



2 killed in landslide

Hill cutting led to disaster, say villagers

MINTU DESHWARA and DWOHA CHOWDHURY

At least two people were killed and several others injured in a landslide during an illegal hill cutting in Companiganj upazila of Sylhet yesterday, said police.

However, local sources said the death toll was six -- all of them were cutting the hill to dig out stone.

The Daily Star could not independently verify the figure.

The two victims are Abdul Quddus and Khokon, of Purbo Dhalpur village in Netrakona, said Sugyan Chakma, additional superintendent (media) of Sylhet police.

The incident happened at Matiar Tila, a part of Shah Arefin Tila in Bholaganj area of the upazila.

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Shah Arefin Tila, a hillock in Companiganj of Sylhet, is being illegally cut and flattened for extracting stone. The photo was taken on Wednesday.

PHOTO: SHEIKH NASIR

Stone collectors feast on hillocks

Small hills in Sylhet being destroyed as stone extracted illegally defying HC order

DWOHA CHOWDHURY, Sylhet

Named after a *sufi* saint, a hillock in Sylhet's Companiganj upazila is an example of how cruel man can be towards nature and the environment.

Shah Arefin Tila in Bholaganj is gradually being razed to the ground, thanks to the greed of some unscrupulous stone traders and the authorities for not taking proper steps.

Several other hills and hillocks in five other nearby upazilas -- Sylhet Sadar, Beanibazar, Jaintiapur, Gowainghat and Golapganj -- are suffering similar fate but the state of Shah Arefin Tila is most severe.

The hillock is not leased to anyone but a group of unauthorised traders, backed by some influential locals, have already destroyed its around 137.50 acres to extract stone, said environmentalists and some district administration officials.

Apart from using labourers to cut down the hillock, dredgers, locally known as Boma Machines, have also been in use there over the years.

Despite a High Court ban on it, Boma Machine is usually used to extract stones from the rivers.

Talking to The Daily Star, several environment activists said while extracting stone from hillocks, the machine sometimes triggers collapse of land.

It is quite easy to collect stone from hills than from the rivers. Again, the

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Ispahani Group chairperson passes away

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Mirza Ali Behrouze Ispahani, chairperson of Ispahani Group, passed away yesterday at the age of 67.

He died of a heart attack at Apollo Hospital in Dhaka early in the morning, the company said on its website.

His first namaj-e-janaja was held after Asr prayer at Gulshan Azad Mosque,

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MORE IN STAR BUSINESS

Police want law against custodial torture scrapped

PM says she doesn't know if it would be right to do so

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Police have demanded repeal of the law that prohibits both mental and physical torture in custody by law enforcement agencies.

To get the law scrapped, Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina's intervention was sought as she attended the Police Welfare Parade at Rajarbagh Police Lines yesterday.

Earlier in 2015, the police department had sent a proposal to the home ministry for bringing major changes to the law and wanted safeguards from prosecution for custodial death and torture.

Some other demands, which include increasing residential and hospital facilities and job quota for dependants of police officers, were also placed at yesterday's programme.

The Torture and Custodial Death (Prevention) Act, which the Jatiya Sangsad passed in 2013, stated that torture in custody by law enforcers or government officials is a punishable criminal offence.

AL lawmaker Saber Hossain Chowdhury placed the

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Apt end to a tour of lost opportunities

AL-AMIN from Christchurch

When Bangladesh returned after a 10-minute innings break to open their second essay an hour before lunch on the fourth day of the second Test against New Zealand yesterday, one thing they wanted to avoid was a repeat of their second-innings collapse in the opening Test.

Although there was a gap of a week and they were playing on a different surface under brilliant sunshine after a day of

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PHOTO ON PAGE 16

TIB finds mishandling of climate projects

Says fund allocation is made under political influence; study conducted on 6 projects

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Climate change funds are allocated under the influence of ministers and powerful quarters, not considering the severity of risk and endangerment of an area, Dr Iftekharuzzaman, executive director of Transparency International Bangladesh,

said yesterday.

Due to lack of good governance, projects are approved for areas that are less endangered than others, Iftekharuzzaman said, releasing a TIB study report at a press conference at its office in the capital yesterday.

The study titled "Climate Financing and

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PM's India tour could be delayed

REZAUL KARIM

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina's New Delhi visit next month seems unlikely as most of the focus in India would be on elections in five states, including the most populous Uttar Pradesh, beginning February 11.

The signing of the Teesta water-sharing deal remains a major challenge for the

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We Deeply Mourn



Paramount Family expresses grief and sorrow at the sad demise of a recognized and leading entrepreneur

Mirza Ali Behrouze Ispahani

A Pioneer of many Industrial ventures in Bangladesh and was a renowned philanthropist.

We the Paramount Family convey our deepest condolence to the members of bereaved family and pray to The Almighty Allah to give them strength to bear this irreparable loss. May The Almighty with His infinite Mercy Bless the departed soul.



PARAMOUNT INSURANCE
PARAMOUNT HOLDINGS
SUNRISE CHEMICAL IND.

PARAMOUNT TEXTILE
FOODEX INTERNATIONAL
PARAMOUNT AGRO

WE MOURN



We deeply mourn the sad demise of
Late MR. MIRZA ALI BEHROUZE ISPAHANI
(1950 - 2017)
Chairman, Ispahani Group
on 23rd January 2017.
Inna Lillahi Wa Inna Ilayhi Raji'un.



On behalf of bereaved family members of Ispahani Group.
May Allah grant him jannah.