

Eight killed by lightning

CITY DESK

Eight people were killed by lightning in four districts yesterday.

In Rangpur, two boys were killed by lightning while they were playing in a field near their houses in Pirgachha upazila.

The deceased were Bijoy Chandra Barman, 10, son of Dilip Chandra Barman and Tinbu Chandra Barman, 12, son of Badal Chandra Barman of Khakharihat village. The boys were cousins.

Meanwhile in Kaunia upazila of the district, two people were killed by lightning when they took shelter under a tin-roofed structure after it began to rain while they were working in a paddy field.

The deceased were Monir Uddin, 60, and Shakil Ahmed, 16, of Langrabazar area.

In Gaibandha, Shariful Islam, 30, of Samoshpara village was killed by lightning while he was working in a field in the village under Gobindaganj upazila.

In Netrakona, Mohammad Alam, 29, of Chhoydun village was killed by lightning while he was working in a field in the village under Kendua upazila.

In Chandpur, Nasima Bagam, 40, was killed by lightning while she was going inside her home from her outdoor kitchen in Dorigon Beribad area of Motlob Uttar upazila.

Meanwhile in Kachua upazila of the district, Billal Prophan, 40, of Budhunda village was killed while he was working in a field in the village.



Health Minister Mohammed Nasim inaugurates Incepta's vaccine bulk manufacturing facility in Savar on the outskirts of the capital on Thursday. PHOTO: COLLECTED

Incepta's vaccine bulk manufacturing facility launched

CITY DESK

Incepta Vaccine Ltd has launched its vaccine bulk manufacturing facility in Savar, outside the capital.

Health Minister Mohammed Nasim inaugurated the facility on Dewan Idris Road in Zirabo on Thursday, says a press release.

Addressing the inaugural ceremony, the minister said now Bangladesh is able to export medicines to 90 countries because of their high quality.

Maj Gen Md Mustafizur Rahman, director general of the Directorate General of Drug Administration, was present as special guest.

Incepta Vaccine Ltd Chairman Abdul Moktadir also spoke.

Loggers slowly razing Bhatera reserve forest

Locals fear influentials behind felling

MINTU DESHWARA, Moulvibazar

The rapacious operation of looting of trees from Bhatera reserve forest in Kulaura upazila in Moulvibazar is not only changing the landscape, but also threatening the delicate ecosystem.

According to Bangladesh Forest Industries Development Corporation, Bhatera forest is situated on 2,542 acres of land.

But the forest, which is a habitat for many rare species of flora and fauna, is now facing a severe threat due to the rampant tree felling.

Police on Thursday night seized a truck (without any licence plate) loaded with at least 24 logs of illegally felled trees in Bhatera Station Bazaar near the forest.

They also held two Talamiz leaders Bodrul Amin, president of Bhatera Union Talamiz and Abul Hosain Mullah, president of Brahmanbaria Union Talamiz in this connection, said Riaz Uddin, bit officer of Bhatera forest. They were later released, he added.

Abul Hossain, the truck driver, said, the duo paid him for transporting the logs. When asked why the vehicle did not have any licence plate, he did not answer.

According to the forest officials, looting and selling of trees has been going on for a long time. At least 16 pieces of logs were seized in the same area last Friday, they added.

While visiting the area, this correspondent found several remains of trunks of the felled akashmoni and rain trees bearing testimony to the felling and plundering.

"We have lived in this forest for generations but are helpless before these gangs who regularly enter the forest and make away with trees chopped into three-foot logs to facilitate transportation," said Monir Uddin, a local of the area. "The loggers often threaten us whenever we try to stop them," he said.

Locals claimed that the loggers were influential people of the area, who often entered the forest in large numbers and carried sharp weapons with them.

Md Abul Kashem Bhuyan, range officer of Kulaura, said they are faced with various problems like shortage of manpower and some unscrupulous persons are taking advantage of that.

"The forest is rich in rare species of plants and animals. But it is getting destroyed by the loggers. We must protect what is left to save the environment," said Abdul Karim Kim, general secretary of Bangladesh Poribesh Andolon, Sylhet unit.

Shamsuddoha, officer-in-charge of Kulaura Police Station, said, "We have seized the truck filled with logs and had held two Talamiz leaders for questioning."

"We are investigating the matter and legal actions will be taken against the perpetrators," said RFM Monirul Islam, divisional forest officer of the Sylhet Forest Division.

Contacted, Bodrul Amin said the allegations against him were false, while Abul Hosain Mullah could not be reached despite several attempts.

AL leader abducted for ransom

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Bandarban

An Awami League leader of Bandarban's Lama upazila was abducted for ransom early yesterday.

The victim is Nurul Absar, 52, ward level president of AL of the district.

Victim's son Mizanur Rahman said a gang of 15-18 broke into their house around 2:00am and abducted his father at gunpoint in Hargaja area. "They also looted valuables and cash worth Tk 1.4 lakh," he said.

"The gang also looted three of our relatives' houses of valuables worth about Tk 3 lakh."

"One of the abductors phoned me around 10:00am and demanded Tk 8 lakh as ransom."

Iqbal Hossain, officer-in-charge of Lama Police Station, said they are trying to rescue the AL leader.

Jakir Hossain, chairman of Fashiakhali Union Parishad, claimed a gang of around 20 from adjacent Chakoria and Ramu upazilas under Cox's Bazar has been conducting such kidnappings in the area for around five years. "We have discussed the matter with law enforcement agencies many times, but to no avail." Superintendent of Police of Bandarban Mizanur Rahman said, "A gang has been operating in the area for quite some time. As they are mostly situated in remote areas, it's hard for us to arrest them. We...will take stern actions against the abductors."

Freethinking weapon

FROM PAGE 3

"I feel proud that we had a teacher like you," Mahfuz Anam told the professor, noting his relentless efforts to speak and write for the common people.

He said it is a question unanswered why the seeds of extremism could not be uprooted when the country was liberated based on the values of secularism and democracy.

Professor Serajul Islam's book has a lot of elements of thoughts regarding communalism, nationalism and the ways out, he said.

New Age Editor Nurul Kabir said, "Our freedom is not possible if nationalism takes the form of communalism," he said.

Bangladesh Academy Director General Shamsuzzaman Khan, University of Liberal Arts Bangladesh Prof Azfar Hussain, cultural activist Nasiruddin Yousuf Bacchu and Junaid Saki of Gonoshanghati Andolon, also spoke.

'AL leader' beats up

FROM PAGE 3

Rashid the president of the new school management committee, he said.

The teachers and students demanded arrest of the attacker.

Marjina Akhter, the upazila nirbahi officer, said they informed police of the incident and asked them to take action against the attacker.

Confirming the incident, Abu Mohammad Fazlul Karim, officer-in-charge of Gouripur Police Station, said no case was filed till last evening.

When contacted, Milon said did not assault the headmaster, adding that he only had an altercation with him over the issue. Rather the headmaster punched him on the face, he said.

NEWSIN brief

Bulbul BFUJ faction's new president

UNB, Dhaka

Monjurul Ahsan Bulbul, chief executive officer and chief editor of Ekushey Television, has been elected president of a faction of the Bangladesh Federal Union of Journalists (BFUJ).

Bulbul was elected defeating his nearest candidate Ashoke Chowdhury of Boishakhi Television by 103 votes in the BFUJ by-election held yesterday.

According to the results announced by the BFUJ Election Commission, Bulbul got 1,065 votes while Ashoke Chowdhury 962 and Abdul Jalil Bhuiyan of The Daily Star 285. The post fell vacant following the death of Altaf Mahmud on January 24 this year.

3-day workshop on safe road for rural area starts in Cox's Bazar

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Cox's Bazar

A three-day workshop on "Safe road for rural area" started yesterday in Cox's Bazar with a call to protect roads in rural areas for ensuring socio-economy development of the country.

The Local Government Engineering Department (LGED) under its Rural Transport Improvement Project (RTIP-2) arranged the workshop.

Chief Engineer of LGED in Cox's Bazar Shyama Prasad Adhikari, among others, were present there.

Kid drowns in pond in Joypurhat

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Dinajpur

A 10-year-old boy drowned in a pond in Tazpur village under Joypurhat Sadar upazila yesterday.

The deceased was Rifat Hossain, son of Babul Hossain. He was a class three student of Tazpur Government Primary School. Family said Rifat along with his friends were swimming in the pond near their home. Locals rescued him and rushed him to Joypurhat Modern Hospital where doctors declared him dead.

Grocer arrested with arms, sent to jail

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Mymensingh

A grocer was sent to jail yesterday after he was arrested with a local-made gun and two cartridges in Muktagacha upazila of Mymensingh on Thursday.

Rab arrested Abdul Barek, 44, of Parulitola village and recovered the gun and the cartridges from his shop in Kalibari Madhya Bazar area. A Mymensingh court sent him to jail, said Akhtar Morshed, officer-in-charge of Muktagacha Police Station.

Drug trader dies in gunfight with another gang: Police

A CORRESPONDENT, Jessore

An alleged drug peddler was killed in a gunfight between two gangs of drug traders in a date orchard near Taraf Nawapara area in Jessore town early yesterday, said police.

Taleb, 45, son of Niyamat Gazi of Purbo Barandipara in the town, was shot in the left eye, said Kotwali Police Station Officer-in-Charge Md Illias Hossen.

Police took him to Jessore General Hospital where he was declared dead. The gangs fled the scene as police fired 10 blank shots, he said, adding that they found a gun and two bullets on the spot.

2 men die in workplace accidents

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

Two workers were killed in workplace accidents in Chittagong's Sitakunda upazila yesterday and Thursday.

In Chowdhury Ghat area, day labourer Moklesur Rahman, 38, was injured as a heavy iron bar fell on him at Laboni Enterprise, a ship repairing company.

He was declared dead at Chittagong Medical College Hospital (CMCH).

In Keshebpur area, Mohammad Khokon, 50, of Noakhali was killed as a bundle of cotton fell on him while he was loading it onto a covered-van at BM Container Depot Ltd on Thursday night.

He was declared dead at CMCH.

Career Opportunity

The role - Deputy Team Leader for DFID-funded governance programme

The Transparency, Accountability and Right to Information Fund (TARIF) is a 3-5 year programme funded by DFID, working with civil society and government. The Deputy Team Leader will work closely with the Team Leader to develop and implement the TARIF project vision, strategy and approach. He/she will serve as the liaison to the Government of Bangladesh and will lead on the capacity building activities for the government partner agencies. He/she will also lead in coordinating all TARIF support for issue-based projects in other sectors as requested by the Team Leader. The role will start as soon as possible and will run until **12 April, 2018**.

Requirements

- At least 10 years' experience in the civil service or the public sector in Bangladesh essential
- Master's degree in development studies, economics or another relevant subject
- Understanding of private sector development or business regulation in Bangladesh
- Management experience and ability to line manage team of professional colleagues
- Demonstrated experience working with international development agencies, preferably on governance projects
- Good analytical ability and report writing skills

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