

Forestland now 10pc of total area against minimum 25pc

Says Ctg divisional commissioner

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

Country's total forestland has come down to 10 percent as against the minimum requirement of 25 percent of its total land.

This was stated by Chittagong Divisional Commissioner Mokhlesur Rahman while addressing a meeting as chief guest at the auditorium of Bangladesh Forest Research Institute (BFRI) yesterday.

The meeting titled 'Introducing BFRI-innovated technology and exchange of views with journalists' was chaired by BFRI Director Dr Md Ashraful Hoque.

Mokhlesur urged BFRI scien-

tists to intensify their work for preservation, development and expansion of forestland in the country.

He urged BFRI authorities to turn the institute spreading over around 75 acres of land into a research ground for the students of forestry, environment, botany and soil science departments of different public and private universities.

"BFRI could also create scope for training of the newly recruited forest officials who are going to neighbouring countries like Pakistan and India for the same purpose every year," he observed.

BFRI Chief Research Officer Dr Md Khairul Alam said since the

inception of the institute in 1968, its scientists succeeded in innovating improved variety of seed and plant, developing bud cutting (Kanchi Kalam) and tissue culture in bamboo plant, manufacturing of quality furniture from rubber timber and use of local timber as railway sleeper.

He said the institute also initiated some afforestation projects to develop forests in the northern districts.

The BFRI director in his speech underscored the need for manpower and structural development of the institute to meet the present demand.

Speakers at the meeting also

called for increasing annual allocation for research to help develop forest resources and expand forestland in the country.

They observed that the allocation made for research is very insignificant.

The meeting was told that of the total allocation of Tk 9 crore for BFRI in 2006-07 fiscal, only Tk 60 lakh went for research, and the rest was spent as salaries and allowances.

Senior scientists of BFRI and representatives of different electronic and print media were present at the meeting.



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

PHOTO: PID

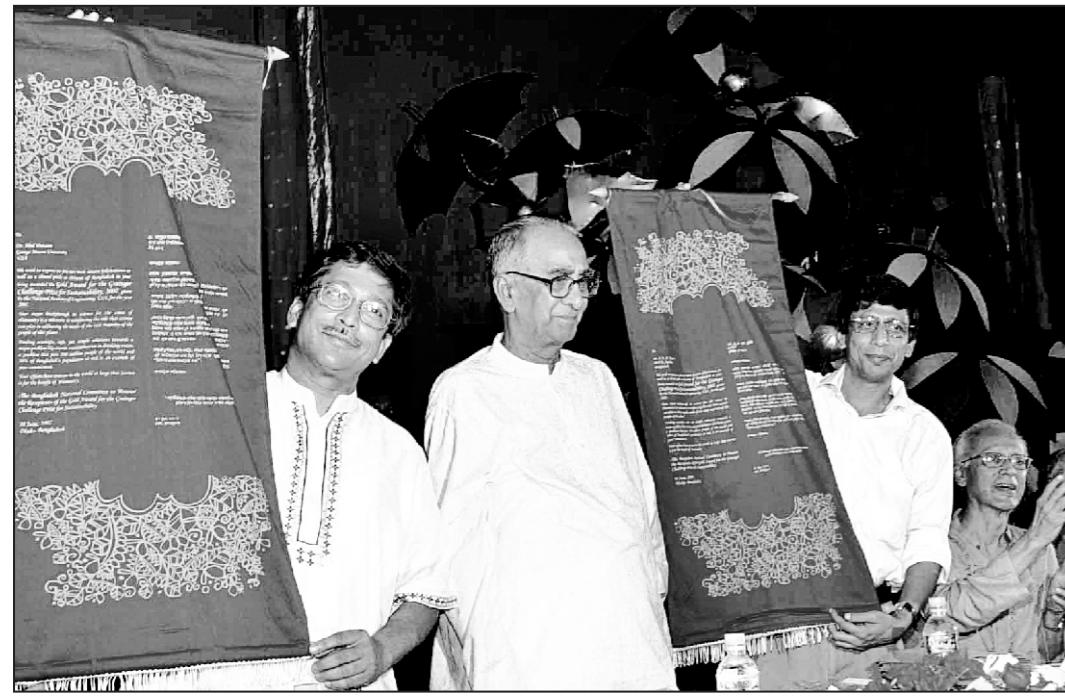


PHOTO: STAR

International Grainger Challenge Prize winners Dr Abul Hussam and Dr AKM Munir hold the citation they received at a reception at Teacher-Student Centre (TSC) auditorium on Dhaka University campus yesterday. Former chief adviser to the caretaker government Justice Muhammad Habibur Rahman, middle, is also seen.

US forces find Iraq mass grave, battle insurgents

AFP, Baghdad

US forces found around 40 bodies, bound and shot, in a fresh mass grave south of Fallujah, the military said Saturday as it reported 26 militants were killed in heavy fighting in Baghdad.

A local Iraqi citizen's tip led coalition forces to the site of a mass grave late Friday evening

outside Ferris, approximately 35 kilometers (21 miles) south of Fallujah, in western Anbar province, the military said.

"Coalition forces uncovered 35 to 40 bodies at the site. The remains were bound and had gunshot wounds."

Major Jeff Pool, spokesman for US forces in Anbar, said US Army soldiers found the grave after a tip-off.

"There were gunshots to the head and torso. Some of them had been bound, they were executed. It was recent," he said, adding that an investigation had been launched to identify the victims and their killers.

In pre-dawn raids in the Baghdad Shite district of Sadr City, US and Iraqi forces backed by helicopters killed 26 militants suspected of links to "Iranian terror networks," the US military said. Seventeen more were detained.

"It is believed that the suspected terrorists have close ties to Iranian terror networks and are responsible for facilitating the flow of lethal aid into Iraq," it said.

The impoverished neighbourhood woke before dawn to the sound of rockets slamming into buildings and machine guns raking the concrete apartment blocks.

Dozens of gunmen ran through the streets, firing pistols and machine guns at US helicopters which responded with missiles. Several

cars and homes were destroyed.

Meanwhile, a suicide bomber killed at least four police recruits and wounded around 30 other people in an attack on a police station in Muqaddiyah, northeast of Baghdad, an official said.

Interior ministry director of operations Brigadier General Abdel Karim Khalaf said the attack took place around noon in Muqaddiyah, Diyala province, the second most dangerous region in Iraq after Baghdad.

Police Lieutenant Ahmed Ali from the provincial capital, Baquba, said those killed were all police recruits.

Hours later, three Iraqi army soldiers were killed when a booby-trapped house exploded in the heart of the provincial capital of Baquba, Ali said, adding that another three Iraqi soldiers were wounded in the blast.

The attacks came less than two weeks after US and Iraqi forces launched a massive air and ground assault against Al-Qaeda strongholds in the province.

In Baquba, the heart of the operation, thousands of US and Iraqi troops have been tip-toeing through deserted city blocks lined with deeply buried roadside bombs and entire houses decked with explosives.

On Saturday, the US military revealed that a man killed in a US-led raid east of Fallujah on Friday was a senior Al-Qaeda militant.

Stolen oil worth Tk 5cr recovered in N'ganj: 12 held

A CORRESPONDENT, Narayanganj

Rapid Action Battalion (Rab) yesterday recovered one lakh litres of fuel worth about Tk 5 crore stolen from two major fuel depots of Meghna and Padma oil companies at Siddhiganj in Narayanganj and arrested 12 people in this connection.

Lt Commander Mohammad Mahtab Ali of Rab-11 confirmed the recovered fuel included diesel, petrol, octane, kerosene and furnace.

He also said that the law enforcers are trying to find the masterminds behind the stealing.

The arrestees were identified as Zaki Hossain, Ibrahim, Asmat Ali, Hanif, Salauddin, Shamim, Ashrafuddin, Kabir Hossain, Nasir Hossain, Mintu Miah, Ariful and Faisal.

Rab sources quoting the arrestees said that Akhil Bhuiyan and Shah Alam, the masterminds behind the stealing, in connivance with some corrupt officials of the two oil depots had been carrying out the illegal business.

They used to bribe police and some administrative officials to have the illegal work done unhindered, added the arrestees.

The fuel was recovered as a result of a 60-hour combing operation around the depots, both controlled by Bangladesh Petroleum Corporation (BPC).

Rab conducted a thorough search in the residences and shops in Ail Para, Godnai Uttar Para, S O Road and Burma Stand. They also searched ponds in the area and the river Shitalakha for the stolen fuel.

Sources said such misdeeds could be checked significantly if digital system could be introduced at the depot.

Production in Zia Fertiliser Factory halted

UNB, Brahmanbaria

Production in Ashuganj Zia Fertiliser Factory was suspended yesterday morning due to some technical problems.

Official sources said the factory authorities suspended the production at about 8:00am soon after the stock of ammonia, main component of producing urea, ran out.

"Ammonia production was halted in the factory on Thursday after the compressor of the ammonia plant turned nonfunctional due to overheating. Since then, we have continued the production operation utilising reserve stock of ammonia," said a factory official.

"It will take around a week to repair the fault to resume the production," he said.

The government already had to count a whopping loss as the state-run fertiliser factory, with age-old equipment, turned inoperative frequently due to recurrence of technical faults.

Due to halt in production, the factory has to incur a loss of around Tk 75 lakh daily, said a source.

A total of 1,400 metric tons of urea fertiliser are produced everyday in the factory.

With the latest suspension, fertiliser production in Zia Fertiliser was suspended twice this month.

The fertiliser production in the factory was suspended for around 11 times in the last nine months.

AUST degree classes resume today

The classes of the degree programme of Ahsanullah University of Science and Technology, Dhaka will resume today, says a press release.

Road accidents kill 11

STAR REPORT

At least 11 people were killed and 79 others injured in separate road accidents in Faridpur, Comilla, Magura, Noakhali, Manikganj and Jhenidah yesterday.

UNB reports: In Faridpur, five people were killed and 37 others injured when a bus plunged into a ditch beside Dhaka-Barisal Highway at Pulia village in Bhanga upazila early yesterday.

Police said a Dhaka-bound night coach from Khulna fell into the roadside ditch after it collided with a truck at about 1:00am, leaving five people dead on the spot and 37 others injured.

Of the deceased, three were identified as bus helper Shibir Hossain, 18, and passenger Iskander Hossain, 70, and Selim Miah, 30. The identity of two others could not be known immediately.

Eleven of the injured were rushed to Faridpur Medical College Hospital in critical condition while 26 others to Bhanga Upazila Health Complex.

Police seized the truck, but the driver and helper managed to escape.

In Comilla, two people were killed and 20 others injured when a bus and a goods-laden truck collided head-on on Dhaka-Chittagong Highway at Cheora road crossing in Choudhraman upazila yesterday morning.

Witnesses said a Feni-bound passenger bus collided with a

Dhaka-bound truck at about 8:00am, killing the unidentified truck helper, aged about 24, on the spot and injuring 21 passengers of the bus.

Of the injured, eight were admitted to Comilla Medical College Hospital in critical condition where Sripur Madrasa teacher Shamsul Alam, 38, succumbed to his injuries.

Magura correspondent adds: one person was killed and 22 people were injured in separate road accidents in the district yesterday.

Police said the first accident occurred at 7:00am when a cement-laden truck hit a roadside tree as its driver lost his control over the steering while giving side to a rickshaw van. The accident left the unidentified truck helper dead on the spot and two people injured.

The injured truck driver Jalal Uddin and van peddler Bangali Miah were admitted to Sadar Hospital.

In another accident, at least 20 people were injured when a Dhaka-bound bus fell into a ditch beside Magura-Jhenidah road at Ichchakhabda village in the morning.

The injured were admitted to the Sadar hospital.

In Noakhali, an unidentified man was crushed under the wheels of a truck at about 9:00am while crossing the road in Mirpool area of Begumganj upazila.

Our correspondent from Manikganj reports: One person was killed in a road accident on Dhaka-Aricha highway in Dhamrai yesterday.

day.

The victim was identified as Abdur Rahim of Sundurpur village under Daudkandi upazila in Comilla district.

Dhamrai police said the accident occurred at around 10:00am at Bathuli under Dhamrai Police Station when a Dhaka-bound bus ran over Abdur Rahim where he was examining computer system of newly built weight scale at Bathuli, which is likely to be opened today.

Rahim is supervisor of the weight scale.

The body was sent to Manikganj Sadar Hospital for autopsy.

A case has been lodged with Dhamrai Police Station.

Our correspondent from Jhenidah adds: Ayyoth was killed in a road accident at 4:00pm here yesterday.

The dead was identified as Mizanur Rahman, 30, son of Giasuddin of Bakshipur village under Sadar Upazila.

Witnesses said a Chaudhanga-bound passenger bus from Jhenidah hit a motorcycle in front of DC's Court in the town, leaving the cyclist dead on the spot. The motorcyclist was going home from Chaudhanga.

On information, police rushed to the spot and sent the body to Jhenidah Hospital morgue for autopsy.

LONDON CONFERENCE Roots of conflict in British society discussed

ANSAR AHMED ULLAH

A conference on 'Social vision: Working for a more equal and tolerant society' was organised by the London School of Economics and Political Science Social Vision Global Alumni Network on June 26.

The purpose of the conference was to discuss and identify the roots of conflict in contemporary British society.

Speakers and participants at the conference analyzed different dimensions of conflict including the rise of religion, fundamentalism, and community cohesion.

They also discussed ways to explore the causes of conflict and identify the long-term solutions.

The speakers included Nazir Afzal OBE, director of the UK Crown Prosecution Service, Ed Bateman, chief superintendent of Metropolitan Police, Ghayasuddin Siddiqui, Muslim Parliament and Zakir Khan, from the London School of Economics and Political Science Social Vision Global Alumni Network.

The conference was attended by participants from various organisations including local government authorities, Scotland Yard and the Police, NGOs and charitable organisations.

London School of Economics and Political Science Social Vision Global Alumni Network is a Network of LSE Alumni working together for a more equal and tolerant society and is active internationally including the United Kingdom, India, and Bangladesh presently.

Girl kept confined, raped in Ctg Five arrested

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

Members of the Rapid Action Battalion (Rab) arrested four people from an apartment building at Agrabad in the city on Friday night on charges of keeping a teenage girl confined for several days and violating her.

The elite force also arrested a woman from the same house for luring the girl to the house with a promise of job at a garments factory.

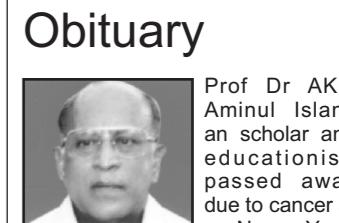
The Rab members conducted a raid on the house and arrested the culprits at around 11:00pm following a complaint lodged by the victim's father. They also recovered six bottles of Phensidyl from the possession of the culprits, sources said.

The arrestees are Md Solaiman Khan alias Badsha, 40, Md Shafiq Mia, 20, Md Nabi, Md Salauddin, 23, and Nupur, 25.

During a preliminary interrogation, Nupur confessed that she lured the victim to that house.

The other culprits also confessed to their crime, said a Rab press release.

Obituary



Prof Dr AKM Amrinul Islam, an scholar and educationist, passed away due to cancer at a New York Hospital on June 27 at the age of 74, says a press release.

He left behind his wife, three sons and elder sister Professor Dr Afia Dil, Professor Emeritus at Allian International University at San Diego, California, USA.

Prof Amrinul Islam was a teacher of the Bangla Department at the Dhaka University in the fifties. Later he joined the Wright State University at Dayton, Ohio, USA and after 26 years of teaching he was appointed Professor Emeritus of Anthropology.

After namaz-e-janaza in New York, his dead body was sent to Dayton, Ohio where he will be buried.



Finance and Planning Adviser Mirza Azizul Islam speaks at a post-budget press conference at National Economic Council (NEC) yesterday. On his left are Bangladesh Bank Governor Dr Saleh Uddin and Chairman of National Board of Revenue (NBR) Badur Rahman.

PHOTO: STAR</