



A brick field, set up by a local Awami League leader inside Fashiakhali Reserve Forest in Chakoria upazila of Cox's Bazar district, poses threat to environment in the area.

AL leader sets up big brick field inside reserve forest

A CORRESPONDENT, Cox's Bazar

A local Awami League (AL) leader has set up a huge brickfield inside Fashiakhali Reserve Forest in Chakoria upazila of Cox's Bazar district.

Gias Uddin Chowdhury, convenor of Chakoria upazila unit of AL, is now preparing to burn bricks there although Brick Burning Act bars setting up brickfield within three kilometres of a reserve forest or human habitation, said forest officials.

If brick burning starts in the area, it will do immense harm to forest resources and cause environmental degradation, they said.

Forest department sources said

Gias Uddin Chowdhury started building the brickfield in the area adjacent to Agoragan in the reserve forest of Uchitar Beel at Fashiakhali Range of Cox's Bazar North Forest Division on August 13.

Businessman Liakat Ali Sawdagar, an alleged grabber of forestland in Ali Kadam upazila in Bandarban, has gone into partnership with Gias in setting up the brickfield.

Confirming the matter, Range Officer Mahmud Kabir of Fashiakhali Forest department said influential people are destroying forest resources at Fashiakhali.

"It is difficult for us to protect the huge forest resources with our limited

manpower," he said.

After a spot visit, Fashiakhali Forest Beat Officer Azharul Haque sent a report to higher authorities about two months ago but no administrative action has been taken yet.

"Gias Uddin and his three to four brothers, who lead a gang of criminals, are felling trees every day and smuggling those out. They also attacked the local forest beat office twice as a case was filed against the influential leader's men," Azharul Haque said.

"No permission has been taken from departments concerned including the Directorate of Environment for setting up the brickfield," Divisional Forest Officer of Cox's Bazar Abul

Monsur said.

When contacted, Gias Uddin Chowdhury admitted to setting up brickfield at Agoragan inside the reserved forest.

He, however, said, "Although the brickfield is in the hills, it is on my paddy field and land owned by a mosque and others."

He claimed that no hill of the forest department was being cut for constructing the brick kiln and there have been no trees on the hills for the last two years.

Gias said he had submitted an application to the department concerned for a licence to build the brickfield and it is under process now.

Good catches of hilsa at long last

A CORRESPONDENT, Cox's Bazar

Thousands of fishermen in coastal areas of Cox's Bazar district are all smiles as a huge catches of popular fish hilsa is being netted in the Bay.

The Bakkhali River in the town sees a large number of trawlers carrying fish, much to the happiness of the fishermen who have been passing hard times for over a month.

During a visit to Nuniachhata fishery ghat, a wholesale fish market in Cox's Bazar town, this correspondent on Friday found over 50 trawlers waiting to sell hilsa.

Fish from large trawlers is being loaded into small ones for supply to Matsya Obotoron Kendra, the main fish landing station in the town.

After buying fish from there, the wholesalers are supplying it to different areas of the country including Dhaka, Chittagong and Sylhet.

"We caught a good amount of hilsa from over 100 kilometres off the coast and it takes six to seven days to return after catching fish from the deep sea," said Kalu Sawdagar, who earned Tk 9 lakh after selling nine thousand pieces of hilsa fish.

Rahim Sawdagar and Salim Ullah are among many fish traders who earned a good amount of money by selling hilsa.

In Matsya Obotoron Kendra, it was found that each piece of hilsa weighing 500 to 800 grams, is selling for Tk 85 to 100 while it is selling for Tk 190 to Tk 210 a kg in the retail market.

Around 40 trucks loaded with hilsa are being transported to different places daily and the supply will increase in a couple of days, said Omar Kazi, a trader.

Nurul Islam, president of Fisheryghat Fish Traders Association, said around 80,000 fishermen of the area have passed tough times for

over a month due to scarcity of hilsa but they are now happy with the amount of hilsa being netted in the deep sea.

"As hilsa was not seen in the sea for over a month, thousands of fishermen families could not celebrate the Eid. But now we are happy as huge fish is being caught. We hope the situation will continue throughout the month if there is no natural calamity," said fisherman

Abdul Malek.

Cox's Bazar Boat Owners Association President Mujibur Rahman said around one lakh fishermen in six thousand trawlers of Teknaf, St Martin's, Moheshkhali and Kutubdia are now busy catching hilsa.

When these trawlers will return to the coast in a few days, the entire area will see abundance of hilsa and the price is likely to decrease too, he added.



Traders bring hilsa on the bank of Bakkhali River at Fisheryghat in Cox's Bazar by small boats from the trawlers.



Vehicles at Ashekpur bypass near Tangail town ply very slowly with headlights on at 10:30am yesterday as dense fog disrupts traffic movement during the last few days.

Blanket of fog disrupts road, river links

Goods laden trucks, passengers stranded at ferry points

STAR NATIONAL DESK

Road and river transports have been facing serious disruption in different parts of the country due to dense fog for the last few days.

Our Tangail correspondent reported that dense fog is creating obstacles to smooth vehicular movements on Dhaka-Tangail highway every day.

Thousands of vehicles, including passenger buses and goods-laden trucks, ply the road having their headlights on during daytime.

Police and witnesses said a Dhaka-bound passenger bus collided head-on with a goods-laden truck at Darun in Tangail Sadar upazila at around 6:45am yesterday as the highway was under a blanket of fog.

Several people, who received injuries in the accident, were given first aid at a local hospital. Police immediately rushed to the spot and removed the damaged vehicles from the road. Several such incidents also occurred on the highway in the last three days, police said.

While visiting the highway at around 10:30am yesterday, this correspondent

found that dense fog blanketed the road and the vehicles were moving at a slow speed having headlights on.

Highway police said 40-km road from Mirzapur to Bangabandhu Jamuna Bridge under Tangail district is risky due to poor visibility caused by dense fog.

According to our Manikganj correspondent, ferry service on Paturia-Daulatdia route remained suspended for four hours on Monday due to dense fog.

Seven ferries with passenger buses and other vehicles remained stranded in the Padma that caused immense sufferings to hundreds of passengers amid cold weather.

Around 500 goods-laden trucks were stranded at Daulatdia and Paturia ferry terminals, creating traffic jam on both sides.

Manager (Commerce) of Bangladesh Inland Water Transport Corporation (BIWTC) at Aricha sector Bidyut Kumar Saha told this Correspondent that dense fog forced the authorities concerned to suspend ferry services for four hours from 5:30am on Monday.

Hundreds say 'no' to corruption

Human chain, rally in Sirajganj

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Sirajganj

Hundreds of people yesterday formed a human chain in front of the deputy commissioner's office in the town to build awareness against corruption.

Corruption prevention committee, Sirajganj district unit arranged the programme on the eve of International Anti-Corruption Day 2009 today.

People from all walks of life including teachers, students, lawyers, politicians, cultural and NGO activists and journalists took part in the hour-long human chain from 10:30am chanting slogan "We won't do corruption, we shall prevent corruption and hate the corrupt people."

They also held a rally at the

venue with deputy commissioner Humayun Kabir in the chair. Golam Rahman, chairman of Anti-Corruption Commission joined the programme as chief guest.

The speakers at the rally said, those who bribe or take bribe commit the same offence. So, hate them and inform the law enforcers about their activities to make the society corruption-free, they said.

Golam Rahman said, corruption is the main obstacle to the country's economic development. Our freedom fighters fought the Pakistani occupation forces for a corruption-free country. In this month of victory, let's vow to resist all sorts of corruption and corrupt people, he said.

Muktijuddher Bijoy Mela opens in Ctg tomorrow

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

A three-week-long 'Muktijuddher Bijoy Mela' begins in the port city tomorrow.

Muktijuddher Bijoy Mela Parishad is organising the fair, which started its journey at Chittagong outer stadium in 1989.

Deputy Leader of the Parliament Syeda Sajeda Chowdhury will attend the inaugural ceremony as the chief guest at 3:30pm. Private Television channel ATN Bangla will telecast the inaugural programme live.

This year, the fair will have 242 stalls and six pavilions, said the organisers at a press conference at Chittagong City Corporation (CCC) auditorium yesterday afternoon.

Abul Hashem, secretary general of the parishad, readout the written statement at the conference while CCC Mayor and parishad chairman ABM Mohiuddin Chowdhury was present.

The programmes include recollection of memories of the Liberation War, cultural

programme, recitation, drama, documentaries on Liberation War, cultural and painting competition and a reception to the GPA-5 achievers.

A five-day long seminar on "Problems of development of Chittagong" will also feature in the programmes. Noted economists, town planners, academics and engineers of the country will take part in the seminar and put forward their recommendations for development of the port city, said the organisers.

ABM Mohiuddin Chowdhury told the press conference that they could not organise the fair at the outer stadium and had to arrange it (the fair) at Laldighi Maidan over the last seven years. He urged all to make the fair a success.

Chittagong City Awami League General Secretary Enamul Haque Danu, former student leader Abdur Rauf and Gonatantri Party Chittagong city unit President Kafil Uddin were present at the conference.



Corruption prevention committee forms a human chain in front of Sirajganj deputy commissioner's office yesterday as part of its awareness campaign against corruption.