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Hills razed for housing



SANJOY KUMAR BARUIA, Bandarban

Hills are being razed in the south east district of Bandarban to make way for a housing project, much to the dismay of locals and environmentalists.

The project -- Bir Bahadur Nagar -- at Kalaghata on the outskirts of the town, is being built on 36 acres of hilly terrain. Interestingly, the government is making a connecting road cutting the hills for the housing project. Around 4-5 hills on about 5 acres of land have already been destroyed to build the two roads that will crisscross the housing plots, locals said.

Environmentalists fear that once the project is fully implemented, the environment of the area would be harmed.

The 36-acre land that belonged to the Bandarban Bhomong royal family was sold to four individuals in 2002 for Tk 36 lakh, said Nue Maung Prue Marma, a member of the family.

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A hill is being razed with a bulldozer in Bandarban's Bir Bahadur Nagar area to build a road to a housing project, named after Bir Bahadur Ushwe Sing, state minister for Chittagong Hill Tracts affairs. The photo was taken early last month.

PHOTO: STAR

Bandarban landslides kill four

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Bandarban

Four people, including a couple and their baby girl, were killed in two landslides amid heavy rain in Bandarban yesterday.

Md Hanif, 30, his wife Rijia, 25, and their two and a half years old girl Halima Begum were buried alive when a chunk of mud fell on their tin-roofed house at remote Kalaiya Para in Lama upazila around 1:00pm, said Nure-A-Jannat, upazila nirbahi officer of Lama.

In another landslide, Protima Das, 45, was killed at Bir Bahadur Nagar in Bandarban town when huge chunks of earth fell on her tin-roofed house around 11:45am, said police.

Members of fire service with the help of locals conducted a rescue operation and recovered the body, said Golam Sarwar, officer-in-charge of Bandarban Sadar Police Station.

Protima and her husband Milon Das were in the house when the landslide took

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REPATRIATION OF ROHINGYAS

Condition still not conducive Says Red Cross president

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Red Cross President Peter Maurer has said there are serious doubts about the conducive conditions in Myanmar's Rakhine state for safe, voluntary and sustainable repatriation of Rohingyas from Bangladesh.



"The conditions are simply not there for a large number of people to return home," he said at a press conference at the Dhaka office of the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) yesterday following his weeklong visit to Rakhine and Rohingya camps in Cox's Bazar.

During his stay in Myanmar, he met State Counsellor Aung San Suu Kyi, President U Win Myint, Senior General U Min Aung Hlaing. In Bangladesh, he had meetings with Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina, Foreign Minister AH Mahmood Ali and Home Minister Asaduzzaman Khan.

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DEATH OF 18 IN GAIBANDHA ROAD CRASH

Bus driver, owner responsible for it

Finds govt probe; says driver fell asleep, the vehicle was not fit for long-haul routes

TUHIN SHUBHRA ADHIKARY

The driver of a bus that veered into a ditch killing 18 passengers last month fell asleep at the wheel, a probe has found.

Aminul Hossain was arrested by highway police on Monday. A criminal case was filed against him.

At least 28 others were injured when the bus heading for Panchagarh from Dhaka ploughed into a tree before coming to a rest in a ditch near Gaibandha's Palashbari around 4:00am on June 23.

The probe also found faults with the bus's body work and recommended legal actions against Aminul and the owner of the vehicle, Shishir Kumar Roy, chief of an 11-member committee that investigated the crash, told The Daily Star yesterday.

The body work of the bus, owned by Alam Enterprise, was done in a local workshop.

As the the body was made of very low quality metal, its upper part crumpled totally after it hit the tree, he added.

The vehicle was not fit to ply the highways, Shishir, also an additional secretary (estate) of Road Transport and Highway Division (RTHD), said.

The driving licence of Aminul was counterfeit and the fitness certificate of the vehicle expired, he added.

The probe committee submitted its report to the secretary of the RTHD on Monday with 22 recommendations.

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Don't misuse handcuffs

HC asks police

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The High Court yesterday directed the police to remain cautious and not to misuse handcuffs for detainees.

The bench of Justice Salma Masud Chowdhury and Justice AKM Zahurul Haque came up with the verdict after hearing a suo moto (voluntary) rule.

The rule was issued after a Jahangirnagar University student was handcuffed while being treated at a hospital in May last year.

The HC bench had issued the rule after a report headlined "Handcuffed to hospital bed" was published in The Daily Star on May 29 last year.

According to the report, Jahangirnagar University student Nazmul Hossain, accused in a vandalism case, fell sick on May 27 last year while protesting

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New hope for threatened koalas



AFP, Paris

Australia's koalas, their very existence imperilled by disease, bushfires, car strikes, and dog attacks, face a more hopeful future thanks to scientists cracking its genetic code, a study said yesterday.

A mammoth effort by more than 50 researchers in seven countries uncovered 26,558 koala genes, yielding vital DNA clues for vaccines against diseases such as sexually transmitted chlamydia, which blinds the cuddly critters and leaves them infertile.

"The genome has allowed us to understand the koala immune genes in detail for the first time," said Rebecca Johnson of the Australian Museum Research Institute, a co-author of the study published in Nature Genetics.

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Correction

A report published in The Daily Star on July 3 under the headline "BAF plane crash: body parts of 2 pilots recovered" mistakenly quoted Inter Services Public Relation (ISPR) as saying that inclement weather caused the crash.

In fact, our Jessore correspondent talked to the manager of Jessore Airport and officials of Fire Brigade, law enforcers and locals to file the report and not to any official of ISPR.

We regret the mistake.



PRAYER TIMING JULY 4
Fazr Zohr Asr Maghrib Esha
AZAN 4-10 12-45 5-00 6-55 8-17
JAMAAT 4-45 1-15 5-15 7-00 8-45

SOURCE: ISLAMIC FOUNDATION

'Drug dealer' killed in 'gunfight' with cops

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Mymensingh

An alleged drug dealer was killed in a "gunfight" in Sadar upazila early yesterday.

The deceased was identified as Bachchu Mia, 45, son of Abdur Rahman of Chitalmari village in Sadar upazila.

With this incident, at least 164 suspected drug peddlers have been killed since the anti-narcotics drive began on May 4. Most of the dead were killed in "shootouts" involving police and Rapid Action Battalion.

Police said a team of Detective Branch (DB) of Mymensingh raided Chitalmari area, beside Mymensingh-Kishoreganj Highway on information that a gang was engaged in drug trading.

Md Ashiqur Rahman, officer-in-charge of DB police, Mymensingh, who led the team, said sensing

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A family member shows a picture of four of the 12 missing boys near the Tham Luang cave at the Khun Nam Nang Non Forest Park in Thailand's Mae Sai on Monday. Trapped in a flooded cave for nine days, the 12 boys and their football coach were "found safe" on Monday in a miracle rescue after days of painstaking search by divers. Inset, missing children are inside the cave.

PHOTO: AFP

Thai boys' cave ordeal not over

Rescuers brace for long, difficult evacuation as rain threatens to complicate efforts

AFP, Mae Sai

Rescuers braced for a difficult evacuation for 13 members of a Thai youth football team found alive in a cave nine days after they went missing, as a phone cable was hurriedly fed into the underground chambers in the hope of allowing them to speak to their families for the first time since their ordeal began.

The 12 young boys and their football coach were discovered rick thin and hungry on a mound of mud surrounded by water late Monday, ending an agonising search that captivated a nation.

A team of Thai Navy SEAL divers -- including a medic -- have joined them on the bank, while rescuers pour over evacuation plans from the Tham Luang cave complex in northern Thailand before heavy rains return and raise the water level.

Much-needed food and medical supplies -- including high-calorie gels and paracetamol -- reached the group yesterday as rescuers prepared for a prolonged extraction operation.

"A telephone line will be installed tonight... they (the boys) will be able to talk with their families via military phone," Passakorn Boonyarat, deputy governor of Chiang Rai province, told reporters late yesterday.

He refused to speculate on how long they might be trapped, but explained that while there are enough provisions for four months, anyone fit and able to leave the cave would be evacuated as soon as possible.

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