



Tree looting from reserve forests even during the daytime has become a common affair. The photo was taken from Char Bangla in Galachipa upazila under Patuakhali district a couple of days ago.

Tree looting denuding forests in all 8 Patuakhali upazilas

SOHRAB HOSSAIN, Patuakhali

Criminals have continued tree looting from forests in all eight upazilas under the district allegedly with the connivance of a section of forest staff while the authorities are struggling to protect the natural resources with inadequate manpower and logistic support.

A gang looted over 200 trees from over three kilometre stretch of area (km) from Bhuria launch ghat to Dakkhin Char Moishadi under Patuakhali Sadar upazila early July this year,

said locals and sources of Patuakhali divisional forest office.

"Informed by locals, I requested the forest officials to take step against the tree looters but in vain," said Abdus Salam Mridha, chairman of Kamapur union parishad (UP).

A gang allegedly aided by three forest staff felled and looted over 300 trees from Bahar Char area in Amkhola UP under Galachipa upazila from July 14 to July 19, locals told journalists and forest officials.

After hearing the matter, Divisional Forest Officer

(DFO) Mihir Kanti Do visited the spot and seized 40 pieces of trees at night on July 19. At the same night a team of forest seized a trawler loaded with stolen trees from Lohalia River when it was being sent to Dhaka.

A three-member probe body was formed to investigate the matter but they have not submitted their report yet, the DFO said.

There are 77,598 acres of forest land including 44,268 acres of reserve forest under Patuakhali forest department but only 125 forest guards and boatmen are

serving there, said sources at the office.

"Most areas in the district are surrounded by rivers and so, it is a challenging task to protect trees from thieves. We need more manpower and instrument to protect the forest resources," he said.

Forests officials seized 1,265.62 cft trees, 30 cft fuel wood, 734 saplings and filed 101 cases for stealing trees with different police stations in the district in one year from July in 2012 to June 2013, DFO sources said.

2 housewives murdered

STAR COUNTRY DESK

Two housewives were killed allegedly by their husbands and in-laws in Rangpur and Bogra districts on Wednesday.

A housewife was stabbed to death allegedly by her husband at Jugitara area in Rangpur city on Wednesday night.

She was identified as Salma Begum, 21, wife of Mahmud Ali, 28 and an employee of Rangpur Foundry Limited, reports our correspondent.

According to the family sources of the deceased, Mahmud was a drug addict and often tortured Salma for money, they said.

At around 10:00pm on Wednesday, Mahmud demanded money from his wife in front of their residence while Salma was returning from her office.

They locked in a quarrel as Salma refused to give money.

At one stage, Mahmud stabbed his wife indiscriminately with sharp weapon, leaving her critically injured.

Hearing her screams, locals rescued in and took her to Rangpur Medical College Hospital where she succumbed to her injuries the next night.

In Bogra, a housewife was killed allegedly by her in-laws at remote Shanpacha Char of Jamuna River under Shariakandi upazila on Wednesday night.

The deceased was identified as Mohiful Begum, 25, wife of day labourer Shukur Ali and daughter of Sholaiman sheikh of the village, reports our correspondent.

Police said they recovered the body of Mohiful from a bamboo cluster in the morning. The body bore marks of injury, they said.

Mohiful's father alleged that her daughter was beaten to death by in-law while the in-laws claimed that she died from snake-biting.

AUG 3 ARSON, LOOTING IN MATIRANGA

Punish offenders, pay damages to victims

Demand Khagrachhari protesters

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Khagrachhari

Democratic Youth Forum (DYF), Pahari Chhatra Parishad (PCP) and Hill Women's Federation (HWF) have demanded exemplary punishment to the people involved in torching and looting of the houses of indigenous people and vandalising two Buddhist monasteries in Matiranga upazila of the district on August 3.

Leaders of the three front organisations of United People's Democratic Front (UPDF) also demanded Tk 10 lakh to rebuild each of the houses burnt down by the attackers, food rations for the victims for five years, and Tk 6 lakh in compensation for the affected families.

They made the demands at a protest rally held in Mahajanpara area of the district town yesterday. Prior to holding the rally, the leaders and activists of the organisations took out a procession in the town and paraded the main streets.

The speakers at the rally criticised the government for not taking steps to rebuild the torched houses and pay compensation to the victims even one month after the attack.

They urged the government to ensure security of the indigenous people in hills and take immediate steps to resettle the Bangalee

settlers in plain lands of the country.

Chaired by Nicholas Chakma, president of DYF Khagrachhari district unit, the rally was addressed, among others, by DYF central member Jiko Tripura, organiser of UPDF district unit Aunga Marma, president of PCP district unit Umash Chakma, its organising secretary Rajentu Chakma and general secretary of the district unit of HWFSikha Chakma.

Following an incident of abduction of a Bengalee settler, arson attacks were launched at Baga Para, Sarbeswar Para, Bandarshing Para and Talukdar Para in Taindong union of Matiranga upazila on August 3.

The attackers set at least 38 houses of indigenous people afire, looted 50 houses and vandalised two Buddhist monasteries.

Meanwhile, a coordination meeting on proper distribution of aid among the Taindong victims was held in the conference room at Khagrachhari deputy commissioner's office yesterday.

Secretary of Chittagong Hill Tracts Affairs Ministry Naba Bikram Kishore Tripura, Divisional Commissioner of Chittagong Mohammad Abdullah, officials of different non governmental organisations, and Deputy Commissioner Mohammad Masud Karim were present in the meeting.



Three front organisations of United People's Democratic Front bring out a procession in Khagrachhari town yesterday demanding punishment to people involved in August 3 violence in Matiranga upazila under the district.

UP member loots a big tree and remains carefree

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Nilphamari

Police are yet to record any case against a union parishad (UP) member of Sadar upazila and a wood trader who illegally felled an old mango tree of an eidgah on government khas land at Angarpara village in Kundopukur union of Sadar upazila one week before last Eid-ul-Fitr.

The UP member, Sazzad Alam Sainul, also sold the tree to wood trader Tahidul Islam, for Tk 16,000 and locals informed the deputy commissioner (DC) of the matter.

As the DC directed Sadar upazila Assistant Commissioner (AC-land) Sabiha Sultana to see the matter, the latter accompanied by Anisur Rahman, union assistant land officer, rushed to the spot and found the allegation true. She instantly ordered seizing the felled tree and take it to the premises of her office in Sadar upazila parishad complex.

On August 11, she wrote an official note to the officer in charge of Sadar police

station, asking him to take necessary measures to file a case against Sazzad and Tahidul.

A few local political leaders belonging to ruling Awami League and Jatiya Party are lobbying to save the accused, locals said, adding that the accused UP member boastfully declared in the area that nobody could touch a hair of his head.

He is also threatening those who opposed his misdeeds of dire consequences, they said.

Finding no way, agitated locals submitted a memorandum to the deputy commissioner on 27 August 27 seeking his intervention and justice.

But no action was taken as of yesterday.

Tapon Kumar Roy, assistant sub inspector of Nilphamari police station, who visited the spot as part of primary investigation, told this correspondent, that a regular case cannot be filed in this connection as the land officer concerned was not cooperating with police.



Seized logs of an old mango tree, illegally felled at a government khas land of Angarpara village in Nilphamari Sadar upazila early August, are kept on the premises of upazila land office.



Water from overflowing Padma and Mahananda rivers floods large areas in Sadar and Shibganj upazilas under Chapainawabganj district, affecting over one lakh people. The photo was taken from Charpaka union in Shibganj upazila yesterday.

Heavy rain triggers floods in 2 C'nawabganj upazilas

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Chapainawabganj

Heavy downpour coupled with onrush of water from upstream for the last one week has triggered flood in 15 unions of Shibganj and Sadar upazilas, learning over one lakh villagers marooned.

The affected unions are Alatuli, Narayanpur, Anupnagar, Shahjahanpur, Debinagar, Charbagdanga, Islampur and Sundarpur and partially of Moharajpur and Baroghoria in Sadar upazila and Panka, Ujirpur, Durloppur, Monakasha, Ghorapakhia, Chhatrajitpur and partially of Shabajpur in Shibganj upazila.

The Padma was flowing above 11 centimeters above its danger level while Mahananda flowing above 19 centimeters of danger mark yesterday, said an official of Water Development Board (WDB) in the district.

The water levels of both the rivers are increasing alarmingly and if it continues, more people will be marooned in the next 24 hours, he said.

A large number of flood-hit people have already taken shelter on embankment and high lands. They are facing acute crisis of food, fuel and drinking water.

Many educational institutions suspended their academic activities as floodwater entered the classrooms.

Deputy commissioner Sardar Sarafat Ali said, local administration prepared a list of over 40,000 worst affected poor people for relief. We have already started distribution of relief among the poor, he said.

Besides, two medical teams have been formed to look after the flood victims, said the DC.

He further said that a few low lying areas of the municipality have been submerged. At least 40 families of the town took shelter at stadium.

The floodwater also damaged Aus paddy on about 6.83 thousand hectares and vegetables on 530 hectares in the upazilas, said officials at the District Agriculture Extension (DAE).

BCL leader succumbs to injuries

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Jessore

A local Bangladesh Chhatra League (BCL) leader, who was beaten up allegedly by pro-BNP men on Wednesday evening, succumbed to his injuries on the way to a hospital in the capital early yesterday.

The deceased was identified as Aminul Islam, 28, president of Narayanpur union unit BCL and son of Matiur Rahman of Jewel, 45 of Chapapara village under Palashbari union of the upazila.

Officer-in-charge (OC) of Chowgachha police station Golam Rahman said an altercation took place between Amirul and local BNP men at Bandalitola Bazar around 5:30pm yesterday while he was sitting at a sawmill there.

At one stage, the BNP men beat up him with wooden rods mercilessly, leaving him critically injured.

Amirul was admitted to Jessore Medical College Hospital. He died on the way to the DMCH at about 1:00am.

Acid burnt housewife dies at hospital

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Dinajpur

A housewife, who sustained severe burn injuries in an acid attack by unidentified gang in Birganj upazila of the district early yesterday, died at Thakurgaon Sadar Hospital in the afternoon.

The victim was identified as Nasrin Begum Fancy, 40, wife of Md Rezanur Haque Jewel, 45 of Chapapara village under Palashbari union of the upazila.

Rezanur, also an assistant teacher of Bahadurhaat High School in the upazila, received severe burn injuries in the acid attack. He is now undergoing treatment at the hospital.

Police quoted family members as saying that unidentified criminals threw acid on Fancy and Jewel through the window of a room where they were asleep at around 2:30am and fled the scene.

Hearing screams, family member and locals rushed in and took the couple to

Thakurgaon Sadar Hospital where Fancy succumbed to her injuries at around 1:15 pm.

Police arrested two people in connection with the incident. The arrestees are Md Jewelur Rahman 40, son of Md Illias Hossain Bahadur, and Amena Begum, 29, second wife (now divorced) of Rezanur from Chapapara village.

Police could not unearth the clues to the attack as of 5:00pm yesterday.

Acting Civil Surgeon Dr. Khairul Kabir told our Thakurgaon correspondent that Fancy's face and front and backside of the body were severely burnt.

Her husband Rezanul Haque also received burn injuries on the face, chest and the backside.

Victim's son Nakib said his father married Amena Begum in 2008 and divorced her in 2011. She might have involved in the attack, Nakib added.



Vehicles get stuck in a long tailback at the entrance of Kawrakandi ferry terminal as Mawa-Kawrakandi route has to deal with double the usual number of vehicles following serious navigability problems on Paturia-Daulatdia route for the last several days.

Smugglers injure BGB member

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Satkhira

A member of Border Guard Bangladesh (BGB) was injured in an attack allegedly by smugglers on Kakkdanga border in Kalaroa upazila early yesterday.

Major Anwarul Mazhar, operation officer of Satkhira

BGB-38, said a patrol team of BGB saw a gang of smugglers led by one Moyaen and his son Tuhin of Baksa village entering Bangladesh from India with consignments of contraband phensidyl syrup and fruits at around 4.00am.

Challenged by BGB, the smugglers swooped on the

team, leaving Nayek Subedar Amir Ali of Kakkdanga BOP injured.

BGB men also fired seven blank shots and arrested smuggler Zahidul Islam of Keragachhi village along with 113 bottles of phensidyl and fruits while others managed to flee away.