HC hearing today

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Madaripur district administration has prepared a probe report on the damage of two century-old Hindu temples at Palita of Rajoir upazila in the district, apparently to shield the perpetrators behind the incident, locals allege.

The High Court is set to hear the matter today. The deputy commissioner's (DC) office of Madaripur prepared the report and submitted it to the attorney general's office on February 28, sources have said.

The report says the temples -- one of Goddess Kali and another of God Gopal -on 1.55 acres of government land were not demolished by any authority or any person, but had been damaged due to lack of proper maintenance.

Rejecting the report findings, the temples' governing committee on Friday submitted an application to the DC requesting him to personally conduct an inquiry after visiting the temples and taking statements from local people.

Villagers and members of the governing committee have claimed that one Nirmal Kanti Halder and his brother Shanti Ranjan Halder, who are very rich and influential in the area, have demolished the temples at different times in their own interest. Nirmal is a retired school headmaster while Shanti is a retired college official. The latter is an accused in a murder case.

The committee's general secretary, Bharat Chandra Halder, and several members said Nirmal had sold a large number of bricks of the temples several years ago. He has recently cut down and sold some old trees at the temple premises. Occupying the temples' land, Nirmal had built a small house on the premises for his personal work.

Keeping track of developments, the temple committee last year submitted an application to the DC's office, but it did not take any action against the accused due to mysterious reasons.

The HC bench of Justice AHM Shamsuddin Choudhury Manik and Justice Jahangir Hossain Selim on January 24 directed the Madaripur DC to investigate whether the temples were demolished

and to prosecute the perpetrators in accordance with the provisions of Criminal Procedure Code and the Penal Code.

Nirmal, who was kept in the dock during the hearing, admitted that he had been occupying the land since 1987 without any lease agreement, but claimed that he had requested the DC office for a lease.

The court rebuked Nirmal for occupying the land.

Contacted by The Daily Star, Md Nur-Ur-Rahman, DC of Madaripur, said his subordinate officials dealt with the matter after visiting the place, and then he prepared the report as per the findings.

"Place your statements before the court. I cannot make any comment," the DC said.

On February 23, a team led by an additional deputy commissioner and UNO of Rajoir went to the temple to evict two landless families who have been involved with the temples for around 25 years, in the name of evicting "unauthorised structures".

They, however, refrained from evicting them after Deputy Attorney General ABM Altaf Hossain contacted the district administration over phone and said that the families could not be evicted from the temple as per the court order. The small house built by Nirmal was

demolished, but the officials did not take statements of the locals, Bharat Chandra said. "Nirmal is now attempting to form a false committee of the temple with the help of his accomplices to grab the land of the temple," he added. Eminent lawyer Manzill Murshid said

the administration was trying to save the persons who had damaged the temples and the environment by making such a false probe report. It is tantamount to showing disrespect to the HC.

During the hearing on January 24, Manzill as an intervener in the case presented to the HC bench some photographs on the demolition of the temples and felling of the trees.

Nirmal could not be reached for his comments on the issue despite several attempts by our Madaripur correspondent.



FILEPHOTO

Domestic help 'commits

suicide' in city

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A teenage domestic help allegedly committed suicide at a residential flat in the

city's Adabor area on Friday. The deceased, Afroza Akhter Sohagi, 14, daughter of Abul Kalam Azad, hailed

from Nilphamari. On information, police recovered the body from the flat on the 11th floor of a building at Japan Garden City

around 10:00pm on Friday. Akhter Hossain, subinspector of Adabor Police Station, said Afroza hanged

herself from a ceiling hook in the flat with a scarf. She was working as a

domestic help at the flat of Sirajul Islam, a jewelry shop owner at Mouchak Market.

At the time of the incident, Sirajul and his wife were not at home while their two daughters were sleeping

in their room. When the girls woke up, they found Afroza dead. Hearing their hue and cry, neighbours rushed to the flat

immediately and called police. Police sent the body to Dhaka Medical College

morgue for autopsy. Afroza's mother Rahima Begum said her daughter

had been working at the flat since August last year. She also said Afroza was slightly mentally imbalanced.

She filed an unnatural death case with Adabor Police Station in this regard.

Five killed, 62 injured in road crashes

METRO DESK

A damaged temple at Palita of Rajoir upazila in Madaripur.

Five persons were killed and 62 others injured in separate road accidents in Gaibandha and Natore on Friday.

In Gaibandha, Three persons were killed and seven others sustained injuries in two separate road accidents in Gobindagnaj upazila of the district on Friday night.

A CNG run three-wheeler fell into a roadside ditch after its collision with a rickshaw van at Shahebganj on Gobindagnaj-Ghoraghat road.

The driver of the three-wheeler Azad Mia, 40, died on the spot while four others received injuries and admitted to Gobindaganj Health Complex.

Later, Abdur Rouf, 50, one of the injured, succumbed to his injuries on the way to Rangpur Medical College Hospital. Meanwhile, a Bogra bound auto-rickshaw collided head on with a bus at Fasitola on Bogra-Rangpur highway, leaving

four passengers of it injured. The injured were rushed to Bogra Medical College Hospital where an unidentified passenger, aged about 36, succumbed to his injuries.

Our Natore Correspondent adds: Two people were killed and 55 others were injured in a road accident on Rajshahi-Dhaka highway in Tokia Dhalan area under Natore Sadar upazila on Friday.

The deceased were identified as Tofazzal Hossain, 60, of Dariapur village in Chapainawabganj Sadar upazila, and

Sahidul Islam, 50, of Gofagari area in Rajshahi city. A bus from Manikganj overturned in the area as its driver lost control over the steering, leaving its passengers injured

at around 7:20pm. Tofazzal succumbed to his injuries at Natore Sadar Hospital at around 9:00pm and Sahidul at Rajshahi Medical

College Hospital (RMCH) at about 10:20pm. Of the injured, Mozammel Haque, 50, Tariqul Islam, 59, Imran Ali, 57, Nur Islam, 75, Israfil Alam, 45, Mafizul Islam, 60, of Chapainawabganj Sadar upazila, and Kazal, 19, of Puthia upazila in Rajshahi, were admitted to Natore Sadar Hospital and the rest were admitted to RMCH and Puthia Upazila Health Complex.



Gusty winds damaged many shops in Patenga sea beach of Chittagong early yesterday.

3 'muggers' National urbanisation caught red handed policy soon: Nanak

BSS, Dhaka

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

Chittagong city yesterday.

Patrol police were alerted

by cries from a female rick-

shaw passenger who was

being mugged by the three,

arriving on a CNG-run auto-

rickshaw, around 6:30am

and rushed in to make the

A case was filed with

Kotwali Police Station in this

Three men

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

Police arrested three people

with a locally made gun in

The arrestees are

Mohammed Hasan, 42, of

Gaibandha; Abdul Kader, 28, of

Kishoreganj; and Mohammed

police went to Shahidnagar

area around 3:00pm and

challenged a group of men.

The men fled and police

managed to nab the three

carrying the firearm. A case

was filed in this connection

with Bayezid Police Station,

Man with

4kg hemp

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

Police, on information,

arrested a man carrying four

kilogrammes of cannabis

from Majhirghat area of

Chittagong city around

The arrested man is

Ranjit Chandra Nath, 32, of

arrested

1:30am yesterday.

Barguna, said police.

said police.

On information, a team of

Shahjahan, 25, of Rangpur.

Chittagong city yesterday.

held with

firearm

arrests, said police.

connection.

Bakalia area.

Police caught three alleged

muggers red handed from State Minister for LGRD and Cooperatives Puratan Biman Office area in Jahangir Kabir Nanak has said the govern-The arrestees are Nazir ment will formulate a 'National Mia, 45, Md Khalil, 22, and Urbanisation Policy' soon to ensure sustain-Md Subahan, 21, of the city's able development of towns.

> The state minister was speaking as the chief guest at a seminar at Agargaon NILG auditorium in the city yesterday.

> The seminar on "Independent Municipality: Planning and Implementation Strategies" was organised by Bangladesh Municipality Development Fund (BMDF).

> Mayors from some 154 city corporations and municipalities attended the seminar.

> Nanak said most of the people of the country would live in towns in the next 40 years. Therefore, there is no alternative to making specific policies and plans for modernisation of towns and enhancing civic amenities there, he added.

Rapid urbanisation is a problem, he said adding that it was not possible to ensure all civic facilities with limited resources. The state minister urged the mayors to

think not only about the present generation, but also the future generations while making plans for their respective areas. Presided over by Local Government

Division Secretary Abu Alam M Shahid Khan, the seminar was also addressed by World Bank Country Director Allen Goldstein and BMDF Managing Director KM Nurul Huda, among others. Former adviser to a caretaker govern-

ment Dr Hossain Zillur Rahman, Bangladesh Institute of Planners President Dr Ghulam Rahman, Municipality Association of Bangladesh President M Azmat Ullah Khan and BMDF Programme Manager M Harun-or Rashid presented separate papers on urbanisation.

Use language to develop country further

Yeafesh urges young generation

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

State Minister for Science and Technology Yeafesh Osman yesterday said the country's young generation had to use language as a weapon side by side with technology to reach Bangladesh to the new heights of development.

The young generation has great potentials to develop the country, he said.

He was addressing as the chief guest the concluding ceremony of a two-day long programme styled "Bangla Wikipedia Unconference-2012" at Independent University Bangladesh, Chittagong in the port city.

The state minister urged the young mass to get involved in upgrading the Bangla

Wikipedia. Through using and developing the site, the generation can learn about and uphold the country's culture, history and heritage, he said.

IUB, Wikimedia and Bangladesh Open Source Network jointly organised the programme.

He said the nation sacrificed much for establishing the right to language and for bringing independence.

He called upon the young generation as well as all patriotic people to stand united against those who do not feel Bangla as their own language and plot to foil the war crimes

"Knowledge is a resource in the new millennium," said noted writer Prof Muhammad Zafar Iqbal.

If the young generation maintains their responsibilities well, it would bring tremendous change in every field of the country, he added.

He also stressed cultivating the habit of reading since it enhances human creativity.

Physics Department Head of Shahajalal University of Science and Technology Dr Yismin Haque, Wikimedia Bangladesh Foundation President Munir Hasan and Chittgaong City Corporation panel Mayor Chowdhury Hasan Mahmud Hasani also addressed the programme.

20 shops damaged in storm in Patenga

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

A brief storm accompanied by strong wind damaged about 20 shops at Patenga Beach in Chittagong early hours of yesterday.

Md Sahabuddin, president of Patenga Beach Shop Owners Association, said around 20 shops were completely blown off and some 50 others damaged partly.

The amount of loss may range from Tk 20 to 30 lakh, he added.

The storm, which started around 1:40am, lasted for five minutes. The wind was recorded as 70 kilometres per hour, said Md Arif Hossain, an official of Patenga Met Office.

Alauddin, a staff of Ammajan Restaurant, who was holding on to a pillar during the storm, said the wind blew the roofs like feathers into trees some 50 yards away.

Morshed Alam, owner of Sea-View Colour Lab, said, "All my computers, printers, and the digital colour lab have been damaged completely as all of them got drenched in rain".

The loss may stand at Tk

5-7 lakh, he said. Many trees were blown down and broken.



Seminar

Bangladesh Heritage and National Security will host a seminar. Time: 3:00pm. Venue: Bilia auditorium.

Exhibition Embassy of Japan will organise an exhibition. Time: 11:30am. Venue:

Bangladesh National Museum.

Discussion Kapeeng Foundation will organise a

discussion. Time: 10:30am. Venue: Cirdap auditorium.

Seminar

Poribesh Bachao Andolon (Poba) will hold a seminar. Time: 11:00am. Venue: Jatiya Press Club.

Meeting

Bangladesh Awami Shwechchhasebok League will hold a meeting. Time: 11:00. Venue: Bangabandhu Avenue.

Commemorative Meeting

commemorative meeting. Time: 4:00pm. Venue: Public Library. **Protest Rally**

Samajtantrik Archive will hold a

5:00pm. Venue: Jatiya Press Club. Scientific Conference

Communist Party of Bangladesh

(CPB) will hold a protest rally. Time:

Bangladesh Society of Medicine will hold a scientific conference. Time: 6:30pm. Venue: Ruposhi Bangla



PHOTO: FOCUS BANGLA Dr Akbar Ali Khan, former adviser to a caretaker government, speaks at a discussion organised by Shekar Sandhan at Dhaka Reporter's Unity yesterday. (Story on Page 2)