

Wild boar dies in road crash

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Moulvibazar

A wild boar was killed in a road crash in Lawacherra forest in Kamalganj upazila of the district on Sunday. The incident took place at the parking entrance point in the forest at night, said forest department sources. When a group of Eurasian wild boars were crossing the road, a speeding motorbike hit them, leaving a baby boar dead on the spot. Many wild animals are killed in road accidents in the national forest, said the sources. On March 24, some forest officials found a dead barking deer in rail line area under the forest. Forest department said an intercity train killed the deer while it was crossing the rail line. Tabibur Rahman, assistant conservator of forest under wildlife management and nature conservation department in Moulvibazar, said the Eurasian wild boar is covered with brown or blackish hair. There is a dark mane from the neck to the waist. They are usually nocturnal. However, during the day, they roam in pairs or groups. He said most wild animals come out from the jungle to hunt at night when speeding vehicles sometimes hit them.

Schoolgirl kills self

The tragedy followed parents' bid to marry her

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Dinajpur

A pal of gloom descended the area as a schoolgirl committed suicide allegedly after failing to prevent her parents from preparation for her marriage in Akkelpur upazila of Joypurhat. The ill-fated girl, Marjia Sultana, 15, daughter of Amzad Hossain of Debishaul village in Akkelpur, was a Class IX science student of Roynkali High School in the upazila. Police recovered the body and sent it to Joypurhat General Hospital for autopsy yesterday noon. Marjia's parents started looking for a bridegroom for her and some people were to come to their home from Santahar upazila of Bogra to see the girl yesterday, said locals. Marjia hanged herself from the ceiling inside her living room any time after she went to bed on Sunday night. Friends and classmates thronged her home after hearing of the tragic incident. "Marjia was a brilliant student. It's so sad that she killed herself," said Belal Uddin, headmaster of Roynkali High School. Lawful action will be taken if any instigation is found behind the suicide, said Sirajul Islam, officer in charge of Akkelpur Police Station. Parents of the girl declined to make any comments.

EXCESSIVE GROUNDWATER USE DEPLETES RESERVES IN C'NAWABGANJ

Water crisis in villages



A woman collects for household use awfully dirty water from a pond at Jalahar, a village inhabited by Santals in Chapainawabganj Sadar upazila, as most of the tube-wells in the Barind area remain dysfunctional due to serious depletion of groundwater. PHOTO: STAR

RABIUL HASAN with ANDREW EAGLE

In Jalahar, a Santal village in Chapainawabganj Sadar upazila, it's becoming difficult to find a glass of water. To serve the 175 village households, Jalahar has just three functional tube-wells. A further three wells have been out of order for around a year with no sight of repairs. But the lack of drinking water also has a more significant cause: groundwater supplies are being overused, with water extracted faster than it is replenished. Diminishing groundwater reserves is a problem in

several parts of the Barind Tract of North Bengal. To visit Jalahar, 13 kilometres from Chapainawabganj town, is to observe women collecting water for household purposes from a small pond. "We have no other way," says elderly woman Rojobala Murmu from Puraton Para in the village. "We collect the dirty water to use around the house and also for our cattle to drink." "One tube well is working in this area, but it hasn't been working well for the last two months," says Urmila Hasda who is also

collecting pond water. "We find it difficult to take baths and wash our clothes after completing other household chores due to the water crisis." "To fetch deep tube-well water we have to travel for half a kilometre," says Bodon Baski, another village housewife. "We also bathe there." "We suffer a lot for the water crisis each dry season," adds Borshon Murmu. It's a situation that's likely to be exacerbated in ensuing months, until the arrival of the monsoon. "The crisis is no less serious in

several other localities," says Tosikul Islam, chairman of the local Jhilmil union parishad. "Every year the underground water table is dropping by about two feet," explains Baharuddin Mridha, executive engineer at the public health and engineering department in Chapainawabganj. "In Jhilmil union the water level sits at around 120 feet below ground." He blames excessive use of groundwater for its depletion. "The people of Jalahar and other Barind villages suffer a lot because as the water table shifts, the tube-wells don't work well."



A brick kiln at Chhunutia village in Kalihati upazila in Tangail. Inset, another brick kiln is being constructed in the village despite protest by the villagers. PHOTO: STAR

Brick kiln in Kalihati residential area

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Tangail

A brick kiln is being set up in a residential area under Kalihati upazila, ignoring the people's objections and defying the authorities concerned. The Directorate of Environment (DoE) rejected the applications of Amzad Hossain submitted on October 27 last year and January 29 this year for construction of a brick kiln at Chhunutia village. Meanwhile, the local people also submitted a prayer to the directorate, requesting not to give clearance for construction of the kiln, saying that the place is a residential area. Responding to the villagers' application, local DoE officials visited the site and also raised their objection to the construction, locals said. Amzad, however, continued construction of brick kiln, ignoring the objections, they added. In such a situation, the villagers at a press conference in Tangail Press Club on April 4, demanded an end to the construction work. Villager Motaleb Hossain at the press conference said there is already a brick kiln in the village and construction of new one

will pollute the environment badly in the area, raising the risk of spread of different diseases. There are around 50 residences and vast tracts of croplands in the area, he added. Moreover, accidents may occur due to increased movement of brick and earth-laden trucks on the only road, which is used by the villagers as well as the school-going children, Motaleb said. Sohodevpur Union Parishad Chairman Masudur Rahman Bala told the press conference that Amzad had submitted a petition to the union parishad for a trade license for the brick kiln, but he did not get it. "I submitted a letter in this regard to the deputy commissioner of Tangail on April 5," he added. Amzad declined to talk about the matter with the journalists. Tangail DoE Deputy Director Amirul Islam Khan said there is no scope to construct the brick kiln there as per environmental laws. "Amzad, however, filed a writ petition with the High Court for construction of the brick kiln and the court issued a rule in this regard. Now we will have to reply to it," he added.

Two jailed for throwing acid on college girl

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Fariadpur

A Gopalganj court yesterday sentenced two men to imprisonment for 14 years and seven years respectively for throwing acid on a college girl in 2015. District and Sessions Judge Md Dolil Uddin of Acid Control Tribunal delivered the verdict. The court sentenced Rothin Ghose, 25, to 14 years and Ashim Roy, 35, seven years. The court also fined the convicts Tk 50,000 each. The court, however, acquitted Rothin's parents. According to the prosecution, Rothin proposed Akhi Bagchi, daughter of Subash Bagchi of Thuthamanda village, which she rejected. Out of anger, Rothin and his friend Ashim threw acid on Akhi in her house around 3:00am on May 9 in 2015. During the investigation police found Ashim's involvement in the incident and arrested him.

'Ghasphool' foils another child marriage bid

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Mymensingh

Another girl of Nandail Pilot Girls' High School in the district has been saved from early marriage, thanks to the prompt step by 'Ghasphool', a seven-member team working for creating awareness against child marriage. Informed that Class VII student Monwara Begum, 12, was scheduled to be married on Sunday, Ghasphool members told it to their school headmaster and went to Monwara's house on Saturday. Failing to persuade the girl's parents not to marry her, they contacted the headmaster who informed the upazila nirbahi officer (UNO) of the matter. The UNO asked Md Ataur Rahman, officer-in-charge (OC) of Nandail Police Station, to see it. The OC called the girl's father Abdus Salam, a marginal farmer, and managed to make him realise the bad effects of child marriage. Earlier on April 11, Ghasphool members foiled the bid to marry off a Class IX student of their school.

Crematorium land recovered after 15 years

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Lalmonirhat

The local people yesterday recovered a crematorium land illegally occupied by a local muselman for the last 15 years at Mostofi village in Lalmonirhat Sadar upazila. Awami League leader Matiar Rahman led the people in recovering the crematorium site from the land grabber. Pulin Chandra Roy, an elderly local, said eight decimals of land at the village were donated for using as crematorium 60 years ago. "A local muselman took the crematorium land under his illegal possession 15 years ago but we didn't dare to protest against him in fear of harassment," he said, adding that they are now happy to get back the land. Uttam Kumar Roy said they had been facing untold suffering during burning bodies here and there for the last 15 years as the land was under illegal possession of a local muselman. Local union parishad member Majibur Rahman said the alleged land grabber Siddique Ali was asked several times to leave the crematorium land that went unheeded. He said the Hindus and Muslims participated in recovering the land and it was handed over to the Hindus in presence of Pulin Roy for using it as crematorium. Refuting the allegation of grabbing the land, Siddique said the land was lying abandoned beside his land in the village.

Hindus and Muslims participated in recovering the crematorium land

Over 100 structures removed in Kuakata

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Patuakhali

Over 100 illegal structures built in November last year were removed from Kuakata beach yesterday during a drive conducted by the Kalapara upazila administration. Executive Engineer of Water Development Board (WDB) Md Abul Khayer led the drive while Assistant Commissioner (AC) land in Kalapara Bipul Chandra Das was present, along with police and other law enforcement agencies. Some local traders opened the market in November last year, and over 100 structures were built illegally on WDB's land on the east side of Kuakata Zero Point. The eviction drive will continue and all illegal structures will be removed from the beach, the AC said. It may be mentioned that The Daily Star on November 2 in 2016 published a report titled 'Land grabbers at it again in Kuakata beach.' Around 60 illegal structures were removed from near Narikel Bagan (coconut garden) area on January 8. Some local youths built the structures on the beach and Narikel Bagan and leased those out to various businesses for Tk 20,000 to Tk 50,000 for each store, locals



said. On June 2, 2011, the High Court (HC) in its directive asked the authorities concerned to immediately remove all structures from the Kuakata sea beach. It also asked them to take necessary steps to stop encroachment, earth filling and construction of structures on the beach. The HC directive came following a writ petition filed the same day by Human Rights and Peace for Bangladesh (HRPB) on the basis of a report headlined 'Realtor faces eviction case in Kuakata,' published in The Daily Star on June 1

the same year. In the 2011 directive the HC bench comprising Justice AHM Shamsuddin Choudhury Manik and Justice Gobinda Chandra Tagore also ordered the deputy commissioner of Patuakhali to have the Kuakata sea beach demarcated immediately by a special committee. The bench issued a rule upon the government officials concerned to explain within three weeks why they should not be directed to protect the sea beach from encroachment, and to take steps to prevent any further construction in the beach area.

On January 18 in 2012, an HC bench comprising Justice AHM Shamsuddin Choudhury Manik and Justice Jahangir Hossain Selim declared the construction of private structures on sea beaches and shores illegal and directed the government to draw up a master plan to turn Kuakata sea beach into an ideal tourist destination. In its verdict on the writ petition filed by HRPB on June 2 in 2011, the court ordered the government to immediately remove all the structures built by any individual or company within the demarcated area of Kuakata beach.