



Even amidst the chill of winter, the animal world, much like humans, can't dissociate themselves from industrious work. In that course, a speckled yellow butterfly rose in the early morning, skipping from flower to flower to collect nectar, aiding pollination for new flowers to bloom. This photo was taken recently from Chattogram's Raozan upazila.

PHOTO: RAJIB RAIHAN

## Save us from waterlogging

Around 1,000 people from Bhabadah besiege DC office

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

"Remove water, save people" was the slogan that around a thousand residents of a waterlogged Bhabadah were heard chanting while besieging the deputy commissioner's office in Jashore yesterday.

The protest was organised by Bhabadah Pani Niskashan Sangram Committee, where the people of Bhabadah urged the DC's attention to solve the crisis.

"Water increases during monsoon and decreases on winter, but our yards are never dry," said Shamoli Mandol, a resident of Puradanga village of Monirampur upazila in Jashore.

"We will not go back until we get a proper solution to the issue," said Hafizur Rahman, a resident of Padmanathpur in Monirampur.

Iqbal Kabir Zahid, adviser of the sangram committee, said around 120 villages in the Bhabadah region are still underwater. "The authority is unbothered about the plight of the residents," he said.

The movement will continue until their six-point demand are met, added Zahid. This include tidal river management before the full moon, cancellation of proposed water pumping project, Amdanga canal excavation and more.

Advocate Abul Hossain, president of Communist Party, Jashore unit; Zillur Rahman Vitu, secretary of Jashore Workers' Party (Marxist); and Ranajit Baoali, convener of Bhabadah Pani Niskashan Sangram Committee, spoke at the programme, among others.



PHOTO: STAR

## 8 acres of mangrove forest gone overnight

Miscreants put up fence, cut around 30,000 trees in Cox's Bazar



This particular area in Cox's Bazar's Kosturighat, along the Bakkhali river, was already reeling from indiscriminate grabbing. After yesterday's heinous incident, almost the entirety of the area has been taken over.

PHOTO: COLLECTED

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Unknown miscreants have grabbed around 800 decimal (8 acres) of mangrove forest land, felling thousands of trees, in Kosturighat area along Bakkhali River in Cox's Bazar early yesterday.

Around 4:00am, they put up a fence of corrugated sheet and started felling the trees, which continued well into the daylight.

According to Forest Department data, there are 600 hectare's of mangrove forest in the estuary of Bakkhali River. It serves as a habitat for 205 bird species.

Ibrahim Khalil Mamun, chief executive of Cox's Bazar-

based green organisation Youth Environment Society, told The Daily Star that around 30,000 trees were felled and burnt to clear the mangrove forest. He mentioned the area had already been almost completely grabbed by local influentials over the last few months.

He said as no one including the district administration and the Department of Environment (DoE) takes any stern action against the miscreants, they continued grabbing the land and getting away with it.

Mentionable, the mangrove forest was created in 2006-2007 under a project of DoE.

Nazmul Huda, deputy director of DoE, Cox's Bazar, told The

Daily Star that they have filed a case regarding the latest incident.

"This has been going on over the past few months. We have filed three cases so far. We are unable to stop this menace ourselves due to our shortage of human resources," he said.

Nua Mong, assistant commissioner of Cox's Bazar Sadar upazila, said upon being informed, they have visited the spot in the morning.

He said although cases have been filed against some of the offenders, they can get away by obtaining bail, which enables them to continue in their criminal ways.

"We are trying to identify the culprits," he said.

## Another launch fire scare

Passengers call 999 after smoke emanates from launch in Meghna; staffers-commuters scuffle

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Barishal

On Saturday midnight, passengers of Surovi-9 launch on the Dhaka-Barishal route panicked as smoke started emanating from its engine room.

One of them immediately dialed the National Emergency Service, 999, which prompted a coastguard unit from Chandpur to force the launch to anchor at Mohanpur launch ghat in the district.

After six hours of examination by fire fighters, the launch was declared safe and was allowed to get back to journeying yesterday morning.

This meant the launch arrived at Barishal River Port at 10:00am yesterday, around seven hours after scheduled time. Talking to this correspondent, passengers said they were frightened for their lives during the incident,



Officials inspect the anchored launch after smoke started emanating from its engine room midriver yesterday.

PHOTO: TITU DAS

owing to the recent MV Abhijan-10 launch fire tragedy.

They said as the smoke started billowing from the engine room, launch staffers threw water at it to reduce heat and clear the smoke.

Meanwhile, a scuffle broke out after the launch anchored at Mohanpur, launch staffers allegedly beat up passengers over calling 999 and bringing the journey to a halt. This was picked up by the TV media and was played on air throughout yesterday, fueling rage among people over the incident.

Moreover, two journalists were injured as they tried to cover the fracas.

As of yesterday evening, the launch's assistant manager Mizanur Rahman was suspended by the launch authorities over the issue.

Md Waheduzzaman, in-charge inspector of Chandpur River Police's Mohanpur launch ghat unit, said after the coastguard forced the launch to anchor at Mohanpur, a unit of the fire service went to the spot and conducted an inspection.

Chandpur Fire Brigade Deputy Assistant Director Md Sahidul Islam said, "During inspection, we found that the silencer had heated up, which made smoke come out of it. The launch was running on one engine and was carrying around 400 passengers."

Staff in-charge of the engine room Paritosh said, "The launch was scheduled to go on a picnic trip the day after tomorrow (Tuesday). While cleaning it, some of the dirty water may have entered the silencer, which made it heat up."

**Passengers said they were frightened for their lives during the incident, owing to the recent MV Abhijan-10 launch fire tragedy.**

## A new hope for learning

Border village gets three-storey library

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Moulvibazar

At a time when even reputed college and universities don't always have libraries, a family of advocates set up a three-storey library at a remote area in Barlekha upazila, some 86 kilometres away from Moulvibazar district town.



Named Tabarak Hossain-Shamsunnahar Library, it was set up at Shahbazzpur High School and College with over 10,000 books on display. The library

was officially inaugurated yesterday afternoon.

Alumni of the school, Supreme Court lawyer Tabarak Hussain and his wife Shamsunnahar built the library building at a cost of around Tk 70 lakh.

During a recent visit, this correspondent saw a good number of rare books at the library.

Residents of the locality, who live very close to the Indian border, are at awe of the library. Eighth-grader Peter Mannar, a resident of Pallarthal village and a student of the school, told this newspaper he has never seen such a huge library before.

Dipa Das said she has been meaning to buy a book on the history of Moulvibazar for a long time, but couldn't find one. However, she has found one at the library. "This is quite the privilege for us," she said.

The inauguration session featured Environment, Forest and Climate Change Minister Md Shahab Uddin as chief guest.



Education Minister Dipu Moni conferred degrees on graduates during the 9th convocation of Daffodil International University at Daffodil Smart City in Ashulia, Savar yesterday. DIU Chairman Dr Md Sabur Khan, Vice Chancellor Prof M Lutfar Rahman and Pro-VC Prof SM Mahabub Alam Majumder were also present on the occasion.

PHOTO: COLLECTED

## Court allows cops to probe GD against Murad

COURT CORRESPONDENT

A Dhaka court yesterday allowed police to investigate a general diary filed against former state minister for information and broadcasting Murad Hassan for torturing and abusing his wife.

Dhaka Metropolitan Magistrate Md Mamunur Rashid passed the order after IO Rajib Hasan, sub-inspector of Dhanmondi Police Station, filed an application with the court on January 8, seeking permission to investigate the GD.

Dr Jahanara Ehsan on January 6 lodged the GD with the police station against her husband Murad, bringing allegations of torture.

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