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Mindless destruction of coastal green belt

ABDULLAH AL MAHMUD, Ctg

Only 200 trees are left on the green forest belt developed on some 125 acres of land along the Sonaichhari coast under Sitakunda upazila in Chittagong.

Massive plundering of trees in two phases within a span of five months left the belt in this sorry state.

Within four hours Sunday night several thousand trees were chopped down on over a half-kilometre stretch of the same Sonaichhari coast, where over 15,000 Keora and Bain trees were plun-

dered on July 03 this year.

Sources said the massive plundering of government reserved green forest took place at the directives of some local influential people to clear space for setting up three to four ship-breaking yards.

Department of Forest (DoF) yesterday filed a case in this connection.

Local forest bit officer Md Hasan Mia filed the case with Sitakunda Police Station accusing 14 known and over 1,100 unknown people.

The 14 accused are Zahur Member, Lablu, Hares, Rubel, Alamgir, Zoinal,

Shahed, Dilip, Rumi, Didar, Belal, Monir, Shafiqul Alam, and Mamun.

"We would file a petition before a court seeking injunction on construction work on the denuded land," said Divisional Forest Officer (DFO coastal range) Khaleq Khan while talking to The Daily Star yesterday.

Khaleq said, "With a view to protecting the coastal people from tidal surges and cyclones, the DoF started developing the green forest belt along Sitakunda coast back in 1989 and since then some 2 lakh

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PHOTO: FOCUSBANGLA

This hill at Galachipa in Bandarban is vanishing fast as hill cutting in the area goes on unabated in utter disregard to the existing laws.

WTO states call for deal on green goods

AFP, Geneva

World Trade Organization member states called yesterday for an early deal on freeing up trade on environmental goods and services, ahead of a major climate change summit in Copenhagen.

An early accord could also act as a much-needed stimulus for negotiations for a broader global trade pact, which are locked in an impasse, trade ministers gathered at a meeting of 153 WTO member states said.

"Some like-minded nations, including Japan, are considering conducting discussions with a view to achieving an early agreement to liberalise trade in environmental goods,"

Japanese Economy, Trade and Industry Minister Masayuki Naoshima told the meeting in Geneva.

"I hope that other interested members will join these discussions, and provide fresh impetus to the Round as a whole," he added.

Launched in 2001, the Doha Round of trade liberalisation negotiations have been in a dead-lock amid disagreements between developed and developing nations over the level of cuts on farm subsidies and industrial product tariffs. Liberalisation of environmental goods and services is part of Doha talks, and ministers pointed out that since climate change was high on the political agenda, it was an opportune

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2 criminals arrested in India

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Kustia

Indian police arrested two more Bangladeshi criminals and an Indian -- for giving them shelter -- from a house at Ghapchi under Bongaon Thana in West Bengal on Monday.

The arrestees were identified as Milon alias Tapan alias Mukta, 40, Babu alias Mahfuz, 38, and Zia, 36.

Indian police said Zia is an Indian citizen of Ghapchi under Bongaon Thana while Milon, of Mirpur area in Dhaka, is a leader of Mukta Bahini and Babu is a top cadre of Sahadat Bahini, also of Dhaka.

According to sources, Indian police raided the house around 8:30am on Monday and arrested them after information gleaned from Gono Mukti Fouz chief Aminul Islam Mukul who was arrested on November 21.

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OnlinePoll

Who should be blamed for launch disasters in the country every year?

- Government's regulatory authority (62.3%)
- Launch owners (25.9%)
- Passengers (11.8%)

Total votes: 776

TODAY'S POLL

Do you think the govt's lenient attitude towards the persons guilty for tree felling in Teknaf and Sitakunda earlier has encouraged the ship-breaking yard owners to plunder more trees at the coast?

Please cast your vote at www.thedailystar.net

Prayer Timing		
December 2		
	Azan	Jamaat
Fajr	6-15	6-50
Zohr	1-45	2-15
Asr	4-45	5-00
Maghrib	6-19	6-22
Esha	8-00	8-30

Source: Islamic Foundation

143 AIDS patients diagnosed in a yr

39 died, govt reveals on World AIDS Day

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A total of 143 people were diagnosed with AIDS while 39 AIDS patients died across the country in last one year, the government revealed yesterday.

On the occasion of the World AIDS Day the health ministry revealed the data at a press briefing at the ministry conference room.

The day was observed across the globe with the slogan "Universal Access and Human Rights".

During the press briefing Health Minister AFM Ruhul Haque said the total number of HIV

infected people in the country now stands at 1,745 while that of AIDS patients at 619. Some 204 AIDS patients died since the first HIV/AIDS patient was identified in the country in 1989.

Highlighting the government's efforts to contain HIV/AIDS in the country the minister expressed concern over the increasing rate of HIV/AIDS among Injecting Drug Users (IDUs). The rate is alarming nine percent among the IDUs.

Quoting the survey result of the Bangladesh Demographic and Health Survey 2007, he also said awareness has increased much in the

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Cop handed 30-yr jail for rape

COURT CORRESPONDENT

A Dhaka court yesterday sentenced a policeman to 30 years in prison for raping a 16-year-old girl in July 2005.

Judge Mohammad Abdus Sobhan of the Fifth Special Tribunal for Prevention of Women and Children Repression handed down the sentence in presence of the convict Nayak Nurul Islam.

The court, however, acquitted Jakir Hossain, a waiter of Hotel Jamuna International in the city, as the charge brought against him was not proved.

Earlier, the prosecution and the defence completed their arguments and the court

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Outlaws kidnap, kill 3 in Kushtia

Bodies recovered after arrested extremist's confession

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Kustia

Operatives of outlawed outfit Purbo Banglar Communist Party (PBCP-ML) kidnapped three people and held them for ransom and having failed to realise the money they killed them and buried the bodies in a graveyard.

Police yesterday recovered the bodies from Taragunia graveyard under Daulatpur upazila in the district.

Police said criminals had abducted them in between November 1 and 10 and then killed them as they failed to pay ransom.

The dead were identified as Mehedi Hasan Sohag, 22, a third year student of Kushtia Islamia College, Jahangir Hossain, 38, an employee of KARITAS in Dhaka and Rassel, a grocer of Jhenidah.

The bodies were recovered following a confessional statement of Rokunuzzaman alias Manik, a top cadre of outlawed

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1 more missing croc found in Khulna

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Khulna

One more baby crocodile out of 18 that went missing on November 22 was found in a canal passing by Karamjol Crocodile Breeding Centre at Dakop upazila of Khulna district.

With this, a total of four crocodiles were recovered from the canal after they went missing.

The staff of the centre caught the crocodiles and kept back in a cage, said Divisional Forest Officer Mihir Kumar of east wing of Sundarban Forest Division.

Assistant Conservator of Forests Golam Qudus

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আমরা গভীর ভাবে শোকাহত

পপুলার লাইফ ইনস্যুরেন্স কোম্পানী লিমিটেড-এর পরিচালক পর্ষদের চেয়ারম্যান, চিটাগাং চেম্বার অব কমার্স অ্যান্ড ইন্ডাস্ট্রিজের সাবেক সভাপতি ও থাইল্যান্ডের অনারারি কনসাল জনাব আমির হুমায়ূন মাহমুদ চৌধুরীর মাতা বিশিষ্ট সমাজসেবিকা ও শিক্ষানুরাগী বেগম মেহেরুননেছা চৌধুরী (৮৯) গত ৩০ নভেম্বর ২০০৯ইং তারিখ সোমবার চট্টগ্রাম মহানগরীর মেহেদীবাগে নিজ বাসভবনে ইন্তেকাল করেছেন (ইন্না লিল্লাহে ওয়া ইন্না ইলাইহি রাজিউন)।

আমরা তাঁর বিদেহী আত্মার প্রতি গভীর শ্রদ্ধা নিবেদন ও মহান আল্লাহুতায়ালার কাছে রুহের মাগফেরাত কামনা করছি। মরহুমার শোক সন্তপ্ত পরিবারের সকল সদস্যবৃন্দের প্রতি গভীর সমবেদনা জানাচ্ছি। মহান আল্লাহর দরবারে দোয়া করছি যেন তাঁর পরিবারবর্গকে এই শোক কাটিয়ে উঠার শক্তি, সামর্থ্য ও ধৈর্য্য দান করেন।

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