

3,600 acres govt forestland recovered in Tangail

MIRZA SHAKIL, Tangail

The Forest Department has recovered about 3, 600 acres of grabbed forestlands in Madhupur and Dhanbari upazilas in Tangail district since it launched a drive on February 15.

The drive to recover forestlands was ordered by higher authorities, Tangail forest officials and local administration said yesterday.

The lands were recovered by destroying banana and pineapple plantations.

At least 20,000 acres of forestland out of 45,000 acres in Madhupur reserve forest remained grabbed for long. A large number of outsiders grabbed the forestlands and raised banana and pineapple orchards on those, they added.

Forest and Environment Adviser

of the Caretaker Government Dr Chowdhury Sazzadul Karim at a view exchange meeting at Madhupur on March 8 advised the district and upazila administrations and high officials of Forest Department to recover grabbed lands, recreate 'shal' and 'gajari' forests on those and monitor activities of sawmills near reserve forests.

Among others, Chief Forest Conservator Mohammad Osman Gani, Assistant Chief Forest Conservator Ali Kabir Haidar and Divisional Forest Officer (DFO) in Tangail Abdullah-al-Mamun attended at the meeting.

The adviser also formed a 13-member committee headed by Madhupur Upazila Nirbahi Officer (UNO) Dr MA Parvez Rahim and ordered him to submit a report within 15 days.

Banana is grown on about 11,000 acres of hill lands in Madhupur and Dhanbari upazilas, which involve about 4,500 families, most of them outsiders, it was gathered from different sources.

They said about 200 commercial banana farmers in Madhupur and Dhanbari upazilas will lose about Tk 100 crore due to the drive as their plantations have been destroyed.

Recently, a team of farmers from the two upazilas met the local administrations and forest officials and requested them to delay the eviction till harvest. As per a decision at the meetings, the farmers agreed to destroy orchards after plucking fruits, sources said.

Most of the farmers cultivated banana by taking loan from banks and NGOs.

When contacted, Madhupur UNO Dr MA Parvez Rahim said the

drive to recover grabbed government land would continue.

"We advised banana farmers to destroy their orchards on grabbed forestlands after plucking fruits," the UNO said.

On the other hand, the authorities have already sealed over one hundred illegal sawmills adjacent to forests in Madhupur, Dhanbari, Ghatail, Mirzapur and Sakhipur upazilas in the district.

Divisional Forest Officer (DFO) Abdullah-al-Mamun said programmes will be taken up to recreate 'shal' and 'gajari' forests on the recovered forestlands.

There are about 1, 22,876 acres of reserve forests in five upazilas of Tangail district—45,565 acres in Madhupur and Dhanbari upazilas, 47,220 in Sakhipur, 21,855 in Ghatail, 7, 576 in Mirzapur and 659 acres in Kalihati upazila.

Khulna police asked to review journo Harun murder case

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Khulna

LGRD Advisor Anwarul Iqbal yesterday asked the Khulna Metropolitan Police Commissioner to review journalist Harun murder case to detect if chargesheeted accused were acquitted by the court due to weak investigation.

Proper step must be taken against weak investigation, he said while exchanging views with local journalists at Khulna Press Club.

He said media men extended their support to him when he was KMP commissioner eight years ago. "Without support of Khulna journalists it would not have been possible for me to arrest notorious terrorists including Ershad Shikder", he said.

Anwarul Iqbal said development of south-western region of the country is needed to offset rise of underground parties.

Presided over by press club president Makkul Hossain Mintu, the meeting was addressed by president of Khulna Divisional Press Club Federation and Editor of local Dainik Purbanchal Liaquat Ali, Editor of Daily Tribune Begum Ferdousi Ali and Khulna Press Club secretary Mahammad Shihab Ali.

Earlier, the advisor inaugurated Nagar Bhaban, the newly constructed building of Khulna City Corporation and exchanged views with ward commissioners.

X-ray centre closed in Barisal

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Barisal

A mobile court yesterday realised Tk 3.15 lakh fine from five diagnostic laboratories and closed an X-ray center in Barisal.

Shuva Diagnostic Lab and Sheba Clinic were fined Tk one lakh each for running those with unskilled people and other irregularities.

Other fined are Medinet Diagnostic Center, Lab Star Diagnostic Center and Zonaki X-ray and Pathology Center. The mobile court closed Barisal X-ray for operating in unhygienic condition.



PHOTO: FOCUS BANGLA

Physically challenged teenagers brought out a procession in Chittagong city yesterday marking observance of National Disability Day.

Protest against admission of fake students at RU

RU CORRESPONDENT

Several hundred students of Social Work Department of Rajshahi University yesterday staged a demonstration on the campus protesting admission of eight fake students in the department.

The eight fake students were admitted to first year honours course in 2006-07 academic session though they did not qualify in test, the students alleged.

The students boycotted classes besieged the administrative building, where they were locked in an altercation with the Proctor and the Student Advisor. Police chased them away, campus sources said.

At a brief rally there the students alleged that a clerk in the department was behind admission of the fake students and demanded his punishment.

The claimed that the clerk realised Tk 1.69 lakh for admission of the fake students.

Chairman of the department Prof Fakhru Islam later told newsmen that the clerk confessed the wrongdoing and that some students of the department were also involved in it.

The academic committee of the departmental at a meeting on Tuesday decided to take punitive action against the eight fake students.

Talking to newsmen yesterday department chairman Prof. Fakhru

Islam said, on March 25, he received a telephone call that several fake students were admitted to the department in exchange of money.

"I investigated the matter and found the allegation correct. I also identified the clerk behind it".

The culprits did the mischief by replacing photos and certificates of genuine students who qualified in the admission test with those of fake students, Prof. Fakhru Islam said.

Admission of the eight fake students will be cancelled and genuine students will be taken in, he said.

8 UP members held for selling govt rice

A CORRESPONDENT, Chandpur

Joint forces arrested eight Union Parishad members including a woman member in Haimchar upazila yesterday for misappropriating eight tonnes of government rice allocated by the UNO for TR projects, police said.

The UP members allegedly sold the rice to a rice mill at Baghdi road on Tuesday.

Following a complaint, joint forces detected the irregularity Tuesday night.

All the arrested persons were sent to Chandpur Sadar thana yesterday evening. They are Ahmadullah, Ismail Kazi, Jahangir Howlader, Mijan Sheikh, Khajey Ahmad, Billal Hossain, Ismail Maju and Salma Begum.

Th joint forces seized 96 sacks of rice while they were being taken out of the rice mill Tuesday night. The law enforcers nabbed three persons from the spot but the rice mill owner escaped.

PARIS EXHIBITION RU VC sued over sending rare Bengal treasures



PHOTO: STAR

One of the rare Bengal treasures at BRM selected for Paris exhibition.

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Rajshahi

Rajshahi University (RU) authorities were sued yesterday for its decision to send 24 rare ancient Bengal treasures from Barendra Research Museum (BRM) for an exhibition in France.

Lawyer Muhammad Yahia filed a public litigation suit against RU Vice-chancellor Prof Altaf Hossain and BRM Director Mohammad Zakaria with a Rajshahi court. The BRM is run by Rajshahi University.

The plaintiff sought permanent injunction on the RU decision. The court will hear the petition today.

Seven days ago, Yahia served a legal notice on RU authorities to cancel the decision.

Yahia pleaded that sending the most rare and valuable treasures of

BRM would hamper research work and there is possibility of damage to those.

Following a government directive, RU authorities in February decided to get BRM a global exposure through an international display.

The famous Guimet Museum in Paris is sponsoring a four-month exhibition styled 'Sonar Bangla' from Oct 24 this year to March 3 next year.

Some 120 objects selected from Bangladesh National Museum, Mahasthangarh, Paharpur and Mainamati Archeological Museums and BRM are scheduled to be displayed at the Guimet Museum.

The BRM assets include two 5th century manuscripts and 22 sculptures dating back 7th to 12th century. These include a unique gold-coated bronze statue of Manjusri, said BRM officials.

Arms smuggling, disputed lands feature Sylhet border meet

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Sylhet

A BDR-BSF sector commander level meeting at Beanibazar has agreed to resolve some major

cross-border problems through talks and by taking 'steps in time'. The meeting decided to maintain status quo on the 500 acres of cultivable land along Zakiganj

border till it is settled by higher authorities. Bangladeshi farmers will continue to cultivate the lands now under their possession, BDR Sylhet Sector Commander Col Abul Hossain told the Daily Star yesterday.

Dispute over the lands led to gunfights between BDR and BSF on several occasions in past few months.

BDR rejected a BSF proposal for raising border fence within 150 yards of the no mans land, saying border rules do not allow this.

The meeting began at a community centre near Dubag border Beanibazar at 10 am Tuesday and lasted till 11:45 pm.

Sylhet Col. Abul Hossain led the Bangladesh side while the Indian side was led by a DIG of BSF. Three Battalion Commanders from India and two from Bangladesh also attended the meeting, held in a cordial atmosphere, Col. Hossain said.

Cross-border problems including illegal migration, border fencing by BSF, smuggling of explosives and firearms from India, killing of Bangladeshis by Indian border guards and armed civilians came up for discussion at the meeting.

Bangladesh officials denied the allegation of use of Bangladesh territory by Indian insurgents.

The Indian side agreed to take effective steps to stop smuggling of explosives and firearms to Bangladesh.

BDR officials informed BSF that explosives are smuggled into Bangladesh easily as those are used in large scale in Meghalaya hills for limestone extraction.

The agenda also included smuggling of contrabands including drugs into Bangladesh, erecting stolen border pillars and stopping killing of civilians.

Col. Hossain said BSF officials showed a positive attitude to resolve the cross-border problems.

2X2

8X2

3X2

4Z2

3X3

9X3