

SNAPS

Drama group celebrates Silver Jubilee

A RU CORRESPONDENT
Anushilon, a drama group of Rajshahi University (RU) staged its 43rd production 'Bohay Prantojoni' at Kazi Nazrul Islam auditorium on Monday.

The drama group was celebrating its silver jubilee on the campus. Indian drama critic Nipendra Shaha and Indian dramatist Chandan Shah attended the programme.

RU Anushilon Drama Group was established in 1979 and performed at different places at home and abroad.

Seven listed criminals held

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Khulna

The joint forces on Monday arrested seven listed criminals from the metropolitan city.

The arrested are Wahid Murad Manu, 32, Shahidul Islam, 24, Murad Manu, 32, Shahidul Islam, 24, Asaduzzaman Ripon, 30, Kamrul Islam, 25, Ishaq Khan Babu, 30, Honda Mazed, 24, and Abdullah, 22.

Privatisation of power supply in Khulna-Barisal region

Systems loss down but consumers fear tariff hike

AKTER FARUK, Barisal

Transfer of electric supply authority from the Power Development Board to the private sector in Khulna-Barisal region has evoked mixed reaction from its staff and customers.

The private sector West Zone Power Distribution Company (WZPDC) has taken over PDB's establishments and other assets and liabilities in 21 districts under Barisal and Khulna divisions.

The transfer, made as per an order from the energy ministry on September 9, is effective from October one.

PDB had seven distribution zones in the 21 districts. It had zonal offices in Khulna and Barisal,

regional offices in Barisal and Khulna, energy outing units in Khulna, Jessore and Barisal, and regional accounts offices in Khulna, Jessore, Kushtia, Faridpur and Barisal.

All PDB staff in its seven distribution zones will avail government service facilities till June 2004 and have the option either to join WZPDC or other zonal offices of PDB by December 31 this year.

WZPDC's head office has been set up in Khulna. Mirza Md Mohiuddin, a former high official of Phillips and newly appointed managing director of WZPDC, visited the company's Barisal regional office recently.

Sources in the company claimed that after the transfer, the overall

situation and office atmosphere have changed.

Many illegal connections have been disconnected. The office is neat and clean. Attendance is regular and there is no idle talk at offices, they said.

"The overall situations has changed remarkably in two weeks and system loss is gradually coming down", Nurul Huq, executive engineer of Barisal Electric Power Division said.

But some other sources claimed that majority of PDB's general staffs in Barisal zone are dissatisfied over the privatisation.

They blamed CBA leaders for this transfer.

But central CBA leader of PDB, M G Faruk, said WZPDC has

accepted CBA's demands. "It is up to the person concerned to join the company or work under PDB", he said.

But many of the power consumers this correspondent talked to were apprehensive of increase in power tariff.

"The company can increase rates as it will purchase power from PDB and then supply", one consumer said.

Another consumer said, "Our experience with Palli Biddut (Rural Electrification Board) is not good so far as distribution, service and pricing are concerned. Without competition and accountability, privatisation will create monopoly with more corruption and less service".



Student nurses bring out a protest procession in Brahmanbaria on Tuesday.

PHOTO: STAR

Diploma nursing students boycott class, hospital in B'baria

OUR CORRESPONDENT, B'baria

Diploma students of Brahmanbaria Nursing Institute yesterday began an indefinite class boycott and work abstention from Brahmanbaria Sadar Hospital, protesting appointment of nurses from private institutes at government hospitals and the recent police action on nurses in Dhaka.

Their actions followed a series of protest programmes since Monday, which included rallies and processions in the town and hand-over of a memorandum to the Civil

Surgeon.

They had also locked the offices of the superintendent of Nursing Institute and the Nursing Supervisor at Brahmanbaria Sadar Hospital.

Earlier, they held a rally on the Nursing Institute campus.

Meanwhile, only the newly appointed nurses are working at the Sadar hospital. Each nurse has to take care of 50 to 60 patients a day, creating difficulties for the patients, hospital sources said.

RUVK's driver stabbed

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Rajshahi

Misceants stabbed the driver of Rajshahi University (RU) vice chancellor's (VC) vehicle who protested the act of extortion at his sister's hostel on Monday.

Rahmat Hossain, the driver was admitted to Rajshahi Medical College Hospital with critical injury.

Ten miscreants demanded a 'handsome toll' from Rahmat's sister who runs a female hostel in her house at Meherchandi area.

Meanwhile, on October 14, the miscreants forcibly entered into the hostel and caught a couple, police said.

However, Rahmat was stabbed during an altercation between the miscreants and Rahmat over their demand.

Police arrested Kalu and Jahangir among the accused.

Flash flood washes away Tk 50 lakh fish in Patuakhali

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Patuakhali

Fishes worth over Tk 50 lakh have been washed away in seven upazilas of the district in flash floods following downpour in the last few days.

About 125 shrimp enclosures and 150 ponds in Galachipa, Kalapara, Dumki, Dasmina, Boupahal, Mirjagonj and the Sadar upazilas were inundated in the downpour, according to the district fisheries department here on Monday.

More than 300 kutcha houses collapsed and crops on vast tracts of land went under water in low-lying areas of the upazilas. Cultivation of Aman paddy will be affected as newly transplanted seedlings in about 1000 acres have been damaged, agriculture officials said. There is no time for transplantation again.

The local meteorological office recorded 138 mm rainfall only on October 12 and 13. Rains continued, though in lesser quantity, they said.

Diarrhoea kills 2 more in Lalmonirhat, 300 sick in Mymensingh, Satkhira

STAR NATIONAL DESK

Diarrhoea claimed two more lives in Lalmonirhat and attacked at least 300 in Mymensingh and Satkhira in the last four days.

A Lalmonirhat correspondent reported that Azad Rahman died at Dhabol Suti village in Patgram upazila on Sunday and his wife Asma Begum died the following morning.

Their one year-old son Selim and three year-old daughter Ayesa are now at the Patgram upazila health complex with diarrhoea.

With the two deaths, the unofficial toll rose to eight in the last ten days. Officials however confirmed five deaths from the disease.

Official sources said 26 people have been admitted to the Sadar Hospital and at Hatibandha, Aditmari and Patgram health

complexes.

Patients alleged that they were not getting saline at hospitals. But Patgram Thana Health and Family Planning Officer Jobon Krishno Ghosh said there was enough stock of saline at the Patgram health complex.

Our Mymensingh Correspondent reported that 152 diarrhoea patients have been admitted at SK Hospital, a mission hospital.

Dr Md Abdul Kader, medical officer-in-charge, told this correspondent that supply of intravenous (IV) saline at the hospital was inadequate.

One hundred twenty bags of saline are needed daily whereas 70 bags are supplied.

He said rush of patients increased in recent days as the disease spread in different upazila.

According to sources at the Civil Surgeon's office, 8,562 people were attacked with diarrhoea in August and another 8, 600 last month. The office has no figure on how many persons have so far been attacked this month.

Civil Surgeon Dr Md Mahmeed Hossain said 152 medical teams are working in the district.

Our Satkhira Correspondent reported that over 150 people have

been attacked with diarrhoea and other intestinal diseases in flood-affected areas of the district.

The affected villages are Khanpara, Kashiadanga, Sardarpara, Kamarpara, Jugikhal, Khetrapara, Dashiadanga, Malopara, Karikarpara, Gazipara in Deara Jugikhal, Joynagar and Jalabad unions in Kalaroa upazila, where crisis of food and drinking water is prevailing.

Attack on drama show protested

Rally, procession held at RU

A RU CORRESPONDENT

Rajshahi University Progotishil Sangskritik Jote (RUPSJ) on Tuesday brought out a silent procession to protest Monday's attack on a drama show, organised by Anushilon Drama Group at Kazi Nazrul Islam auditorium.

They demanded exemplary punishment of those involved in the attack.

Several hundred teachers, cultural activists and students took part on the procession and paraded the campus.

The RUPSJ also held protest meeting in front of the RUCSU Bhaban.

Anushilon's president and dramatist Moloy Bhomik addressed the

meeting.

Progotishil Teachers Association Convenor Prof Entajul Haque, Rajshahi University Teachers Association (RUTA) Treasurer Sheikh Md Nurulla, Sammilito Sangskritik Jote Secretary Abedul Islam Dipu, Gram Theater Secretary General Hemayat Kabir, Udichi RU unit President Prof Dr Bidhan Chandra das, 'Arnock' drama group director Fayze Zahir, RU Music and Dramatic Department's former chairman Shafiqunnabi and RU Syndicate member Ali Reza Apu also addressed the rally.

They also demanded compensation from the RU authorities for the damage.

Long March reaches Magura

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Magura

The Long March by the Oil-Gas-Port Protection National Committee reached Magura yesterday.

Several hundred leaders and workers of left-leaning parties, joined by people and students started the Long March towards Mongla Port in Khuina from Dhaka on October 19.

After a brief halt and a rally at Nomani Maidan in the town, the marchers started for Jessore.

Addressing the rally, the committee's convener Mohammad Shahidullah said, "Our main object

is to protect our natural resources including gas and oil.

"We have started this movement because we are determined to preserve the resources for our next generation".

Shahidullah urged all to take part the march to build up a movement to protect the resources.

Workers Party President Rashed Khan Menon, CPB (Communist Party of Bangladesh) President Monjurul Ahsan Khan, Bangladesh Samajtantrik Dal Convenor Khalekuzzaman and Workers Party leader Bimal Biswas were among those present at the rally.



PHOTO: ANWAR ALI

The Rajshahi-Tanore road is dotted with ditches and potholes, making journey risky. Hundreds of light and heavy vehicles ply the road daily. The photo was taken recently from Tanore Sadar. The authorities say the road can not be repaired due to 'fund crisis'.

11 killers get life term in Nilphamari, Habiganj

STAR NATIONAL DESK

Eleven persons on Tuesday were awarded life term imprisonment in two murder cases by two courts in Nilphamari and Habiganj.

Our Nilphamari Correspondent reported that six persons were sentenced to suffer life term rigorous imprisonment (RI) in a murder case here on Tuesday.

Additional District and Sessions Judge of Nilphamari Md Mokhlesur Rahman who delivered the judgement after examining 17 witnesses also fined Tk 3,000 each convict, in default, to suffer three months more RI.

The convicts are Nurul Islam, son of Ibrahim, Mizanur and Nasharuddin both son of late Asatullah Mamud, Ibrahim Ali and Easin Ali, both son of late Gahartullah and Taleb Ali, son of late Dolla Mamud. All the accused hailed from Shatjanj village of Dimla

upazila. Of them Easin is absconding and Ibrahim is dead.

All the culprits on May 17, 1998 hit Mahmuda, 20, of Shatjanj village of Nautara union under Dimla upazila with a lethal weapon over a feud on land. They also obstructed the victim's relatives to shift her to any hospital. As a result Mahmuda died on that day without treatment.

After the incident Mahuda's father Mahmud Ali lodged a murder case in Dimla thana accusing the aforesaid persons.

Assistant Public Prosecutor (APP) Md Ataur Rahman conducted the case for government while Advocate Abdus Sattar and Advocate Jamil Ahmed pleaded for the defendant.

A Habiganj Correspondent reported that five others on Tuesday were awarded life term RI in another murder case.

Additional District and Sessions

Judge of Habiganj Aminul Islam delivered the judgement after examining 15 witnesses and evidences and fined them also Tk 1,000 each, in default, to suffer three months more

The convicted persons are Asia Khatun, her mother Khursheda Khatun, brother Shamsul Haque, maternal uncle Idris Ali and Abdur Rashid of village Norsingh Gaon under Chunarughat upazila. Of them Shamsul Haque is still absconding. Three other accused persons were acquitted.

Morom Ali, 25, of village Hazipur under Chunarughat upazila went to his father-in-laws house at Norsingh Gaon on July 13, 1993 where he died of food poisoning.

The victim's wife Asia Khatun and others killed Morom as he objected to the extramarital affair of his wife with another man of the same village.