

SNAPS

Husband kills wife for dowry in Kushtia

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Kushtia
One person strangled his wife for dowry at midnight on Monday. The victim was identified as Bedena Khatun, 18.

Police arrested the killer husband, Polan. Police said, Polan a taxi driver often beat his wife as her father failed to pay Tk 10,000 which he demanded six months ago. On the fateful night Polan beat his wife following an altercation over the matter.

Later, he strangled her at about 12 pm. Police recovered the body the next morning and sent it to Kushtia General Hospital for autopsy.

Orientation programme

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Kushtia
An orientation programme for elected chairmen and members of Union Parishads (UP) was held on Monday at the office of Mukti Nari-O-Sishu Unnayan Sangshitha, a local Non-governmental Organisation.

Two chairmen and 18 members of Haripur and Ziarakhi UPs attended the programme. The objective of the programme was to strengthen local government.

Extortionist caught by people

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Barisal
An extortionist was caught by people and handed over to police in Gourmadi on Saturday.

Md Manir, 22, the extortionist, along with his gang came to collect illegal toll from Namigopal, a businessman of Torki Bandar at his house at Ramnagar under Gourmadi. At that time local people rounded up them and caught him with a pipe gun and handed over him to police after mass beating. Other members of the gang fled away.

Dacoity bid foiled by police

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Barisal
The highway patrol police foiled an attempt of armed robbery on the Barisal-Dhaka highway on Sunday. Passengers and police said a gang of bandits created barricade by putting log on the highway at southern part of the Illa bus stand at midnight.

But the highway patrol police reached there on time and foiled the attempt of dacoity by removing the obstacle.

Incident with army officer**2 JCD activists held**

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Sylhet

Police on Sunday arrested two activists of Jatiyatabadi Chhatra Dal (JCD) in connection with Friday night's incident in the city involving some JCD activists and a young army officer.

They were arrested from the city's Dariapara area at about 1AM. However, the main accused in the case-- Habib Ibne Islam Chamak could not be caught despite several raids in different areas, police said. Seven JCD activists were moving in the city on Friday in a car (Dhaka Metro-Cha-11-5354) owned by former JCD leader Mashuk Ahmed, police said.

They had a hot exchange of words with a young army officer at Barutkhana.

The JCD group included Chamak, Rahi, Dibya Roy, Hakim and Lavlu. It was alleged that they abused the army officer and pointed the firearms at him.

On Saturday, Station Commander of Jalalabad cantonment Brig. Gen. Matiur Rahman filed a case with Kotwali police under the Speedy Trial Law. He named four accused and included three unidentified accused in the case.

Police and other sources said the JCD group had been engaged in criminal activities in the city. All of them are accused in cases like murder, snatching, extortion and kidnapping.

Police arrested them on several occasions, but they managed to come out within days by using their political shelter.

Man with fake note arrested in Kushtia

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Kushtia

One person was arrested for possessing a fake note of Tk 100 denomination from the town on Saturday.

Police said Kabil Mondol of Thanapara area was caught by people at Upazila road Mazampur when he had tried to push a fake Tk 100 note to a shop owner after purchasing goods from him. At once the shop owner called people nearby who rushed there and caught him with the fake note. They gave him a good beating and handed over to police.

Massive corruption in Barisal T&T**Tk 95 lakh scam goes unpunished!**

AKTER FARUK, Barisal

Despite orders from the highest authorities in the department, no action has been taken against the persons responsible for the massive corruption and irregularities in Barisal T&T which deprived the government of over Tk 95 lakh revenue.

The persons involved are now lobbying with the authorities concerned to avoid punishments, T&T sources here said.

Thirty-six telephone connections including some ISD lines were given in fake addresses by Barisal T&T last year, bills against which ran up to Tk 95, 24, 493. These were given at the behest of some corrupt officials in connivance with a local gang, and both earned hefty amounts illegally using the T&T facilities, the sources

said.

The scam came to light mid-last year when telephone bills against six numbers (54097, 55654, 55838, 71083, 71084 and 71353) in Barisal city were returned to the revenue departments at their addresses were not found.

The notices sent against those numbers were also returned for the same reason. After the T&T Revenue Department confirmed that the addresses were fake, it sent a letter (memo no. TR/BL/Arear/02-03, dated 27-08-2002) to Barisal Divisional T&T office to disconnect the numbers and take action for the irregularities.

But these connections were not disconnected till June 15 this year despite reminders twice, on December 23 last year and on March 3 this year, to the Divisional Executive

Engineer (DET) Barisal and to the General Manager (GM) Khulna T&T.

In the mean time bills against these numbers exceeded Tk 46,49,662.

After this, six more connections in fake addresses in Barisal city were detected. The numbers were 72135, 72137, 72138, 72139, 72140 and 72141 and the connections were given by Barisal T&T within ten days from August 3 to August 14 this year. Within a month, their bills stood at Tk 30,28,395.

Following a complaint from the revenue section, these numbers were disconnected between September 2 and 8 this year.

Another 24 telephone numbers were also detected in false addresses in remote Agailjhara upazila with Tk 18,46,435 arrears bills.

As the explanations given by the

officials and employees concerned could not satisfy the revenue department, it urged higher authorities in T&T Board to take action against them.

The Director (Revenue) in a letter (memo no. PARI/TR/5-46/2003-2004/31 dated 28-10-2003) to the Chairman, T&T Board recommended action against the officials and employees of Barisal T&T for the irregularities, misappropriation and corruption.

T&T sources said, new connections are given after approval by authorities. Moreover, Barisal T&T has introduced metering system and some telephone numbers have been brought under the system.

So there is no scope for any official or staff to avoid responsibility for any irregularity, they said.

20-point demand of owners**72-hr transport strike in Sylhet division from Nov 14**

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Sylhet

A 72-hour transport strike will begin in Sylhet division on November 14 if the 20-point demand of transport owners is not met by the district authorities by November 13.

This was announced by Shahjahan Khan MP, leader of Bangladesh Sarak Paribahan Sramik Malik Oikya Parishad, at a rally of transport owners and workers in the city Saturday night.

The demands include withdrawal of BRTC service from Sylhet-Tamabil road.

A countrywide indefinite transport strike will begin on December 20 to realize the demands, he said.

He alleged that transport workers

and owners are being "neglected" by the present government.

The communication sector is in "great crisis" due to its faulty policy.

He also alleged that the communication minister failed to keep his commitments made with transport owners and workers.

The Sylhet district administration also breached its commitments with transport owners and workers, he alleged.

Nobody had any objection to the plying of BRTC buses in Sylhet city. But the authorities are trying to ply BRTC buses in different upazila routes also.

"We will not accept this (BRTC buses on upazila routes)", he said.

Over 300 transport workers will lose

jobs and bus owners will be badly hit if BRTC buses ply on Sylhet-Tamabil road, he said.

Shahjahan Khan MP also protested illegal toll collection from stone-carrying trucks on Sylhet-Tamabil Road by some influential quarters. He demanded immediate end to this.

Other speakers at the rally said the Divisional Commissioner and political leaders in Sylhet at several meetings said "legitimate demands" of transport owners would be met, but nothing has been done.

Earlier, to stop a planned transport strike in Sylhet, district BNP Secretary Ariful Haque Chowdhury gave a written assurance that BRTC buses would be withdrawn from Sylhet

Tamabil road.

Instead, four more buses have been pressed into service on the route, the speakers said.

Meanwhile, people of Jaintapur, Gowainghat and Kanaughat upazilas continued boycott of private buses and minibuses for the 28th day yesterday as private bus owners and workers compelled the authorities to suspend plying of BRTC buses on the Sylhet-Tamabil route.

The people started the boycott at the call of Brihattar Jainta Samannaya Samity, a forum of people of the three upazilas.

It will announce a fresh agitation programme today (Monday) at a rally.

CPJ demands release of photojournalist Selim Jahangir

A RU CORRESPONDENT

The Committee to Protect Journalists (CPJ), an international body of journalists, has condemned the arrest of photojournalist Selim Jahangir of daily Jananatha and local Sonali Sangbed.

In a fax message sent to Prime Minister Khaleda Zia, the CPJ also demanded release of Selim Jahangir, arrested in Rajshahi on November 1.

"Selim Jahangir's arrest is a blatant example of abuse of power by government officials, who must not be allowed to deny journalists their right to report on public events", CPJ Executive Director Ann Cooper said in the message.

Pneumonia, bronchitis: 25 children die in Khulna

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Khulna

Pneumonia and bronchitis claimed lives of 25 children in Khulna in last two months.

Of them, 22 died in Khulna Shishu Hospital and two others died at Dakop upazilla health complex and another at Phultala health complex.

According to Khulna Shishu Hospital sources, over 200 children are still under treatment. At least 15 to 20 are being admitted here on average everyday. The number of patients

having bronchial complications is increasing day by day.

Shishu hospital sources said earlier eight children died and within first week of November seven more children died of pneumonia.

According to Khulna Civil Surgeon, two children died of bronchitis in October at Dakop upazilla. More than 5,000 others in nine upazillas of Khulna district are suffering from the two diseases, he said.

The civil surgeon further said that pneumonia and bronchitis claimed

lives of eight children in September, eight in October and six in November.

However, guardians of most patients complained that patients were not properly treated in the Shishu hospital due to negligence by attending doctors.

The Administrative officer of Shishu hospital Mokhlesur Rahman refused to give names of the dead saying he won't supply information of internal affairs of the hospital.

Breaking the barrier of poverty

EAM ASADUZZAMAN, Nilphamari

A few years ago China Begum, a housewife at Maidanpara village of Singdoi under Sadar thana used to lead a sub-human life due to abject poverty.

China was a daughter of a day labourer of Panchapukur union under Sadar upazila. At tender age when she was supposed to go to school with books in hand, she began to sell labour at the houses of rich people in her locality in exchange for nominal price.

Her father took her to be his burden. So, at the age of only 12 years she got her married with a rickshaw puller named Anwarul of a neighbouring village who was double her age. Anwarul had to deposit Tk 15 to his rickshaw owner. From the beginning of her marriage China had to remain halffed most of the days. Anwarul began to torture her for dowry from day one of their marriage. Her woes multiplied when she became mother of two children. At this stage life came to a standstill. She even thought of committing suicide when she was unable to feed her babies.

When she was passing such a miserable life all on a sudden a 'miracle' happened.

It was just two years ago. A group of people visited their locality who said to her that they came from BRAC. They had come to help the ultra-poor in their village. They enlisted China's name and names of other poor people there. They also got information of



PHOTO: STAR

China Begum feeding her chicken at house. She changed her lot by rearing poultry birds.

their land, domestic animals and poultry birds which they possessed.

After a few days the lady officers of BRAC visited them. They asked China and other poor people so many questions. When the lady officers came to know about their poverty, they asked them whether they had any loan or not with anybody. They replied to negative. At this stage the visitors proposed them that they would

supply with poultry birds to rear in cages.

From that day China and her fellow villagers came to know that they were brought under the CFPPTUP (Challenging the Frontiers of Poverty Reduction Targeting the Ultra-poor) Project of BRAC. A week later they were given training for three days a week. During training period China got Tk 30 every day as training

Sylhet schoolboy's death: Father wants judicial probe

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Sylhet.

An ill-fated schoolboy's father demanded judicial probe into the death of his son Murad, 15, a few days ago due to alleged negligence of teachers of his school.

Mohammad Shoakat Ali demanded this at a press conference at Sylhet Press Club on Saturday afternoon

He complained that his son Murad, a student of class IX in Khajanchibari International School in the city fell sick in his class. But his class teacher was apathetic to his physical ailment. He along with other teachers and Principal of his school school misbehaved him, he alleged. Ultimately, he died.

During the press conference he protested some 'unwanted' comments allegedly passed by the Deputy Commissioner (DC), an ex-officio president of the English medium school's Trustee Board after the death. He termed the comments 'unwanted' and 'silly'.

Students told this correspondent that Muad, an asthma patient, went to the school on the fateful day as usual. But he forgot to take the inhaler with him. As a result he fell sick in the classroom. His mother requested the principal of the school over telephone that she wanted to talk to her son, but the principal declined. Other students of the class also requested their class teacher to let Murad go out as his condition was deteriorating, but the teacher refused. He also rebuked them. Later, she talked to her daughter Papiya, who is also a student in the same class. She told her mother about the deteriorating condition of her brother. At last Murad's mother sent a car to take her son to a doctor. This time Murad's teacher allowed him to go out to see a physician, but on way he died, according to the doctor.

The incident sparked agitation among students, guardians and other quarters in the city. Processions were brought out and a memorandum was

given to the Deputy Commissioner demanding a judicial probe into the matter and punishment to the responsible persons.

The DC formed an inquiry committee with a magistrate to probe the matter. But, it is most interesting to note that he did not mention any time limit to submit the report. So, it is a farce, said Murad's father Shoakat. He expressed his doubt whether the DC was sincere or not in forming the probe committee.

He further alleged that the school authorities removed the posters of a mourning procession organised by his son's sympathetic students and guardians. Surprisingly, he received a number of phone calls for not to proceed further, Shoakat alleged.

Shoakat Ali, an expatriate living in UK read out his written statement in the conference. He told that all his children had British citizenship. But he was rearing up them in his home town.