



With the mercury rising and the sun beating down mercilessly on the capital yesterday, four children plunge joyfully into the Hatirjheel lake to escape the blistering heat at noon.

PHOTO: ANISUR RAHMAN

AL leader sued for grabbing khas land

Chandpur DC office files the case against him, 24 others

A CORRESPONDENT, Chandpur

The deputy commissioner's office in Chandpur has sued an Awami League leader and 24 others for grabbing khas land in the district's Haimchar upazila.

The case was filed with the Senior Assistant Judge's Court of Chandpur on Thursday.

Taking the case into cognisance, the court asked the accused to appear before it. Public Prosecutor Abdur Rahman said May 31 was fixed for the next hearing.

According to the case statement, a char emerged in the Meghna in Haimchar in 1950. Later, the government allotted its land for farming on a temporary basis.

But Jawadur Rahim Wadud alias Tipu, vice president of the AL in Chandpur, in collusion with other ruling party men and some officials of the sub-registrar's office, allegedly grabbed about 48.52 acres of the land, forging documents, said the statement.

They set up fish and cattle farms and made vegetable gardens there. Besides, Jawadur named the area "Tipu Nagar", read the statement.

Jawadur is a brother of Education Minister Dipu Moni. Upon directives from the higher authorities, the local administration filed the case to reclaim the land. It has also sought compensations.

Additional Deputy Commissioner (Revenue) Daud Hossain Chowdhury said they filed the case to get back the government land.

Jawadur's name came to the fore earlier this year after an allegation surfaced that the prices of 63 acres of land,

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Massive work, very little time

Hajj package yet to be announced with only two months remaining

RASHIDUL HASAN

Hajj management would be very challenging this year as almost all hajj-related activities are yet to start with just two months to complete those, said organisations involved in it.

The largest annual congregation of the Muslims is going to be held in Saudi Arabia in the second week of July.

"Hajj management is a massive work which used to begin seven to eight months before the hajj in previous years. But almost all activities are yet to start this time. We have two months at best to finish those," said M Shahadat Hossain Taslim, president of Hajj Agencies Association of Bangladesh (Haab).

Eyaquib Sharafati, senior vice-president of the platform, said they were yet to conclude the primary task of hajj this year which is causing concern among

hajj pilgrims.

Top officials of the religious affairs and civil aviation ministries echoed the views of Haab.

Haab President Shahadat said nothing has been done so far except for declaring the airfare.

"Even the most crucial part of hajj management – declaring hajj package – remains to be done."

On Wednesday, Haab sent a letter to the religious affairs ministry asking it to declare the package urgently and speed up the other hajj-related activities.

Shahadat said many activities are involved in the hajj management.

In the last two years, hajj was held on a limited scale with pilgrims from only Saudi Arabia due to the pandemic.

Usually, 20-25 lakh people from across the world are permitted to perform hajj

every year. Around 1.27 lakh Bangladeshis were allowed in 2019.

The Saudi government last week announced that it would allow one million people from around the world to perform hajj this year.

Some 57,585 Bangladeshis could do the pilgrimage this year. Of them, 4,000 will perform hajj under government management and the rest under private management, said sources at the religious affairs ministry.

HAJJ AGENCIES' CHALLENGES Shahadat said hajj agencies will have to finish huge tasks within a very short time this year.

He said they will have to finalise the number of hajj agencies, determine monazzem (representative of a hajj agency who coordinates all tasks of hajj in Saudi Arabia), rent houses or hotels for pilgrims, send money

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Rain likely on Eid day

Met official says mild heatwave may continue till tomorrow

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

It could rain on Eid Day in many areas across the country as the current mild heatwave is likely to stay until tomorrow, said a meteorologist yesterday.

Rainfall is likely on Monday and Tuesday, said Bazlur Rashid of Bangladesh Meteorological Department.

The Met office will release its official bulletin in this regard in a day or two, he said, adding that the weather will remain mostly dry until Sunday.

According to a weather forecast valid until 9:00am today, a mild heat wave is sweeping over Khulna division and the districts of Gopalganj, Rangamati, Chandpur, Moulvibazar, Rajshahi, Barishal and Patuakhali.

There was no rainfall recorded in the country in the 24 hours preceding 6:00am yesterday.

The country's maximum and minimum temperature yesterday were recorded at 38 degrees Celsius in Jashore and 23.4 degrees Celsius in Tetulia.

Dhaka to probe sinking of ship in Kolkata

15 Bangladeshi sailors stranded there for more than a month

STAR REPORT

The Department of Shipping has formed a three-member investigation committee to probe the sinking of Bangladeshi vessel MV Maritrust-1 at the Syama Prasad Mookerjee Port in Kolkata over a month ago.

The committee will visit the place of occurrence, according to a letter sent to India's Department of Shipping on Thursday, reports UNB.

The vessel was operated under the Coastal Shipping Agreement. It was taken over by insurer Hull and Machinery after the accident.

Our Kustia correspondent adds: Fifteen crew members of the ship are now staying at a hotel of the Marine Club in Kolkata. On Thursday, they posted a video message on social media asking for immediate help for repatriation.

One of the sailors is Mizanur Rahman, a resident of Shibpur village in Kustia. Speaking to his family over WhatsApp on Thursday, he described the suffering they were going through.

He said they lost many of their documents in the accident and they had no money.

In a video message uploaded on Facebook on Thursday, Fahim Faisal, chief engineer of the vessel, said they sailed out of Chattogram Port on March 20 to bring cargo containers from Kolkata.

The ship reached the Kolkata port on March 23. It sank the following day while loading containers. However, the sailors escaped unhurt

The sailors' documents, including passports, were taken away by the police.

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TENTULTALA PLAYGROUND

Hand it over now to city corp or PWD

Green activists urge govt

HELEMUL ALAM

While appreciating the government's move to keep Tentultala in the capital's Kalabagan as a playground for children, green activists yesterday demanded that the authorities take steps to modernise it and maintain all existing facilities.

They also urged the government to hand the playground over either to the public works department or the city corporation, which can then maintain it on a permanent basis like the city's other parks and playgrounds.

They said they would hold discussions with the Dhaka Metropolitan Police and other stakeholders to find a suitable solution after Eid-ul-Fitr.

On January 31 this year, the Dhaka Deputy Commissioner's Office handed over the playground to the DMP to construct a building for Kalabagan Police Station. For several months, local residents have been demonstrating with

the demand to keep it as it is for the sake of children.

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina on Thursday ordered that Tentultala be kept as a playground, to the relief of environmentalists and locals.

Home Minister Asaduzzaman Khan said the playground would be open to everyone, but would be under the jurisdiction of the police.

Children have resumed playing at the ground since the announcement.

Syeda Rizwana Hasan, chief executive of Bangladesh Environmental Lawyers Association, said the playground has been identified as an open space in Rajuk's Detailed Area Plan (DAP).

The legal definition of an open space, she said, is that "there will be no boundary from ground to the sky", so the authorities should remove the wall that DMP had built on the playground.

If the wall remains, the basic

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PHOTO: PRABIR DAS

With the Eid-ul-Fitr just days away, two shoppers looking at some clothes at a store in the capital's Bashundhara City shopping mall yesterday. Like them, thousands of others thronged shops in the capital to do some last-minute shopping ahead of the festival.