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Loggers feast on forests

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Bandarban

Illegal logging continues unabated in the deep forests in Bandarban, contributing to deforestation and destruction of wildlife and depriving the government of revenue.

Almost all the reserve forests stretching over 1.2 lakh acres in Lama, Alikadom, Ruma, Rowangchhari and Thanchi upazilas assumed a barren look due to mindless felling of trees.

Sources say dishonest timber merchants in connivance with a section of corrupt forest officials smuggle thousands of cubic feet precious teak every night.

There are three reserve forests in the district - Matamuhuri Reserve Forest, Bamu Bilchhari Reserve Forest and Sangu Reserve Forest.

Lumberjacks have depleted two-thirds of Matamuhuri and Bamu forests unabatedly felling the valuable teak, mehmani and gamar trees.

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A truck loaded with illegal logs leaves a remote forest in Rowangchhari upazila of Bandarban. Inset, a man trims a log before loading it on the truck. Wholesale illegal logging is going on in the reserve forests of the hill districts by a nexus of timber traders and allegedly forest officials.

PHOTO: STAR



Nasir gets AL backing for Ctg mayoral race

Khokon denies loan default allegation

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The ruling Awami League yesterday decided to back AJM Nasir Uddin, general secretary of Chittagong city AL, as mayoral candidate in the April 28 Chittagong City Corporation polls.

The decision came at a marathon meeting between AL central and Chittagong city leaders at the Gono Bhaban yesterday evening. Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina, also the president of AL, chaired the meeting.

Through this decision, Chittagong city AL chief ABM Mohiuddin Chowdhury, three-time port city mayor who has strong holds in politics there, has been sidelined, party insiders said.

Mohiuddin had earlier declared himself as the mayoral candidate "backed" by the AL-led 14-party combine.

But at the meeting yesterday, the veteran leader said he did not want to run for mayor this time due to his old age and poor health. And he would

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AJM Nasir Uddin

SALAHUDDIN MISSING FOR 11 DAYS

BNP leaders meet family

Mahbub suggests govt take help of foreign agencies

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A BNP leader yesterday suggested that the government seek the help of foreign investigation agencies to find Salahuddin Ahmed, who has been missing for 11 days.

"If government agencies fail to find Salahuddin, help can be sought from foreign investigation agencies such as the FBI, since the agency came here for different issues before," said BNP standing

SEE PAGE 8 COL 5

WRITER AVIJIT KILLING

Twelve threats from Farabi since 2012

Father Prof Ajoy claims his plea for help was not entertained by police

EMRAN HOSSAIN

Prof Ajoy Roy, father of slain writer Avijit Roy, had failed to elicit any positive response from police when he lodged a complaint a year ago about a dozen death threats issued to his son.

Shafiur Rahman Farabi, the now arrested prime suspect in Avijit's murder, issued all those threats in his Facebook page since 2012. In some of his posts, he said Avijit was targeted for "demeaning Islam".

Avijit had forwarded the threats to his father through e-mail. His father visited Ramna Police Station last year to report the threats. One of the threats read: "Avijit Roy cannot be killed now. He lives

RELATED STORY ON PAGE 4

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The Daily Star

Integral Energy Limited

ONLINE POLL

Do you think that the Bangladesh government would be able to manage to deliver machine readable passports for all of its expat workers by November 24 meeting global deadline?

Yes (23%)

No (77%)

TOTAL VOTES: 44

TODAY'S POLL

Do you think Bangladesh Cricket Board should file a complaint to the International Cricket Council for poor umpiring in Bangladesh-India quarterfinal?

PLEASE CAST YOUR VOTE AT www.thedailystar.net

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PRAYER TIMING

MARCH 21

Fazr Zohr Asr Maghrib Esha

AZAN 4-55 12-45 4-45 6-16 7-45

JAMAAT 5-30 1-15 5-00 6-20 8-15

SOURCE: ISLAMIC FOUNDATION

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Rescue workers are busy freeing people from mangled train carriages following the derailment of an express train at Bachrawan, about 50kms from Lucknow, capital of the northern Indian state of Uttar Pradesh. Story on page 15.

PHOTO: AFP

Don't call hartal during exams

Worried guardians of O, A level examinees urge political parties

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Guardians of O and A-level students yesterday urged political parties not to enforce any programmes like ongoing hartal and indefinite blockade that might disrupt upcoming May-June session tests.

Expressing worries at a press conference held at Jatiya Press Club in Dhaka, they said the authorities concerned in Bangladesh would be unable to conduct the exams amid such political programmes as the tests are simultaneously held around the world.

They demanded that the authorities concerned create a congenial atmosphere so that their children could sit for the exams in time.

The tests are scheduled to begin on May 5. British Council Bangladesh administers the tests.

The BNP-led 20-party alliance has been enforcing hartals on every workday since February 1 in addition to its indefinite blockade announced on January 5.

"Our children have already completed the registration and are preparing hard for the tests. Please ensure a congenial atmosphere and allow them to sit for the exams in due time," said Aita Ahmed, mother of an examinee, who studies at Dhanmondi Tutorial, on behalf of the guardians.

In a written statement, she said the education ministry had taken the SSC examinations every weekend, but such a move could not be taken for O and A-level examinations.

SEE PAGE 8 COL 1

5 suffer burns in arson

DSCC cleaner hurt in blast; 'BNP man' held with 20 petrol bombs

STAR REPORT

Five more people suffered burns in another mindless arson attack on a pick-up in Daganbhuiyan upazila of Feni early yesterday.

The injured are driver Mohammad Yousuf, 55, his helper Rabiul Islam, 16, and fish traders Abul Hossain, 49, Mohammad Wasim, 28, and Mohammad Rokan 24.

The arson attack was carried out around 5:00am, barely an hour before the expiry of the BNP-led alliance's nationwide 120-hour hartal.

The victims were sent to Feni Sadar Hospital. Later, Yousuf, Hossain and Wasim were moved to Comilla Medical College Hospital.

Injured Rokan said they were carrying fish from Nimshar Bazar of Comilla to Companiganj, Noakhali. As the pick-up reached the Matubhuiyan Pool area on Feni-Noakhali highway, criminals hurled a petrol bomb at the vehicle.

At least 87 people, mostly without links to politics, were killed and nearly 400 injured in arson attacks and violence since the 20-party combine

enforced an indefinite countrywide blockade on January 6 demanding a midterm election under a non-partisan administration. The alliance also enforced hartals since February 1, except for weekends, to press home the demand.

Meanwhile, a pall of gloom descended on the Ilishpur village of Kalaroa upazila in Satkhira yesterday as villagers and family members mourned the death of trucker Jahangir Alam. He was burnt alive in his vehicle in a firebomb attack at Chandra

SEE PAGE 8 COL 5

'Ideal mother' honoured

INDEPENDENT.CO.UK

An Egyptian single mother who spent 43 years living as a man in order to work and provide for her daughter has reportedly been honoured as the "ideal mother" in Cairo.

Sisa Abu Daooh, 64, received the "woman breadwinner" award from the Social Solidarity Directorate of Luxor for working so hard to provide for her family, Al Arabiya reports.

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