

1200 roadside trees being felled

Locals planted the eucalyptus under social forestation programme

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Gaibandha

Influential people are felling a large number of eucalyptus trees along a two-kilometre road of Taluk Kanupur union in the district's Gobindaganj upazila without any tender or order from the competent authorities.

Local people planted over 1200 eucalyptus saplings along the road from Basudevpur Bazar to Teliyan village under social forestation programme 15 years ago.

Some local influential people in collaboration with the chairman of Taluk Kanupur Union Parishad (UP) sold out the now matured trees to local timber traders without any prior permission of the authorities concerned and the buyers have started felling the trees and shifting those to safe places, locals said.

Shaheen Mia, a local timber trader, said they purchased the trees after settling the matter with UP Chairman Atiqur Rahman Atik and Jaharul Islam Sabuj, president of social forestation programme.

Sabuj said they have sold out 442 trees for Tk 26 lakh through a 'spot tender'.

Locals, however, said all of the 1200 roadside trees were sold without any tender. Contacted over cell phone, UP Chairman Atiqur Rahman Atik said he would talk to journalists on that matter later.

Asked about the matter, Mizanur Rahman, upazila forest officer of Gobindaganj, said he is not aware about the felling of roadside trees.

Ramkrishna Barman, upazila nirbahi officer of Gobindaganj, said he asked the UP chairman and the president of social forestation programme to submit all the documents related to selling of roadside trees but they only submitted a resolution of the committee.

Action will be taken, if any discrepancy is found, he said.



Logs from a large number of trees, felled without any tender, are being taken away from beside a village road at Teliyan in Taluk Kanupur union of Gaibandha's Gobindaganj upazila yesterday.

PHOTO: STAR

Natore's princess poet

Recovered century-old diaries and love letters shed light on royal life



Century-old memorabilia of Princess Indoo Prova of Dighapatia zamindar family in Natore.

PHOTO: STAR

BULBUL AHMED with ANDREW EAGLE

For seven generations from the early-eighteenth century, the zamindars of Dighapatia near Natore were landlords of a vast estate, with land parcels as far afield as Jessore and Mymensingh. Such was the prominence of the dynasty founded by Dayaram Roy that the successive landlords were awarded various titles including maharaja by the Mughal court, and later honours by the British.

At the turn of the twentieth century, a young Princess Indoo Prova, a newly-married daughter of the family, penned diaries and shared love letters with husband Mahendra Narayan Chawdhury, then stationed in Kolkata. Locked inside a trunk at the district administration's treasury, her writings were all but forgotten until last December. Then, in the process of establishing a museum dedicated to the Dighapatia Raj, 17 diaries and 285 letters were rediscovered, offering a trove of new information about the family and the history of North Bengal. What's more, her writing demonstrates the princess had considerable skill as a poet.

"We were searching the treasury for historical materials from the Raj period that might be of interest to the new museum," explains Natore's Additional Deputy

Commissioner Razzaqul Islam who is responsible for the museum. "That's when we came upon the letters."

At the time of her writing, beginning around 1904, Princess Indoo Prova was living in Rajshahi, then-called Rampura. She was primarily leading a life of household routine, the details of which changed somewhat between winter and summer. Common activities included singing, drawing, sewing, swimming, chatting and cooking. She marvelled at being able to visit theatres and cinemas on occasion. Hers are the words of a girl who at a young age lost her father, a daughter with four younger brothers to consider.

Along with her writings, a number of artefacts were found, including a framed photograph, a royal pen and ink pot, a crown and a regal gown. There are items made of ivory and deer antler that once belonged to the Dighapatia Rajbari, the palace the family called home.

From March 9 this year, the diaries, letters and other regalia have been made accessible to the public, being put on display at the newly-inaugurated Uttara Gonobhaban Museum. A more fitting location there could hardly be since the Uttara Gonobhaban building, which has for decades been used as the official residence

for Bangladeshi heads of state in North Bengal, is indeed the Rajbari itself.

Given their age, the diaries and letters are in remarkably good condition. Words and sentences are clearly discernible, though the paper is frail. "The pages tend to break if one touches the books," notes Natore's deputy commissioner, Shaheena Khatun.

Of their content, there is particular excitement about the princess's poems, which have been compared by experts to the works of Jessore's Michael Madhusudan Dutta. "I hope to speak to the cabinet secretary and divisional commissioner to ensure that, with the help of the culture ministry, her poems can be published," says the deputy commissioner.

"If we can publish Indoo Prova's poems, it will enrich the history of Natore and also Bengali literature," agrees Razzaqul.

"How impatiently the azure water is sparkling," the princess wrote in one poem, entitled 'Bangapo Sagar'. "As if soaked in moonlight, how bright and quiet!"

While those words refer to the poem's subject, the Bay of Bengal, they could just about describe the current excitement of rediscovering her written words, which have brought a bygone era, with surprising vibrancy back to life.

Youth's body found

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Jamalpur

Police recovered the body of a youth under Jhenai Railway Bridge at Kompopur in the town yesterday morning.

The deceased, aged about 25 and wearing ash colour T-shirt and pink pant, could not be identified immediately.

Police suspect that the youth was travelling on the roof of a train and he died after being hit by a girder of the railway bridge early yesterday.

Informed by locals, railway police recovered the body from the spot around 11:00am.

Later, the body was sent to Jamalpur General Hospital morgue for autopsy, said Taposh Chandra Pandit, officer-in-charge of Jamalpur Railway Police Station.

Innovative drive for road safety

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Cox's Bazar

Twenty-five three wheelers have been thrown into a deep ditch and canal after being seized in a drive in the district.

Malumghat Highway police have been conducting the innovative drive for the last three days.

As part of the drive that started on Thursday, police seized three wheelers plying on the highway and threw them into the nearby water bodies.

Twenty-five CNG-run auto rickshaws, battery-run easy-bikes, rickshaw vans and legunas were seized and thrown into the deep ditch and canal till yesterday, said Sub-inspector (SI) Jasimuddin of Malumghat Highway police.

The drives were conducted at Kanchanmala and Natun Office in Sadar upazila and Khutakhali and Dulahazara point in Chakoria upazila.

The drive is aimed at preventing the three wheelers from plying on the highway, said the SI.

In-charge of Malumghat highway police outpost Md Alamgir Hossain said 11 persons were killed in collision of passenger buses with leguna and Tomtom in Chakoria on Cox's Bazar-Chittagong highway on September 11 and 12.

Owner of leguna at Chakoria Farhad said the police drive has reduced plying of three wheelers, which is causing sufferings to the passengers.

'Cow lifter' beaten dead

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Benapole

An alleged cow lifter was beaten to death at Sadipur village in Jessore's Bagharpara upazila yesterday.

The identity of the deceased, aged around 45, could not be known immediately.

Sheikh Wahiduzzaman, inspector of Bagharpara Police Station, said a group of thieves stole two cows from Nimta village and then took the cattle to Sadipur village.

Sensing the presence of the cow lifters, villagers chase the gang and caught one of them red handed. The angry mob then gave the cow lifter a good beating, leaving him dead on the spot.

The body was sent to Jessore General Hospital for autopsy.



Sheikh Hasina Titas Bridge in Banchhampur upazila of Brahmanbaria is scheduled to be inaugurated by Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina through a video conference today.

PHOTO: COLLECTED

'Spare agri land, dwellings from acquisition'

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Patuakhali

Several hundred people of Dhankhali in Kalapara upazila under the district formed a human chain at Kalumiar Bazar on Friday protesting the government's move to acquire their agricultural land and dwelling houses.

They sought the prime minister's intervention over the matter.

Over 3,000 acres of land at Pachjuna, Chailabunia, Nishanbaria, Devpur and Dhankhali villages in Kalapara upazila have already been acquired to build four power plants -- Payra power plant, Ashuganj power plant, Sena

Kalyan Sangstha power plant and Rural Electrification Board power plant, each with 1,320 MW capacity, local sources said.

Recently Sena Kalyan Sanstha wanted more 1,000 acres of land for their project and local people became aggrieved over the matter.

Ismail Hawlader, a marginal farmer of the area, said he runs his six-member family by cultivating paddy and different crops including pulses, watermelon, maize, groundnut, sweet potato and chilli.

"At least three types of crops are produced on our land every year. If the government acquires our agricultural land, we will be

helpless," he said.

"Where will we go if the government acquire more of our three-crop lands?" said Khaleda Begum of the same area.

Contacted, Md Mamunur Rashid, additional deputy commissioner (Revenue) of Patuakhali, said, "The ministry concerned has already given instruction to us about setting up of power plants in the areas and we are conducting works as per the government's instruction."

Earlier on September 4, about a thousand people of different villages formed a human chain at Kalapara upazila town over the same issue.

Huge cannabis seized in B'baria

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Brahmanbaria

A large quantity of cannabis was seized from a microbus with a sticker of a ministry in Kasba upazila.

The law enforcers also arrested three people in this connection at Kamalpur village in the upazila the same day.

The arrestees are Jakir Hossain, 20, of Kasba, Md Ripon, 24, of Debidwar upazila in Comilla and Gias Uddin, 22, of Raipura upazila in Narsingdi.

Kasba Police Station Officer-in-Charge (OC) (Investigation) Mrinal Debnath said, acting on a tip-off, police conducted a raid and stopped the car at Kamalpur village.

After a thorough search, they found 180 kilograms of cannabis in 45 packets. Later, they took the car and the arrestees, including the driver, to the police station, the OC said.

A case was filed in this connection, he added.



People of Dhankhali in Kalapara upazila of Patuakhali form a human chain at Kalumiar Bazar in the upazila on Friday afternoon demanding cancellation of the authorities' decision to acquire 1,000 acres of land there.

PHOTO: STAR