



PHOTO: STAR

MARKET ON FORESTLAND: Land grabbers have set up a good number of shops and a few mills on the forestland at Gomnati beat under Domar Forest Range in Nilphamari district, thanks to the negligence of the authorities concerned.

DOMAR UPAZILA IN NILPHAMARI

Grabbers feast on forestland as officials indifferent

70-80 shops, mills built on 3 acres in Gomnati forest beat

EAM ASADUZZAMAN, Nilphamari

Influential land grabbers allegedly blessed by ruling party men occupied about three acres of forestland in Gomnati forest beat under Domar Range in the district to create a market at Uttar Gomnati village of Domar upazila, allegedly in collusion with a section of corrupt forest officials. During a visit to the occupied forestland at Gomnati village on Sunday, it was learnt that 70-80 shops, business centres and even mills and factories have been built on grabbed land beside important Domar-Gomnati road during the

last one year. "The government took land from my father and uncle and many others in mid-60s to create a forest on condition that we would get 50% of the money from selling the matured trees," said Nur Islam of the area. "But now there is no tree on my land and the grabbers illegally created shops on it. Forest guards or officials concerned sometimes remain standing on the spot to help grabbers build shops as they get handsome amounts as bribe," he alleged. Another villager Abul Kashem said the forest department took possession of the land of their house to

create forest but grabbers occupied that land and corrupt forest officials threatened to sue as he protested. It is surprising that the forest department in Domar has not issued any notice or file any case against the powerful land grabbers, said Ansar Ali, union parishad member from that village. Several traders seeking anonymity said some forest officials realised Tk 10-30 thousand from them for giving opportunity of doing business on grabbed land as many grabbers rented the shops or sold possession for high prices. Md Abu Bakkar Siddique, forest ranger of Domar, said

he had raised the matter and other occupation related issues in the monthly law and order committee meeting of the upazila parishad, requesting start of an eviction drive. "The matter now depends on the UNO as he is the head of the upazila forest development committee," he said. He refuted the allegation of taking bribe by any forest officials for helping the land grabbers. Contacted, Domar UNO Sabiha Sultana said she joined there recently and she would take step to recover the grabbed forestland after investigation.

CASES FOR VANDALISING, TORCHING POLLING CENTRES

8 Jamaat-Shibir men land in Dinajpur jail on surrender

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Dinajpur

A court here on Tuesday sent eight local Jamaat-Shibir men to jail, rejecting their bail prayers in cases for vandalising and torching different polling centres in Nashratpur union under Chirirbandar upazila of the district during the January 5 national elections. The accused are Abdur Razab, 42, Akher Ali, 48, Badrul Alam, 35, Jobayer Ahmed, 38, Sujaur Rahman,

40, Julfikar Ali, 24, Shariful Islam, 28, and Abu Raihan, 25. They are the activists of Nashratpur union unit of Jamaat-Shibir, said police. Judge Hossain Shaheed Ahmed passed the order when the eight surrendered to the District and Sessions Judge's Court in the afternoon. Police recently pressed charge sheet against them, said Anisur Rahman, officer-in-charge of Chirirbandar Police Station. Meanwhile, the law enforcers arrested a local

Jamaat leader in Panchbibi upazila of Joypurhat district the same day. The arrestee, Md Shafiqul Islam, 50, ameer of Bagzana union unit of Jamaat, is accused in an arson case, said OC Ashraful Islam of Panchbibi Police Station. Shafiqul was later produced before a court which sent him to jail, said the OC. In Mymensingh, police in separate drives arrested two leaders of Islami Chhatra Shibir in Trishal and Sadar upazilas of the

district on Tuesday afternoon, reports our correspondent. The arrestees are Anisur Rahman Ratan, 25, former president of Government Ananda Mohan College unit of Shibir, and Md Al Amin, 20, school affairs secretary of its district unit. The two are accused in several cases including one for arson attacks, said Imarat Hossain Gazi, officer-in-charge of Detective Branch (DB) of police, Mymensingh.



PHOTO: STAR

The famous sal-gajari forest in Modhupur Garh sees gradual shrinking as a section of people are clearing off the jungle areas for commercial cultivation of fruits, vegetables and crops. The photo was taken from Garo Bazar in Gatail upazila under Tangail district on Tuesday.

Mro National Party to surrender arms today

The extremists of the ethnic minority group pledge to resume normal life

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Bandarban

At least 79 activists of Mro National Party (MNP), an armed group of Bandarban hill district, will surrender their arms to Bangladesh Army today. The programme will be held at remote Kuruk Patajiri in Alikadom upazila under the district, said Brig Gen Naqeeb Ahmed Chowdhury, chief of Bandarban cantonment. Mro Social Council (MSC), a social organisation of Mro community, worked for months to negotiate with MNP leaders for the purpose, said Sing Yang Mro, a member of

Bandarban Hill District Council and a leader of Mro community. MNP leaders gave a list of 79 members, including 65 from MNP Menrum group and 14 others from MNP Lohub group, who want to return to normal life through surrendering their arms to the government security forces, said Eyang Lack Mro, president of MSC Alikadom upazila unit. Mro leaders said Menrum Mro of Alikadom upazila founded the group with a few Mro youths in 2010. Later, they engaged in killings, abduction, extortion and other criminal

activities in Alikadom, Thanchi and Lama upazilas of the district. "Menrum was killed by his own party men in 2012 and consequently, MNP was divided into two groups, one comprising followers of Menrum and the other led by Lohub," said Kamlai Mro, vice president of MSC. The rebel groups of the district will return to normal life, thanks to the initiative of the present government, said Bandarban Additional Deputy Commissioner (General) Abu Jaffar, also the now acting deputy commissioner. State Minister for CHT affairs ministry, Bir Bahadur

Ushwe Sing MP, will attend today's programme as the chief guest. High officials of army and local civil and police administration will be present. The Awami League government and Parbaty Chattagram Jana Samhati Samiti (PCJSS) signed historic Peace Accord on December 2 in 1997 to end a years-long armed struggle in the Chittagong Hill Tracts. Around 1,950 PCJSS members surrendered and handed over their arms and ammunition to the government in four phases as per the accord.

Fugitive JMB man arrested

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Mymensingh

Detectives arrested a fugitive Jama'atul Mujahideen Bangladesh (JMB) man from Kanhor village in Trishal upazila under the district on Tuesday afternoon. The arrestee was identified as Zonayed Siddique Bibek, 40, son of late Zobayed Siddique of Kanhor.

On information, a team of Detective Branch (DB) of police led by sub-inspector Mofizul Islam raided the area and arrested Bibek from his home around 3:30pm, said Imarat Hossain Gazi, officer-in-charge of DB police, Mymensingh. Bibek is an accused in series bomb attacks in Mymensingh on August 17, 2005, police said. He was being interrogated at the DB office as of filing of this report.

Schoolgirl drowns in river

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Gaibandha

A schoolgirl drowned in the Jamuna River yesterday at Harubhanga near Balashi ghat in Fulchhari upazila. The girl, Morsheda Khatun, 12, was daughter of Mokbul Hossain of Harubhanga village, and a Class V student at Harubhanga Primary School.

Joynal Abedin Jalal, chairman of Fazlupur Union Parishad, said Morsheda and some other students and passengers were crossing the river from Sapkata char on a country boat. The boat capsized near Harubhanga ghat due to strong current. All the passengers but Morsheda swam ashore. A group of divers from Rangpur fire fighter and defence service reached the spot and started looking for the missing girl.

Youth held with pistol

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Benapole, Jessore

Police arrested a youth and seized a pistol from his possession in Benapole bus stand area on Tuesday night. The arrestee is Ilias Ali, 30, son of Suruj Molla of Rajbari Sadar upazila. Sub-inspector (SI) Firoz Uddin of Benapole Port Police Station said a police team, acting on a tip-off, raided the bus stand area 11:00pm and arrested Ilias. Police seized a foreign-made pistol, two magazines and a bullet from his possession, the SI added. A case was filed with the police station in this connection.



PHOTO: BANGLAR CHOKH

A huge quantity of logs is kept for burning on the premises of a brick field at Guimara in Khagrachhari district. Such callous act, causing harm to environment and public health, continues unabated in different areas of the hill district as there is very little action from the authorities concerned.

Expat shot dead, 8 injured over land dispute

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Cox's Bazar

An expatriate was shot dead and eight others of his family were injured allegedly by rivals over a disputed land in Baradkhali union under Chakaria upazila of the district early yesterday. The deceased is Helal Uddin alias Shipu, 29, son of Abu Taher of the area. He returned from UAE a few months ago. Locals said Hossain Ahmed recently filed a case with Chakaria Police Station following a clash over the land. Humayra Begum, younger sister of the victim, alleged that local BNP leaders Iqbal Badari and Hossain Ahmed and their men

stormed into their house when they were asleep around 1:00am. They fired around hundred bullets, leaving Shipu dead on the spot and eight others injured, she said. The injured were rushed to the upazila health complex. Of them, three were shifted to Chittagong Medical College Hospital as their condition deteriorated. On information, police rushed to the spot but the attackers managed to flee, sensing the presence of the law enforcers, said Probash Chandra Dhar, officer-in-charge of the police station. Police are raiding different areas to arrest the culprits, said the OC.

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গাজীপুর

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