



PHOTO: STAR

Tree felling affects betel leaf plantation at Nahar Khasia Punjee in Srimongal upazila of Moulvibazar district as the creepers depend on trees for survival. Inset, elephants carrying tree logs at the garden. The photos were taken on Sunday.

Keep elephants away, save the betel leaf gardens

Urge Khasia people in Srimongal

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Moulvibazar

Indigenous Khasia people living at Kailin Punjee and Aslam Punjee near a tea garden in Srimongal upazila of Moulvibazar district have appealed to the authorities concerned to stop carrying chopped trees from there by elephants to save their paan punjees (betel leaf plantations).

In a written petition submitted to the Moulvibazar deputy commissioner on December 12 and to the Srimongal upazila nirbahi officer on December 7, the Khasia people made the request on 'humanitarian grounds'.

The mohalder (bid winner) has got a verdict from the Supreme Court to carry 1886 chopped trees and so they have no objection to it, the Khasia people said.

They, however, have urged not to use elephants to carry the chopped trees so that betel leaf plantations are not damaged.

Many viruses usually spread out from the body of the elephants, which are very harmful for betel leaves, they said.

A team of journalists from Dhaka and Moulvibazar visited Kailin Punjee (Nahar Punjee-2) and Aslam Punjee (Nahar Punjee-1) on Sunday to see the situation

that appeared after chopping of about 5000 trees of those two Khasia punjees by the tea garden authority. Bangladesh Adivasi Forum leaders Shakti Podo Tripura, Pankaj Kondo and Deepayan Khisa were also present there during the visit.

Ferly Surong, montri (punjee leader) of the Kailin Punjee, told the reporters that they had started living at the two punjees (Khasia village) near the tea garden in 1980. They had taken the lands from former owner of the tea garden on lease and cultivated betel leaves there. Their betel leaf cultivation is dependent on environment friendly trees as betel leaf plants are creepers and they wind around big trees. Birds sitting in the branches of environment friendly trees often eat harmful insects and thus help betel leaves from damage.

So if there are no trees, there is no possibility of betel leaf cultivation.

"But the tea garden authorities had sold out big trees of the two punjees. After getting permission from the forest department, the mohalder started chopping down the trees. Upon protest by Khasia people and different organisations, the forest department suspended

their permission for tree felling. Later the mohalder filed a writ with the High Court that gave them permission to fell trees. The court had instructed them to chop only marked (by forest department) trees. But more than nine thousand trees including many unmarked trees had been felled down," Ferly Surong said.

"Later the affected Khasia people became a party of the writ filed by mohalder Selim Uddin. Then the court ordered him not to cut more trees and keep the already felled trees in stack near the punjee. The mohalder then filed a leave to appeal to the Appellate Division of the Supreme Court and got verdict to carry 1886 chopped trees on November 23 last year," he said.

"We are fearing that after end of the tree felling issue, the tea garden authority may evict us from our land in the name of extending tea plantation area. If we are evicted from this land we will be deprived of earning sources," Lutmon Pohlong, 55, a Khasia community member of Aslam Punjee, said.

Khasia leaders said about 600 people belonging to 70 Khasia families live in the two punjees and they cultivate betel leaves on about 450 acres of land there.

RAJSHAHI DIVISION

Aspirants file nominations for municipal election

STAR NATIONAL DESK

Mayor and councillor candidates yesterday submitted nomination papers to contest the election to the municipalities scheduled for January 12 in Rajshahi division, report our correspondents.

RAJSHAHI

As many as 87 mayor and 397 councillor candidates and 123 women for reserved seats submitted their nomination papers in 11 municipalities, said election officials last night.

More than one mayor aspirants from both Awami League and BNP filed nominations in all 11 municipalities in Rajshahi district yesterday, the last day of submission of nomination papers.

However, the district AL and BNP leaders said they will resolve intra-party feuds before the last date for withdrawal of nominations on December 26.

Sayed Mohammad Musa, election officer of Rajshahi,

said, the elections are being held in 11, out of 14 municipalities.

PABNA

Fifty-four mayor and 353 councillor candidates and 83 candidates for reserved seats for women councillor submitted nomination papers in seven municipalities of the district, election office sources said.

Several candidates from both AL and BNP submitted their nominations for the mayoral posts in all municipalities.

In Pabna Sadar upazila, 12 candidates for mayoral, 104 for councillor posts and 16 for reserved seats for women submitted nominations yesterday. In Vangura upazila, 10 for mayoral, 34 for councillor posts and 13 for reserved seats submitted nominations. In Ishwardi upazila, three for mayoral, 58 for councillor posts and 14 for reserved seats for women, in Sujaganar, 10 for mayoral, 50 for councillor posts, and 12 for reserved

seats, in Chatmohar, six for mayoral, 32 for councillor posts and seven for reserved seats, in Santhia, eight for mayoral, 41 for councillor posts and 10 for reserved seat, and in Faridpur municipality, five for mayoral, 34 for councillor posts and 11 for reserved seats submitted nomination papers.

CHAPAINAWABGANJ

Candidates for mayor and councillor posts filed their nomination papers to contest the coming election to four municipalities in Chapainawabganj.

A total of 33 mayor candidates, 260 councillor candidates and 70 candidates for women reserved seats filed their nomination papers in four municipalities of the district.

According to the election office sources, seven mayor candidates, 120 councillor candidates and 28 candidates for women reserved seats submitted nominations in

Chapainawabganj municipality, six mayor candidates, 42 councillor candidates and 17 for women reserved seats submitted nominations in Shibganj municipality, seven mayor candidates, 41 councillor candidates and 11 for women reserved seats submitted nominations in Rohonpur municipality and 13 mayor candidates, 59 councillor candidates and 14 for women reserved seats submitted nominations in Nachole municipality.

NATORE

As many as 33 candidates filed nominations for mayoral posts while 309 for councillor posts and 70 for women reserved seats in six municipalities of Natore district.

BOGRA

As many as 58 candidates filed nominations for mayoral posts in nine municipalities in Bogra while 491 for councillor posts and 135 for women reserved seats.

10 fishermen injured in pirate attack

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Patuakhali

At least 10 fishermen were injured as a gang of pirates attacked a fishing trawler in the Bay of Bengal at noon on Sunday. Of the injured five fishermen were sent to Barisal Sher-E-Bangla Medical College Hospital in critical condition.

The injured were identified as Neshur Uddin, 25, Shahidul Islam, 28, Jamal Mollik, 30, Abdul Khaleq, 32, Fazlu, 35, Jamal Mollah, 37, Jamal Howlader, 28, Ahmed, 29, Abul Kashe, 30, and Mannan, 34, all hailing from different villages under Kalapara upazila in the district.

Most of them were admitted to Mohipur health centre in the morning on Monday while Neshur Uddin, Shahidul Islam, Jamal Mollik, Abdul Khaleq and Fazlu were shifted to Barisal Medical College and Hospital.

Ansar Uddin Mollah, owner of the looted trawler FB said, on Sunday morning, the trawler started for deep sea to catch fish for Mohipur bazar near Kuakata.

After about four hours, a pirate gang on a speedy trawler attacked them and looted fuel, rice, net, cash, cell phones worth Tk two lakh from the trawler.

As some fishermen tried to resist the gang they chopped and beat them up.



PHOTO: STAR

Locals form a human chain at Zero Point in Rajshahi city yesterday demanding early steps to ensure proper healthcare services at government and private hospitals, clinics and diagnostic centres.

BSF kills 1

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Sathkira

Indian Border Security Force (BSF) shot dead a Bangladeshi cattle trader inside the Indian territory opposite to Kakkanga frontier under Kolaroa upazila on Monday.

The deceased was Kabirul Islam, 30, son of Ismail Hossain of Boalia village in the upazila.

BDR sources said BSF troops of Hakimpur camp fired two bullets, targeting a group of cattle traders around 5:30am, killing Kabirul on the spot.

BSF took away the body. Major Jahangir, operations officer of 41 Rifles Battalion, said BDR sent a letter to the Indian counterpart protesting the killing.

Krishak Dal leader held

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Patuakhali

A Rab-8 team at Patuakhali camp arrested Abdur Rob Howlader, president of Bangladesh Krishak Dal district unit, also former chairman of Utbaria union parishad under Sadar upazila yesterday.

The Rab team arrested him from Sadar Road area at about 1:30 am on the day.

Kazi Shamsheer Uddin, Rab company commander said Rob was in a case with Patuakhali police station.

Rab handed him over to Patuakhali police. They sent Rob to the court and the court sent him to the jail.

Proper healthcare at hospitals, pvt clinics demanded

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Rajshahi

Rajshahi city people yesterday formed a human chain demanding proper healthcare services at Rajshahi Medical College Hospital, other government and private hospitals and clinics and at diagnostic centres.

Organised by Rajshahi Rakkha Sangram Parishad (RRSP), around 100 people joined the human chain at Zero Point in the city.

They demanded enactment of the proposed Private Clinic Law 2010 and fixation of doctors' fees and charges for medical examinations at diagnostic centers, considering the income of common people.

The participants also urged the authorities concerned to ensure proper healthcare services at the medical centers within the next 30 days. Otherwise, they threatened to launch a tougher agitation programme.

Addressing a rally at the venue, the speakers said a number doctors are spending maximum time at private clinics ignoring their duties at government hospitals and some of them are charging excessive fees to the patients.

Due to lack of proper action against the persons responsible," he said.

employed by private clinics are active at government hospitals, bus stands and railway station to misguide patients, the speakers said, urging the authorities concerned to take immediate steps against nearly 100 illegal private clinics operating in the city without ensuring the least healthcare facilities.

They also demanded opening of a separate unit for heart patients and urged the authorities concerned to ensure presence of doctors at hospitals at night.

Contacted, Rajshahi Civil Surgeon Dr M Zahurul Islam admitted operation of many unregistered private clinics in the city. He said they will immediately launch a drive against the illegal clinics.

RMCH Director Brig Gen Abdul Latif, when contacted, said the 500-bed tertiary hospital is meant for only dealing specialised treatment, but it is now facing a load of 1200 patients due lack of a general hospital.

"We are trying our best to provide healthcare services for the patients as per rules. If anyone has any specific allegation against any doctor, he or she can make a complaint to us. We will take action against the persons responsible," he said.



PHOTO: STAR

Students of Patuakhali Government College bring out a protest procession in the town after their fellow Naznin Akter Fatema died in a road accident yesterday.

Death of student in road accident sparks protest in Patuakhali

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Patuakhali

Death of a female student of Patuakhali Government College in a road accident yesterday morning sparked protest in the town.

The victim was identified as Naznin Akhter alias Fatima, a student of 2nd year in Bangla department, also daughter of Shah Alam Khan of Gosalia village under Galachipa upazila in the district.

The accident occurred at around 9:30am at Sonali Bank Road.

Witnesses and police said, Fatima was going home along with her brother in an autorickshaw. When the autorickshaw reached Sonali Bank area in the town her scarf got coiled with a wheel and she fell down from the three-wheeler.

Her brother brought her to Patuakhali General Hospital where the on-duty doctor declared her dead. Driver of the autorickshaw fled after the accident.

On hearing the sad news, over 500 students boycotted their classes and brought out a procession from the college campus. The agitated students ransacked at least eight autorickshaws in different roads causing the autorickshaws to stop plying in the town.

Later the students at a street corner meeting in Sonali Bank area demanded immediate arrest of the driver of the autorickshaw and immediate punishment.

They also announced an agitation programme including forming a human chain today in front of the college.

The body of the hapless student was sent to her village.

Abu Saleh, brother of the girl filed a case with Patuakhali police station in this regard.

Contacted, Noresh Chandra Karmaker, OC of Patuakhali police station said police will take lawful steps after proper investigation.

... শরীরের সৌন্দর্যে কোথাও কোন সমস্যা থাকলে আমরা আছি

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- অতিরিক্ত মোটা মানুষের পাকস্থলী ছোট করা (Stapling) • লেজার (Laser)
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