



Bangladesh Theatre takes out a colourful procession from Shilpakala Academy in the city yesterday to mark its 20th founding anniversary.

PHOTO: STAR

## Blockade forces street children into begging

MAHBUBA ZANNAT

Street children, who collect recyclable goods from the streets to make a living, were forced into begging as the streets were the arena for political violence over the past weeks.

Due to increased police vigilance over the opposition blockade programme, these homeless children were also subjected to police abuse and repression.

"Whenever I go out to collect bhargari (recyclable goods) with a sack on my back the police beat me up suspecting that there are cocktails or other explosives in the sack," said Rana, a 12-year-old boy who has left home to live with other street children at Paltan in the city.

"As I cannot go out for work I use to beg money from people and

sometime beg food from shop owners and hotel workers," he said. This was not only the tale of Rana but also the tale of thousands of other underprivileged children whose hand to mouth existence was threatened due to political agitation.

The blockade made these underprivileged children more vulnerable than others, said Mushtak Hossain of Incidin Bangladesh, a child rights organisation.

There are around 6.74 lakh street children in the country and 58 percent of them are living in Dhaka.

During the blockade the street children were also used for political purposes, said an official of government's Appropriate Resources for Improving Street Children Environment Project.

"Hartal and blockade create negative pressure on the income of the street children. Besides, we have seen the street children with written slogans in their chests and backs which is a violation of International Child Rights Convention," said Amena Khatun, programme coordinator of Aparajeyo Bangladesh, adding that they would inform the policy makers of the matter.

They were used to join procession, rally and other programmes and sometimes they were given money for joining such political programmes.

"I received Tk 25 after joining a political procession on the last day of the blockade and I had a great meal on that day," said Kabir with a smile on his face questioning what is the problem if I join a procession

and get some money?

Situation for the girls was more acute than boys.

"I have heard that police arrest the street children suspecting their involvement in political activities and take them to police stations. So I am passing my days wandering in the park and since the last two days I could not sell my chocolates to anyone," said Ripa, a 13-year-old street child.

Few shelter homes in the city are quite inadequate to help around 3,50,000 street children.

"But during the odd days the number of street children was almost doubled. They came to shelter homes to get free food as many of them had no work," said Aminul Islam of Aparajeyo Bangladesh.

## BNP urged to nominate new candidate for Dhaka-9

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A section of BNP supporters of Dhaka-9 constituency yesterday called on the party to field a new candidate for their constituency in the forthcoming elections.

At a press conference at the National Press Club, Social Welfare Secretary of Dhaka city BNP Afzalul Haque urged the BNP high command to nominate Syed Omar Farook instead of Khandakar Mahbubuddin Ahmed, who was a BNP lawmaker from this constituency.

Afzal alleged that although Mahbubuddin was elected member of the parliament in 2001, he failed to fulfil his promises to the people and did not work for their development.

"Locals want BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia to contest from this constituency or to nominate Syed Omar Farook, son of former MP SA Khaleq," he claimed.

Joint General Secretary of 46 Ward BNP Abu Syed Bepari, Vice-President Saidul Haque Khan, former President of 43 Ward BNP DM Rahaman and Senior Vice-President of 41 Ward BNP Ramijuddin Talukder were also present.

## 3 vessels fined at Ctg port

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

A mobile court here yesterday fined a foreign vessel Tk 20,000 for polluting environment.

Sources said the court led by Chittagong Port Authority (CPA) Magistrate Md Munir Chowdhury in a drive at port channel on Thursday found the MV Orionis causing serious air pollution by emitting black smoke.

The court yesterday summoned the master of the vessel and realised Tk 20,000 as forfeiture under Chittagong Port regulation.

The court in separate drives on Wednesday and Thursday fined two vessels, MV Jabal-e-Nur and MV MBD-1, Tk 50,000 for illegally anchoring at the prime channel of the port and for failing to show legal documents, sources said.



BNP Chairperson and immediate past prime minister Khaleda Zia speaks at a conference of Doctors' Association of Bangladesh (Dab) at Bangladesh-China Friendship Conference Centre in the city yesterday.

PHOTO: STAR

## MBBS admission seekers continue agitation

Demand cancellation of results

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A section of students, who appeared for MBBS admission test on November 17, continued their agitation yesterday demanding cancellation of the results alleging that the question paper was leaked out.

Hundreds of agitating students staged a sit-in at the Central Shaheed Minar in the city at 9:30am with a call for stopping the admission process and holding fresh admission test.

Later they brought out a silent procession towards the National Press Club.

As police obstructed the procession near Shikha Bhaban, they again staged a sit-in there.

A number of students of Sir Salmullah Medical College, Dhaka Medical College, Buet and Dhaka University expressed solidarity with them there.

Principal of Dhaka Medical College Prof Syed Mahbul Alam said he has heard about the rumour of question paper leak.

"But it is difficult for us to say whether it really happened or not as we did not prepare the question paper. We just conduct the examination," he said, adding that an investigation committee may be formed in this regard.

Moyukh Chowdhury, a member of the 'Committee of Victim Candidates of MBBS Examination 2006', said they will continue the agitation until the authorities cancel the faulty examination.

He said the agitation is also going on simultaneously in Comilla Medical College, Sylhet Osmani Medical College, Chittagong Medical College and Khulna Medical College.

On the other hand, guardians of some students who have succeeded in the admission test urged the authorities not to play game with the future of their offspring.

They said if the rumour of leakage of question paper is true, it must be investigated and those responsible for this should be punished but not the students.

## JU admission tests resume tomorrow

JU CORRESPONDENT

The admission tests under 2006-2007 academic session for first year honours classes at Jahangirnagar University (JU) will resume tomorrow.

The tests scheduled to be held from tomorrow to December 2 will be held as per the schedule published earlier. Only the test for History department was rescheduled to be held on December 2.

The admission tests scheduled to be held from November 20 to 23 was previously postponed for unavoidable circumstances after the admission tests for Computer Science and Engineering, Physics and Mathematics departments was held on November 19, on the opening day of the admission tests.

Admission tests for Bangla, Drama and Dramatics and Philosophy departments will be held tomorrow while English, International Relations and Archaeology departments will be held on Monday.

The admission tests under Social Science faculty (Kha unit) for the departments of Business Administration and Geography will begin on November 28. Admission tests for Public Administration and Anthropology departments will be held on the following day while tests for Economics and Government Politics are scheduled to be held on November 30. Admission test for Urban and Regional Planning will be held on December 2.

Sit plan for the admission tests will be available on the previous day of the respective admission tests. Applicants can also get the sit plan on the JU website www.juniv.edu. Results of the admission tests will be published in the national dailies and on www.juniv.edu.

## ICDDR,B's new innovation Baby Zinc launched

UNB, Dhaka

'Baby Zinc', a life-saving treatment for young children suffering from diarrhoea innovated by International Centre for Diarrhoeal Diseases Research, Bangladesh (ICDDR,B) has been launched in the country.

The ICDDR,B and The ACME Laboratories launched the Baby Zinc at a function at the Bangladesh-China Friendship Conference Centre in the city on Thursday.

Baby Zinc is a dispersible zinc tablet used in conjunction with ORS. It is a life-saving treatment for under-five children suffering from diarrhoea.

ICDDR,B is leading the way for introducing and expanding access to zinc. Baby Zinc will provide zinc treatment for diarrhoea for the first time on such a large scale.

It has been estimated that zinc treatment could save the lives of 30,000 to 75,000 children a year in Bangladesh alone.

After many years of research, ICDDR,B showed that giving children a small, dispersible tablet of zinc has great positive effects in the treatment of diarrhoea.

As a result, the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation funded the ambitious SUZY project to make zinc available to the general population of Bangladesh.



Garment Sramik Oikya Forum stages a demonstration at Paltan in the city yesterday protesting retrenchment and repression of workers.

PHOTO: STAR

## RU defers reopening date for third time

Three JCD men injured in factional clash

RU CORRESPONDENT

Rajshahi University (RU) authorities extended the reopening date for the third time till November 28 fearing violence and political unrest on the campus.

The university was scheduled to reopen today.

But a news release issued by RU Registrar Professor Abdus Salam on Thursday said the vacation period was extended for unavoidable reasons and the campus now will reopen on November 29.

The reopening of the campus on November 29 is also uncertain, as tension has been prevailing among teachers, officials and students.

Besides, sporadic clashes among the student organisations have become a normal practice on the campus. Islami Chhatra Shibir (ICS) has been dominating campus and took control in the residential halls, campus sources said.

Meanwhile, three Jatityabadi Chhatra Dal (JCD) activists were injured in a clash between two groups of the JCD over establishment of supremacy on the campus on Thursday.

Some agitating JCD cadres led by Romel, Ashik and Rajib attacked Joint Convener Mamun and attempted to torch a motorbike.

ICS of RU unit on Thursday took out procession on the campus and

held a rally in front of the central library with outsiders creating panic among the teachers and students.

ICS RU Committee General Secretary Delwar Hossain Saidee threatened to resist entry of BCL and left party students into the campus. If they try to enter, they would be slaughtered, Saidee warned.

Talking to The Daily Star Samajtantrik Chhatra Front RU unit President Susanta Sinha alleged that being blessed by the university administration, the ISC and JCD have made the campus hostage and destroyed the environment of education. We are unable to enter the campus fearing Shibir attack.

On the other hand, pro-Awami League teachers under the banner of 'Progressive Teachers Society' will launch fresh agitation programme demanding resignation of the vice chancellor and pro-vice chancellor after reopening of the campus.

Meanwhile, the five-day work abstention of university staff under the banner of 'Officer O Karmachari Oikya Parishad' has ended on Thursday.

They threatened to continue work abstention for indefinite period from today, if their five-point demand is not met.



Five Left Parties takes out a procession from Gulistan in the city yesterday demanding an independent Election Commission.

PHOTO: STAR

## Mugger held, Tk 1.1 lakh recovered

CU CORRESPONDENT

Members of Rapid Action Battalion (Rab) here yesterday arrested a mugger and recovered Tk 1.10 lakh snatched from a trader in city's Kulgaon area on Thursday.

The arrestee was identified as Mohammed Selim, 30, son of Late Ali Ahmed of Kulgaon under Bayezid Bostami Police Station.

Sources said, Rab-7 members raided Selim's Kulgaon residence and recovered the money from a showcase at around 2:00pm.

Selim along with three other accomplices snatched Tk 3.90 lakh from one Mohammed Abdur Rahim, a cosmetics trader, while the latter was coming to Green Line Bus Counter at Dampara on his way to Dhaka on Thursday, said the sources.