



PHOTO: STAR

A man felling a live roadside tree in broad daylight at Nizpara point of Lalmonirhat-Mohendranagar road in Lalmonirhat Sadar upazila on Friday morning.

Tree looting on as authorities turn blind eye

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Lalmonirhat

Illegal tree felling goes on unabated in different areas of Lalmonirhat district, but the authorities are yet to take any legal action against the culprits.

At least 30 mahogany and rain trees beside Amtola-Noyarhat Road and Lalmonirhat-Burir Bazar Road under Mohendranagar union of Lalmonirhat Sadar upazila were felled alleged by some ruling party men in the last four days.

Union parishad (UP) Chairman Abdus Sonahan Mondol, who was informed by locals about the tree felling on Thursday, said he brought the matter to the notice of law enforcers, but they refrained from taking any legal action due to unknown reasons.

"As an unidentified gang threatened to kill me, I didn't dare to file any case against the persons responsible for cutting down the roadside trees in my union," the UP chairman said, adding that illegal felling of roadside trees continues in the upazila, but local administration keeps mum.

In Kaliganj upazila, around 200 trees beside Kamlabari-Joraseta Road and Sonapur-Chandrapur Road in Chalbala union were cut down in the last two weeks. Rashed Miah, a sawmill

owner in Tusbandar area of the upazila said he got a bid to fell 142 trees beside the two roads from Chalbala Diganata Federation, a local NGO, a month ago.

"My labourers cut down the trees in presence of the federation members, UP members and local elite," Rashed said. He refuted the allegation of felling additional 58 trees.

Contacted, Chalbala Diganata Federation President Ashraf Ali Montu said they planted the roadside trees eight years ago on an agreement signed with the district council. "After taking permission from the district council, 142 roadside trees worth Tk 3.40 lakh were sold to legal bidder Rashed Miah," Ashraf added.

District Council officials said felling of roadside trees without prior permission of the divisional forest officer is a criminal offence. Officials of Chalbala Diganata Federation submitted an application to the district council, seeking permission to sell the trees at an auction but the council authority didn't approve it.

Meanwhile, a section of the ruling Awami League (AL) men felled around 500 roadside trees at 20 villages in five upazilas of the district in the first two weeks of this month allegedly in collusion with a few district council officials.

8 kidnapped fishermen rescued in Noakhali

UNB, Dhaka

Members of Bangladesh Coastguard rescued eight kidnapped fishermen from a den of forest robbers in a remote area of Hatiya upazila in Noakhali district early yesterday.

Those rescued are Kashem Majhi, Nitai Chandra Jaldas, Babul Chandra Jaldas, Kamal Uddin, Manik Chandra Jaldas, Manu Chandra Jaldas, Anil Chandra Jaldas and Robi Chandra Jaldas. They hail from different

areas of the district.

Sources at the Coastguard headquarters in the capital said, a team of the river force in the country's costal belts conducted a raid on the den of robber ringleader Imran Sarder at Char Kalam around 2:30 am.

However, sensing the presence of the law enforcers, the gang fled the scene, leaving the eight fishermen kidnapped recently and 10 motorised boats behind.

Later, they rescued the fishermen and handed them over to their families.

NOAKHALI, PIROJPUR DISTRICTS

Downpour during Mahasen damages major crops

STAR COUNTRY DESK

Heavy downpour during cyclone Mahasen on May 26 damaged major seasonal crops on more than 3,000 hectares in Noakhali and Pirojpur districts.

Most of crops including soya bean and peanuts on about 2,261 hectares of land in Subarnachar, Hatiya and Companiganj upazilas of Noakhali were affected due to heavy rain during the storm, reports our correspondent.

Of them, soya bean on 661 hectares and peanuts on 1,200 hectares have totally been damaged, Department of Agriculture Extension (DAE) sources said.

Besides, vegetables on 400 hectares have been destroyed in the coastal district, it added.

The damage caused by the natural calamity could go up to Tk 5.4 crore, said sources at local agri office. More than 1000 cyclone-affected farmers are now passing their days amid worry as they cultivated the crops by borrowing money from different banks, said the sources.

Contacted, district agriculture officer Mohammad Shah Alam said that they

have already sent a letter to the higher authorities suggesting steps to rehabilitate the affected farmers.

In Pirojpur, heavy rain caused by Mahasen damaged crops including betel leaves and beans on about 850 hectares in seven upazilas of the southern district, reports our correspondent.

The upazilas are Mathbaria, Zianagar,

Nazirpur, Pirojpur, Kawkhali, Bhandaria and Nesarabad.

Of them, Mathbaria is the worst affected area where different vegetables on 320 hectares were totally damaged due to the downpour.

The losses due to the storm in the district may go up to Tk 3.4 crore, said an agriculture official.

Farmer Shahidul, 35, of Balipara union in Zianagar

upazila, said the downpour damaged different summer crops on his 4 bighas of land.

Md Nasiruddin Khan, deputy director (DD) of Pirojpur agriculture department, said they have informed the higher authorities about the damages, caused by the storm and sought assistance in this regard.



PHOTO: STAR

A farmer at one of his summer vegetable fields damaged by stagnant rainwater at Shankarpasha village in Pirojpur Sadar upazila. Heavy rainfall during cyclone Mahasen on May 16 flooded vast lands of major crops in several coastal districts.

A schoolboy's act of great bravery

SOHRAB HOSSAIN, Patuakhali

When all were concerned with their own safety during the onslaught of cyclone Mahasen, a schoolboy braved all the risks to bring to safety 38 people, mostly children, women and elderly men, in Galachipa upazila town under the district.

The young altruist, Rashedul Islam nicknamed Nayeem, 15, is son of Nasir Uddin of launch ghat area of Galachipa upazila town, and a class nine student of Galachipa High School.

When cyclone Mahasen hit the area on Thursday morning, Nayeem came out from his house and ran to nearby Talebnagar Abason, a housing project meant for the poor and landless people, in the upazila town.

There he saw Subarna, 6, and Rabiul, 7, crying on the road as their parents had gone to the cyclone shelter with their goods, saying that they would come back soon to bring the kids with them.

Nayeem took the two kids to the cyclone shelter. Nayeem went to the Abason area again and saw four-year-old Siam crying in front of a room as his father was busy to save their household goods. Nayeem took the kid and his mother to the shelter.

In this way Nayeem saved 38 people from the



Rashedul Islam

fury of nature.

"When I was doing the rescue work amid the natural disaster, I saw trees breaking down around me but I continued, ignoring life risk," Nayeem said while talking to this correspondent on Thursday.

"When I studied at Anirban Cadet Coaching Centre in Barisal city two years ago, they encouraged me to render such voluntary service, especially during natural disasters like floods and cyclones. Later my teachers and fellows at Galachipa High School also encouraged me in this regard.

"I feel myself lucky to do such humanitarian job during disasters. We should work together, especially during critical situations, for our collective safety as well as prosperity of the country," Nayeem said.

Sushil Chandra Biswas, panel mayor of Galachipa municipality, said, "We should learn from Nayeem and develop humanity for the greater interest of the society."

HODA MURDER IN C'NAWABGANJ 3 Jamaat-Shibir men arrested

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Chapainawabganj

Police arrested three Jamaat-Shibir men yesterday at Boalia under Gomostapur upazila here in local Awami League leader Durul Hoda murder case.

The arrestees are Kamruzzaman, 30, son of Jhatu Mondal and Mohammad Raihan, 22, son of Zillur Rahman of Khragpur village and Golam Azam, 22, son of Asgar Ali of Haripur in Bholahat upazila.

SM Abu Farhad, officer in-charge of Bholahat police station, said on informa-

tion, police arrested Kamruzzaman, Raihan and Azam from a house at around 4:00am.

Daldali union AL general secretary Hoda was killed and ward 7 AL vice-president Abdus Shukur injured in an attack with sharp weapons by a gang of masked criminals at Mushribhuza village when they were taking tea at a stall at around 10:00pm on Thursday.

Hoda's wife Marzina Khatun filed a murder case, accusing 20 Jamaat-BNP men, with Bholahat police station on Friday.

Man killed, 25 injured as villagers clash

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Khulna

An elderly man was killed and at least 10 people were injured in a clash between two groups over a piece of disputed land at a village in Dakope upazila of Khulna on Saturday.

The dead was identified as Pir Ali Gazi, 70, son of late Layek Ali Gazi, of Moukhali village in the upazila.

Police and locals said, there had been a longstanding dispute between Abdus Salam Gazi and Zakir Boyati of the village over the ownership of the land.

Some villagers led by Abdus Salam Gazi, established a club a few years back on the disputed land.

The clash ensued on Saturday morning as Salam Gazi along with his men started earthwork on the land.

Following an altercation, they beat up Zakir Boyati and his associate Musa Gazi, resident of Hoglabunia village adjacent to Moukhali village, as Zakir resisted the work.

Later, a group of people led by Zakir Boyati, equipped with lethal weapons, attacked their rivals at noon, leaving 10 injured.

Critically injured Pir Ali Gazi and his brother Abdur Rob Gazi, 55, were rushed to Khulna Medical College Hospital where Pir Ali Gazi succumbed to his injury around 6.45pm on Saturday.

2 Bogra Jubo League men murdered

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Bogra

Two Jubo League men were murdered in Gondagram area of Shajahanpur upazila yesterday afternoon.

The deceased were identified as Majnu Pramanik, 43, member of district unit Jubo League and son of late Sukur Ali of Phultola area in Bogra town and his nephew Nahid, 24, son of Dulu Mia of the area and activist of the unit.

Police sources said the two might have been killed by party rivals over a previous enmity or over sharing of illegally earned money.

Identified criminals Jhuntu, Nantu, Menko, Ripon and their cohorts might have been involved in the killings, they said.

A gang attacked Majnu and Nahid with sharp weapons, leaving them critically injured when they were holding a meeting with district Swechchhasebok League president Asadur Rahman Dulu at the house of Ripon, president of upazila unit Swechchhasebok League at 1:30pm.

The two were rushed to Shaheed Ziaur Rahman Medical College and Hospital where doctors declared them dead at 2:00pm, said police superintendent Mozammel Haque.

As the death news spread, aggrieved relatives of the deceased torched the house of one Osman Gani in Phultola area, one of the



Majnu Pramanik



Nahid

accused in Bush murder case. Bush was a nephew of Majnu.

The reason behind the killings could not be known immediately, said the SP.

Police arrested Swechchhasebok League leader Ripon in connection with the killings, he said.

Contacted, Jubo League district committee member Aminul Islam Dablu, however, said Jubo Dal and JCD men might have killed the two.

Despite repeated attempts, this correspondent could not reach district Swechchhasebok League president Dulu as his phone was switched off.

SNIPPETS

Train hits truck, one killed

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Benapole (Jessore)

A commuter train hit a truck at a level crossing in Shyamlagachhi area under Sharsha upazila of Jessore district yesterday, leaving a passenger of the train dead and 17 others injured. The identity of the passenger could not be known as of 5:00pm. Police said the Khulna-bound train from Benapole hit the goods-laden truck at the unmanned level crossing at around 1:30pm.

Indian national held

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Khagrachhari:

Border Guard Bangladesh (BGB) personnel arrested three people, including an Indian national, from Robisundar Karbaripara area in Matiranga upazila of the district yesterday. The arrested Indian national is Goutam Tripura, 22, of Baitali area under Sabrum Police Station of South Dinajpur district. The two others are Ramchandra Chakma, 45, and his son Lakkhi Chakma, 25, of Robisundar Karbaripara area. Lt Col Mohammad Nuruzaman, commanding officer of BGB Palashpur zone, said Goutam Tripura along with the two other was involved in arms and drug smuggling. Later, they were handed over to Matiranga police.

Woman killed by lightning

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Benapole (Jessore)

A woman was killed by lightning at Putkhali village under Benapole Police Station on Saturday night. The dead was identified as Momena Bagum, 50, wife of Panchu Mia. Police quoted locals as saying that Momena Bagum was struck by lightning at their house at around 12:10pm. She died instantly.

Revolver seized

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Dinajpur

Member of the Rabid Action Battalion (Rab) seized a revolver and a bullet from Bazitpur village under Nawabganj upazila of Dinajpur early yesterday. Acting on a tip-off, the elite force raided the village at around 1:30am and found the revolver with a loaded bullet in an abandoned state at the village. None was, however, arrested.

Jamuna erosion devours 500 houses in Sirajganj

STAR COUNTRY DESK

Erosion by the River Jamuna devoured over 500 houses and 2,000 hectares of cropland in Sadar and Chouhali upazilas of Sirajganj district in the last one month.

It also eroded a major portion of the town protection embankment at Bahuka point threatening nearby Kazipur area, said K M Julfikar Tarek, sub-divisional engineer of district Water Development Board (WDB).

"If necessary measures were not taken immediately to protect the erosion, the entire embankment might go under water anytime", he said.

"Although the construction of an alternative 3 km-long dyke has already been started from Shimla to Bahuka point at a cost of Tk. 6 crore, it is not adequate to ensure safety, he added.

SM Golam Kibria, chairman of Sadar upazila, said more than 200 dwelling

houses and 3,000 bighas of cultivable land at Baligugri, Shimla, Bahuka Pashtakuri, and Italy villages in the area went under water due to the erosion during the period.

The river also devoured 300 houses and around 2,000 thousand bighas of cropland in Chouhali upazila in last two weeks, said Mahfuza Khatun, chairman of the upazila.

In Jhalakathi, more than 10 houses and eight shops at Badurtala village in Rajapur upazila were devoured by erosion of the River Bishkhali in the last two days, reports our correspondent.

A launch terminal, a high school, a market and some croplands have also been washed away by the river, said the erosion-hit people.

Upazila nirbahi officer Mahabuba Aktar said that they have already informed the higher authorities for taking initiative to prevent the erosion.



PHOTO: STAR

A hapless resident of Bahuka village in Sadar upazila of Sirajganj gives a bleak look as the Jamuna devoured his land on Friday.

Jubo League leader hurt in bomb attack

A CORRESPONDENT, Chuadanga

A local Jubo League leader was injured in a bomb attack by a gang at village Dakkhin Chandpur of Darshona Municipality in Damurhuda upazila on Saturday night.

The victim was identified as Joynal Abedin Nafar, 40, son of late Khoajuddin Mallik. He was former Darshona municipal committee Jubo League general secretary and a former municipal councillor.

Locals and police said, criminals numbering four to five, threw bombs at Joynal in front of his house while he was returning home from Darshona Puratan Bazar in a motor-bike at about 11:30pm.

Locals rushed him to Chuadanga Sadar Hospital from where he was shifted to Dhaka Orthopaedic Hospital as his condition deteriorated.

The reason behind the attack could not be known immediately.