

## RAJSHAHI DISTRICT COUNCIL

# Tk 33 lakh pocketed by showing false bills?

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Rajshahi

Allegations have been raised against Rajshahi District Council officials that they, in league with ruling party stalwarts, have misappropriated at least Tk 33 lakh government money in last two years showing 'false bills for imaginary development works'.

Leaders of BNP and its front organisations sought sanctions for 'fake institutions' and the officials released the amounts without scrutiny following recommendations and lobbying by local ruling party lawmakers, it is alleged.

The disbursed amounts included Tk 15.45 lakh in fiscal 2002-03 and Tk 18 lakh in fiscal 2003-04 for different programmes on national occasions and development works at educational, sports, social welfare and religious institutions, sources claimed.

An amount of Tk 10 lakh was misappropriated by showing those spent for 44 'fake' organisations in Rajshahi city, Tk 5 lakh against 22 institutions in Paba upazila and Tk 6 lakh against 26 in Charghat upazila. Another Tk 5000 was shown disbursed in the name of the Executive Director of Biswa Sahitya Kendra in Rajshahi in 2002-03, but there no such post.

Amounts ranging from Tk 5000 to Tk 20,000 were shown spent for 42 such other organisations at Puthia, Durgapur, Bagmara and Godagari upazilas and Tk 10,000 was shown spent for repair of Charghat Dak Banglaw (rest house) though it was not repaired.

Organisations like Choto Pukuria Jatiyatabadi Jubo Dal and Puthia Shaheed Zia Smriti Shangha were also included in last fiscal's donation list.

When contacted, Chief

Executive Officer of the District Council Shankar Kumar Das denied the allegations.

He however said, "In cases of government grants, MPs recommended in writing or told (us) on phone for sanctioning money and we approved applications".

"We have no scope for misappropriating money as expenditures depend on decisions of project implementation committees for which lawmakers are responsible", Das said.

The Daily Star obtained copies of recommendations by the Post and Telecommunications Minister Aminul Haque but he could not be contacted for comment.

Following the allegations, the Local Government and Rural Development Ministry sent a two-member audit team comprising Paritreswar Roy and Abdul Bari to look into the allegations.

The team started investigation on August 18 and has already found many "objections", sources claimed. The audit is going on, they said.

The ministry also sent a letter to the Rajshahi Divisional Commissioner last month for a through probe into the allegations, but the probe has not been started yet.

Rajshahi divisional commissioner Mosleh Uddin told The Daily Star that he was yet get any such order from the ministry, but sources inside his office showed a copy of the letter and said the deputy director of local government was asked for investigation.

When contacted, Deputy Director Asit Kumar Mukutorny of the Local Government Ministry said he would start investigation after the audit team completes its work.

## Jubo League, BCL leaders held on rape charge

A CORRESPONDENT, Jessore

A Chhatra League and a Jubo League leader were arrested from a residential hotel in the town last night on charge of rape.

They are Amirul Islam Shanto, secretary of Jessore Government City College unit of Chhatra League and Al Mamun, a Jubo League leader, policy said. Police said they lured a woman to the hotel and raped her. The victim, a resident of Bejpara ara in the town lodged a rape case with Kotwali police against the two, police said.

Sources in the parties however claimed that the two were expelled from the parties earlier for immoral activities.

## Because of a quack Baby dies during delivery

A CORRESPONDENT, Jessore

A pregnant woman narrowly escaped death while her unborn baby met a tragic end of life during delivery due to callousness of a quack at Navaran in Sarsha upazila on Thursday.

Firoza Begum, 30, wife of Shamser Ali of Diuli village in Jhikargachha upazila was admitted to Navaran Palli Clinic with labour pain on September 1. Abdul Hamid, a callous quack and his untrained nurses handled her in a non-professional manner. At one stage of delivery they severed the head of the unborn baby keeping the body inside the womb of the woman.

As her condition worsened fast due to profuse bleeding, the quack referred her to Uttara Private Hospital in Jessore town. Dying Firoza was operated upon and surgeons brought out the severed head of the baby from her womb. Firoza was improving, told Dr Shafiqul Islam of the hospital.

The convicts are Halim, 25, Sagir, 25, and Kamal, 26. The convicts were fined Tk One lakh each, in default, to suffer imprisonment for more five years. The three culprits abducted two sisters Rashida Begum, 18, and Shirin Akter, 14, while they were on their way back home at Khazurata village from their maternal uncle's home in Barguna town on August 16, 2003.

They gangraped them on a paddy field. A rickshaw-puller rescued them and brought them to Barguna Sadar Hospital following escape of rapists. Rashida Akter, eldest sister of one of the victims lodged the rape case against the culprits with Barguna Sadar Thana on August 17, 2003.

14 fishermen thrown into Bay rescued

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Barisal

Armed pirates threw 15 fishermen in the Bay and took away their trawler along with fishes, fishing equipment and snatched money.

Fourteen of them were rescued by other fishermen but fisherman Abdul Mannan was missing till yesterday. The incident took place in the deep sea on Sunday, according to the survivors.

The rescued fishermen are Kuddus, Mojibur, Helal, Bachhu, Halim, Keram, Nurul Mollah, Moti, Delwar Molla, Jainal, Mong Shue, Motaleb, Bashir and Shaha Alam. They have been admitted to Kalapara Hospital.

The 15 had gone for fishing with the trawler FB Latachapl. The pirates were on board the F.B Khaja, they said.



Uttaran, a local NGO, organised a roundtable on 'violence on women, human rights and legal aid' at Mobarakpur in Tala upazila in Shatkhira on Sunday.

## Bid to occupy waterbody in Kishoregonj: 30 hurt

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Netrakona

At least 30 people were injured, some of them critically, when a group of about 400 equipped with sharp weapons attacked Banail and Sohagpur villages in Bawa Bill in Tarail upazila in Kishoregonj on Sunday, apparently to occupy the waterbody.

The attackers allegedly led by Sharif Uddin Buyan, Chairman of Rowti Union Parishad, also looted Tk five lakh fishes from the waterbody, police and witnesses said.

Sources in the area said the waterbody is owned by about 20 families of Banail and Sohagpur villages. Sharif Uddin was trying to occu-

## Citizens take dirty water: RCC unmoved

Sewage seeping into leaked pipes

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Rajshahi

Leaked water supply pipelines in many areas in the city getting connected with sewerage drains have contaminated the water, exposing the people to serious health hazards.

This correspondent during a visit yesterday saw leaked and broken water supply pipelines connected with sewerage drains at many points. Polluted and dirty water from drains are seeping into the pipes.

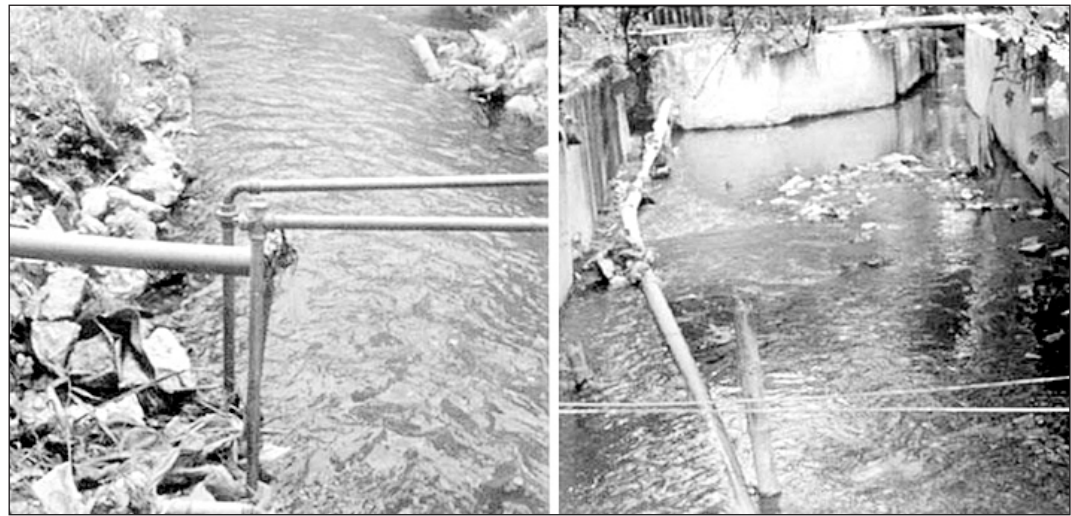
Many city dwellers also com-

plained to this correspondent that the pipeline water is very dirty and highly contaminated. The water is of orange and gray colour and emitting very bad smell, they said. The situation is continuing for several weeks but the City Corporation officials did not do anything in this regard, they alleged.

Rajshahi Medical College Hospital (RMCH) sources said there has been a rush of patients at the hospital with intestinal and water-borne diseases in the last few days.

Most of them are from Ambagan, Rajshahi Housing Estate, Shalbagan, Asham Colony, Bhadra, Beelshimla, Chandipur, Laxmipur, Kadiganj, Ranibazar and Malopara areas where water pipelines are faulty.

An engineer at water supply section in Rajshahi City Corporation, when contacted, said old pipes might have leaked at places but the people of the areas did not inform them. They did not get any complaint, he said yesterday.



Dirty water seeping into leaked pipes in Rajshahi Upashahar and Ambagan areas.

PHOTO: STAR

## Imports thru' Benapole returning to normal

Flow had declined due to steps by Indian customs, BSF

A CORRESPONDENT, Jessore

Imports from India through Benapole land port increased on Sunday after less flows for five days.

On Sunday, about 300 loaded trucks entered Bangladesh. The number was 63 on September 2, 32 on September 3 and 71 on September 4. Earlier, 300 to 400 loaded trucks would enter Bangladesh daily.

The number had declined sharply following strict customs inspection at Petrapole land port and strong vigilance by BSF (Indian Border Security Force) on the Indian side.

The Indian customs had tightened inspection to check alleged carrying of goods in excess of LCs and unauthorised trespass, sources in Benapole land port told this correspondent.

BSF strength has been increased along the border following the August 21 grenade attack on Awami League rally in Dhaka and the fallout political turmoil, they said.

The BSF has imposed nightly curfew on the Indian side of the border and have been ordered 'shoot at sight' to check trespass.

A high-powered Indian team led by Chief Customs Commissioner Lipika Majumder from Calcutta had visited Petrapole land port to enforce strict vigilance, the sources said.

The number of travelers to and

from India has also declined in the last few days, they said.

BSF reinforcement has also created panic among people near the border areas inside Bangla-

desh. Farmers seldom go to their fields as BSF personnel point

their guns to Bangladeshis inside the border and even fire shots at times without any provocation, many farmers said.

When asked, a source in the BDR 25th Battalion said they are keeping a vigil on the border.

## Prothom Alo aid to 3 acid victims

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Barisal

Three victims of acid attack were given sewing and embroidery machines for rehabilitation by daily Prothom Alo at a simple function held at the Barisal Press Club on Sunday.

The recipients are Jesmin Akhtar, Ripa Khonon and Monika Halder. They will also get Tk 1000 per month each for education, it was announced at the function.

The assistance is being given under a programme to rehabilitate acid attack victims.

Noted educationist Principal Md Hanif presided over the function. Barisal Divisional Commissioner Md Abdul Quddus was the chief guest at the function, also attended by other officials and representatives of



The three acid victims with sewing machines.

PHOTO: STAR

the elite in the city. It was addressed by, among others, G M Babar Ali, Towfique

Maruf, S M Ikbal, Palash Roy, Monirul Alam Swapon and Anisur Rahman.

## Life for 3 rapists in Barisal

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Barisal

Three rapists were awarded life term rigorous imprisonment (RI) by the Speedy Trial Tribunal here in a verdict pronounced by its judge M A Matin on Sunday.

The convicts are Halim, 25, Sagir, 25, and Kamal, 26. The convicts were fined Tk One lakh each, in default, to suffer imprisonment for more five years.

The three culprits abducted two sisters Rashida Begum, 18, and Shirin Akter, 14, while they were on their way back home at Khazurata village from their maternal uncle's home in Barguna town on August 16, 2003.

They gangraped them on a paddy field. A rickshaw-puller rescued them and brought them to Barguna Sadar Hospital following escape of rapists.

Rashida Akter, eldest sister of one of the victims lodged the rape case against the culprits with Barguna Sadar Thana on August 17, 2003.

12 hurt as expelled AL leader attacks party meeting in Manikganj

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Manikganj

At least 12 Awami League (AL) leaders were injured when an expelled party leader in collaboration with Chhatra Dal (JCD) and Juba Dal activists attacked a meeting at Singair bus stand on Sunday.

Singair upazila AL organised the meeting protesting grenade attack on a party rally in Dhaka.

The attackers beat AL activists and prevented many of them at Noyadingi, Ajampur and Dhalla from joining the meeting.

Seriously injured persons are party's Manikganj Poursabha President Engineer Foruk, former Social Welfare Secretary Shahidul Islam, party's Singair upazila leaders advocate Shahidur Rahman, Abdus Salam, Md Hashem and Abu Bakar. They were admitted to Singair Upazila Health Complex.

Singair Thana police said the attackers are AL leader and Singair Poursabha Chairman Mir Sahjahan and his activists.

Sources in Manikganj district AL told this correspondent Mir Sahjahan was expelled from the party a few days back for violating party rules.

incident under this government", AL central leader Fazley Rabbi told the rally.

"What they are doing is simply an eye-wash to protect the attackers", he said.

This government can not ensure law and order because the ruling parties are sheltering terrorists and criminals and patronising corruption, Rabbi alleged.

Several pro-liberation political leaders and journalists were killed in the last three years but the government could not unearth any of the incidents, other speakers said. Fundamentalists and communal forces have become active again. This has also tarnished the country's image abroad, they said.

They called for unity of pro-liberation and progressive forces to oust the government through a mass movement.

Presided over by Gaibandha Sadar upazila Awami League President Ranajit Boxhi Surja, the meeting was addressed by, among others, district AL president Mohammed Khaled, its secretary Sayed Shamsul Alam Hiru, Sadrul Kabir, Sultan Ali Mandol, Shah Masud Jahangir and Kabir Milon.

Earlier on the day, Jatiya Samajtantrik Dal (JSD) held a separate protest rally in the town.

## Passenger train service from N dists awaits ministry nod

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Gaibandha

Resumption of passenger train service between northern districts and Dhaka through Bahadurabad Ghat is awaiting permission from Communications Ministry.

Train service through the route was stopped on July 11 as flood badly damaged large portions of tracks in Trimohini-Balashi Ghat and Dewanganj-Bahadurabad sections.

The tracks have been restored.

A Bailey bridge has been built in the damaged portion of the Trimohini-Balashi Ghat section. Movement of goods trains resumed on September 1 but that of passenger train is awaiting a nod from the ministry, they said.

Talking to this correspondent, Divisional Railway Manager, Lalmorihata, Emdadul Huq said people are suffering and the railway is losing huge amounts of revenue daily due to suspension of passenger train movement.



Mouths closed with black cloths, Barisal lawyers formed the human chain in the city on Sunday protesting 'politicisation of courts and attack on lawyers'.

PHOTO: STAR

**SNAPS**

**AL meeting foiled by police**

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Magura

An Awami League (AL) meeting was foiled here by police on Sunday. Magura district unit organised the meeting as part of the party's central committee programme protesting grenade attack on AL rally in Dhaka on August 21. Police chased the AL leaders, activists and occupied the meeting venue at Nomanai Maidan in the town, according to witnesses and party sources. Later, AL activists held a meeting at the house of the party district convener, Md Altaf Hossain. The meeting was addressed, among others, by leaders Abdul Gafur, Tanzel Hossain Khan and Golam Moula Molla.

**2 criminals held**

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

Police on Saturday arrested two criminals including a listed one and recovered a firearm here. Pahartoli Thana police in collaboration with local people arrested Md Nurul Islam, 30, son of Chan Mia of Chaktai in Bakolia Thana from Panirkal. A loaded LG was also recovered from his possession. Agitated people gave him a good beating. He is undergoing treatment at Chittagong Medical College Hospital (CMCH) in a critical condition. In another drive, police arrested a listed criminal, Zahid Ahmad, 30, son of Abul Hossain, from Halishahar K-block area. The arrested person is an accused in two criminal cases.

10x2