



Logs of felled trees on the embankment at Dakkhin Musulliabab village in Kuakata area of Patuakhali's Kalapara upazila.

PHOTO: STAR

## Illegal tree felling in Kuakata

**Villagers prevent timber traders from taking the trees, claiming ownership**

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Patuakhali

Local timber traders have felled around 100 large trees on the dyke at Dakkhin Musulliabab village in the last one month, but they could not take those away as the villagers stopped them saying that they (villagers) were the owners of the trees.

Water Development Board (WDB) built the dyke along the Bay in Kuakata area in the 1980s. Local people planted some trees on the dyke at their own initiative to protect the dyke. The forest department planted about 10,000 trees on the dyke under social afforestation project in 2013-14 fiscal year.

The forest department took steps to sell the trees as WDB took up a plan to renovate

the dyke. The department marked some trees about two years back and sold those in an auction in April this year.

In the last one month, the timber traders who bought the trees have felled around 100 trees that were planted by the local people, who stopped them from taking those away, saying that they (villagers) are the real owners of the trees and the forest department sold those illegally.

Afjal Hossain of Dakkhin Musulliabab village said the forest department sold the trees illegally in an auction which were not planted by the department.

"Our grandfathers or fathers planted the trees from around 40 years back," he said, adding that the villagers are the real owners

of these trees and they will take the trees or the money from the sale of the trees.

Abu Saleh, another resident of the same area, said they looked after the trees after planting those, but the forest department is selling them, depriving them of financial benefit.

They will not allow the traders to take the trees without paying the market price, which is around Tk 15,000 per tree, he said.

Abdul Aziz, former member of Latachaplee union parishad, said the forest department cannot sell the trees as local people are the original owners. Forest department should pay those villagers who planted the trees, he added.

During a recent visit to the area, this

correspondent found that many trees on the dyke had been cut down.

Mohipur Forest Department Ranger (range officer) Abul Kalam Azad said they planted 10,000 trees on the dyke in 2013-14 fiscal year under social afforestation project. Fifty five percent of total value of the trees will be given to the land owner, but the trees have no owners as local people cannot plant anything on government land.

They have informed the higher authorities about the matter, he added.

Kalapara Upazila Nirbahi Officer Md Tanveer Rahman said that he asked the forest officials to resolve the matter and they will look into it.

## Female Yaba peddler arrested

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Cox's Bazar

Police arrested a female Yaba peddler with 11,000 Yaba tablets and Tk 29.57 lakh in cash in Teknaf upazila yesterday.

The arrestee, Laila Begum, is wife of Yaba peddler Nurul Alam of Purba Satgharia Para at Hoikong in the upazila, police said.

Teknaf Model Police Station Officer-in-Charge Ranjit Kumar Barua said, acting on a tip-off, police conducted a raid and arrested Laila Begum.

Following the lead obtained from Laila, police recovered the Yaba tablets and the money from their house. A case against the couple has been filed with the police station under the narcotics control act.

## 47 fishermen jailed, 2 fined for netting hilsa

STAR COUNTRY DESK

Mobile courts in separate drives yesterday sentenced 47 fishermen to different terms of imprisonment and seized around 308 kilograms of hilsa in Faridpur and Chandpur for defying a 22-day ban on netting the fish till October 28.

Our Faridpur correspondent reported that at least 34 fishermen were jailed by two separate mobile courts on charge of defying the ongoing ban on hilsa fishing in Sadar and Sadarpur upazilas of the district.

One of the courts also fined two other fishermen for defying the ban in Sadarpur upazila.

A court led by Executive Magistrate Israt Jahan sent seven fishermen to 15 days imprisonment under Protection and Conservation of Fish Act, 1950.

The court also sized 50 thousand metres of fishing nets and 60 kilograms of the popular fish from different places of the Padma river in Sadar upazila.

Meanwhile, another court led by Executive Magistrate Mohammad Kamrul

Hasan sentenced 27 fishermen to different terms in Sadarpur upazila.

The court also fined two other fishermen Tk 5,000 each and seized 3,000 metres of current nets with 90 kilograms of hilsa from different areas in Padma and Arial Kha rivers.

Away in Chandpur, mobile courts in separate drives detained 13 fishermen and sentenced them to different terms of imprisonment, reports our correspondent.

During the drive, the court also seized 158 kilograms of mother hilsa from the convicts.

District Fisheries Officer Mohammad Asadul Baki said mobile courts conducted nine drives at different points in the Meghna river from Monday evening till yesterday and detained 13 fishermen for defying the ban.

The judges of the courts later awarded one year imprisonment to nine fishermen, one month to another and 15 days' imprisonment to three others.

The convicts include Jewel, 35, Nasir Miah, 30, Ariful Islam, 28, Hazrat Ali, 35, Md Hossain, 26, Yousuf Majhi, 26, Md Quddus, 25, Md Saiful, 27, Md Jamal, 30.



Defying the countrywide ongoing ban on netting, selling and transporting hilsa, some unscrupulous people in Manikganj's Harirampur, Shibalaya and Doulatpur upazilas continue the callous act.

PHOTO: COLLECTED



Rain at the right time helped fast and plentiful growth of Aman paddy in Koterkauna area under Kulaura upazila of Moulvibazar.

## Rain boon for Aman, curse for vegetable

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Moulvibazar

Incessant rain over the north-eastern districts of the country has been a blessing for Aman paddy cultivators and a curse for vegetable growers in Sylhet region.

Moderate rainfall helps Aman paddy to grow properly, but it may damage newly planted winter vegetables, said agriculture officers and farmers.

Visiting different areas of Sylhet and Moulvibazar recently, this correspondent found that paddy growers are very happy with such weather.

Joynal Abedin, a farmer of Bhuksmoil area in Kulaura upazila of Moulvibazar, told this correspondent that rainy weather is favourable for cultivating Aman paddy and helps in getting bumper production.

Around 3,87,000 hectares of land have been brought under Aman cultivation in Sylhet division this year, said Sylhet Department of Agricultural Extension (DAE) Deputy Director (DD) Abdul Hasem.

On the other hand, vegetable growers in Sylhet region are in fear that their newly planted winter vegetables might get damaged due to rain.

"I am having great difficulty protecting my vegetable plants. I want the rain to stop," said Miftah Uddin, a farmer of Angura Mohammadpur village in Beanibazar upazila of Sylhet.

"I planted seedlings of vegetables on 30 bighas of land this month and hope to harvest the crop in January. But I am afraid that my plants may get damaged by rain," said Idris Ali, a farmer of Bhuksmoil village in Kulaura upazila of Moulvibazar.

Moulvibazar DAE DD Shahjahan Chowdhury told this correspondent they are providing all-out cooperation to farmers to minimise the damage to vegetables.

## Farida's medical study uncertain

**Father seeks monetary support from well-off**

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Gaibandha

Brilliant Farida Akhter still does not know how she will manage money for her admission into a government medical college as her poor father has no ability to contribute.

Farida secured 67.5 marks in the recent test examination for medical college admission and got selected for admission to Faridpur Medical College.

Having utter difficulties in maintaining his six-member family, Farida's rickshaw-puller father Farid Ahmed Baki of Jaramnadi village in Sundarganj upazila is in despair that he cannot do anything for his daughter's admission due to acute financial hardship.



Farida Akhter

"I have appealed to a number of my relatives and neighbours for extending their helping hands, but did not get any response from anyone yet," said an anxious Baki.

"Farida, eldest among my three children, is a brilliant student since her childhood," Baki said.

Farida got scholarships in the PSC examinations from Jaramnadi Government Primary School in 2009 and in the ISC examinations from Ameena Government Girls' High School in 2012, Baki said, adding that her daughter secured GPA-5 in the SSC examinations from the same institution in 2015.

The same year Farida was invited for a grand reception in the capital and got admission to Cambrian College from where she secured GPA-5 in the HSC examinations in 2017, the proud father said.

Expressing her anxiety over the uncertainty of admission, Farida said they have no savings and not even her stipend money which helped her to buy books and other necessary things.

"I don't want to be dependent on my father. If I get admission to the medical college, I would be able to carry on my education by giving private tuition to others," Farida said.

"Although I could not feed my children properly, I am proud of my brilliant daughter," Farid said.

## Sub-registrar sued for keeping Tk 2.38cr illegally

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Pabna

A sub-registrar of Pabna Sadar upazila has been sued on charge of possessing Tk 2.38 crore illegally.

Golam Moula, assistant director of Anti-Corruption Commission (ACC), filed the case with Darus Salam Police Station in Dhaka on Monday, accusing sub-registrar Md Ibrahim Ali, 58, of Ramchandrapur village in Ishwardi upazila.

Moula, former assistant director of ACC, Pabna, was transferred to the commission's headquarters last week.

According to the case, the Tk 2.38 crore has no legal source.

Ibrahim possessed the illegal wealth by taking bribes from 2013 to 2018, said Md Abu Bakar Siddique, deputy director of ACC, Pabna.

In the case statement, it is alleged that the accused sub-registrar bought a flat at a cost of Tk 40 lakh in the capital's Mirpur. He also bought land under different names during the time.