

SNAPS

2 fake DGFI men held in Barisal

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Barisal
Kotwali police arrested two persons for impersonating DGFI officials Friday night.

Tanvir Rahman and Kamrul Islam went to the house of one Harun-Rashid at Nabogram road in the city at dead of night. They identified themselves as of DGFI officials and demanded Tk 7,000 from him.

Harun informed police on suspicion.

When police came and interrogated the two, they admitted giving false identity.

Police arrested them and filed a case.

Trucker murdered in Bogra

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Bogra
Truck driver Siddique Sakider was hacked to death by miscreants at Chalkutrapur Chaporpara in Bogra town Thursday night.

Police recovered the body with marks of cut injury from a pond and a shutter gun from a nearby spot Friday morning. The body was sent to Bogra Mohammad Ali Hospital morgue for autopsy, police said.

Siddique, 30, was the son of Hasen Ali of Noshipur village in Gabtoli upazila.

He had left home three days back. On Thursday night, he had told his wife Mou from Pabna that he was returning home within two hours. Police could not find any clue to the murder.

Rice looted in Bogra

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Bogra
Dacoits tied up night guard Komor Uddin on gun point and looted 71 sacks of rice from Gupta Rice and Flour Mill at Talora Bazar under Dupchanchia upazila in Bogra on Thursday night.

The dacoits numbering about 12 loaded the booty in a truck and sped away at dead of night, police said.

CARITAS closing its Modhupur silk factory, sericulture project

High yarn price raises production cost

JAHANGIR ALAM, back from Modhupur (Tangail)

NETRAKONA: The CARITAS silk factory and its sericulture project in Modhupur are going to be closed, its officials said.

Some sources however claimed that CARITAS is now giving more emphasis on giving micro credit than on production oriented activities.

CARITAS, an NGO, stated its sericulture project in 1992 and appointed 16 field officials in different areas of Mymensingh.

It also established a silk factory at Jalchatra in Modhupur upazila the same year with 54 looms. About 500 indigenous and Bangali women got jobs there.

The sericulture project supplied 100 per cent pure silk yarn and the factory produced pure silk cloth.

Dyeing and printing sections were added in phases.

Beautiful silk sharee, panjabi and other clothes were produced in the factory, which had good market in the country. Within short time, CARITAS silk products became famous.

But in July 2001, CARITAS authorities started retrenchment of employees from its sericulture project one by one.

Now, there is only one field official in the Modhupur sericulture project, the sources said.

The sericulture project is virtually closed now, they said.

Consequently, supply of yarn also stopped. The factory started buying yarn from the market at high prices and so the cost of production increased. Demand for its products plummeted.

CARITAS silk factory lost its normal activities and the authority decided to close it down.

Now, only about 100 workers are working in the factory.

Factory manager Jarum Sattan Howlader told the correspondent during a recent visit that the CARITAS silk factory is going to be closed due to "lack of patronisation" by higher authorities.

Howlader lamented that CARITAS products could be

exported, but this potential could not be exploited due to lack of initiative by the higher authorities.

When contacted, Chitta Ronjon Sangma, director of CARITAS in Mymensingh, said, "Higher authorities have decided to close the silk factory and I have nothing to do."

Some workers told this correspondent that about six months back, the authorities asked about 400 of their colleagues not to come for work.

Seeking anonymity, some of the workers and leaders of local indigenous people alleged that CARITAS now gives more emphasis on credit-giving than on productive activities.

Acid attack on minor girl at school

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Rajshahi

Acid was thrown on a 12 year-old schoolgirl at school.

The incident took place at Bonkishore Government Primary School at Faridpur village in Charghat upazila on Friday.

Two outsiders -- Zahrool and Bidhan Chandra -- called Rehana Khatun, 12, a student of class five, to a teacher's room during recess at noon and threw acid on her. She was immediately taken to the local health complex with burn injuries.

Victim's father Shamsul Islam filed a case accusing three persons including a schoolteacher. Police arrested Bidhan.

Journalist acquitted in murder case

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Barisal

Ajmir Hossain Talukder, Jhalakati correspondent of national daily Dinkal and a journalist of regional daily Ajker Paribarton was acquitted in two murder cases.

His name was added to the list of accused when the charge sheets were framed later though he was not an FIR-named accused in the cases.

On August 16, 2002, Ajmir was called to Jhalakati sadar thana and arrested. Police had told him that he was arrested on instructions from a top leader of the ruling party in the district.

His bail prayer was rejected by a magistrate. After ten days, he was granted bail by the Jhalakati District Judge.

After trial, District Judge ATM Mezbahuddin and Second Additional District Judge Md Anwar Pasha in separate verdicts on March 17 and March 9 acquitted Ajmir and other accused in the two cases.

6 Rajshahi WDB officials sued for tender scam

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Rajshahi

Five Water Development Board (WDB) officials and a contractor here have been sued for alleged tender scam that caused Tk 1.5 loss to the government.

The five WDB officials are Rajshahi Superintendent Engineer Jasim Uddin, Executive Engineer Saidul Islam, sub-divisional engineers Nasir Uddin and Khalilur Rahman, and Senior Accounts Clerk Gyas Uddin.

A contractor firm -- Khondokar Corporation -- has also been sued in the case filed by contractor Subhas Chandra Sarkar with the Senior Special Judge's court on March 13.

He alleged that Khondokar Corporation was favoured in awarding the tender for Thanapara Padma bank protection work at Charghat upazila, ignoring the lowest bidder.

Some influential circles are now pressing Subhas for withdrawing

the case and threatening him with death for non-compliance, sources claimed.

According to the case, WDB floated the tender on October 15 last year for works in six groups. The last date for dropping tender was November 17. Several hundred contractors including Subhas participated in the bidding.

Subhas was selected the lowest bidder in Group D. He quoted Tk 32 lakh against the government allotment of Tk 49.35 lakh.

But WDB awarded the work to Khondokar Corporation that quoted Tk 47 lakh and given the work order on January 17.

Such irregularities were also done in awarding contracts for rest of the work in five other groups, which would cause Tk 1.41 crore loss to the government, the plaintiff alleged.

Subhas also alleged that WDB officials abused their power for personal financial gains.

Heroin recovery: BDR says 4.6 kg, local people claim 12 kg

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Rajshahi

A controversy has arisen on the quantity of heroin recovered by Bangladesh Rifles (BDR) during a raid at Manikchalk village in Godagari upazila on Friday.

BRD sources said they recovered 4.6 kgs of heroin from thatched house of one Gudha Mia, used for keeping his shallow tube well machine for irrigation. A nine-member team BDR from Poladanga outpost conducted the raid following a tip-off.

But local people claimed that BDR recovered 12 kgs of heroin and nabbed two persons.

The local people also claimed that BDR nabbed two persons but BDR denied having arrested any body.

When contacted, BDR Commanding Officer Shahidul Islam said 4.6 kgs of heroin were recovered in the drive.

A BSS report from Rajshahi says: The local narcotics control department after preliminary tests found the heroin to be genuine. Its price is about Tk 4.6 crore, sources said.

Outlaws kill doctor in Barisal for refusing toll

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Barisal

Armed outlaws shot dead quack Hiralal Halder, 40, at Nittanandi village under Uzirpur upazila in the district Friday night as he declined to pay toll and tried to resist them.

According to police and villagers, cadres of Sharbohar Zia Group sent letters to 25 Hindu and five Muslim families in five villages in Guthia union a few days ago demanding toll.

An amount of Tk 70,000 was demanded from Hiralal Halder. Halder, known in the area as a progressive man, not only refused to pay toll but also started to organise resistance against outlaws. He organised patrol in the village at night.

As he was returning home on Friday night along with one Biren Das, outlaws waylaid and shot him point blank near a primary school, killing him on the spot. Biren Das fainted at the sight.

Biren Das has been admitted in hospital. The body of Halder has been sent to morgue for autopsy.

Hiralal's brother Shankar Halder filed a case but Uzirpur police could not arrested any body till filing of the report yesterday evening.

Shortage of manpower at Bandarban DAE

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Bandarban

A total of 138 out of 288 posts are lying vacant in the Department of Agriculture Extension (DAE) here for a long time.

As a result agricultural activities are being hampered greatly in the district.

Only 63 block supervisors out of 157 posts are now working here. At field level block supervisors usually supervise fields and coordinate with farmers.

The hill district council controls the activities of DAE. The council is authorised to appoint third and fourth class employees of DAE.

On contact, Bandarban Hill District Council Chairman Ma Mya Ching told this correspondent that a process is going on to upgrade the post of block supervisors into second class officers. So, the council is now unable to recruit manpower in the vacant posts.

Besides, in seven upazilas five out of seven posts of additional agriculture officers are vacant, while three out of seven posts of agriculture extension officers, five out of seven posts of assistant agriculture extension officers, three out of seven posts of junior agriculture extension officers and three out of seven posts of plant protection inspectors are vacant for a long time.

BNP fronts demand removal of Rangamati Dist Council

Hartal on Mar 25 protesting 'scandal' in teacher recruitment

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Rangamati

Leaders and activists of ruling BNP's front organisations yesterday brought out a procession and held a rally in the town demanding removal of RHDC (Rangamati Hill District Council) Chairman Manik Lal Dewan and its four members for their alleged corruption.

They called a day-long hartal in the hill town on March 25 to press the demand and submitted a memorandum to the Prime Minister through the Deputy Commissioner.

The four members of the council are Musa Chowdhury, Ajit Talukder, Sujit Dewan and Ushatan Roaza.

The hartal programme was announced at the rally held in front of Deputy Commissioner's

office.

About 200 activists led by district unit leaders of Jatiyatabadi Chhatra Dal (JCD), Jubo Dal, Srannik Dal, jatiyatabadi Mohila Dal and Jatiyatabadi Samajik Sangskritik Songhathan (JSS) paraded the streets and at one stage tried to enter the RHDC Bhaban.

Facing police resistance, they then gathered in front of the DC's office.

Presided over by Rangamati Jubo Dal President Saiful Islam Ponir, the rally was addressed by, among others, its vice-president Saiful Islam Bhutto and Secretary Shafiqul Azam, JCD Secretary Mahbubul Baset Apu, JSS President Ali Hossain and Mohila Dal President Shaheda Akter.

They alleged that the latest incident of corruption by the RHDC was "taking bribe" from candidates for posts of assistant teachers for primary schools.

Protesting the alleged bribery, ruling party activists on Monday, swooped on the RHDC office, injured some staff and teacher candidates and damage furniture and window panes.

On the following afternoon, they held a press conference at the local press club and demands immediate removal of the RHDC.

The RHDC will appoint same 250 assistant teachers.

They alleged that the RHDC chairman and members took bribes from candidates through District Primary Education Officer Khair Ahmed.

A CORRESPONDENT, Rangpur

People of Lalbag in Rangpur brought out a big anti-drug procession on Thursday demanding steps by law enforcers to check drug use and arrest of drug traders.

About 3000 people under the banner of Lalbag Ancholek Shanti Rokkha Committee paraded streets in the town and handed over memorandums to the Deputy Commissioner (DC) and the Police Superintendent (SP).

Leaders of the committee told the DC and the SP that they would extend all out cooperation to the administration to eradicate drug use and trade.

Sultan Ahmed Raza, president of the committee complained to the DC and SP that drugs, mainly phensidyl, are being sold at seven spots in Lalbag area.

The leaders alleged that the drug peddlers, sheltered by a section of law enforcers threaten local people if they oppose drug trading, they told the DC and the SP.

They told the officials that drug peddling increased in the town but the law enforcers did not take any action.

They said the committee will launch other programmes to create awareness among people against drug use.

In the past local people caught several drug peddlers and handed them over to police but police did not take any action against them, leaders of the committee alleged.

Season's first nor'wester in Bogra

200 made homeless

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Bogra

Over 200 people became homeless as the seasons first nor'wester lashed four villages in Sherpur upazila in the district Friday evening.

The nor'wester in its half-an-hour swoop razed to the ground most of the tin-shed houses in Kalshimati, Bonga, Bandibanpara and Shaibpur villages, the district administration said.

Agriculture Extension Department (AED) officials said it also damaged ready-for-harvest maize, one of the cash crops in the area.

Several hundred timber and fruit trees have been uprooted. Some of these fell on the Bogra-Dhaka highway, disrupting road communication for about two hours.

PHOTO: STAR



Uncertain future... The indigenous woman (left) will soon join the ranks of unemployed when the weaving unit and the dyeing unit (right) of KARITAS in Modhupur will be closed down soon.



'Unite against drugs' was the slogan when people of all classes joined a procession brought out at Rangpur town on Thursday to raise awareness against drug use and drug peddling.

Phensidyl recovered from vegetable trucks

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Barisal

Barisal Kotwali police in two drives in the early hours of Friday recovered 900 bottles of Phensidil hidden under vegetables in two pickup vans.

Three persons were arrested and the two transports seized.

Acting on a tip-off, police raided Hathkholra wholesale market in the city at about 4 am on Friday and recovered 637 bottles of Indian-made Phensidil hidden under vegetables in a pickup. The vegetables were brought from Satkhira.

Md Milon of Satkhira, who came with the vegetables and pickup drivers Jamal Hossain and Rokon Khan were arrested.

Topped-off, police recovered 180 bottles of Phensidil from another pickup at Barman road at about 1 am Friday. As police stopped the vehicle, its passengers and the driver fled away.

Phensidil is now being sold openly in different spots in the city, even near the Kotwali thana, allegedly with the help of a section of law enforcers and ruling party men.



The photo was taken from Brindaban Para village under Garidaha union in Sherpur upazila after Friday's nor'wester.