



Trunks of trees felled by criminals lie on both sides of Harinshing-Kanchan Bazar road in Pirganj upazila of Rangpur district, right, the gang taking away the trees in a truck in broad daylight.



PHOTO: STAR

Over 5,000 roadside trees looted

RAFIQUE SARKER, Rangpur

Criminals allegedly backed by some local political leaders cut down over 5,000 roadside trees and took them away in broad daylight while the authorities concerned played the role of silent spectators.

Equipped with sharp weapons, the plunderers numbering about 50 felled the trees from both sides of Harinshing-Kanchan Bazar Road in Pirganj upazila of the district on Saturday and Sunday and threatened the witnesses with dire consequences if anyone protested the matter or informed administration or police, locals said.

They alleged that they informed police and upazila nirbahi officer (UNO) about the mindless tree felling but to no effect.

Ashrafur Rahman of Mattialpara, Hafizar Rahman of Mattialpara, Shajahan of Gramtala, Nuru of Hossainpur, Rezwan of Ghona Chatra and Shafiqul Islam led the looters, a number of witnesses said on condition of anonymity.

Sohag Mondal of Mattialpara said they also informed local leaders of Awami League and BNP about the incident but nobody came forward to stop felling of trees.

A member of Chatra Union

Parishad (UP) on condition of anonymity said that the criminals felled the trees in collusion with a section of officials of local administration, police and leaders of political parties.

Abu Shaheen Md Asaduzzaman, UNO of Pirganj, said, "Whenever I got any complaint about felling roadside trees, I have tried to do my duty. In fact, I had nothing to do other than informing police about the plundering as the road belongs to the district board (Zilla Parishad)."

Denying the allegation, Pirganj police station officer-in-charge

Roushan Mostafa said, "It's not true that police did not take any action. Police raided the houses of some accused several times. On Monday, police seized about 500 logs of eucalyptus trees from the spot."

The Hunger Project, an NGO, planted about 10,000 eucalyptus trees on both sides of the two-km long road around 10 years ago. A few years later, the NGO abruptly stopped its programme. Since then people living near the road had been taking care of the trees, local sources said.

Meanwhile, police arrested one Tosaddek Miah on Tuesday night

from Chatra area in connection with felling of trees.

The same evening, Rafiqul Islam, secretary of the district board, filed a case with Pirganj police against Tosaddek and his accomplices on charge of felling the trees.

But the OC of Pirganj police station said that Tosaddek was the first to lodge a complain in this connection. He filed the case with the police station on Monday, he added.

Rafiqul Islam, however, said Tosaddek and his accomplices were trying to play innocent by lodging a case.

Thus pry schools in C'nawabganj 'extort' guardians

RABIUL HASAN, C'Nawabganj

Majority of the class-V passed students have to pay money to their schools under Chapainawabganj municipality area for obtaining certificates.

"Some guardians give money willingly while others are forced to pay as school authorities have made it obligatory for students to get their certificates," said a report of Transparency International Bangladesh (TIB).

Youth Engagement and Support (YES) Group and Chapainawabganj Conscious Citizens' Committee, a unit of TIB, released the survey report at Chapainawabganj Club auditorium recently.

As they conducted the survey among 242 class-VI

students of 17 high schools in the municipality area, 201 students said they paid money to the school authorities for getting certificates while 37 others said they did not pay for it. Four students could not say anything clearly about giving money for the purpose.

However, those who did not pay money are the children of the members of school managing committee or local influential people.

Twelve members of YES Group collected information

of the survey from the class-VI students during February 1 to 15 this year.

Corruption and irregularities have worked as major obstacles to achieving expected success in education, the report said, adding that headmasters have to face different types of harassment for getting fund for development activities in schools.

Even they have to give bribes to the offices of upazila engineer and accountant for releasing fund in favour of their schools, it added.

The schools find it difficult to maintain different costs due to poor allocation of fund and in many cases, teachers and students have to contribute money for keeping aya, it said.

Farhad Ahmad, member of YES Group, read out the survey report that also made a set of recommendations for solving the problem.

Chapainawabganj Citizens' Committee convenor Mahbubur Rahman presided over the meeting. District Education Officer Nafisa Begum, assistant education officer Siddique Mohammad Yusuf, Habibur Rahman of TIB, Sarwar Kaonain of Model Government Primary School and Shafiqul Alam were present, among others.

Rhymes of love for freedom

A young man collects, compiles them

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Nilphamari

A number of folk rhymes, composed and recited by the freedom loving people in rural areas of northern districts during the Liberation War, have been saved from gradual disappearance as a young admirer of literature has taken initiative to bring the great deeds of unsung heroes to light.

Raja Shahidul Aslam, 38, now working as a pisciculture 'consultant' in Nilphamari, took the arduous task of collecting and compiling into book around 200 rhymes that helped to keep morale of common people high during the turbulent days of Liberation War against the Pakistani occupation army.

The book titled 'Muktijuddho O Probochan' was published in February this year.

In absence of any initiative from the government or non-government organisations during the 38 years of independence, the inspiring folk literary items were heading towards getting lost forever.

During the days of Liberation War, freedom loving people in rural areas continued their lofty spirit and unity even amid smell of gunpowder, sound of brush fire, screaming of people from Pak army's torture camps, and roaring of Pak army's heavy vehicles.

With natural sense of humour and insight, they composed rhymes depicting atrocities of the barbaric Pak army, bravery of freedom fighters and shameful retreat of the Pak army.

There were even reflection of the then politics, 1970 elections that saw victory of Awami League as the majority party, disapproval of religion-based parties, evil design of Pakistan president Yahya Khan to suppress Bangladeshis, strategy of freedom fighters and admiration of friendly countries, said locals.

During the tumultuous period, people in groups

gathered at night to listen to the programmes of Swadhin Bangla Betar Kendra including news and inspiring programmes like 'Jallader Darbar' and 'Charompatra'.

Getting theme or information from the programmes, some of the audience would instantly compose rhymes and recited those.

The rhymes would spread to many others as people loved to recite them during their

He moved from door to door, approaching people for the patriotic rhymes.

"I wrote down the rhymes hearing from those who could recite it. It was a difficult task as many composers and direct listeners have died by this time and only a few of the new generation are interested in the matter," said Aslam.

"There are hundreds of such patriotic folk rhymes that helped boost people's



PHOTO: STAR

Cover of the book 'Muktijuddho O Probochan', a compilation of folk rhymes composed by rural people in northern districts during the Liberation War. Inset, compiler Raja Shahidul Aslam.

work as well as leisure time.

It was, however, a risky thing as armed 'Rajakars' (local collaborators of Pak army) would assault, even hand over to Pak army if someone was heard reciting the patriotic rhymes.

Delighted to find the precious pieces of evidences of Liberation War at his native village, Raja Shahidul Aslam decided to collect and compile them.

confidence about victory over the heavily armed Pak army. Steps should be taken for their preservation," he said.

"By compiling the literary creations of our patriotic rural people during the Liberation War, Raja Shahidul Aslam has presented us a unique and laudable work," said Asaduzzaman Noor, lawmaker from a Nilphamari constituency, also a renowned cultural personality of the country.

378 'collaborators' sued in Bagerhat so far

UNB, Bagerhat

Thirty-three cases have so far been filed against 378 alleged collaborators of Pakistani occupation forces in the district on charges of killing, looting and arson in 1971.

Police Superintendent Mizanur Rahman said the cases have been recorded with six police stations of the district as per directives of the court.

He said five cases were recorded with Bagerhat Sadar Police Station, 17 with Morelganj Police Station, three with Rampal Police Station, five with Kachua Police Station, two with Fakirhat Police Station, and

one case was recorded with Sharankhola Police Station.

The complainants alleged that the accused killed their near and dear ones, looted valuables and set ablaze many houses during liberation war.

Meanwhile, freedom fighters and members of Ghatak Dalal Nirmul Committee have taken initiatives to make a list of war criminals in the district.

Freedom fighter Shahinul Alam Sana said they are making a list of war criminals on the basis of evidence.

He said the list of war criminals at upazila level will be published soon.

PROCESSION, RALLY ON RU CAMPUS Fresh probe into killing of Prof Yunus demanded

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Rajshahi

Different quarters yesterday demanded reinvestigation into the killing of Rajshahi University teacher Prof Muhammad Yunus while the trial process of the case against eight JMB militants is at final stage at Rajshahi Speedy Trial Tribunal.

The tribunal fixed December 31 for holding argument between the lawyers of both sides on completion of recording statements of 26 prosecution witnesses and examining the accused on Wednesday.

"After the argument, the tribunal will fix the date for delivering the verdict in the case", said Public Prosecutor Entajul Haque Babu.

Teachers and students of RU economics department demanded reinvestigation into Prof Yunus murder case while observing his fifth death anniversary on the campus yesterday.

Hundreds of students and



Prof Muhammad Yunus

teachers of the department brought out a silent procession on the campus at around 11:00am and held a rally in front of the department.

Addressing the rally, Prof M Moazzem Hossain Khan, chairman of economics department, urged the government to reinvestigate the case. He slated RU administration for not dealing with the murder case properly.

Muktijoddha Santan Command, Bangabandhu Parishad and Bangladesh Economic Association also

demanding reinvestigation into the case.

Prof Yunus of RU economics department was killed during morning walk near his Binodhpur house on December 24, 2004.

Inspector Mohammad Helauddin of the Criminal Investigation Department (CID) submitted the charge sheet in the case against eight JMB militants on September 10, 2007.

The accused are Shafiqul Tarek (follower of Asadullah Al Galib), Shahidullah Mahbub (husband of the executed JMB leader Siddikul Islam Bangla Bhai's niece), JMB's regional commanders Abu Isa Enamul and Golamur Rahman Mostafa, militants Abul Kashem Tufan, Abdul Matin, Abdul Rahman Arif and Mujibur Rahman.

In the charge sheet, the CID brushed aside previous police findings of Shibir involvement in the killing despite two witnesses in separate judicial statements said that Shibir men were involved in the murder.



Teachers and students of economics department of Rajshahi University bring out a silent procession on the campus yesterday demanding reinvestigation into Prof Muhammad Yunus murder case and speedy trial of the killers.

SNAPS AND SNIPPETS

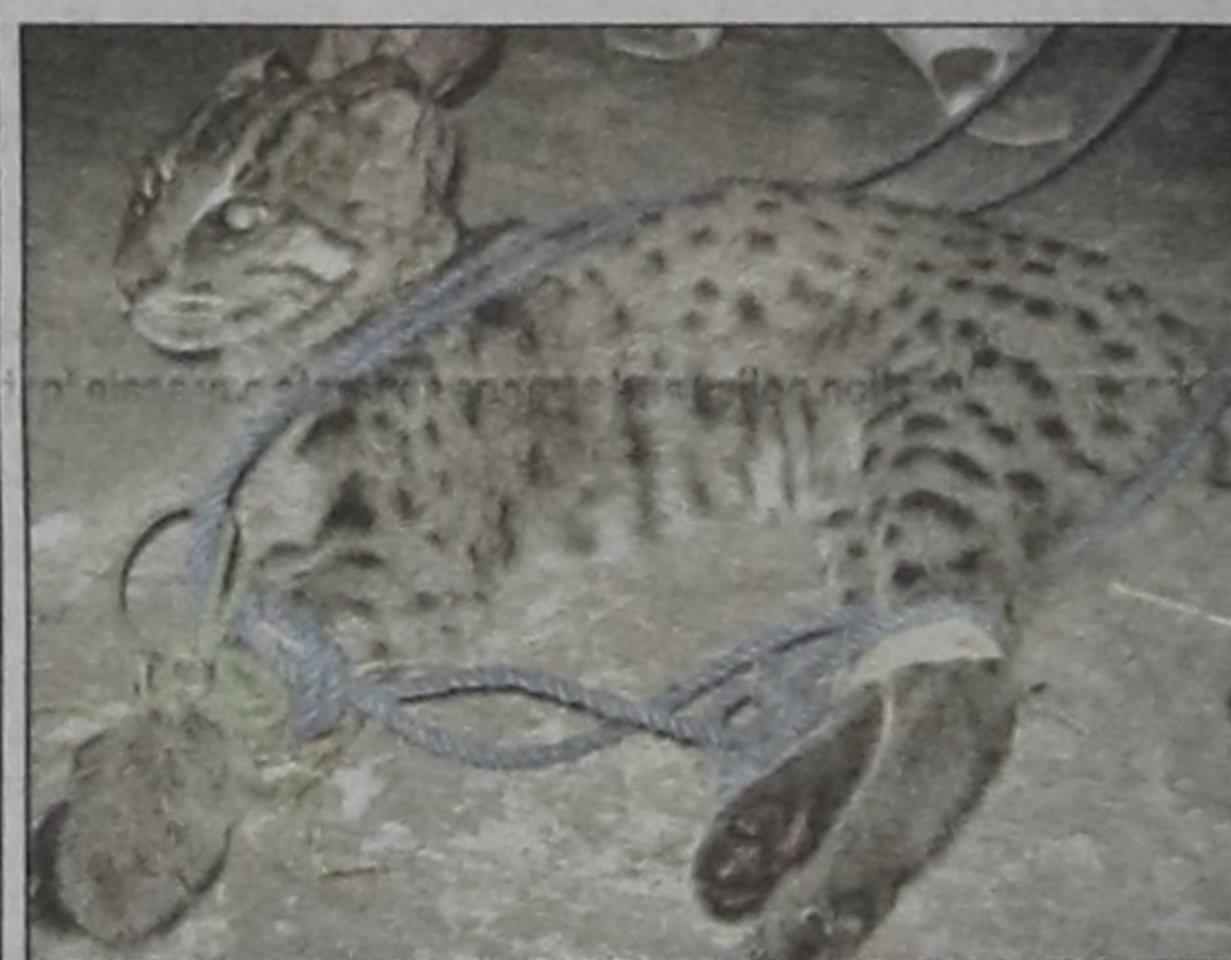


PHOTO: STAR

This young animal belonging to the cat family was caught unhurt at Govindapur village in Mouvibazar Sadar upazila on Wednesday night. Locals said it is cub of a leopard and came to human habitation in search of food.

Two die after eating shrimp

A CORRESPONDENT, Narsingdi

Two children died while two other members of a family fell critically ill after taking shrimp curry in Matirpara area in Narsingdi town Wednesday night. Nurjahan Begum, wife of Malek Miah of the area took shrimp curry with her children at around 8:30 pm and went to sleep. At around 11:30 pm, Nurjahan and her children started groaning in pain in their abdomen. Malek Miah woke up but his daughters Ritu Begum, 3, and Sonali Begum, 8, died after sometime while wife Nurjahan Begum, 35, and son Russell, 10, fell seriously ill. As Malek cried out for help locals rushed in and sent Nurjahan and Russell to Dhaka Medical College and Hospital in critical condition.

Section 144 in Ishwardi

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Pabna

Local administration has imposed Section 144 as two rival factions of BNP called meeting at the same venue at Puratan Bus Stand yesterday afternoon. Police said, supporters of Mokhesur Rahman Bablu, municipality mayor also upazila BNP leader called a meeting at the spot protesting a murder case. The rival faction led by Zakaria Pintu also called another meeting at the same venue triggering tension in the area. At this, Ishwardi upazila nirbahi officer (UNO) Ismail Hossain imposed Section 144 in the area to avoid untoward situation.

Fake Rab man arrested

UNB, Chuadanga

Rapid Action Battalion (Rab) members arrested a fake Rab man at Sorojganj bazaar in Sadar upazila on Wednesday morning. The arrestee is identified as Shahjahan Shah, 40, son of late Jamat Ali of Tiorbilla village in the upazila. Rab sources said, police at Sorojganj check post challenged Shahjahan while he was moving suspiciously in the area in a motorcycle. When Shahjahan introduced himself as a Rab member and produced a fake identity card, police informed the matter to local Rab. Later, a team of Rab-6 rushed to the spot and arrested him.

Fake notes seized from bank

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Pabna

Police yesterday seized 270 pieces of fake 500 taka notes from a bank and arrested the cashier on charge of supplying fake note from the bank. Officer-in-charge (OC) of Faridpur police station Md Abu Zafar said, acting on a tip-off, police raided Janata Bank Demra branch at Faridpur upazila town at noon. Searching the cash of the bank they recovered the fake notes. "All the notes were seized from cashier Abdus Subhan, the OC said. Later, the manager of the bank yesterday filed a case with Faridpur police station accusing the bank cashier on charge of trading fake notes through the bank branch.

Protector turns predator

Police ASI found guilty of cheating in Bogra

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Bogra

An assistant sub-inspector of Bogra Sadar Police Station was arrested in a cheating case yesterday.

ASI Mizanur Rahman was arrested immediately after Sub-Inspector Roksana of the police station filed the case. He was later sent to jail.

Mizan was found guilty in a police investigation and arrested on cheating

charge.

Police Sources said a potato trader named Akbar Ali, 55, was going to Thakugaon from Dhaka in a night coach with Tk 42,000 on Tuesday.

Apprehending robbery, he got down from the night coach at Bogra and went to Sadar Police Station. There he gave the money to duty officer Mizan to keep it in safe custody.

As Akbar wanted his money back the next morn-

ing, ASI Mizan refused to return the money and detained the trader as a mugger.

Akbar got upset and tried to commit suicide with a knife in the detention.

Following the incident, a one-member committee, headed by Additional Superintendent of Police Mostafizur Rahman, investigated the matter and found ASI Mizanur Rahman guilty.