

Fire service staff at risky office bldg need 'rescue'

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Patuakhali

The building housing the Patuakhali fire service and civil defense office needs immediate renovation as 42 staffs work there amid life risk.

Plasters from the roofs fall on and often hampering activities at the office, staffs

alleged.

"The building may collapse any time. Plaster of roofs, wall turned loose. Our life is at risk in the building," said an official, expressing fear.

This correspondent, while visiting the two-storied building on Friday, found plasters fallen from at least 20 points of the roofs

and walls. At several places rods came out while cracks also developed in the building. Electric cables were hanging from walls and roofs making it risky for the employees.

All 42 staffs of the office work and live in the building while three fire fighting cars, one ambulance and one jeep are kept on the ground floor

of the building.

"The building needs urgent repairs as we are doing work and living here amid life risk as plaster is falling everyday," said Salauddin, a leader of firefighting team.

The two-storied building be came so dilapidated that rainwater enters it even after a small shower he said.

It is not only causing our sufferings but also damaging many valuable documents stored on the floor, he added.

"The building was built in 1974 and since then repair works were done only four to five times. No major renovation work took place for lack of fund. Rainwater easily enters the building through its roof," senior station officer Aminul Islam said.

We work and live amid fear as the building is too old for the purpose, Aminul Islam said, adding the second floor was declared 'risky' in December 2010 by Public Works Department (PWD).

"We sent several letters to the authorities concerned demanding immediate renovation but to no effect," he said.

In the letters sent to the authorities we narrated our sufferings and describe condition of the building. On October 1, we dropped a similar letter, he said.

"We are in fear that accident may occur any time," said Md Badrul Alam, assistant director of Fire Service and Civil Defense.

Contacted, Md Salim Talukder, sub-assistant engineer for Patuakhali Public Works Department (PWD), said they also wrote several times to the higher authorities to take steps for constructing a new building, as there is no scope to renovate the old one.

"We are building a shed at a cost of about Tk 10 lakh to shift the staffs to a safer place", he added.

But the shed will be very small in size and all the 42 staffs may not be accommodated there, senior station officer Aminul Islam told this correspondent.



PHOTO: STAR

Jungle mynahs lay eggs in an artificial nest set in Baikka Beel of Srimongal upazila of Moulvibazar district by Integrated Protected Area Co-management (IPAC), Bangladesh.

Wild birds in artificial nests hatch eggs

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Moulvibazar

Several cotton pygmy geese, locally known as *bali hans*, and jungle mynahs have laid eggs in the artificial nests set in Baikka Beel of Srimongal upazila under Moulvibazar district, thanks to the initiative of Integrated Protected Area Co-management (IPAC), Bangladesh.

Eggs of wild mynah have hatched in the nests that IPAC installed in an attempt to increase breeding of different species of birds in Baikka Beel.

The Hail Haor (water body) comprising Baikka Beel in Srimongal upazila was once rich in fish and aquatic plants but unabated fishing, felling of trees and aquatic weeds caused massive damage to its biodiversity, said IPAC sources.

With a view to reviving the traditional natural resources of the *haor*, IPAC started its work there with the financial assistance of USAID a few years ago.

Hail Haor, one of the most important marshlands of the country, has already made its place in the international list of important bird population areas.

Earlier in 2005, the IPAC installed 12 artificial nests on experimental basis at different places of Baikka Beel but no birds laid any eggs there that time. In 2007 the geese laid eggs in four nests.

In April this year, the local 'co-management committee', an affiliated

body of the IPAC, installed 21 water-proof artificial nests at Hijal and Karach jungles of Baikka Beel. These special nests were manufactured with the technical advice of Paul Thomson, an international expert on birds.

An observation team led by Moloy Sarkar, IPAC director in charge of Sylhet region, completed the first phase of their survey of artificial nests at Baikka Beel on July 10 this year. During the survey, they saw that birds made their shelter in 14 artificial nests. They found 26 eggs in a nest and 15 eggs in another nest. The birds also started laying eggs in a few other nests. Young ones of wild mynah also hatched out from eggs in a nest.

"We have taken an initiative on experimental basis to install artificial nests to save native birds that have seen decrease in recent years. According to our preliminary observation, the result is positive. We are hopeful of success if eggs remain safe and young ones hatched out from them can grow without any disturbance," Moloy Sarkar said.

"Now only a few native birds reside here permanently. To save the artificially installed nests from the bird hunters, these are being kept under strict vigilance," said Ador Miah, a guard employed by the co-management committee in Baikka Beel.



PHOTO: STAR

Staff work at two-storey Patuakhali fire service and civil defence office amid life risk as plasters from the roof and walls of the run-down building fall on and often while cracks have developed in the concrete structure.



Trader kidnapped and killed, another stabbed to death

STAR NATIONAL DESK

Kidnappers killed a trader in Narail yesterday while criminals stabbed another trader to death in Mymensingh on Friday.

Body of a local trader, kidnapped two days ago, was recovered by Lohagara police from a pond at Madinapara village near Lohagara Bazar yesterday, reports our Narail correspondent.

The deceased was identified as Biplob Mollah, 21, son of Abul Hossain Mollah of Chorbokjuri village under Lohagara upazila.

Family sources said Biplob, owner of a sta-

tionary shop at Kalna Bazar, had a longstanding enmity with Sagor Meer, Liton Meer, Hanna Meer, Mintu Meer, Monowar Meer and Kamrul Sheikh of his village.

One of them demanded illegal toll from Biplob. Biplob refused and informed the matter to his family members and local union parishad chairman. This angered the gang for which they threatened him, they said.

According to parents, on Thursday at around 6.00pm, Biplob went out of house with his motorcycle and since then remained

missing. Yesterday his body was found in a pond with his hands and legs tied with rope.

Investigation officer SI Toiwob Ali Khan said, "Biplob was suffocated in pond water". We arrested Sagor Meer on suspicion, he added.

In Mymensingh, local traders blocked Dhaka-Mymensingh highway yesterday noon following the killing of a trader in Trishal upazila bus stand area Friday night.

Sabuj, 26, owner of a tea-stall and a resident of Darirampur village in Trishal upazila, was killed by a local gang at 9pm on Friday, reports

UNB.

Police quoting locals said, criminals attacked and stabbed Sabuj at one stage of altercation over a trifling matter, leaving him seriously injured.

Later, Sabuj succumbed to his injuries at Mymensingh Medical College Hospital. A case was filed.

As the news spread, angry local traders formed a human chain demanding immediate arrest of the killers.

They also put up a barricade on Dhaka-Mymensingh highway at 12:30pm, disrupting traffic for about an hour.

2 murdered in Jessore

STAR NATIONAL DESK

Two young men were stabbed to death in Jessore while body of another youth was recovered in Meherpur yesterday.

The youths killed in Jessore town were identified as Masud Hossain, 27, son of Sheikh Abdus Sattar of Purba Barandipara area and Shukur Ali, 25, son of Abdul Gafur Mollah of Railgate Pashchimpara area of the town, reports UNB.

Family sources said, Masud had a conflict with the drug peddlers of the area as he informed police about their illegal activities.

They said one Laltu of nearby Bejpara area called Masud out of the house at about 1:30am and later he was found dead near a graveyard in the town.

On information, police recovered the body that bore several stab injury marks and sent it to hospital morgue for autopsy.

Police detained Monirul Islam *alias* Chhoto Moni, son of Azim Mia, Sony and Islam, sons of Fazar Ali of the area for interrogation.

In another incident, criminals stabbed to death Shukur Ali, an activist of Awami Shwechhasebok League at around 12:15am in Railgate area. The body was sent to hospital morgue for autopsy.

In Meherpur, body of a young man was found floating in the Mathabhanga River in Gangni upazila yesterday, reports our Kustia correspondent.

The deceased was identified as Ifaz Uddin, 25, son of Monsur Ali of Garula in Daulatpur upazila of Kushtia.

Victim's family sources said, Ifaz along with others had gone to India to enjoy the immersion of Durga idols on Thursday, but he did not return home.

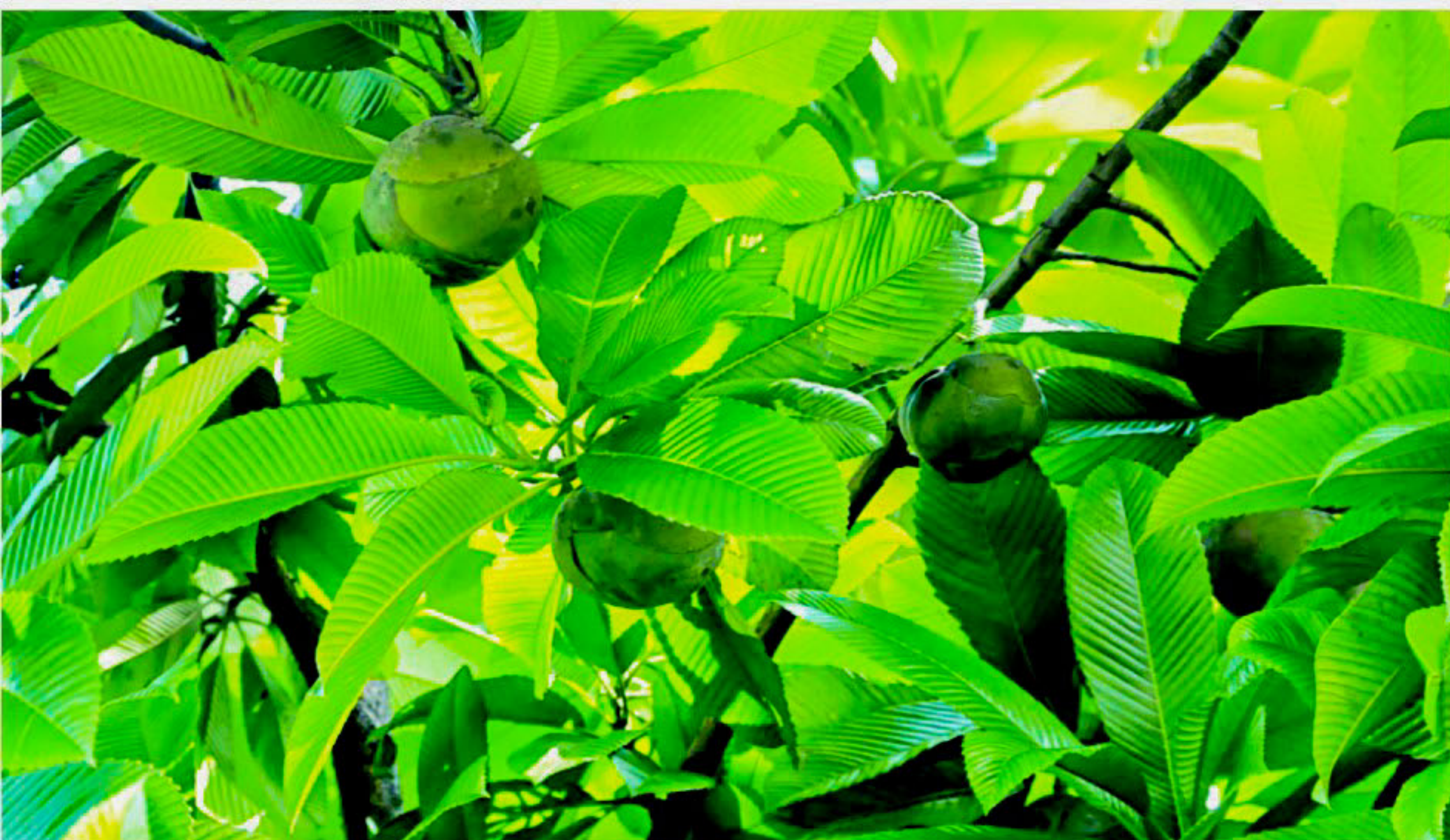


PHOTO: STAR

Rainy season is over. But Elephant Apples, locally known as *chalta*, are still available at some places. This picture of the acidic flavoured fruit was taken from Shalbagan area of Rajshahi city yesterday.

