

Social forestry: who do you serve?

MINTU DESHWARA WITH FIROZ A MUZAHID

Under a quizzical social forestry project undertaken right in the middle of a natural forestland in Moulvibazar's Kulaura upazila, the Forest Department is jeopardising age-old natural forestry as well as livelihoods of several hundred people living in the area for generations.

At least 300 members of 60 impoverished indigenous families had been living from hand to mouth by cultivating betel leaf on natural trees in the forests near their village (punji) -- Daluchhara Punji in Kormodha union of the upazila.

But contradicting government rules, the Divisional Forest Office in Sylhet, at the recommendation of Muroichhara beat officer, did not include the local marginalised indigenous population as participants or beneficiaries of the social forestry project near Daluchhara.

Rather, the department took possession of a vast tract of forestland near Daluchhara Punji around four months ago and planted around twenty-five thousand saplings there. Moreover, they made Rafiq Mia and Harish Ali -- who are affluent and influential individuals from outside the area -- beneficiaries of the social forestry project.

According to the official website of the Forest Department, "Social forestry [is an] activity involving the local poor people as beneficiaries for management and conservation of forests. Local people [are] involved in planning the plantation activities, implementation of planning, plantation and maintenance, management of forest resources etc. The main goal of social forestry is to ensure the social and economic benefits to landless, poor, widowed and oppressed rural people. The main purpose of social forestry is to create employment opportunities for the poor people and help them for being self-dependent and meet their needs for food, fodder, fuel and furniture."

The villagers alleged that a section of forest officials, with the objective to serve an organised group of influential locals, are working to implement the social forestry project near Daluchhara.



Locals on way to harvest betel leaf in a natural forest, near Daluchhara Punji in Moulvibazar's Kulaura upazila, where the Forest Department is implementing a social forestry project. Keeping the impoverished local indigenous communities out of the project, the department has made several affluent individuals, from outside the area, its beneficiaries. Since the project was launched, the indigenous communities in the area have been facing destruction of their betel leaf plants and attacks by beneficiaries of the government project.

PHOTO: MINTU DESHWARA

As part of the process, cohorts of the beneficiaries have been physically assaulting the villagers and already destroyed all betel leaf plants in the project area that is ancestral land of the inhabitants of Daluchhara Punji, they also said.

Villager Rusbel Rynksai, 65, said, "We've been living here for generations. This is our ancestral land and betel leaf cultivation is our main source of income. But the Forest Department along with some unscrupulous people now want to destroy our betel leaf garden."

Lobing Sumer, the headman of Doluchhara Punji, said, "Forest officer

Arjun Kanti Dastidar, accompanied by some others, recently came to our punji and cut down many trees."

College student Phaimon Sungoh said, "We are passing each day in fear that our betel leaf gardens might be destroyed anytime."

"Indigenous people earn their livelihoods by growing fruits and betel leaves in the punjis for long. If such social forestry project is implemented, it would destroy their gardens," said Father Joseph Gomes OMI, coordinator of Indigenous Affairs Committee of Bangladesh Poribesh Andolon (BAPA) in Sylhet.

Some forest officials are conspiring to

lease out the gardens to some influential people including Rafiq Mia and Harish Ali in exchange for bribe, alleged Flora Bably Talang, general secretary of Kuboraj Inter-punji Development Organization, a rights body for indigenous communities.

Rafiq has already occupied Katabari betel leaf garden in the same upazila after evicting its indigenous owner, many members of the indigenous communities alleged, saying that Rafiq with the help of his cohort Haris was also moving ahead with a plan to encroach on the gardens at Daluchhara Punji.

Henchmen of Rafiq and Haris have

assaulted and injured at least nine indigenous people in a week last month and they have been warning that they would evict the indigenous people from their ancestral land, said punji headman Lobbing Sumer.

He also said he filed a case with Kulaura Police Station naming eight people, including Rafiq and Haris, and some 30 to 40 unidentified individuals after a criminal gang led by Rafiq and Haris attacked on Belua Punji, adjacent to Daluchhara Punji, and chopped down around 2,800 betel leaf plants on August 25.

Denying the allegation, Haris claimed that he was not involved with any such incident.

Rafiq could not be reached for comments as his cell phone was found switched off during repeated attempts.

Contacted, Arjun Kanti Dastidar, beat officer of Muroichhara forest, said the Forest Department planted around twenty-five thousand saplings on government land near Daluchhara Punji.

But on August 10, the indigenous people uprooted around 25,000 saplings and "That's why I filed case against the indigenous people."

Asked why names of marginalised locals were not included as beneficiaries of the social forestry project, he claimed that since the indigenous people of the area refused to be enlisted as beneficiaries, names of outsiders were included as beneficiaries.

Binoy Bhusan Roy, officer-in-charge of the police station, said all accused in both the cases received bail from the court.

Contacted, Kulaura Upazila Nirbahi Officer ATM Farhad Chowdhury said he would make an effort to resolve the problem by holding a dialogue among the indigenous communities, Forest Department officials concerned and other stakeholders.

BAPA general secretary Sharif Jamil said the Daluchhara incident is one example of how the indigenous communities are losing their ancestral land and livelihoods at the hands of some corrupt and greedy individuals and government officials.

Lightning kills 2 in Rangpur

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Dinajpur

Two fishermen were killed in lightning strike while fishing in the Teesta river in Rangpur's Gangachara upazila yesterday.

The deceased were identified as Tangru Mia, 35, and Monu Mia, 36, of Kalichar area in the upazila.

Laxmitari Union Parishad (UP) Chairman Abdullah Al Hadi said a group of fishermen were catching fish in the Teesta river near Char Challishale area amid rain since morning.

At one stage, a streak of thunderbolt suddenly hit them, leaving the two dead on the spot and another injured, he said.

Elderly couple killed

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Cumilla

Unidentified criminals killed an elderly couple at Subarnapuri village under Panchthabi union in Sadar upazila early yesterday.

The deceased are Billal Hossain, 75, and his wife Safura Begum, 56.

Inspector (Investigation) of Sadar Police Station Kamol Krishna Dhar said the victims' hands and legs were tied with rope, but no injury marks on their bodies.

Being informed, police recovered the bodies and sent those to Cumilla Medical College Hospital for autopsy.

They also detained three people, including deceased's daughter-in-law Shewly Akter, for quizzing.

Start process of Rana's extradition

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process to extradite the police officer, although it's a long procedure that will depend on the foreign ministry's involvement in line with the extradition treaty with India."

On Friday, Soheli was detained by the BSF on the Changrabandha border in West Bengal's Cooch Behar on charges of trespassing.

"Bringing back Soheli Rana from India won't be easy as there is a case filed against him there," said DMP Commissioner Shafiqul Islam on Sunday.

Following the arrest, Soheli was suspended from his position.

Meanwhile, investigators are now looking into the wealth of Soheli Rana and his family members, beyond the known sources of income, at home and abroad, after their involvement with e-commerce platform e-orange came out the open.

The platform made headlines for embezzling crores of taka of customers.

Several agencies are investigating the sources of the police officer's unusual wealth, which he accumulated within a few years.

According to investigators, Soheli has four flats, two of which are in Niketan. He ran three business establishments and a number of dealerships of multinational companies. He also runs a business

called T&G, with branches in Gulshan and Uttara.

He also bought a plot in Purbachal's Sector-3, two plots in E and I block of a residential area, and land for a resort in Khagrachhari.

He also has investments of crores of taka in Thailand, Portugal, France, Philippines, and Nepal.

Hailing from Gopalganj, he has over 500 bighas of land. Besides, he is a member of a number of elite clubs.

Aminul Islam, inspector (investigation) of Gulshan Police Station, told The Daily Star they have learnt about Soheli's wealth from various sources and they are investigating the matter.

On August 16, a customer, on behalf of others, filed a case against the owners and staffers of e-orange for reportedly embezzling around Tk 1,100 crore by not delivering their products.

A week later, another customer Md Russel filed a case against Soheli and nine others for their alleged involvement in misappropriating Tk 88, 94,918 of the investors.

After receiving a court order, Gulshan police recorded it as a regular case on September 2.

Later that day, Soheli fled the country. He had paid a broker Tk 10,000 to illegally cross Lalmonirhat's Patgram border and planned to go to Europe from Nepal, according to officials.

Days after Soheli fled the country, a

Dhaka court on Sunday issued a travel ban against the suspended inspector and five officials of e-orange in the case filed for embezzling around Tk 88.98 lakh.

Soheli's sister Sonia Mehjabin, her husband Masukur Rahman, Chief Operating Officer Amanullah Chowdhury, Bithi Akter, Kausar and all other owners of e-orange were made accused in the first case.

Sonia, Masukur, Amanullah and former COO Nazmul Alam Russel are behind bars now.

The ownership of the company has recently been transferred to Bithi Akter from Sonia.

In the second case, the others accused are Soheli Rana's wife Naznin Nahar Bithi, Kamrul Hasan, Abdul Kader, Nur Jahan Islam Sonia and Rubel Khan.

Soheli has all along been denying allegations of his involvement with e-orange.

However, his name as a director can be seen in the TIN certificate used to open the company called Orange Bangladesh. E-orange and Orange Bangladesh are at the same location. There are allegations that he has withdrawn Tk 2.5 crore from the company at different times.

The IO said when they asked Sonia about it, she told the investigators that Soheli withdrew the money on her request.

রেজিস্ট্রার দপ্তর
যশোর বিজ্ঞান ও প্রযুক্তি বিশ্ববিদ্যালয়
যশোর-৭৪০৮, বাংলাদেশ



Office of the Registrar
Jashore University of Science and Technology
Jashore-7408, Bangladesh

Memo No. JUST/Reg.(Aca.)/1423/M.Phil & Ph.D Admission Circular/2019-1935

Date: 05/09/2021

Admission Circular (Full-time/ Part-time M.Phil & Ph.D Program)

Applications are invited for admission in the full-time M.Phil program at Computer Science and Engineering(CSE), Microbiology(MB), Fisheries and Marine Bioscience(FMB), Genetic Engineering and Biotechnology(GEBT), Industrial and Production Engineering(IPE), Petroleum and Mining Engineering(PME), Nutrition and Food Technology(NFT), Pharmacy(Pharm), Mathematics(Math) and English(Eng) departments and full-time Ph.D program at Computer Science and Engineering(CSE), Microbiology(MB), Fisheries and Marine Bioscience(FMB), Genetic Engineering and Biotechnology(GEBT), Industrial and Production Engineering(IPE), Petroleum and Mining Engineering(PME), Nutrition and Food Technology(NFT), Pharmacy(Pharm), Mathematics(Math), English(Eng) and Agro Product Processing Technology(APPT) departments and full-time/ part-time M.Phil and Ph.D program at Accounting and Information Systems(AIS), Finance and Banking(FB), Management(MGT) and Marketing(MKT) departments in the July-2021 semester of 2021-2022 academic year with the following conditions.

1. General qualifications and conditions for applying to M.Phil program:

- Candidates must have Master's Degree/an equivalent Degree obtained from this University/a recognized University in the relevant/related subjects.
- Candidates having at least second class Honours Degree with 50% marks in total or CGPA 3.00 (out of 4) and second class Masters Degree with 50% marks or CGPA 3.00 (out of 4) shall be eligible for admission. In case of Degree pass Examination, candidates must have one first class or CGPA 3.5 (out of 4) either at Degree Pass Course or Master's level.
- Candidates having M.B.B.S degrees with 50% marks in total or CGPA 3.00 (out of 4) shall be eligible for admission to the M. Phil Program.

2. General qualifications and conditions for applying to the Ph.D program:

- | Applicable for MB, FMB, GEBT, NFT, Pharm, Math, Eng, APPT, AIS, FB, MGT and MKT departments | Applicable for CSE, IPE and PME departments |
|--|--|
| a) Candidates must have Master's Degree/an equivalent Degree obtained from this University/a recognized University in the relevant/related subjects. Candidates should have a strong academic record with not less than 55% (50% for English) marks or CGPA 3.25 (out of 4) both in Honours and Master's degree and have minimum 2 (two) years teaching/research experience in any recognized institution. | a) Candidates must have Master's Degree with a thesis/an equivalent Degree obtained from this University/a recognized University in the relevant/related subjects. Candidates should have a strong academic record with not less than 55% marks or CGPA 3.25 (out of 4) both in B.Sc. and M.Sc. degree. |
| b) Candidates, who have four years Honours with MS/M.Sc degree can be enrolled directly to the PhD Program. | b) The teachers of this university who do not satisfy the condition given above shall be eligible to apply for admission to the PhD program. However, s/he must have M.Sc. degree in the relevant field. It is noted that they have minimum 2 (two) years teaching /research and have minimum 3 (three) research publications in the field of their research interest in standard peer-reviewed indexed (e.g. SCI/SCOPUS/ESCI) journals with impact factor as a first or corresponding author. |
| c) Candidates having M. Phill Degree obtained from any recognized University shall be eligible for admission to the PhD program. | |
| d) Candidates having 3rd division at any level shall not be eligible for admission to the PhD program, except in cases of candidates having first class both in Honours and Master's level or CGPA 3.50 with an outstanding contribution in the field of their research interest and have minimum 2 (two) years teaching/research experience in any recognized institution and have minimum 2 (two) research publications in recognized journals. This clause may be relaxed for candidates having outstanding research carrier with the approval of the Academic council. | |
| e) The teachers of this University or of any other University who do not satisfy the condition given in clause 2 (a) of the ordinance shall be eligible to apply for admission to the PhD program. It is noted that they have minimum 2 (two) years teaching experience in any recognized university and have minimum 2 (two) research publications in the field of their research interest in standard academic journals. | |

3. Process of admission form collection and submission:

Candidates with the qualifications mentioned in 1 and 2 have to collect the form from their respective department by submitting 1000.00 (One Thousand) Taka for Ph.D application form and 500.00 (Five Hundred) Taka for M.Phil application form. Initially, the application form has to be filled-up properly and submitted to the respective department by 22/09/2021 (excluding holidays). The application form must be submitted with the attested marksheet and the certificate of all the examinations, three recent passport size color photographs and 01 set of research proposal/synopsis. Service-holders/employees must attach a written permission letter issued by their respective authority/employer/office. Applications without research proposal/defective/incomplete or delayed application (after the stipulated time) will not be accepted.

4. Any information regarding admission can be found on the university website (<https://just.edu.bd>) or in the respective departments.

Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh
Local Government Engineering Department
Office of the Upazila Engineer
Muktagacha, Mymensingh
www.lqed.gov.bd

Reference: IFT No. 01/2021/2022 Memo: (1) 46.02.0000.902.14.1221.20.13354, Date: 22/11/2020
(2) 46.02.0000.889.14.1195.20-14051, Date: 14/12/2020

e-Tender Notice

e-Tenders are invited under LTM system in the National e-GP System Portal (<http://www.eprocure.gov.bd>) for the procurement of works under Muktagacha upazila, Dist: Mymensingh.

SI No.	Name of scheme	Tender ID	Package No.
01	02	03	04
01	Construction of Boundary Wall including Gate of (1) Gorbazail (2) Gosh Bari (3) Hazi Sadar Ali (4) Joyda (5) Kandi Gaon and (6) Kendrio Pouro Model Govt Primary School under NBIDGSPS-1.	599820	e-Tender/NBIDGSPS-1/MYMM/MUK/2020-21/W2.00102
02	Construction of Boundary Wall including Gate of (1) Haidar Pur (2) Jhanka (3) Khil Gati (4) Moishadia (5) Palgoan Gov Primary School under NBIDGSPS-1.	599984	e-Tender/NBIDGSPS-1/MYMM/MUK/2020-21/W2.00077
03	Construction of Boundary Wall including Gate of (1) Khuk Shia (2) Kutub Pur (3) Luxmipur (4) Lichu Tola (5) Mazher Bond (6) Mohistara and (7) Montola Gov Primary School under NBIDGSPS-1.	600139	e-Tender/NBIDGSPS-1/MYMM/MUK/2020-21/W2.00103
04	Construction of Boundary Wall including Gate of (1) Mondol Sen (2) Nimunia (3) Rajbari (4) Raythora and (5) Syed Gram Gov primary school under NBIDGSPS-1.	600159	e-Tender/NBIDGSPS-1/MYMM/MUK/2020-21/W2.00104

This is an online tender, where only e-Tender will be accepted in the National e-GP Portal and no offline/hard copies will be accepted. To submit e-Tender registration in the National e-GP System Portal (<http://www.eprocure.gov.bd>) is required. The fees for downloading the e-Tender documents from the National e-GP Portal have to be deposited online through any registered bank's branches up to 5.00pm on 21-09-2021. No sub-contractor will be appointed for full or partial implementation of the work. Further information and guidelines are available in the National e-GP System Portal and from e-GP help desk (helpdesk@eprocure.gov.bd) also from call to 09028-75144. Interested persons can communicate with the undersigned during office hours.

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GD-1589

GD-1590

Engr. Md. Ahsan Habib
Registrar
Jashore University of Science and Technology