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BID FOR SHIP-BREAKING YARD Forest Dept to legally fight tree plunderers

SHAHIDUL ISLAM and NUR UDDIN ALAMGIR, Chittagong

Forest authorities have decided to fight a legal battle against the plunderers of 15,000 Keura and Bain trees on a vast 40-acre forest belt near Sonaichhari coast in Sitakunda two days after razing of the greens.

A few influential people in a bid to develop ship-breaking yards hired workers, who felled the trees worth over Tk 1.1 crore with electric saws and machetes on Friday.

The move by the forest authorities came following press reports and subsequent enquiries by the ministry concerned.

Divisional Forest Officer of Chittagong Coastal Forest Division SM Khaleque Khan yesterday told The Daily Star, "We'll appear to the court to either withdraw its earlier order or stay it by dint of which they [the plunderers] managed to destroy the vast forest belt."

The mass destruction of invaluable green forest belt is feared to cause grave environmental disasters and put the coastal embankment on threat.

Witnesses and sources say more than 500 workers started chopping down the Keura trees since Friday afternoon and completed the destruction by midnight.

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A man hired by local influential people cuts down the stump of one of the trees felled Friday night on the Sonaichhari coast in Sitakunda, Chittagong, to clear the land for a ship-yard. Picture inset shows locals making off with boats loaded with the timber.



Pvt airlines to be engaged in carrying hajj pilgrims

UNB, Dhaka

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina yesterday said if necessary, private airlines would be commissioned to carry Bangladeshi hajj pilgrims from the upcoming season.

"The government also has a plan to set up permanent hajj-mission offices in Makkah and Madina for ensuring proper hajj management," she said.

The PM made the remarks when a four-member delegation of Hajj Agencies Association of Bangladesh (HAAB) led by its president Mohammad Ibrahim Bahar

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Govt to buy 28 lakh MT food grains this year

26 lakh MT to be distributed under social safety net programmes

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Food Minister Abdur Razzaque yesterday said the government has set a target of procuring 28 lakh tonnes of food grains in the current fiscal year of which 26.75 lakh tonnes will be distributed under public food distribution system.

Of 28 lakh tonnes of food grains, 16 lakh tonnes will be procured from domestic market, 1.50 lakh tonnes are expected as aid while 10.50 lakh tonnes will be imported.

Besides, the government will take up employment generation programme of Tk 1,176 crore to create 14 lakh employ-

ments for the hardcore poor during lean season.

Razzaque was addressing a press briefing at his ministry.

"At least 23 lakh tonnes of food grains will be distributed under various social safety net programmes. This is probably the largest amount to be used for the programme," the minister said.

He said that ensuring food for the poor is a high priority of the government, but expressed concern that such big allocation for social safety net is done by diverting money from the development programmes.

Health, education and infrastructure

sectors could get more allocation if social safety net required less money, Razzaque said.

"This [social safety net] is where the development partners should come forward. But, unfortunately the foreign aid has come down significantly, despite various promises," he told newsmen.

Still, the government has decided to expand the social safety net programmes, considering the fact that around six crore people live below the poverty line, Razzaque noted.

Under the programmes, 5.50 lakh tonnes of food grains will be distributed

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Dhaka seeks to be in Egmont group Hopes to recover smuggled money easily

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Bangladesh has applied for the membership of Egmont Group, a coordinating company of over 100 financial intelligence units across the world, in an effort to bring back siphoned off money.

It will be easier to collect information on siphoned off money after obtaining Egmont's membership, Finance Minister AMA Muhiytul Islam told parliament in reply to a query from Awami League lawmaker Mahmud Us Samad Chowdhury.

The finance minister said the government is keeping communications with different countries and international organisations and memorandums of understanding are being signed with them.

He said the government has formed a task force to communicate with foreign organisations and coordinate the government efforts to bring back siphoned off money.

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GARMENT UNREST JS body asks for Home report

RASHIDUL HASAN

A parliamentary standing committee yesterday asked home ministry officials to prepare a specific report on how to control further labour unrest in the garment sector.

Upon receiving the report the parliamentary body on home ministry will prepare a set of recommendations and send it to Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina.

Meanwhile, the authorities last night deployed around 2,000 additional forces in Gazipur to intensify security for the garment factories in

SEE PAGE 15 COL 7

Committee formed to modernise police force

UNB, Dhaka

A three-member sub-committee, with member of parliamentary standing committee on home ministry Md Mujiburul Haque as convenor, has been formed to formulate a transparent and modern guideline for police recruitment process as well as their deployment in UN peace-keeping missions.

The two other members of the sub-committee are Md Nurul Islam Sujan and Md Shafiqul Islam.

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28 Rohingyas pushed back to Myanmar

A CORRESPONDENT, Cox's Bazar

Bangladesh Rifles' (BDR) jawans at Teknaf arrested 28 Rohingyas of Myanmar and pushed them back to their country yesterday.

The Myanmar nationals including seven men, 11 women and 10 children were held at about 9:00am at Shah Parir Dwip of Teknaf upazila while they were infiltrating into Bangladesh crossing the Naf river.

Deputy commander of 42 Rifles Battalion Major Shahinur Rahman confirmed the incident.

Prayer Timing		
July 6		
	Azan	Jamaat
Fajr	5-10	5-45
Zohr	1-45	2-15
Asr	6-00	6-15
Maghrib	7-55	8-00
Esha	9-17	9-45

Source: Islamic Foundation



A large boat is being repaired in anticipation of a busy season as the monsoon has set in. The picture was taken at Trimohoni near Khilgaon in the capital.

PHOTO: SHEIKH ENAMUL HAQUE

RMG makers told to be responsible

Faruk Khan on checking unrest in industry

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Commerce Minister Faruk Khan yesterday urged the ready-made garment (RMG) manufacturers and exporters to play a 'responsible role' so that any untoward incident in the garment sector can be averted.

He said the garments manufacturers will not use 'only good branded cars wearing brand suits' but they have to ensure the workers' welfare in the factories to avoid workers' unrest.

The minister said this while distributing cheques among the dependants of workers

killed in various incidents including the recent worker unrest in Ashulia, at Bangladesh Garment Manufacturers and Exporters Association (BGMEA) office.

He said a section of unidentified miscreants had vandalised the garment factories and set fire to those during Ashulia unrest, which was a pre-planned conspiracy to damage the garment sector.

"We are investigating the latest labour unrest seriously whether there was any involvement of the administration or not. If we find

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Woman kills husband

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A woman stabbed her husband to death in Kadamtoli area yesterday while police recovered body of an unidentified man from the city's Kuril area.

Sub-Inspector Liakat Hossain of Kadamtoli Police Station said Mollika Begum locked into a quarrel with her husband Sumon Mahmud, 30, in his video shop at Muradpur

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FUND 'EMBEZZLEMENT' Brac employee locked in office for 3 days

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Dinajpur

The upazila nirbahi officer of Ranisankoil upazila in Thakurgaon yesterday rescued a missing Brac employee from the local Brac office where he was being held against his will for more than three days.

SEE PAGE 15 COL 4

16 UN de-miners kidnapped in Afghanistan

AP, Kabul

A roadside bomb and a rocket-propelled grenade in southern Afghanistan killed two British soldiers, while gunmen in the east abducted 16 mine-clearing personnel working for the United Nations, officials said yesterday.

The attacks that killed the British troops in Helmand province's Gershik district came as thousands of US Marines pour into the Taliban's southern heartland, in the biggest US military offensive operation in Afghanistan since the toppling of the militants in 2001.

It wasn't clear if the British casualties were involved in the

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Online Poll ✓
Do you think reshuffling and expanding the cabinet is necessary to make it more efficient?
☐ Yes (49.0%) ☐ No (48.9%)
☐ No Comments (2.1%)
Total votes: 773
TODAY'S POLL
Do you support TIB's recommendation that lawmakers will lose membership if they remain absent in parliament for 30 consecutive working days instead of 90 days?
Please cast your vote at www.thedailystar.net