

SNAPS

Theatre fair opens in Ctg

CU CORRESPONDENT

A five-day theater fair titled Magh Nishither Natak began at the Studio Theatre adjacent to the Muslim Hall auditorium in the port city yesterday. Elderly actor Poresh Chandra Das inaugurated the fair where Prof Dr. Iftekhar Uddin Chowdhury was present as chief guest.

The inaugural function was followed by colourful procession in the city.

The programmes will include discussion meeting, street drama, gathering of artists, open discussion and drama show at 6:30pm every day at the fair venue.

Nine 'pirates' held in Bhola

A CORRESPONDENT, Bhola

Police arrested nine alleged pirates from different areas of Tajmuddin and Borhanuddin upazilas recently.

Police sources said that these arrested are engaged with robbery, extortion and other criminal activities. Some of them are warranted accused of many cases.

Tajmuddin thana police arrested Nazu, Hannan, and Mannan from Char Johiruddin; and Jafar, Fazlu and Mohiuddin from Chandpur. Borhanuddin police arrested Ibrahim, Jabol Hoque and Siddique Mazi from Hasnanagar.

Three held with 'leaked' question papers

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Satkhira

Satkhira Sadar police arrested three youths for allegedly leaking out question papers of Dakhil test examination here on Saturday.

The arrested persons are Haroon-ar-Rashid, 25, of Sreekalash village, Arifur Rahman, 23, of Tuadanga village and Rasheeduzzaman, 26, of Machkhola village under the Sadar upazila.

A case was filed with the Sadar thana.

3 powerful bombs recovered

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Satkhira

Three powerful bombs were recovered from a heap of straw at Mahmudpur village in the Sadar upazila on Sunday.

Tipped off, police led by OC Abdul Kader Beg recovered the bombs from the straw owned by former Union Parishad member Mozammel Haq.

Police suspect that the bombs, made in India, were brought by miscreants for committing subversive activities.

Company decamps with Tk 26.7 crore of Road and Highways

No action against officials for payments despite unsatisfactory progress in Pirojpur road reconstruction

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Barisal

A construction firm has decamped with Tk 26.7 crore of the Roads and Highways Department (R&H) abandoning two road reconstruction projects in Barisal.

R&H sources here said a Bagladesh company was given work order on July 5, 2000 for reconstruction of 17-KM Dhawa-Ikri road in Vandaria upazila in Pirojpur district with an estimated cost of 26.4 crore. The project was scheduled to be completed within 24 months.

The time was extended by 17 months but the work was not completed.

Despite unsatisfactory progress of work, the company was paid Tk 5.28 crore and Tk 4.72 crore in two installments by the RHD.

The company abandoned the work about years ago. The R & H cancelled the work order on November 18 this year but no action has been taken so far against the government officials responsible for the payments.

Only fifteen percent work was done, the sources said.

The company got another work order in June 2000 for reconstruction of the Gournadi Agailjhara-Poisarharat road at a cost of Tk 25.13 crore.

The work was scheduled to be completed in 18 months. The time was extended by 18 months and the company was paid Tk 16.7 crore but hardly 15 per cent work was done. Its work order was finally cancelled on November 18.

The two roads are being reconstructed under the Roads and Highways Department's RRMP-111 project funded by the World Bank.

Inordinate delay in completing the work has created immense sufferings to people of this region.

Meanwhile both site offices of company are closed and abandoned.

At its Gournadi site office a guard

was available. He said none of the officials of the company came to office in the last three months. "They have fled away and I did not get my salary for three months".

The RHD sources said they have decided to realise the money paid to the company by selling its abandoned instruments and goods left at the site. Filing of a criminal case is also being contemplated.

But the guard the company's equipment and goods are being looted by sub-contractors who claim the company owes huge amounts to them.

A little attention shows them the light

NGOs take 10,000 children and teens out of hazardous bidi factories in Rangpur

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Rangpur

Twelve year-old Morjina of Haragach Bandar has given up bidi manufacturing. She is learning sewing at a dress making training centre and going to school.

But her parents are still in the hazardous job only to survive.

Morjina is among 14 other girls below 18 enrolled in the training centre at Bandar, run by BRAC, an NGO. They have been taken away from their traditional family profession of bidi manufacturing and admitted to a non-formal school.

Some local journalists including his correspondent during a visit to the training centre and the school recently were impressed to see their zeal for learning for a better life different from their parents'.

BRAC, SSS (Society for Social Service) and ESDO (Eco-social Development Organisation) are

jointly running the school.

There are seven NGOs—BRAC, SSS, ESDO, Light House, SEPOC, EDSC and Cinna Mukul Bangladesh—rendering a laudable service in eliminating child labour at Haragach Bandar and surrounding areas.

Their project was launched in 2001 with 15 crore taka assistance from the International Labour Organisation (ILO) and International Programme on Eliminating Child Labour (IPEC).

Sources in the NGOs said Haragach Bandar a thickly populated area and is known throughout the country as a centre for tobacco business and bidi manufacturing, where at least one on lakh labourers and about 20,000 children are engaged in 39 bidi factories.

Children and their parents work in bidi factories amid health hazards. They become victims of fatal diseases like TB, asthma, jaundice,

bronchitis and kin and eye infections.

The sources said most of the families in the Bandar area comprising of parts of Haragach and Sarai unions under Kaunia upazila and Mornia and Gajaghanta unions under Gangachara upazila are victims of erosion and flooding by Teesta river. Having no alternative source of income, most of the families become dependent on bidi manufacturing and tobacco processing work for survival.

According to a survey conducted by the NGO's, a male worker earns Tk 30 a day on an average. If there is no work, they have to starve.

They said the seven NGOs so far have taken away around 10,000 children from the hazardous work.

About 9,000 children are being given education in non-formal schools and about 5,000 of them have been selected for admission to

primary schools this year.

Another 3,000 children will be admitted to primary schools next year.

The NGO's are also training about 2,000 boys in various technical courses and income generating activities to make them self-reliant so that they do not become engaged in bidi factories or tobacco business.

They are also showing documentary films and VIDEO shows on the bad affects of tobacco to create awareness.

The NGO's under their poverty alleviation programmes covering about 5,000 mothers in the area have so far disbursed Tk 2,44,09,000 loans on easy conditions for agriculture, pisciculture, dairy and poultry farming, goat and cow rearing and other income generating activities.

They said there should be laws in the country to stop child labour.



Teachers and employees of non-government educational institutions under the banner of the National Teachers and Employees Front lay on the footpath in front of City Collegiate School in Mymensingh town for one hour and a half recently to realise its eight-point demand including salary rise and introduction of house rent.

10 hurt in clash in Bhola

A CORRESPONDENT

At least 10 people including three women were injured, three of them critically, in clashes over harvesting paddy from disputed lands in Noluta village in Charfassion and Dewala village in Borhanuddin upazilas recently.

Seven of them including three women were injured when supporters of Chatra Dal leader Tofazzal Hossain clashed with their rivals led by Khondoker over harvesting paddy from five acres of land in Charfession.

Critically injured Hormuja Begum, 50, Fatema Begum, 38 and Moiful were admitted to Charfession health complex.

A case was filed with Charfession thana.

Three others were stabbed in the other clash. They are Anwar, 40, Ziaur Rahman, 25 and Abdul Wahab, 75. No case was filed till filing the report on Friday.

Martyred Intellectuals Day observed

A RU CORRESPONDENT

The Martyred Intellectuals Day was observed in a befitting manner on the Rajshahi University campus on Sunday.

The programme started early morning with Vice Chancellor Prof Faisal Islam Faruki placing wreaths at the Central Shaheed Minar. Pro VC KAM Shahadat Hossain Mondil and other teachers were also present there.

Rajshahi University Teachers Association (RUTA) also placed wreath at central Shaheed Minar.

The National Flag was hoisting at half-mast atop the administrative building, VC house and every dormitory.

RUTA brought out a procession on the campus and held a discussion meeting and art exhibition.

RUTA president Sayen Uddin and general secretary Abdul Latif led the procession.

Special prayers for martyred intellectuals were offered at the university mosque after Johar prayer.

The Shaheed Smiriti Sangrasala was open till the evening.

5742 bottles of phensidyl seized at Daulatdia

BSS, Daulatdia

Goalondo police recovered 5,742 bottles of Phensidyl from a truck at Daulatdia ferry ghat on Sunday.

Acting on a tip-off, police seized a awaiting truck (Dhaka Metro Tha-11-4072) at Ghat No-2 and recovered the Phensidyl.

The truck was going to Manikganj from Magura.

The police arrested one Shaheen Alom of Keya village under Sreepur upazila of Gazipur district from the truck.



Hopping for a new life... (left) boys taken out of bidi factories learning electrical work and girls up to 18 being trained on sewing at Rahagach Bandar in Rangpur. The photos were taken recently.



PHOTO: STAR

Road mishap kills one in Comilla

A CORRESPONDENT, Comilla

One people was killed and five others injured when a Dhaka-bound microbus collided with a Comilla-bound truck on the Dhaka-Comilla highway at Elliotgenz, about 20 miles from the district town on Sunday.

The dead was identified as Shuruj Miah, son of Tukku Miah of Danakhula village under the Sadar thana.

Shuruj Mia died at a nearby upazila health complex after local people took all the seven injured there. Names of the other injured persons could not be known immediately. A case was lodged with Dawadkandi police.

Krishna statue recovered

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Brbaria

Nabinagar thana police recovered a bronze statue of Hindu god Krishna from Ibrahimpur village in Nabinagar upazila on Friday and arrested two persons.

The arrested persons are Saha Alam and Billal of Pakundia in Kishurgonj district.

Tipped off, a team of police led by SI Md Shahjahan rushed to the village and recovered the statue from a house.

Seminars on AIDS, women development held at RU

A RU CORRESPONDENT

The Rajshahi University (RU) Sociology Department and Sociology Department of Manchester University in UK jointly organised a seminar on "Women and Development" at the Senate building recently.

Prof AHM Zihadul Karim, Dean of Social Science Faculty, was present as chief guest while Prof Fazlur Rashid was in the chair.

Seven research papers were presented at the seminar. Prof Kazi Tobarak Hossain read out the keynote paper.

On the same day, another seminar on AIDS and Awareness was

held at the same building.

Vice-chancellor Prof Faisal Islam Faruki attended the UNFPA-funded seminar as chief guest while Pro VC Prof KAM Shahadat Hossain Mondil and Science Faculty Dean Prof Nurul Absar were present as special guests.

Prof Rafiqul Islam, Prof Asrafur Islam, Prof Mahmudur Hasan and Prof spoke at the seminar chaired by Prof Dr JAM Shouquillur Rahman.

It was organised by the department of Population Science and Human Resources Development.

A short film on AIDS was also screened.