

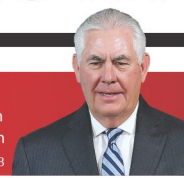


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ARTIST EXTRAORDINAIRE

A tête-à-tête with renowned painter Kazi Ghiyasuddin

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JOINT EFFORT FOR SYRIA

The US is willing to work with Russia on establishing 'no-fly zones', says Tillerson

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WITH TODAY'S ISSUE

STAR WEEKEND



The trap of section 57

21 journos sued under the controversial section of ICT Act in 4 months; chances of misuse remain

TUHIN SHUBHRA ADHIKARI

At least 21 journalists were sued under section 57 of the Information and Communication Technology Act in the last four months amid growing demand for repeal of the provision which is wide open to misuse.

Though the law minister on several occasions said the section would be scrapped, cases filed against journalists under the provision are on the rise with their leaders as well as rights activists terming it a tool to muzzle the press and freedom of expression.

The Daily Star has found that 11 cases have been filed against 21 journalists since March 1 this year under section 57, and most of the cases are related to news reports.

On July 2, Iqbal Hossain Chowdhury Milton, chairman of Islampur Union Parishad in Rangunia upazila of Chittagong, filed a case against senior reporter of daily Samakal, Taufiqul Islam Babar, over a June 22 report on the alleged involvement of AL leader Hasan Mahmud's aides in criminal activities.

Three journalists were sued by Afroz Mia, president of Pukra union Juba League in Habiganj, on June 3 over a report involving local AL lawmaker Abdul Majid Khan.

The accused are Colam Mostofa Rafiq, editor of Daily Habiganj Samachar, acting editor Rasel Chowdhury and

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RAMPAL PROJECT Unesco 'lifts objection'

Govt agrees to conduct Strategic Environmental Assessment

STAR REPORT

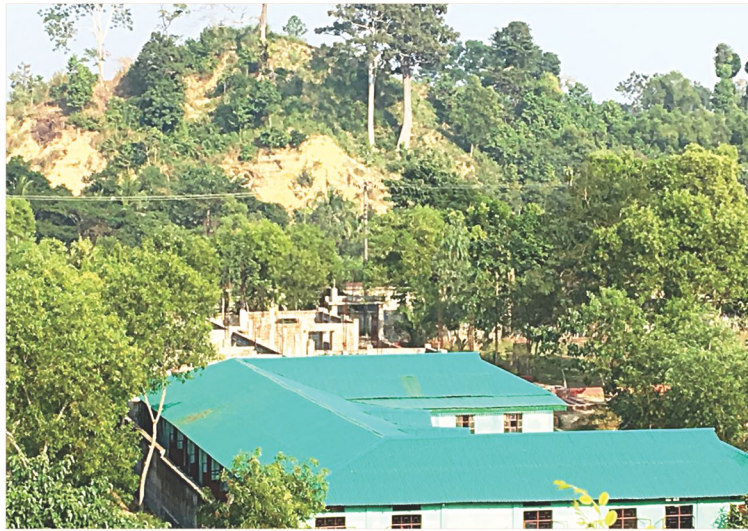
The World Heritage Committee of Unesco has withdrawn its objection to the setting up of Rampal power plant at its current site near the Sundarbans, claims the Bangladesh foreign ministry.

The committee, however, requested Bangladesh to carry out Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) of its south-west region, including the Sundarbans, before starting the project. Dhaka has agreed to it.

The decisions were made yesterday at the 41st session of the committee in Krakow of Poland. The 10-day session ends on July 12.

In a press statement yesterday, the foreign ministry said the Unesco also "spared the Sundarbans from being relegated to the List of World Heritage in Danger".

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The recent photo shows illegally built structures on "Uttaran Greehayan Samabay Samity" that has flattened hills and chopped down thousands of trees in Kolatoli of Cox's Bazar town for its housing estate without Department of Environment's and deputy commissioner's approval. Bottom, the location of the housing society in the town.

PHOTO: STAR

HRW calls for free probe, prosecution

Home minister terms HRW report 'motivated'

DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT

Security forces in Bangladesh are accused of extrajudicial killings, enforced disappearances and secret detentions, including that of opposition activists, says Human Rights Watch.

Bangladesh's law enforcement authorities have illegally arrested and detained hundreds of people in secret detention since 2013, the HRW said in a report released yesterday.

The New York-based human rights group also urged the Bangladesh government to launch an independent investigation into these allegations and "prosecute security forces responsible for such egregious rights violations".

At least 90 people were victims of enforced disappearance last year alone, according to the 82-page report titled, "We Don't Have Him: Secret Detentions and Enforced Disappearances in Bangladesh".

SEE PAGE 17 COL 2

Hills lost to housing

150 acres of hilly land flattened, a dozen structures built illegally for a housing scheme for 1,100 people including some influential persons

TAWFIQUE ALL, back from Cox's Bazar

Uttaran cooperative housing society, with powerful people as its members, has flattened around 150 acres of hilly land and cut down thousands of trees in Kolatoli of Cox's Bazar town for its housing estate.

Of the 1,100 members of "Uttaran Greehayan Samabay Samity", some of whom are civil servants, politicians, judges, lawyers and journalists, 700 already got allocation for plots.

The housing estate has no Department of

Environment or deputy commissioner's approval and has built around a dozen buildings without construction permits on both sides of the Kolatoli Bypass Road.

According to the Department of Environment (DOE), Uttaran flattened 96 acres of hills by January 2011 for which the department slapped a fine of Tk 2.88 crore on Uttaran and filed a case with Chittagong environmental court.

But, the authorities' reluctance in fighting the legal battle resulted in the case not

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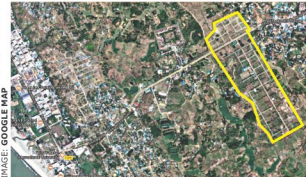


IMAGE: GOOGLE MAP



Some village women collect water from a partially submerged tube well in Baradal of Moulvibazar's Kulaura upazila. Downpour and onrush of water from the hills near the borders have caused flooding in many areas of the district, leading to a crisis of safe drinking water. Below, people stand along an inundated road in Cox's Bazar Sadar. The photos were taken yesterday. Story on Page 20.

PHOTO: MENTU DESHWARA/MOHAMMAD ALE USINAT

Brutal

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Nilphamari

Centring a fight that began over paying bills at a tea stall on Tuesday, a group of villagers swooped on another group the next afternoon at Dakkhin Chikonmati Huzurpara village in Domar upazila.

In the clash, the group mercilessly beat the women and children of the other group.

Police, after reaching the spot, arrested four individuals in this regard.

However, Mosharaf Hossain, 62, father of two of the victims, pointed out that the police arrested

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Suspension, once again

Gazipur mayor faces graft charges

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Gazipur Mayor MA Mannan rejoined office on June 18 after fighting legal battles for about two and a half years.

But the Local Government Division (LGD) suspended him for the third time yesterday.

The LGD in a circular said the mayor was suspended as a Gazipur court on January 18 accepted the charge sheet in a corruption case filed against him by the Anti-Corruption Commission.

Signed by Deputy Secretary Shahidul Islam, the circular said this suspension order would become effective immediately.

Talking to The Daily Star, Mannan said he would file a writ petition with the High Court on Sunday challenging

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MA MANNAN
MAYOR OF GAZIPUR

Elected for 5 yrs

Served the office around 18 months

Was in jail for 22 months

13 months left of his tenure

Total case filed 30

Suspended thrice



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