

POLICE-BNP CLASH 87 sued in Habiganj

OUR CORRESPONDENT,
Moulvibazar

Police filed a case against 47 BNP leaders and around 40 unnamed individuals yesterday, following a clash between the party activists and the law enforcers in Habiganj town on Wednesday.

Habiganj Police Station Inspector (Investigation) Badiruzzaman said BNP leaders and activists vandalised around four cars in the town and attacked the police.

Sub-inspector Hemayet Ullah of the police station filed the case. Efforts are on to arrest the accused, said the SI.

Police said after the announcement of the national election schedule on Wednesday, BNP leaders and activists gathered in the town's Shayestanagar cemetery area and protested against the move.

A police team from Sadar Model Police Station rushed to the spot. At that time, the party leaders and activists clashed with them. Police fired several tear gas shells to bring the situation under control.

BNP activists started throwing brickbats at the police. The clash lasted for about half an hour. At that time, about 25 people -- including seven policemen of Habiganj Sadar Police Station -- were injured. Several vehicles were damaged.

Come forward to change the country Says Atiqul

BSS, Dhaka

The young population should come forward to change the country, said DNCC Mayor Md Atiqul Islam yesterday.

He made the remarks while addressing the opening ceremony of the Global Youth Summit-2023, organised by The Earth and Climate Parliament Bangladesh, at Bangabandhu Military Museum in Dhaka.

Atiqul said as the world is going through a difficult situation due to climate change, pandemic and conflict, the need for youth to step up is all the more important.



A lifelong passion FOR TREES Patuakhali man plants over 50,000 trees in 7 decades

SOHRAB HOSSAIN, Patuakhali

In the quiet village of Purbo Atkhali in Patuakhali's Galachipa upazila, 82-year-old Sirajul Islam Hawladar is known among all for planting trees -- his lifelong passion.

For over seven decades, he has been planting trees, transforming not only his village but also 10 other neighbouring ones.

Over the years, he has planted around 50,000 trees, nurturing them as if they were his own children.

"I was encouraged to plant trees at a young age. Trees provide oxygen, shade, and fruits. In the shade of a tree, a weary traveller can sit in peace and rest," Sirajul emphasised.

Sirajul is the youngest and only surviving one among his seven brothers. He holds a Kamil (MA) degree from Dhaka Nesaria Kamil Madrasa, and served as imam in various mosques in the upazila, including the one in his village. He is now unable to work due to health issues related to old age.

Three of his four daughters are married, while the youngest, Hamida, is an undergraduate

student.

When this correspondent visited Sirajul at his residence, he took him for a walk around the village and showed him the trees he had planted and nurtured over the years. These trees have been growing for decades.

Sirajul usually cultivates



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whenever I see
an empty land.
Ownership doesn't
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seedlings at home, and sometimes buys from the market, before planting those on empty lands in the locality, and caring for those from dawn till dusk.

The trees, including coconut, guava, grapefruit, palm, mahogany, raintree, sundari, thrive along government roads and on lands owned by people, providing fruits and shade while also generating revenue.

Just a couple of months ago, he planted 150 betel nut saplings

on the roadside, said locals.

Neighbour Delwar Hossain said, "He nurtures the trees day and night. If a tree becomes sellable, the landowner sells it and shares the proceeds with Sirajul."

Abu Taher, a local tea shopkeeper, added, "Trees planted by him adorn every corner, reflecting his passion."

Despite his family's concerns about his deteriorating health, Sirajul remains undeterred.

"We're proud of his work. But he is getting weak due to old age and we often tell him to stop, but he won't," said his daughter Hamida.

"His work deserves praise. We will allocate all the saplings he needs to further enhance the villages' greenery," said Biswajit Roy, chairman of local union parishad.

"Everyone should follow him and plant trees. If one is felled, two should be planted. It is essential for the well-being of the environment," he added.

Sirajul wishes to continue planting trees as long as he lives.

"I plant a tree whenever I see an empty land. Ownership doesn't matter; what matters is keeping nature healthy."

ROAD ACCIDENTS Four killed, 10 injured in two districts

STAR REPORT

At least four people were killed and 10 others injured in road accidents in two districts yesterday, according to reports from our correspondents.

In Faridpur, two cops were killed and three of their colleagues injured when a bus hit a CNG-run auto-rickshaw that was carrying them in Bhanga upazila.

Of the deceased, Nazmul Islam, 28, was a nayak of Bhanga Highway Police Station while Nasir Hossain, 31, a constable, police sources said.

The injured -- Zakir Hossain, Ibrahim Hossain and Mithwaiching Marma, constables of the police station -- were taken to Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujib Medical College Hospital, said Officer-in-Charge Ziarul Islam.

The OC said the five policemen were going to Faridpur for official purposes. Following the accident, their auto-rickshaw overturned, killing the three on the spot.

In Munshiganj, two people were killed and seven injured as a bus hit the island on Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman Expressway in Sreenagar upazila.

A Dhaka bound bus of Dola Paribahan lost control in the Kewatkhali area and hit

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Labour welfare centre serving no purpose

S DILIP ROY, Lalmonirhat

Labourers in Lalmonirhat are deprived of facilities at the district's Labour Welfare Centre as it is not providing the necessary services.

The centre was established on one-acre land in the College Road area in Lalmonirhat town in 1984 for the welfare of labourers, including providing them with free medical treatment and medicines.

Visiting the centre recently, this correspondent observed a lack of activities there, with staffers seen passing idle time.

At present, the centre has no doctor or nurses stationed there, and so the dispensary has no medicine supply, said Moksedul Islam, dispensary assistant at the centre.

Of the 12 posts at the centre, those of medical officer, population officer, nurse, labour organiser, office clerk, inspector, and cleaner are vacant at present. Five staffers -- labour organiser, dispensary assistant, compounder, office assistant, and night guard -- were posted to the centre in April 2018, and they only come to the office to sign their attendance register as there is no work for them.

"Medical officer, the main post at the centre, has been lying vacant from the beginning, so labourers don't come and thus there is no work here," said Atique Rahman, labour organiser at the centre.

Compounder Anwar Parvez echoed the same. Labourers have long been urging authorities concerned to keep the centre operational by posting doctors and nurses so that the workers

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Poachers on prowl in haors

MINTU DESHWARA

A man, casually holding a Kaleem bird, looks for potential buyers while another carries four slaughtered birds, including a white heron and a sarali duck, and hands it over to another buyer before vanishing amid the crowd within a blink of the eye -- this is what this correspondent was welcomed to as he stepped into Kashimpur market in Moulvibazar Sadar upazila.

Instances like these have become common in the market these days, especially now that the migratory birds started arriving in the haors.

Rampant poaching has become a common phenomenon in the region amid an absence of effective initiatives and vigilance from the authorities concerned.

Bird enthusiasts and locals have expressed concerns and called for immediate measures to halt poaching activities.

Every year, thousands of migratory birds come to Kawadighi, Hakaluki, Hail, and Tanguar haors from different countries during winter.

Rajon Ahmed, on November 10, saw migratory birds being slaughtered and sold near the Kashimpur Pump House area.

"Drives are conducted when these incidents make headlines but everything goes back to the old ways after a while. No one is abiding by the rules and no actions are being taken to stop this," said Rajon, an environmental activist in the area.

Around 15-20 poachers are active

in each gang. They choose this profession as it is profitable and an abundance of birds are available in the haors during this season, said a poacher wishing anonymity.

"Some people even place orders and offer good price for migratory birds so we fulfil their demands," he added.

In turn, the number of migratory birds is decreasing in the haors and there might be a day when they stop coming here, said Ripon Das, a local green activist.

"Some birds even build nests in



our houses and we try our best to guard them. However, our efforts go in vain as poachers use poison baits and traps without any intervention from the authorities," said Akhter Ahmed Shipu of Halla village in Baralekha upazila.

The poachers have already become active, while the birds have not even started arriving at the haors yet, said

Sajal Deb, director of Bangladesh Wildlife Service Foundation.

As per the Wildlife (Conservation) Act-2012, killing, poaching, selling and possessing any wildlife is a punishable offence.

Birds are indicators of ecological health and wealth of certain areas. Sylhet's haors are famous for migratory birds, besides being a habitat for many indigenous species. They are important for regeneration of flora and fauna, said Abdul Karim Kim, general secretary of Bangladesh Paribesh Andolon, Sylhet.

"Catching and selling of these birds should be stopped immediately," he added.

Contacted, Dr Jahangir Alam, divisional forest officer in Sylhet, said, "The issue has come to our attention. We will identify the spots and conduct mobile court drives. Meanwhile efforts are on to raise awareness among locals."

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