe

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

The joint forces detained a traffic sergeant on charge of taking bribes from a bus driver at Olonkar intersection in the port city's Pahartali area yesterday.

Witnesses said the members of the joint forces caught Md Saifullah red-handed at around 12:30pm while he was taking Tk 300 from the bus driver. The bus had pulled in there to allow some passengers to get off the vehicle.

The accused cop was later handed over to Deputy Commissioner (traffic) of Chittagong Metropolitan Police (CMP) Abu Sufian for legal and departmental action, sources said.

11 bombs recovered at Rangpur village

UNB, Rangpur

Police recovered 11 bombs from a village in Pirgachha upazila of the district yesterday.

Police sources said a couple masquerading as husband and wife came to the house of rickshaw-puller Shahadul at Shafiqsundar village on Friday night and wanted to pass the night there.

As Abdur Rahim, son of Shahadul, refused their plea, the couple left the house tactfully keeping a suitcase in the house.

Rahim found a black suitcase in a room of the house yesterday morning and informed it to the local union parishad (UP) chairman. Later, the chairman informed it to police.

Police rushed to Shahadul's house and recovered 11 bombs from the suitcase.

A case has been filed in this connection.



Chief Adviser to the caretaker government Fakhruddin Ahmed presides over a meeting of the Council of Advisers at his office in the city yesterday.

PHOTO: PID

Use haors' potential for agri dev

Speakers tell seminar

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The economy could be further developed through a more effective utilisation of the country's haors, said speakers at a seminar on the role of civil society and the media to develop haor regions.

Speakers at the seminar said lack of proper management and implementation of haor development policy is preventing effective utilisation of the resources hidden away in the haor regions.

They said it is impossible to imagine the extent of the haors' riches while sitting in cities.

Veteran journalist Zaglul Ahmed Chowdhury urged to use the haors' potential for agricultural land.

The seminar was organised by Nagorik Sanghati at the National Press Club in the city in association with ActionAid, Bangladesh.

Speaking as keynote speaker,

Mostafa Zabbar said national policy makers have hitherto neglected any serious discussion on developing haor regions' resources even though use of its resources would benefit the whole nation as well as poor inhabitants of haors.

Other speakers pointed out continued drawbacks of the tradition of leasing out land, and also potential benefits from agribased development, and improving the haors' munga and unemployment problem.

The seminar was presided by Nagorik Sanghati President ASM Atikur Rahman, and addressed among others by President of Bangladesh Economic Association Quazi Kholiquzzaman Ahmed, journalists Hasan Shahriar and Pir Habibur Rahman, former secretaries Mahmudul Hasan and MA Mannan, Haor Development Board's Director General Enamul Haq, and ActionAid's R Mosabber Hossain.

12 die in China road accident

AFP, Beijing

At least 12 people were killed in a road accident in southern China yesterday, the first major traffic mishap during the nation's ongoing Spring Festival transport period, state press said.

The accident occurred in southern Guangxi province earlier Saturday morning involving a bus registered in southwestern China's Sichuan province, the China News Service reported.

Up to 20 people were on the bus with many passengers seriously injured, it said.



PHOTO: STAR

Roads & Highways Department, as part of its ongoing drive, bulldozes illegal structures at Maubon Market in South Shurma area in Sylhet city yesterday.

SI suspended in Satkhira for taking bribe

UNB, Satkhira

A sub-inspector of Shyamnagar police station here was suspended yesterday for reportedly taking bribe from a drug trader.

Police sources said SI Anis on Tuesday called drug peddler Arshad Ali of Ismailpur village in his police station and demanded Tk 10,000 from him to avoid arrest.

Later, Arshad's son Zahur got his father released after meeting Anis' demand.

But Zahur brought the matter to the notice of Police Super of the district Abdullah Hel Baki who took action against Anis after investigation.