



This 12-year-old sandalwood tree on the road island at Shibbari intersection in Khulna city has not been spared as both the advertising firm and city corporation officials found setting the triangular billboard more profitable than helping smooth growth of the highly valuable tree.

## Death knell for a rare sandalwood tree

QUAZI AMANULLAH, Khulna

A recently installed large triangular billboard has covered the upper portion of a sandalwood tree at Shibbari intersection under Sonadanga police station in Khulna city, as if to cause gradual death of the valuable tree hardly seen in our country.

Asked about the matter, Senior Revenue Officer of Khulna City Corporation (KCC) Md Moniruzzaman said, "The city corporation has allowed hanging this billboard there upon payment of advertisement fees. But I cannot say whether it will disturb growth of the sandalwood tree."

The official, responsible for collecting fees for such billboards, however, evaded the question how the billboard owners could manage such permission

from KCC officials concerned.

When contacted, KCC acting mayor Ajmol Ahmed Tapan told this correspondent yesterday that he would discuss this matter after Mayor Talukder Abdul Khaleque returns to Khulna from abroad within a couple of days.

The sandalwood tree will be protected at any cost, he said.

Md Anwarul Iqbal, a former adviser of the last caretaker government, planted sapling of the rare sandalwood tree on the road island at Shibbari intersection when he was the commissioner of Khulna Metropolitan Police in 1999.

Consequently, locals started calling the road island 'Chandan Dwip'.

"It is really sorrowful that hanging of a billboard for commercial

interest will lead to the death of a valuable tree.

The billboard must be dismantled without any delay to save the tree as the government is encouraging tree plantation across the country," said advocate Feroze Ahmed, convenor of Khulna Nagorik Samaj.

"Sandalwood trees are not grown in the Sundarbans. It is grown in some parts of India, especially Kerala state," said Mihir Kumar, divisional forest officer of the East Wing of Sundarbans Forest Division.

"The government imports sandalwood for different purposes. It is mainly used for making soap and herbal medicines. It is also used for celebration during different pujas and cremation of dead bodies of Hindus," he added.

# One killed, over 100 hurt in UP poll-related violence

STAR NATIONAL DESK

One person was killed and over 100 were injured in UP poll-related violence in Gaibandha, Kishoreganj, and Netrakona districts yesterday and on Saturday night.

In Gaibandha, post-poll clashes in three unions of Gobindaganj upazila on Saturday night left a man dead and at least 26 others injured, reports our correspondent.

The supporters of defeated chairman candidate Golam Kader Mithu attacked the workers of chairman-elect Abdul Latif Prodhan of Mohimaganj Union Parishad in front of Kushartai polling centre soon after the announcement of election results, leaving four people injured.

One of the critically injured named Abdus Sobhan, 55, of Ambari village in the union was rushed to

Bogra Medical College and Hospital where he died yesterday morning.

In Harirampur Union of the upazila, police charged batons on the supporters of a defeated member candidate as they tried to snatch ballot boxes after the announcement of results at Harirampur Government Primary School centre.

At least 10 people were injured in police action. They (police) also fired 11 blank shots to disperse the unruly people.

Post-poll clashes at Barotikori village in Shibpur Union and at Khuksia village in Nakai Union at the same night left 12 people injured.

Our Kishoreganj correspondent reported that the supporters of the defeated member candidate and the elected member clashed in Gubdig union of Mithamoin upazila yesterday morning, leaving at least 50 people from both sides injured.

Of the injured, 25 were admitted to Kishoreganj Sadar Hospital, 20 to Karimganj Upazila Health Complex while the rest given first aid.

Police and locals said the clash ensued as the supporters of elected member Awlad Mia

and defeated candidate Habibur Rahman Dusal locked in the clash as the processions of the two rival groups came face to face in the union at around 10:00am.

In Netrakona, at least 35 people were injured in a clash between police and the supporters of a candidate at Badda polling centre in Agia Union of Purbadhalia upazila at around 8:00pm on Saturday, according to our correspondent.

Officer-in-charge (OC) of

Purbadhalia police Station Asaduzzaman said the unruly people entered the polling centre in a bid to snatch the ballot boxes while the counting of votes was going on.

Police charged truncheons and fired 13 rounds bullets, leaving at least 25 people injured.

They also arrested six people on the spot and later produced them before a mobile court that sentenced each of them to one year imprisonment.

The convicts are Lat Mia, Raisuddin, Saiful Islam, Shahjahan Mia, Rafiq Mia and Bazlu Mia of Hatkanda village under Purbadhalia upazila.

The injured were admitted to the upazila health complex. Two of them, who received bullet injuries, were later referred to Mymensingh Medical College and Hospital.

## Pirates injure 8 fishermen, abduct 15

UNB, Bagerhat

At least 8 fishermen were injured while 15 others along with three trawlers abducted by pirates at Bedakhali canal of Sundarbans in Shoronghola upazila early yesterday.

Sundarbans east zone DFO Mihir Kumar Dey, quoting a fisherman, who returned from the clutches of the pirates, said that 20/25 members of notorious Nasir Bahini attacked 20 trawlers of the fishermen and beat them up mercilessly at 4:00am.

The fishermen came under attack while they were returning homes after fishing in coastal areas. At least 8 of them were injured.

The pirates looted the hilsa catches, fishing nets and fuel from the trawlers and kidnapped 15 fishermen demanding Tk 7.50 lakh ransom.

The kidnappers threatened to kill the fishermen if their demand was not met within one week.

Meanwhile, officials of forest department aided by Coast Guard members launched a drive to rescue the fishermen.

## Robbers loot house in Satkhira

UNB, Satkhira

Robbers looted gold jewelry and other valuables from the house of a primary schoolteacher at Uttar Polashpol village in the district town Friday.

Sources said robbers entered the house of Sahana Akther in absence of the inmates of the house by cutting the window grills in the evening and took away seven tolas of gold and other valuables worth Tk 4 lakh.



Locals form a human chain beside Lalmonirhat-Rangpur road at Mohendra Nagar in Lalmonirhat Sadar upazila yesterday demanding recounting of ballot papers at Nizpara Government Primary School polling centre.

## Recount of votes demanded, cop accused of flouting code

STAR NATIONAL DESK

Alam.

Mominul Islam Babu, one of the nine defeated member candidates, alleged that Khazir Uddin bribed the presiding and polling officers who declared him elected.

"After two days of election, local people found 300 ballots having seal on symbols on a jute field near Nizpara polling centre," the defeated member said.

Meanwhile, a police officer has been accused of violating election code of conduct in Lohagara upazila of Narail district.

Our Lalmonirhat correspondent reported that around 1,000 voters from five villages joined the human chain organised by nine defeated member candidates in the morning.

The participants alleged that elected member Khazir Uddin manipulated the election results with the connivance of presiding and polling officers of Nizpara Government Primary School centre on June 19 and snatched the victory of his rival candidate Jahangir Alam.

Upazila election office sources said 10 people contested for the member post. Khazir Uddin secured 711 votes while his nearest candidate Jahangir Alam got 511 votes.

In Narail, election code violation charge was brought against a police

officer by six chairman aspirants of Nowagram Union Parishad in Lohagara upazila, reports our correspondent.

In a written complaint submitted to the returning officer on Friday, the chairman candidates alleged that Md Enamul Haque, officer-in-charge of DB Jessor, arranged meetings at Brahmandanga Bazar, Raigram, Bottola and Kolagachhi Bazar on Wednesday and Thursday to woo votes for his younger brother Foyzur Haque.

Contacted, Upazila Election Officer Jahangir Alam Rakib said he knew nothing about the abandoned ballots.

Contacted, Returning Officer Arun Kumar Mondal said necessary action will be taken against the person responsible for violating election rules after proper investigation.

Refuting the allegation, Md Enamul Haque said he went to village home to see one of his ailing cousins.

## Dried turtle seized from smugglers

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Dinajpur

Border Guard Bangladesh (BGB) seized about 124 kg dried turtle, allegedly prepared for smuggling to India, in Nawabganj upazila of Dinajpur district yesterday morning.

Tipped off, a BGB team of Phulbari 40 Battalion led by Subedar Safi Uddin Hawladar raided Tikur village of Nawabganj upazila when some people were getting ready to smuggle the dried turtle to India through Hili border of Hakimpur upazila, BGB sources said.

Chased by the BGB jawans, the smugglers ran about half a kilometre and then managed to flee away, leaving the dried turtle.

Lt Col Amirul Islam, commanding officer of Phulbari 40 Battalion, confirmed the incident.

Seizure of the dried turtle, first time in the district, shows that it has appeared as a new item for smuggling to neighbouring India, said BGB official.

## Train derails

UNB, Comilla

Rail communications on Dhaka-Chittagong and Chittagong-Sylhet routes remained suspended for five hours as a container train derailed near Gomoti rail bridge in Sadar upazila early yesterday.

Railway sources said four compartments of a Dhaka-bound container train from Chittagong port veered off the track at 5:15 am, disrupting train services on the routes.

The train services resumed at 11:00am after two relief trains from Laksam and Akhaura salvaged the goods train.

## GAMBLING AND AFTERMATH

# One killed, 80 hurt in series of clashes, houses set on fire

STAR NATIONAL DESK

Series of clashes between villagers left one person dead and 80 others injured in Pirganj upazila of Rangpur district and Ghoraghat upazila of Dinajpur district last two days.

A man was killed and 50 others were injured as two groups of villagers in Chatra union of Pirganj upazila got locked in clashes over gambling at Ghashipur village on Saturday and Sunday, reports our Rangpur correspondent.

Altaf Hossain, 35, of Kumarpur village died on his way to Rangpur Medical College Hospital (RMCH) on Saturday afternoon as he was seriously injured in a fierce clash between people of Kumarpur and Ghashipur

villages, said Rowshan Mostafa, officer-in-charge of Pirganj police station.

As a sequel to Saturday's incident, the villagers again engaged in a clash yesterday and around 50 people were injured during the two days' incidents, said police and locals.

Twenty-seven of the injured were admitted to Pirganj Upazila Health Complex, 10 to Rangpur Medical College Hospital while the rest were given primary treatment.

Eyewitnesses said hundreds of people of Kumarpur with sticks and local weapons attacked the residents of Ghashipur village and set fire to their houses. They also looted belongings from there.

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yesterday in search of people fleeing for shelter following clashes over gambling.

The miscreants also set fire to at least 30 houses of the area, causing damage to around 5,000 maunds of paddy and 200 maunds of rice in addition to household things, said police and locals.

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