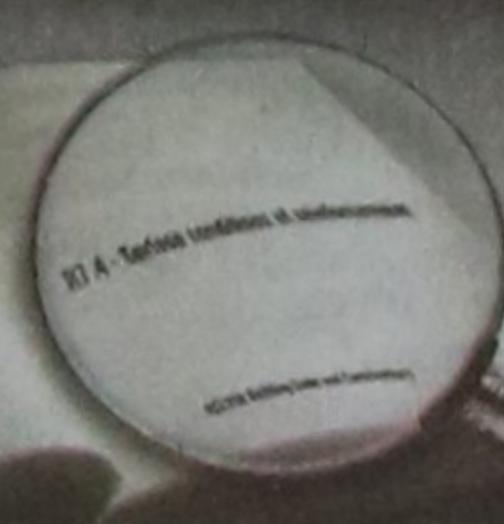


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Mindless destruction of coastal green belt

ABDULLAH AL MAHMUD, Cg

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 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 beat 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,

Shahid, 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

SEE PAGE 15 COL B

Govt to fully implement CHT accord
Says law minister
STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The government is eager to fully implement the Chittagong Hill Tracts Peace Accord, Law Minister Shafique Ahmed has said.

On December 2, 1997, the previous Awami League government led by the then prime minister Sheikh Hasina signed the peace accord with Parbatya Chattagram Jano Sanghati Samiti (PCJSS) leader Jyotirindra Bodhipriya Larma, also known as Santu Larma, ending an over two-decade-old insurgency.

SEE PAGE 15 COL 6

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 Ruhal 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

SEE PAGE 15 COL 3



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 deadlock 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

SEE PAGE 15 COL 4

2 criminals arrested in India

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Kushtia

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.

SEE PAGE 15 COL 6

Online Poll

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

	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

আমরা গভীর ভাবে শোকাত

পপুলার লাইফ ইনসুরেন্স কোম্পানী লিমিটেড-এর পরিচালক পর্ষদের চেয়ারম্যান, চিটাগাং চেম্বার অব কর্মসূচি অ্যান্ড ইন্ডাস্ট্রিজের সাবেক সভাপতি ও থাইল্যান্ডের অন্তর্বারি কনসাল জনাব আমির হুমায়ুন মাহমুদ চৌধুরীর মাতা বিশিষ্ট সমাজসেবিকা ও শিক্ষানুরাগী বেগম মেহেরুন্নেছা চৌধুরী (৮৯) গত ৩০ নভেম্বর ২০০৯ইঠ তারিখ সোমবার চট্টগ্রাম মহানগরীর মেহেদীবাগে নিজ বাসভবনে ইন্টেকাল করেছেন (ইন্লা লিপ্তাহে ওয়া ইন্লাইন ইলাইট রাজিউন)।

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



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