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Front Page

2,000 jhau trees on beach cut down

Forest officials silent



Criminals chop down and take away many tamarisk trees (jhau) on the popular holiday destination Inani beach in Cox's Bazar. The photo was taken yesterday. Photo: STAR

A Correspondent, Cox's Bazar

Miscreants felled around 2,000 tamarisk trees in last three days at a grove near Inani beach in Ukhia upazila in a bid to grab valuable land.

During a visit to Sonarpara beach yesterday, a number of locals were seen uprooting the remains of the felled trees from the grove.

Local sources say about 1,500 trees have been completely felled and removed, while remains of another 500 felled trees were still visible.

Evidence of an onslaught on several hundred trees inside the grove about 500 yards north of Sonarpara was also visible there.

Locals say every day up to 30 people entered the grove and felled the trees. The same people took the logs and branches to nearby villages on pushcart vans or open jeeps in the early hours of the following days.

The locals allege though the range officer of the forest department was informed about the incident, he remained a silent spectator.

Asked about the matter, Range Officer Sunil Devnath said the trees could not be saved due to lack of manpower.

Sunil said a case will be filed against the miscreants after collecting particulars of the persons involved in the tree felling.

During the visit, it was seen more than 500 illegal structures and shanties were erected on grabbed land by felling tamarisk trees in Himchhari, Inani, Sonarpara, Barochhara and other areas along the beach.

Forester Sunil said only two forest guards are posted to protect the tamarisk grove on about 15 acres of land. He added about 2 lakh trees were planted on the grove in 2001, but more than half of the trees have already disappeared.

He however claimed most of the trees were uprooted and washed away by the sea waves.

Divisional Forest Officer of Cox's Bazar (South) Bipul Krishna Das has admitted that despite continuing patrol by foresters, miscreants are illegally felling trees at some points.

Environmentalists say in last one month more than 15,000 trees have been felled and removed from the groves along a 100km stretch of beach from Nazirertek to Teknaf.

As a result, coasts are going under the sea due to tidal surge and high tide and cracks are being developed at



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eight different spots in Kolatoli, Barochhara, Adarsha Gram, Himchhari along the Marine Drive road, said Ibrahim Khalil, general secretary of Cox's Bazar Forest and Environment Protection Council.

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