

Tree felling goes on, this time in Lalmonirhat

S. DILIP ROY, Lalmonirhat

A group of people allegedly belonging to the ruling Awami League (AL) felled 50 big roadside trees at Durakuti village in Lalmonirhat Sadar upazila from March 16-18.

Informed by locals, Lalmonirhat district council authorities prevented the group from felling any more trees beside Lalmonirhat-Mogholhat road on March 18 noon.

However, no further action is yet to be taken against the 'identified gang'.

The 50 felled trees include 20 mahogany, 21 shil korai and 9 nim trees at the village, locals said.

Price of each of the felled mahogany trees would be Tk 30 to 40 thousand, each shil korai Tk 20 to 25 thousand and each nim around Tk 8 to 15 thousand, said local wood trader Monsur Ali.

"When we asked the gang why they were felling roadside trees they showed false auction papers. We informed the district council authority of the matter immediately," said Habibur Rahman, a villager.

"They gave death threat when we urged the gang not to fell the trees on March 16," said Nurul Islam, another villager.

Seeking anonymity, a woodcutter at Durakuti village said a local AL man hired him and nine other labourers to fell the roadside trees, saying that he got auction order to fell roadside trees at Durakuti.

Unus Ali, head assis-

tant of Lalmonirhat district council, said the district council authority did not hold any auction to fell roadside trees in the village.

"After getting information that an organised group felled some big and live roadside trees in Lalmonirhat-Mogholhat road I took steps to prevent the group from cutting down anymore trees on

Sunday noon. I have informed the administrator of district council of the matter. He will take necessary step," said Mohammad Shahjahan, chief executive officer of Lalmonirhat District Council.

Contacted, district council Administrator Motiar Rahman, also district AL general secretary, said, "Some unscrupulous staffs of my office may be

involved with the gang in felling some big and valuable roadside trees at Durakuti village beside Lalmonirhat-Mogholhat road in last few days."

"A three-member probe team was formed to investigate the matter on last March 19. I will take necessary action regarding the matter after getting probe report by coming Monday," he said.

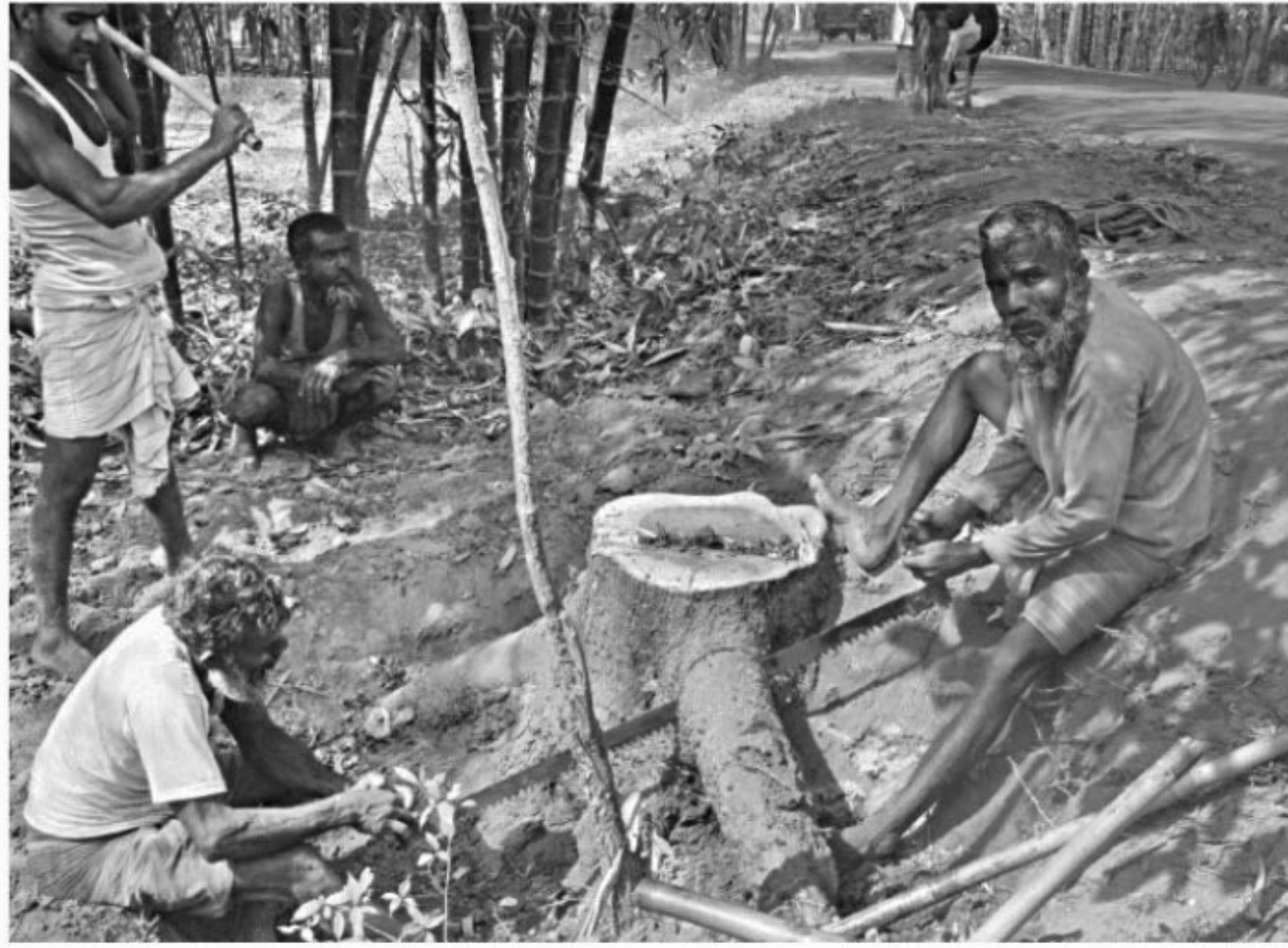


PHOTO: STAR
Two workers saw a tree beside Lalmonirhat-Mongolhat road at Durakuti village in Lalmonirhat Sadar upazila as a group allegedly belonging to the ruling Awami League felled 50 large roadside trees from March 16 to 18. Inset, logs of felled trees being taken away for sale.



Water crisis grips Satkhira town due to fall in water tables

Procession, rally marking World Water Day

ABU AHMED, Satkhira

Scarcity of safe drinking water has taken a serious turn in Satkhira town in the last few days causing immense sufferings to the town dwellers as the municipal authorities cannot supply around half of the required quantity of water.

Residents of Bakal, Kukhrali, Parkukharali, Rasulpur, Mehediabagh, Masterpara, Madhyakatia, Palashpole, Raispur, Baddipur colony and Itagachha are worst sufferers as water tables marked fall in those areas.

Satkhira municipality sources said, water cannot be lifted as per demand through the pumps due to decline in water table. Most of the pumps remain inoperative also due to frequent load-shedding and voltage fluctuation.

According to sources, there are 7,100 water connections for over one lakh

and 35,000 people in the municipality while the authorities are now supplying 6,300 litres of water against the demand of about 11,000 litres.

They said, there are two overhead water tanks to supply water to the residents of the town with a capacity of 1100 litres of water each. On the other hand, one out of six production tubewells went out of order in February last.

While visiting a few affected areas yesterday, this correspondent found women crowding around taps to collect drinking water. Abdur Razzak and Nawsher Ali of Raispur said the town dwellers are suffering a lot as water supply remained suspended in the area for the last five days.

Patients at Satkhira Sadar Hospital and other private clinics suffer a lot due to the scarcity of

drinking water.

Relatives of the patients procure water from far away places for drinking, bathing and washing clothes.

Due to sharp fall in groundwater level, it is not possible to lift around half of the required water through pumps, said supervisor of water supply centre's of Satkhira municipality Selim Sarwar. Most of the water pumps remain inoperative in dry season, he added.

Satkhira municipal mayor MA Jalil said that his office invited two separate tenders to install two deep tubewells to lift water in a bid to solve the water crisis. The work is expected to be completed within three months, he added.

Meanwhile, scores of people from all walks of life under the banner of Sachetan Nagarik Committee, Satkhira district chapter of TIB, brought out a procession, formed a human

chain followed by a rally in the town demanding access to safe drinking water.

To mark the World Water Day 2012, they gathered on a street carrying banners in the morning and paraded the main thoroughfares of the town. Later they formed a human chain at Laboni Cinema Hall intersection.

A rally was also held there with committee president Abdul Mannana in the chair.

The Speakers said over 50 lakh people living in the coastal areas of Satkhira, Khulna and Bagerhat districts are facing acute scarcity of safe drinking water due to arsenic contamination in ground water, use of toxic elements in arable lands and discharge of industrial wastes in the rivers.

They also urged the government to take steps to remove salinity from surface water.

Harijan people demand arrest of youth's killers

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Dinajpur

People of Harijan community yesterday formed a human chain demanding immediate arrest of the killers of a young man of their community on March 9.

They also submitted a memorandum to deputy commissioner and superintendent of police of Dinajpur.

Gonesh Soren 22, son of Sitaram Soren was beaten to death in Balubari area in the district town on March 9 midnight.

After submitting the memorandum, about 300 people of the community including men, women and children gathered in front of Dinajpur Press Club and formed an hour-long human chain.

On March 10, mother of the victim Shandhya Rani filed a case accusing nine people. Of them, three were caught by locals and handed over to police.

But police took no action against the accused though the gang continued to intimidate them openly, the participants alleged at the human chain programme.

Mukti Rani Roy, wife of the victim and their one and half year old daughter Neha Rani were present at the human chain.

Benapole C&F men threaten indefinite strike Mar 28

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Benapole, Jessore

Benapole C & F Agent Employees Union called for an indefinite strike at the land port from March 28, protesting a 'false case' filed against their 200 members by the port authority.

Md Nasir Uddin, general secretary of the C & F Agent Employees' Union said, they took the decision at an emergency meeting yesterday noon to go on strike, if the case was not withdrawn by March 27.

Abul Jalil, deputy director of the port, said a case was filed against 200 employees of the union on Thursday evening after the C & F agent employees attacked the port security members and vandalised port office over a trivial matter.

On Thursday morning, five people were injured in a clash between members of ansar and the C & F agent employees following an altercation.

The clash erupted when C & F employee Shohag protested alleged corruption by Anser members.

Hasan Hafizur Rahman, officer-in-charge of port PS, said port director Abul Kalam Azad filed the case against 200 members of C & F agent employees.

The Daily Star - ENGLISH FAIR



PHOTO: STAR

Winner of different events at the English language fair at Ishwardi Airport Academy in Ishwardi upazila under Pabna district flash V-sign as they pose with their teachers.

Kids of 4 Pabna, Jamalpur schools take part

STAR NATIONAL DESK

Students of four schools in Pabna and Jamalpur districts yesterday took part in the English language fairs held under English in Schools programme, a joint initiative of The Daily Star and mobile operator Robi.

Adcom Ltd is the creative and event partner of the fairs.

English language fairs were held at Ishwardi Airport Academy in Ishwardi upazila and Bera Pilot High School in Bera upazila under Pabna district yesterday, reports our correspondent.

Md Motiar Rahman, headmaster of Ishwardi Airport Academy, and Gias Uddin, headmaster of Bera Pilot School, inaugurated the programmes at the respective institutions.

In Ishwardi Airport Academy, over 200 students joined the fair while 19 of them participated in extempore speech, vocabulary test, role play and quiz competitions.

Globally renowned movie The Lion King was screened, followed by quizzes on vocabulary, extempore speeches, etiquette test and role play.

"The English in Schools programme has created the opportunity to read English newspapers and learn the foreign language with ease for the village children," said headmaster Motiar Rahman.

Over 200 students of



PHOTO: STAR

Two students of Ishwardi Airport Academy take part in a role play during yesterday's English language fair.



Bera Pilot High School also joined the fair at the institution and 25 students there participated in similar events.

Our Jamalpur Correspondent adds: About 250 students of Jamalpur Zila School and Jamalpur High School in the district headquarters took part in the English language fair held at Zila School auditorium yesterday.

The fair events comprised presentation of The Lion King, contests on vocabulary, situation-based questions, one-word questions, extempore

speeches and role play. Students of the two schools took part in joyful interactions and watched the events based on the movie.

Later prizes were distributed among the winners.

Aiming to promote English language learning among school students across the country, The Daily Star in cooperation with Robi undertook English in Schools programme in 2009.

Under the initiative, each of one thousand schools selected from 64 districts of the country receives three complimentary copies of The Daily Star five days a week.

The ongoing English language fairs at different schools are being held in coordination with the education ministry as part of the three-year-long programme.



PHOTO: STAR

Prize winners of Jamalpur Zila School and Jamalpur High School flash V-sign at the English language fair held at the auditorium of the zila school yesterday.



Tiring two hours

Passengers of Burimari commuter train on Lalmonirhat-Burimari route are visibly tired of waiting at Lalmonirhat station as the train, already plying the route for the last two months, saw inauguration and naming by a state minister who arrived two hours late for the purpose yesterday.

PHOTO: STAR

Teenage gangsters ransack clinic, stab its director in Barisal

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Barisal

A gang of teenage boys on Friday ransacked a clinic in the city and stabbed the clinic director for refusing treatment of an injured gang member.

Police arrested five boys early yesterday.

Clinic, police and witnesses said, notorious teenage gang known as Tipu-Jitu Bahini control the Jhawtala-Kalibari-B M School-

Shitlakhola- Hospital Road areas of the city.

A gang member of Nipu, younger brother of Jitu, was injured in a clash with rival Rony Bahini on Friday night.

Nipu came to Fair Health Clinic in Kalibari Road area in the city at about 9:00 pm and ordered attending physician Dr Hawa Akhter Jahan to give him necessary treatment.

As Dr Hawa was busy at

operation theatre, she advised them to take the injured to Sher-e-Bangla Medical College Hospital.

It made the teenaged gang members furious. They beat up OT boy Zahid, ransacked the clinic and tried to stab clinic receptionist Yasin Khan, creating panic among the patients, attendants and staffs of the clinic.

The gang severely stabbed clinic director

Harunur Rashid Selim when he rushed to settle the trouble. As locals called police, the gang left the clinic with the injured gang member.

The gang also created panic at the emergency ward of SBMCH and misbehaved with the hospital staffs and physicians later at night, said sources.

Police rushed to SBMCH and arrested five gang members.