

SNAPS

Zoha memorial lecture held at RU

RU CORRESPONDENT

Zoha Memorial Lecture-2004 was arranged at the Senate Bhabon of Rajshahi University (RU) on Monday. Chemistry department organised it. Prof Abu Emam read out the key-note paper. Vice chancellor (VC) Prof Faruki was present as main speaker and chief guest while pro VC Dr Mondol was special guest. The entire programme was conducted by departmental chairman Prof Azhar Ali. Dr Shamsuzza was a professor of Chemistry department who fell a martyr on February 18 in 1969 after brute forces of Pakistan Army killed him at the university main gate. Every year the day is observed as Shikhhok Dibos' (Teachers' Day) at Rajshahi University.

Workshop held to improve health service in shoals

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Gaibandha

A day long workshop on development of health service in shoal areas was jointly organised by Oxfam, Bangladesh and Gono Unnayan Kendro here on Monday. Gaibandha civil surgeon Dr Abdul Qudus was present as moderator while it was presided over by the Editor-in-Charge of Aker Janagan, a local daily, Abu Zafar. Union Parishad chairmen, members, social workers, NGO workers and health inspectors attended the meeting. Dr Jani Alam, deputy director, Family Planning Directorate, M Adus Salam, chief executive of Gao Unnayan Kendro, Dr Mostak Ahmed, Dr AKM Nur Quatubur Rahman and Dr Habibur Rahman addressed.

Thrown out of school

61 satellite primary schools closed in Nilphamari

EAM ASADUZZAMAN, Nilphamari

Seven year-old Mohitur no more goes to school. He helps his father harvest paddy in the field. "Our school is closed. Apa (female teacher) asked us not to go to school", he said. Like him, Belal, Delwar, Babu and Shefali were lazing around. Their school is locked, they said. Neither they nor their fathers knew when the school will reopen. They are among 4,500 children deprived of education in the district following closure of 61 satellite schools in remote villages on orders from the Primary and Mass Education Directorate last year allegedly due to fund crisis. Nine year-old Kuddus was a student of Chapra Beradanga Jolipara Satellite School. He now grazes goat instead of going to school. The Apa advised him to go to a government primary school. But this is far away from home, he said. The schools were set up under a project of the Primary Education Directorate in 1998. Students were given free books and 1500 of them were given 'Upa Britti' (stipend) to encourage primary education. All the facilities have been stopped. The primary schools were set up in remote villages where poor students could not go to government primary schools far away from home. Twenty-three such satellite schools were set up in Jaladhaka upazila, 14 in Syedpur, eight in Kishoreganj, nine in Damar, four in Dimla and nine in the Sadar upazila. A total of 109 female teachers were appointed and 80 students were enrolled in each school. Each teacher was given Tk 500 honorarium per month. Many of them were trained at the Nilphamari Teachers Training Institute.



PHOTO: STAR

Should children in remote villages remain out of government's 'education for all' programme? The photo was taken during school hours on Monday from Jolipara village where a satellite primary school has been closed.

Despite a good success in spreading primary education, the satellite schools have been closed. Some of the poor parents of the children this correspondent talked to at Jolipara village said the satellite schools were close to their houses and female teachers kept an eye to ensure regular attendance of students. Their children do not like to go to government primary schools as those are far away. They also do not press the children to walk long distances as it is not safe, they said. A former teacher said the satellite schools provided a good chance to children of poor families for pri-

mary education. She regretted closure of the schools. District Primary Education Officer Abdus Sattar Sarkar when contacted said the satellite schools have been closed on order from higher authorities. He declined to elaborate and could not say when the satellite schools will be reopened. But other sources at the district primary education office said the schools have been closed due to fund crisis. He informed that around 40 per cent of students of satellite schools had been given 'Upa Britti'. He admitted that closure of the satellite schools has dented primary

education. "Teachers of government primary schools now visit houses, talk to guardians and have even formed 'guardians committees' to motivate them send their children to government school. "But all these failed to bring children to far away government primary schools" he said. Some officials and civil society leaders while talking to this correspondent said closure of the satellite schools has made government's policy of 'education for all' ineffective. Sita Nokrak's husband Piren Snal was shot dead on January 3 in police firing while protesting the government's planned eco-park in Modhupur forests. The tribesmen in Modhupur protested it claiming that it would destroy the ecology and displace them. "If I give VGF card or widow allowance to Sita Nokrak the administration will take action against me", Yakub Ali told this correspondent when asked why she is deprived of the facilities. But he had no answer when asked why Sita Nokrak should not get the facilities as a distressed women. He kept mum to a question: Did she and her two minor children join any so-called anti-government activity? This correspondent visited the widow and her family at their house at Joynagacha village in Modhupur upazila on Sunday. Sita and her two children Utsab and Ratri now survive on doles from the Garo people. "They sometimes help me, but how long they will do this?", she told this correspondent. Piren Snal's 60-year-old father Dijen Nokrak was dependent on his

Indo-Bangla accord to curb cross-border crime, re-install lost pillars

DC level meet ends in Brahmanbaria

OUR CORRESPONDENT, B'baria

Bangladesh and India at the just concluded Deputy Commissioner level border talks here have agreed to prepare lists of "wanted criminals" in respective border areas to stop cross-border crime including drug smuggling. Officials of the two countries have also agreed to take joint steps to identify and re-install lost border pillars and check trafficking. The Indian side also agreed to remove all illegal phensidyl factories in different areas of Tripura district to check flow of the drug into Bangladesh, banned by the government. The two sides signed an agree-

ment on conclusion of the two-day talks that began here on Sunday. Brahmanbaria Deputy Commissioner Md Yunusur Rahman and West Tripura District Magistrate Ashutosh Jindal signed the agreement, official sources said. The conference was held in two sessions. The first session was held at the VIP rest house of Ashuganj Zia Fertiliser Factory on Sunday. The second session was held at Brahmanbaria Circuit House on Monday. They also decided to hold such border conferences twice a year. The last conference was held in West Tripur last year. The Indian delegation felt Bangladesh yesterday. Md Yunusur Rahman and other officials saw off the eight-member Indian team at the Akhaura check post. The 10-member Bangladeshi team led by Md Yunusur Rahman included Brahmanbaria Police Superintendent ATM Tarek, Land Records Deputy Director Khandaker Ahmed Ali, Public Works Executive Engineer Khoashed Alam, Maj. Anwar Hossain of BDR, Customs Superintendent AZM Shahidullah and Upazila Nirbahi Officers of different upazilas of the bordering district. The Indian team included Wet Tripura Police Superintendent TB Roy, BSF Commander A K Tripura and other officials, the sources said.

Victimised for voicing rights

Widow of Piren Snal punished for his protest against govt's planned Modhupur Eco-Park

JAHANGIR ALAM, back from Modhupur (Tangail)

NETRAGONA: She has no rights to get a VGF card or widow allowance because "her husband was engaged in anti-government activities", Yakub Ali Chairman of Sholakuri Union Parishad in Modhupur upazila says. Sita Nokrak's husband Piren Snal was shot dead on January 3 in police firing while protesting the government's planned eco-park in Modhupur forests. The tribesmen in Modhupur protested it claiming that it would destroy the ecology and displace them. "If I give VGF card or widow allowance to Sita Nokrak the administration will take action against me", Yakub Ali told this correspondent when asked why she is deprived of the facilities. But he had no answer when asked why Sita Nokrak should not get the facilities as a distressed women. He kept mum to a question: Did she and her two minor children join any so-called anti-government activity? This correspondent visited the widow and her family at their house at Joynagacha village in Modhupur upazila on Sunday. Sita and her two children Utsab and Ratri now survive on doles from the Garo people. "They sometimes help me, but how long they will do this?", she told this correspondent. Piren Snal's 60-year-old father Dijen Nokrak was dependent on his

son. Now he is compelled to work in banana garden as a day labourer. "Eakub Ali chairman struck off my name from the list of elderly allowance", he lamented. Both Sita and Dijen said they did not get help from the government. Awami League President Sheikh Hasina gave them Tk 50,000. The money is with the Garo Society leaders for meeting the expenses of Piren Snal murder case. They said the World Vision, Bangladesh gave them two cows. When contacted, Garo Society leaders alleged that Eakub Ali is a "strong supporter" of the planned eco-park and so he deprived them (Sita and Dijen) of their benefits. Many helpless people like Sita and Dijen enjoy facilities like VGF card, widow allowance and elderly allowance. The two should also get the facilities, they said.



PHOTO: STAR Sita Nokrak, widow of Piren Snal, snapped with her two minor children on the court yard of her house on Saturday

Rally for Proshika chief's release foiled by JCD

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Manikganj

At least ten people were injured when a rally of NGO employees demanding release of Proshika chief Quazi Faruque Ahmed was vandalised allegedly by activists of ruling BNP's student wing Jatiyatabadi Chhatra Dal (JCD) and youth front Jatiyatabadi Juba Dal in the district town on Monday. Several hundred NGO employees under the banner of Association of Development Agencies in Bangladesh (ADAB) brought out a procession from in front of ADAB office and marched the main street of the town. As they were holding a rally in front of Manikganj Press Club after the procession, ruling party men swooped on it, witnesses said. The attack was made when Manikganj district Jatiya Samajtantrik Dal (JSD-Inu) Joint Secretary Iqbal Hossain Khan was addressing the rally.

The injured included ADAB's Manikganj president Abdul Mojib, Rowsan Alam, Sheikh Asrafur Rahman, Mohammad Rafique, Alpana Goswami, Jasim and Moynul Hossain. As the NGO employees fled away, the ruling party men occupied the stage and held a rally there demanding punishment for Quazi Faruque Ahmed for alleged unlawful activities. BNP leader Ataur Rahman Ata, Juba Dal district president Motaleb Hossain, secretary ASMM Iqbal Hossain, organising secretary Kazi Raihan Uddin Tuku, assistant organising secretary Abdul Motin Biswas and JCD district unit president Golam Abedin Kayser addressed the rally. It was announced at the ruling party rally that Proshika will not be allowed to stage any demonstration in Manikganj.

'Public-private move needed for child rights'

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Satkhira

Speakers at a discussion suggested public-private initiative for establishing child rights. They also stressed for creating awareness about child rights among rural people. Satkhira unit of Bangladesh Shishu Academy organised the discussion titled 'Creating People's Awareness to Implement Child Rights' at local pourasabha auditorium on Monday. While addressing, the chief

guest told the number of child laborers is increasing although the government has banned child labour in all sectors. The government has already prohibited child labour in the garment sector, he further said. The district administration has also banned child labour in shrimp enclosures and shrimp processing factories, the DC added. District children affairs officer Abul Alam, Prof Pabitra Mohon Das, Kishori Mohon, Abdul Majid also addressed.

Additional deputy commissioner (ADC) Mahammad Gaus was in the chair while deputy commissioner (DC) of Satkhira AYM Ekramul Haq was present as chief guest. Among the child participants, names of Asmaul Husna, Sahrina Bin-e-Anowar and Saifullah Al Kafi are worth mentioning.



PHOTO: STAR

A partial view of a meeting on child rights organised by Satkhira unit of Bangladesh Shishu Academy, held at the municipality auditorium on Monday.

Dacoity: 11 villagers bullet-hit in B'baria

13 houses looted in Bogra

STAR NATIONAL DESK

Eleven villagers were bullet-hit in a clash with dacoits at Kena-Budumti village in Brahmanbaria Sadar upazila Monday night. In Bogra, 13 houses were looted by dacoits on Sunday night at Tatulia village in Sherpur upazila. Our Brahmanbaria Correspondent reported that a gang of around 25 armed dacoits attacked the house of one Tuta Mia at Kena-Budumti village. As the inmates raised a hue and cry, neighbours came for help. The dacoits started fleeing with looted valuables worth about Tk three lakh, firing shots, police and villagers said. The villagers chased the dacoits, caught four of them and beat them severely. On information, Brahmanbaria Sadar thana Officer-in-Charge Md Ismail rushed there with a team and rescued the dacoits.

They are Mazu Mia, 45, of Taltola village; Abdu Mia, 30, and Prosanna Sarker, 30, of Merashani and Md Siddik, 30, of Kaichapura village. The all injured villagers have been admitted to Brahmanbaria Sadar Hospital. One of them, Bilal, was sent to Dhaka in critical condition with bullet injury in one eye. The injured dacoits were also admitted at the Sadar Hospital under police guard. A case was filed with Brahmanbaria police. Our Bogra Correspondent reported that about 150 dacoits divided into two groups looted 13 houses at Tatulia village. They took away over Tk one lakh 55,000 in cash and valuables including gold ornaments, VCD and cell phones. Earlier on Friday night, about 25 youths wearing masks looted about Tk lakh in cash, gold ornaments and valuables from six houses at Boraidoho village in the same upazila.

KATKA TRAGEDY KU VC faces students' ultimatum

STAR CORRESPONDENT, Khulna

Students of Architecture discipline of Khulna University (KU) laid siege to the office of Vice Chancellor (VC) Prof Dr A Kadir Bhuiyan for three hours on Monday. They gave an ultimatum to the VC to either make public the probe report on Katka tragedy by tomorrow or face a greater agitation which would ultimately paralyse all academic and administrative activities of the university. Eleven students of Khulna University and Bangladesh University of Engineering and Technology lost their lives in the tragedy on March 13. Professor Dr Golam Martuza who headed the five-member probe committee submitted his report to the VC on May 16. On contact, the VC told this correspondent he would not disclose the contents of the probe report without approval of the Syndicate, scheduled to meet on May 31.