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Deforestation unobstructed

Illegal logging, transportation of felled trees continue in Hathazari with false papers



MOSTAFA YOUSUF, Chattogram

Loggers have been wiping out hundreds of acres of forest in Hathazari upazila of Chattogram, within a three-kilometre radius of the Forest Department office. The felled logs are then smuggled through the department's checkpoints, largely without any obstruction.

For months, loggers have been clearing forestland at Udaliya in Mondakini of Hathazari -- which the Forest Department claims does not fall under its jurisdiction.

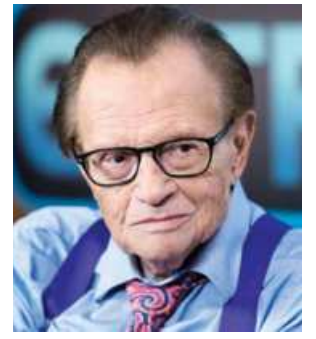
On January 6, this correspondent visited the forestland of Udaliya adjacent to Monai Tripura Para -- where villagers said the loggers constructed a road to facilitate transportation of the logs but the front part of the forest was left intact so that no one could grasp what was going

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Children collecting empty water bottles, mostly thrown away by the passengers of Dhaka-bound launches, from the Kirtankhola in Barishal. The photo was taken yesterday.

PHOTO: TITU DAS



Talk show legend Larry King dies

REUTERS, Washington

Larry King, who quizzed thousands of world leaders, politicians and entertainers for CNN and other news outlets in a career spanning more than six decades, has died aged 87, his media company said in a statement yesterday.

King had been hospitalized in Los Angeles with a Covid-19 infection, according to several media reports. He died at Cedars Sinai Medical Center, Ora Media, a television production company founded by King, said in a post on Twitter.

"For 63 years and across SEE PAGE 10 COL 3

PATURIA, SHIMULIA ROUTES

Fog disrupts ferry service for hours

STAR REPORT

Reduced visibility caused by a dense fog disrupted ferry services across the Padma, causing long tailbacks on both sides of the river yesterday.

Buses full of people and hundreds of trucks had to wait for up to nine hours to go across the river.

Ferry services from Shimulia-Banglabazar and Paturia-Daulatdia are considered gateways to 21 of the country's southern districts.

Meanwhile, a Met office bulletin yesterday said the temperature dip may persist for a while.

"Mild cold wave is sweeping over the regions of Rangamati, Sreemangal, and Panchagarh and it may continue."

"Night and day temperatures may remain nearly unchanged over the country," it said.

"Weather may remain dry with a temporary, partly cloudy sky over the country. Moderate to thick fog may occur during midnight to morning."

In its 72-hour outlook, the bulletin said temperatures may rise at night.

Yesterday's lowest temperature

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480m-year-old starfish unearthed

MAIL ONLINE

A fossil starfish unearthed in Morocco that dates back 480 million years is a 'missing link' between modern day crinoids and their ancestors, a study has reported.

Experts from Cambridge said that the fossil -- uncovered from within the so-called Fezouata shale of the Anti-Atlas mountain range -- is the oldest-known starfish.

It dates back to a period in Earth's history -- the so-called Ordovician Biodiversification Event -- when the life suddenly expanded.

The previous contender for the oldest starfish specimen on record was 50 million years younger, the researchers said.

Given the scientific name 'Cantabrigiaster fezouataensis', the ancient species has an intricate design, with feathery arms still visible in its fossil specimens.

The beautifully-preserved remains will allow palaeontologists to map out the new species' body in detail -- and shine a light on how starfish evolved.

"Finding this missing link to their ancestors is incredibly exciting," said evolutionary palaeoecologist Aaron Hunter of the University

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Four die as trawler sinks in the Bay

13 rescued by Coast Guard

OUR CORRESPONDENT

Members of Bangladesh Coast Guard recovered four bodies from the Bay of Bengal yesterday, few hours after a fishing trawler capsized.

At least 13 persons were rescued and nine others remained missing as of 5:00pm. The rescue operation was still going on till the time this report was filed.

Lt Arifuzzaman Rony, in-charge of Coast Guard's Saint Martin's station, said the trawler capsized around 65 kilometres away from Saint Martin's Island early yesterday.

The trawler named FB Janjabil might have capsized due to thick fog and adverse weather, he told The Daily Star.

On information, two rescue vessels of

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COVID VACCINE

Pfizer offers 40m doses to poorer countries

Biden warns US death toll can hit 600,000; Wuhan marks a year since lockdown

AGENCIES

Pfizer announced Friday that it will provide up to 40 million of its Covid-19 vaccine doses to poorer countries on a non-profit basis, through the globally-pooled Covax facility.

Around the world, more than 2.1 million people have died of Covid-19 since it emerged in China's Wuhan in December 2019, with over 98 million infected.

Wuhan yesterday marked one year since the start of its traumatic 76-day coronavirus lockdown, while the pandemic raged elsewhere and governments scrambled to put in place new measures.

Europe faced a worsening struggle with production woes hitting supply of the AstraZeneca/Oxford vaccine as well as the Pfizer/BioNTech shot.

In the world's worst-hit country, US President Joe Biden warned America's death toll could pass 600,000, the highest estimate yet that would mark a devastating rise on the 400,000 fatalities so far.

"The virus is surging," Biden told a news conference. "We're at 400,000 dead, expected to reach well over 600,000."

While dozens of the world's richer countries have begun their vaccination campaigns in a bid to curb the pandemic, coronavirus jabs have been few and far between in the world's poorer nations.

Covax -- the globally-pooled coronavirus vaccine procurement and equitable distribution effort, aimed at ensuring that lower-income countries get hold of doses too -- is hoping to ship its first deliveries in February.

Covax is co-led by the World Health Organization and Gavi, the Vaccine Alliance. The Pfizer-BioNTech vaccine is

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WILDLIFE TRADE

2 traffickers held with deer hides

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Bagerhat

Police detained two alleged traffickers along with 19 deer hides in Bagerhat's Sharankhola yesterday, three days after a tiger's skin was recovered from the possession of a poacher in the upazila.

A team of Detective Branch of police recovered the hides from the rented house of one Monirul Islam Sheikh, 48, in Rayenda bus stand area around 1.45am, Pankaj Chandra Roy, superintendent of police in the district, said at a press briefing at his office.

He said the recovery was made acting on a tip-off that Monir of Bhadrarapa village in Bagerhat Sadar upazila, along with Mohammad Elius Hawlader, 35, of Rajoir village in Sharankhola upazila, was selling deer

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PHOTO ON PAGE 5



PRAYER TIMING JANUARY 24

Fazr Juma Asr Maghrib Esha
AZAN 5:30 12:45 4:15 5:43 7:15
JAMAAT 6:05 1:15 4:30 5:47 7:45

SOURCE: ISLAMIC FOUNDATION



A three-wheeler, overloaded with sacks of rice, on Dhaka-Kishoreganj highway in Bajitpur, Kishoreganj. The authorities have been struggling for years to keep these vehicles off the highways. Transport associations say that these three-wheelers are one of the major causes of frequent crashes.

PHOTO: ANISUR RAHMAN

22 more die from Covid, 436 infected

UNB, Dhaka

Covid-19 fatalities in Bangladesh soared to 8,003 as the country's health authorities confirmed 22 more deaths in 24 hours till yesterday morning.

The caseload of the virus in the country now stands at 531,326 with 436 new cases being reported during the period, according to the Directorate General of Health Services (DGHS).

The latest data of DGHS showed that the daily infection rate in Bangladesh dropped to 3.92 percent.

The country recorded SEE PAGE 10 COL 6

IN FOND MEMORY



Mrs. Anwara Islam, died on 24-01-2006 - exactly the same day and date as her husband Mr. Sirajul Islam who died twenty four years earlier in 1982.

Please join us in praying to the Almighty Allah to grant them eternal peace.

Lubna, Akbar, Durce, Arife & Bunty (Children)
Anika, Talita, Numair (Grand Children)
Amani, Tijaan & Jinaan (Great-Grand Children)

Ms Lubna Choudhury
Founder-Principal, B.I.T