

SNAPS

12 children die of pneumonia

A CORRESPONDENT, Noakhali
Twelve children died of pneumonia and 300 others were hospitalised here last week, according to official sources.

The Noakhali District Civil Surgeon office sources said the disease is spreading due to increasing intensity of cold.

Many affected children are flooding due to inadequate accommodation facility in the hospital.

Minor girl sustains acid burn injuries

A CORRESPONDENT, Comilla
A minor girl aged about three and a half years suffered serious acid burn injuries when her brother-in-law threw acid on her in the Biakharda area under Laxsam upazilla on Thursday night.

The victim's sister said her husband Kofiluddin threw acid through a window at her and her younger sister Fatema.

The victim's sister filed a case against her husband for throwing acid on her for dowry.

Tributes paid to Azadi Editor

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Ctg
Speakers at a recent condolence meeting paid rich tributes to The Daily Azadi Editor Professor Mohammad Khaled and recalled his outstanding contributions in the field of journalism.

Former Chief Advisor to the Caretaker Government in 1996 Justice Habibur Rahman in his address as the chief guest termed Prof Khaled as a 'role model' for all.

The Chittagong Press Club organised the meeting while club president Abu Sufian chaired.

Tk 20 lakh property gutted in Comilla

A CORRESPONDENT, Comilla
Property worth Tk 20 lakh was gutted in a devastating fire in the Shawagong area under Sadar upazilla on Thursday night.

The fire originated from a cotton godown at about 2 at night and spread to the adjacent area where a printing press and a computer centre of Abdul Momen Khandaker were situated.

The fire also gutted the sawmills of Rafiq Miah and a cotton godown of Manik Miah within a short time. Fifteen persons were injured while extinguishing the fire.

PDB employees in 21 dists prepare for agitation

West Zone Power Distribution Company "violates" agreement, Barisal CBA leader says

AKTER FARUK, Barisal

The simmering discontent among officials and employees of Power Development Board (PDB) in 21 districts under Barisal and Khulna divisions may erupt into a movement as the newly formed West Zone Power Distribution Company has "violated" the tripartite agreement, CBA sources here said.

The government in a circular on October 1 this year turned PDB in the 21 districts into the West Zone Power Distribution Company.

The company has offered pay scales, benefits and service rules which violate the agreement it signed with the government and the PDB CBA (Collective Bargaining Agent) on October 4, they said.

Tension is mounting in all PDB compounds since the company put forward its proposals in the first

week of this month, PDB's Barisal CBA Secretary GM Faruk told this correspondent on Saturday.

The CBA has rejected the proposals and put forward its own proposals to the company authorities, he said.

The CBAs in Barisal and Khulna PDB zonal offices have urged the company not to implement the new pay scale and service rules, he said.

"We have sent formal letters to the authorities in Dhaka and are awaiting a reply."

"We will announce a movement programme if the reply is not satisfactory", Faruk said.

The tripartite agreement said there would be no termination, salaries of all employees and workers will increase and post-service benefits given.

All these have been violated in the proposed service rules, Faruk said.

The agreement provided for a highest and lowest salary ratio of 1:10. The company has proposed a ratio of 1:16.

The company Secretary will get a pay package of about Tk 1 lakh with a basic pay of Tk 50,000.

On other hand workers will get a salary of Tk 6000 with a basic pay of 3000. There is no provision for overtime allowance for workers.

The Managing Director and the Deputy Managing Director will get "actual" medical allowance but employees and workers will get Tk 1000 to 3000, he said.

As per the service rules, workers will be appointed for five years on contract basis after a probationary period. Their service will be extended on five-year terms

depending on performance.

Seniority will not be counted. Extension of service will depend on merit and experience.

A worker can accumulate earned leave for 90 days only, but that also depends on the will of the company.

"We have demanded immediate cancellation of the proposals and submitted our proposals to the authorities in Dhaka."

"We have demanded a lowest salary of Tk 15000. We have also demanded five per cent profit, Tk 3000 monthly conveyance for miter readers, Tk 300 washing allowance and 10 per cent extra city house rent allowance".

He said Khulna CBA Secretary Md Mazibur Rahman in a letter to the authorities in Dhaka has also rejected the company's offer.

Barisal BNP council tomorrow

Workers want election, 'vested quarters' want selection

AKTER FARUK, Barisal

Much enthusiasm has been created in the party rank and file centring the council of Barisal district and city units of BNP, scheduled to held tomorrow after 10 years.

Party workers and mid-level leaders expect a 'strong committee' from the council through direct vote of councilors.

But some vested quarters in the party are trying to form the committees without voting to retain their influence, party insiders said.

The last conference of the two units were held in 1993 when Mazibur Rahaman Sarwar MP, now Mayor of Barisal City Corporation and Dr Nasim Biswas were made president and secretary of the district unit. Nasim Biswas died later and the then First Joint Secretary Ebadul Haq Chan was

made secretary of the district unit.

Ahasan Habib Kamal, the then chairman of Barisal municipality, and Asaduzzaman Khasru were elected president and secretary of Barisal city unit of BNP.

During Barisal City Corporation election held in March this year, Ebadul Haq Chan and Ahasan Habib Kamal contested in the polls violating a party decision.

BNP mayoral candidate Mazibur Rahaman Sarwar won the election. Chan and Kamal were expelled from the party for violating party decision.

Thereafter, joint secretary of the district unit advocate Nazrul Islam Razon was given the charge of secretary. The city unit committee was dissolved and a convening committee was formed, headed by senior party leader Mahmud Golam Salek.

Party insiders said the party rank and file wants a "strong and dynamic leadership to run party activities in the district."

They also expected that new district and city committees would be formed through councilors' vote.

Mentionably, BNP has divided Barisal into two organizational districts -- Barisal North BNP covering Hizla, Muladi, Gouranadi, Mehendijong and Augalzara upazilas; and Barisal South BNP comprising Barisal city, Sadar, Bakerjong, Banaripara, Babujong and Uzirpur upazilas.

Party sources said two councilors from each thana and poura units will elect or nominate executive committee members of the two units.

They said incumbent president of the district committee Mazibur Rahaman Sarwar wants to retain

his post. Some senior leaders seeking anonymity said it will not be easy for him.

There are four probable candidates for the post of secretary of the district committee. They are incumbent secretary-in-charge Nazrul Islam Razon, Abul Hossain MP, Moazzem Hossain Alal MP and Azizul huq Akkas, president of Barisal Sadar BNP.

There are two probable candidates for the post of president of the city unit. They are Mahamud Golam Salek and Asaduzzaman Khasru. Kamrul Ahsan Shahin PP, Ali Hayder Babul, Kaisar Biswas may contest for the post of secretary.

The party insiders said the party will suffer in future if the leaders are not elected. In that case, some vested quarters will gain, they said.

Remove govt to stop political killings: Matia Huge public meeting protesting Lalmonirhat AL leader's murder

A CORRESPONDENT, Lalmonirhat

People from 42 unions in Lalmonirhat district came to Aditmari to join a public meeting on Saturday to protest the murder of popular Union Parishad Chairman Shamsul Islam Suruz, an Awami League leader and freedom fighter.

It was a huge public meeting, held on Giriza Shangkar High School ground in Aditmari.

Suruz, five times chairman of Kalambari Union Parishad, was killed by miscreants on December 21. A pall of gloom descended in the area after his killing.

Former minister and Awami League Presidium member Matia Chowdhury, its central publicity secretary Asaduzzaman Noor MP and organising secretary Sultan Mohammad Mansur were among the politicians who addressed the meeting.

Addressing the meeting chief guest, Matia said this government has to be disclosed to stop political killings. She called upon all opposition forces to unite to build a movement to oust the BNP-Jamaat government.

None can think that a popular public leader like Suruz can be murdered, she said. The incident has stunned the nation.

She blamed the ruling alliance for the murder and said they are have started killings to eliminate Awami League.

"We should remove this government... If we can not do it, we may be killed like Suruz", Matia said.

She alleged that police are not playing their due role to arrest the killers.

Asaduzzaman Noor said, a suffocating situation has been created in the country due to rise in killings, extortion and violence. Prices of essentials have gone beyond the reach of the common man.

The meeting was also addressed by, among others, former lawmaker and president of Lalmonirhat district AL Nazrul Haq Patwary, its secretary Mothar Hossain MP and AL leaders Nuruzzaman Ahamed, Shafiqul Islam Shafi, Badol Ashraf and Zahurul Haq Mamun.

The wife of the slain leader said her husband was killed as per a plan. She demanded arrest of the killers.

His son Faruk said his father was killed as he protested corruption, crime and social injustice.

The meeting was presided by Abdul Berek Chowdhury, president of Aditmari upazila AL.

No headway in probe into Ctg BCL leader Mortuza murder Strike called at CU on Dec 31

SHAHADAT HOSSAIN, Ctg.

There has been no headway in probe into the murder of Ali Mortuza Chowdhury, vice president of Bangladesh Chhatra League (BCL) at Chittagong University (CU), even in two years after the incident.

The victim's family alleged that the killers are moving freely and threatening them to withdraw the case but police are not arresting them.

Talking to this correspondent, Mortuza's elder brother Ali Agor Chowdhury, Chairman of Journalist Department at Chittagong University, demanded Chittagong University, demanded Branch (DB) of police from Hathazari thana police.

Relatives and friends will observe Mortuza's second death anniversary today.

Mortuza was gunned down on December 27 in 2001 near his house in Hathazari allegedly by some Islami Chhatra Shibir cadres.

Sources had earlier claimed that as he reached near the house, 10 to

12 Shibir cadres on board two autorickshaws allegedly led by Habib Khan encircled him and shot point blank.

Fatally injured Mortuza run into a saloon for shelter. The assailants caught him and fired in his head and chest and fled away. He died while being taken to Chittagong Medical College Hospital (CMCH).

During the last two years, the responsibility of investigation was shifted four times, but none of the investigation officers (IOs) did anything to probe the matter and arrest the killers.

The fifth IO, Sub-inspector-Aminur Rashid, now says he can not make any headway due to lack of witnesses, police sources said.

Hathazari thana OC Mahfuz Ahmed told this correspondent that lack of witness is delaying charge-framing. "But we are optimistic to end our task within a month", he added.

The six accused in the case are Didarul Alam Mozumder president of CU unit of Islami Chhatra Shibir, Habib Khan, Gittu Masir, Montu, Saiful Islam and Towfiq Hossain.

Road accidents claim 5 in Satkhira, Magura

STAR NATIONAL DESK

Five persons were killed in separate road accidents in Satkhira and Magura on Saturday and Sunday.

Our Satkhira Correspondent reports: Three persons were killed and three others injured in separate road accidents here on Saturday.

Police said, one person was killed and three others were injured in a road accident on Shyamnagar-Munshiganj road as two motor bikes collided head-on in front of Abed Ali's house at Sreefalkati village in Shyamnagar upazila on the day.

The dead was identified as Mizanur Rahman, 25, son of Siddique of Abad Chandipur village in Shyamnagar upazila while the injured were Altaf, 36, Alam, 16 and Biplob, 18, of the same area.

In another incident on Satkhira

Kaligonj road at Bakal, Abul Kalam, 20, of Bhaluk village in the Sadar upazila was killed on the spot as he fell down from the rooftop of a speeding bus in which he was travelling.

The third victim was Jharu, 28, of Satkhira town who died at Satkhira hospital after being injured seriously in an accident on Satkhira-Jessore road at Chhoysaria.

Separate cases filed with the respective police stations.

Our Magura Correspondent reports: Two persons were killed on the spot when he was run over by a bus on Magura-Faridpur highway in the Khoitala area of Madhukhali upazila in Faridpur near Magura town on Sunday.

The victims were Bashiruddin, 39, and Azizur, 45, of village Goyeshpur in Modhukhali upazila.

Blindless is no bar



Visually handicapped girls and boys enthral a jam-packed audience at the RDRS auditorium at Haribhanga in Lalmonirhat. RDRS' Rehabilitation Centre for the Visually Handicapped organised a musical programme on the joyous occasion of the Victory Day recently.

PHOTO: STAR

Work on Someshowary bridge stalled

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Netrakona

The construction work of two bridges in Durgapur upazila is yet to be completed.

As a result people in the border area have been facing an immense problem.

Local businessmen have complained that they had been finding it quite difficult to send their agricultural products like rice, jute, lemon, nut, vegetables and other commodities to other parts of the country.

People from different parts of the country also through here to enjoy the hilly scenic beauty of Durgapur and the cultural activities of Garo tribes every winter. But poor road communication hampers their movement.

The respective construction firm got an work order of the 298.12-metre long Someshowary Bridge in 1999.

The government also sanctioned Tk 4 cr and 99 lakh for its construction work, but the work has been shelved now. The concerned contractor told this correspondent that the approach road could not be finished due to slow pace of earthwork in the municipality and the upazila areas.

Rally for release of Citizen's Committee leader

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Gaibandha

People formed a human chain and held a rally in the town at the call of Gobindaganj Citizen Committee on Saturday demanding unconditional release of Abdul Matin Mollah, Convener of Gobindaganj Citizen Committee and a leader of the movement against moneylenders and drug addicts.

People of all walks of life joined the rally and the human chain formed near the Gibindaganj thana.

The rally was addressed by, among others, former upazila chairman Sheikh Sadek Ali and Mojibar Rahman, labour leader Mohammed Hossain Faku, Shaharul Islam and Workers Party leader Abdul Wares, who is also a leader of the Citizens' Committee.

The speakers threatened of laying a siege to the UNO office if Molla is not released immediately.

Molla was arrested recently following filing of an extortion case against him allegedly by a money-lender.

They said police did not arrest moneylender Arifur Rahman Liton and his companion Md Azam though there are cases against them.



The Deputy Inspector General (DIG) of Police, Rajshahi Range, Mohammad Anisur Rahman distributes prizes among winners of the annual sports meet of Nilphamari district police at the local police line ground recently. Nilphamari SP Chowdhury Abdullah-Al-Mamun is also seen in the picture, among others.

PHOTO: STAR