



## 8 suspected militants arrested

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Patuakhali

Rapid Action Battalion (Rab-8) of Patuakhali camp arrested eight suspected militants from PTI Road in Barguna district town yesterday morning.

The arrestees were identified as Jalal Uddin, 40, of Uzirpur upazila in Barisal, Mozammel Haque, 35, Sajib Shaikh, 30, Rajib, 36, and Salman Khan, 41, of Gouranadi in Barisal and Waliullah, 35, of Barguna district town.

Hamid Al Mahbub, deputy director of Rab-8 said they arrested the suspected militants at about 8.00am from a rented house where they were staying and allegedly carrying out militant activities.

Mozammel, one of the arrestees told this correspondent that they were members of Hizb-ut-Tawhid, an Islamist outfit, led by Bayezid Khan Panni of Tangail district.

We rented a house here to spread our message, he added.

One of us pulls rickshaw, one is a house tutor and others live by selling books, he disclosed.

Later, Rab handed over all the arrestees to Barguna police.

### TANGAIL BYPOLL

## Nomination of independent candidate rejected

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Tangail

The returning officer (RO) here yesterday rejected the nomination paper of an independent candidate for Tangail-3 (Ghatail) bypolls as he failed to show support of necessary voters.

Five candidates submitted nomination papers in the bypolls and yesterday was the date for scrutiny.

Returning officer Mohammad Khorshed Anwar yesterday said at the hall room of Tangail deputy commissioner that nomination paper of independent candidate Aatur Rahman Khan was rejected as he failed to submit support (signatures) of one percent voters (2,713) out of the total voters in the constituency as per the electoral rules.

The candidate could submit signatures of only 1,480 voters, the RO added.

The nomination papers of four other candidates -- Awami League (AL) backed Shahidul Islam Lebu, Jatiya Party (Ershad) backed Sayed Abu Yousuf Abdullah Tuhin and independent candidates Amanur Rahman Khan Rana (rebel AL) and Fazlur Rahman Bir Protik -- were found valid.

The election to the parliamentary seat which fell vacant following the death of Matur Rahman on September 14 will be held on November 18.

PHOTO: STAR  
Workers hired by a local Sramik League leader cut living trees beside Lalmonirhat-Mogholhat road at Durakuti village in Lalmonirhat Sadar upazila yesterday. Fifty roadside trees fell victim to such callousness during the last four days as the pro-ruling party man, entitled to cut 20 dead trees following an auction, also sawed off and took away the living trees in the absence of proper supervision by the authorities concerned.

# Ruling party man loots roadside trees in Lalmonirhat Sadar

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Lalmonirhat

At least 50 roadside trees were felled allegedly by a Sramik League leader at Durakuti village in Lalmonirhat Sadar upazila in the last three days since Friday.

Lalmonirhat Zila Parishad (district council) recently sold 20 dead trees along Lalmonirhat-Mogholhat Road and Lalmonirhat-Bhelabari Road to Abu Bakkar Siddique, 40, general secretary of Mogholhat union Sramik League, as he was the highest bidder.

Bakkar was given work order on condition that he would fell the trees in presence of a representative from the district council.

Accordingly, the Sramik League leader engaged 15 labourers to fell the roadside trees on Thursday in presence of a class four employee of the district council.

Locals alleged that the labourers on the instruction of the Sramik League leader felled at least 50 living trees along the roads in the last

three days as no representative from the district council was present.

Of the felled trees, 35 were mahogany and the rest were jackfruit and neem trees, local said, adding that they did dare challenge the Sramik League leader, fearing harassment.

Azibor Rahman, 50, of Durakuti village said though the Sramik League leader felled the living trees along with the dead ones, violating the condition in the work order, the district council turned a blind eye to his illegal act.

Mobarak Hossain of the same village alleged that Sramik League leader Abu Bakkar chopped many roadside trees in the last three years, showing false auction orders. Local people filed allegations with the authorities concerned several times, but to no effect, he added.

Locals alleged that they were earlier harassed by the ruling party men as they put signatures on the written allegations against the Sramik League leader.

"We keep mum about felling of the 50 living trees, fearing harassment by Abu Bakkar and his men," they said.

Hasem Ali, one of the 15 labourers, said they felled the roadside trees, which were marked by the Sramik League leader. "We have just carried out his order," he added.

Contacted, Sramik League leader Abu Bakkar Siddique said he got work order from the district council to fell 20 roadside dead trees. "My workers felled the dead trees in presence of a representative of the district council. They didn't fell any living trees along the two roads, he claimed.

Zila Parishad Administrator advocate Motiar Rahman, also the general secretary of Awami League district unit, said Abu Bakkar felled only the dead trees in presence of our representative.

If the allegation against Abu Bakkar is found to be true, necessary action will be taken against him as per law, he added.



PHOTO: STAR  
Against the backdrop of an ongoing probe into the Bangladesh Chhatra League (BCL) men's alleged assault on left-leaning students and punching of a female student by the proctor of Bangladesh Agricultural University (BAU) on its campus in Mymensingh on October 9, BCL activists including its BAU unit president Shamsuddin Al Azad (third from left) and general secretary Rafikuzzaman Emon (fourth from left) join a human chain organised by BAU Teachers Association yesterday, protesting what it dubbed left-leaning students' misbehaviour with teachers.



PHOTO: STAR  
A devotee folds her palms in reverence to Goddess Durga at Barendra puja mandop in Boalia area of Rajshahi city during Maha Saptami yesterday, the second day of Durga Puja, the biggest religious festival of the Bangalee Hindus.

# A small personal initiative now a big help for many

HOSSAIN SERAJ, Magura

A small charitable dispensary at Kajoli village under Sabdalpur union in Sreepur upazila has come as a blessing for the poor in the area.

Though it is not well equipped, for nearly 18 years, the 'MA Khaleque Hospital' in this remote village, 25 kilometers off Magura district town, has been rendering a commendable service to the local people, providing initial healthcare and medicine free of cost.

Every day of the week except for Friday between 9 am and 5 pm, on an average 100 patients avail treatment and medicine for common health disorders like fever, stomach ache, cuts and bruises. The poor are provided with necessary medicines free of cost while the well-off gets the prescription only.

Md. Shamsul Azam, a retired engineer and noted industrialist in Dhaka set up the healthcare centre on his own initiative in 1994 on about 30 decimals of land and named it after his late father Alhaj MA Khaleque.

Since its inception, Shamsul Azam has been personally bearing all expenses of the dispensary. Currently, the annual expenses, including salaries of a doctor, a qualified nurse, a trained rural medical worker and three other staffs, stand at Tk 6 lakh.

"The hospital has fulfilled my dream," said Shamsul Azam adding, "I set up the health centre to help the poor and it is performing quite well."

The place has become a first aid centre for all kinds of ailments in the area. If the ailment is grave, the doctor immediately refers the patient to upazila or the district level hospitals for further treatment.

For the local people Shamsul Azam's charitable dispensary has become a 'sacred' place. The upazila health complex is situated about eight kilometers while the district's hospital

is nearly 25 kilometers away.

"The most notable success of this initiative is that it has created health awareness among the local people," said Md. Serajul Islam, chairman of Sabdalpur union parishad (UP).

"We can now say it proudly that none in Kajoli village dies without medical care since the opening of the health centre," he added.

Zahida Khatun of Kajoli described how the villagers had to travel to the district headquarters and spend huge amounts even for

common illness like fever.

"This is a great relief for all of us in the village where a qualified doctor decides what to do next when someone falls sick," Zahida Khatun said.

Abdus Salam, a primary schoolteacher, said that nobody now sends a patient out of the village before consultation with the doctor at the health centre.

"Even if the patient is in a critical condition, we first take the patient to the local hospital and then arrange further treatment as per the doctor's advice," Abdus Salam added.



PHOTO: STAR  
An elderly patient being treated at 'MA Khaleque Hospital', a charitable health centre, at Kajoli village in Sreepur upazila of Magura.

# Water logging due to dam on canal damages aman

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Patuakhali

Aman plants on over 500 acres of land are getting damaged due to water logging caused by a dam built on a canal at Diamkholapara village under Latachapplee Union of Kalapara upazila.

Locals said Shamsul Haque, an influential man in the area, constructed the dam on Amkhola canal for fish cultivation. The dam has caused extensive water logging in the area, affecting several hundred people, they added.

Farmer said water logging is ruining aman plants on over 500 acres of land. If the dam is not removed immediately, persistent water logging will wreak havoc on aman crop in the area, they said.

Last year, Shamsul Haque did the same thing on the canal, but local farmers cut the dam to save their aman plants. Later, Shamsul

Haque filed a case, which is still pending with a court.

This year, the farmers of the area are not taking any move to cut the dam as 14 of them are accused in the case filed by Shamsul Haque. They have already made an appeal to the

upazila administration to save their aman plants from being damaged.

Contacted, Shamsul Haque said no one can cut the dam as the matter is pending with the court. Kalapara Upazila Nirbahi Officer (UNO) Jahangir Alam

told this correspondent that he would visit the area soon. Mrs Sahid Begum, acting chairman of Latachapplee Union Parishad (UP), said they can't take necessary steps to remove the dam as a case on the issue is still pending with a court.

PHOTO: STAR  
A farmer gives a despairing look at his aman field in Latachapplee union under Kalapara upazila of Patuakhali district as waterlogging, caused due to construction of a dam on a canal at Diamkholapara village in the union for fish cultivation by a local influential person, damaged the paddy on over 500 acres of

