

SNAPS

13 held for attack on priest

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Mymensingh

Thirteen people have been arrested for attack on Father Paster Stipes alias Sudit Mir, headmaster of AG Mission School at Phulbaria on Friday. Father Paster is now under treatment at a hospital in Dhaka, shifted there from Mymensingh Medical College Hospital (MMCH) on Saturday. He was seriously injured when some miscreants hacked him when he was going home at Gouripur village in Phulbaria.

42 hurt in Satkhira road mishaps

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Satkhira

At least 42 people were injured, two of them seriously in two road accidents here on Sunday. The two - Mizanur Rahman, 55, of Gangni village and Touhidur Rahman, 25, of Mahmudpur village--have been admitted to Satkhira hospital. Forty of them were injured when a bus and truck collided at in Debhata. The rest two were knocked down by a truck at Badamtala.

Murders cross previous records in Jhenidah

101 in 2004 against 75 in 2003: 50 murders by outlaws

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Magura

The law and order situation deteriorated in Jhenidah district last year, with 101 murders committed during the period against 75 in 2003, according to a high-ranking police official.

Seventy-three murders took place in 2002 and 59 in 2001, according to police records and newspaper reports.

Of the 101 murders, 50 were committed by outlaws. There are at least 500 armed cadres grouped in 17 gangs.

Of the murders last year, 18 were committed in Jhenidah Sadar, 27 in Harinakundu, 12 in Sailakupa, 14 in Kaliganj, 16 in Moheshpur and 14 in Koatchandpur upazila.

Fifteen people were killed in 'crossfire' with police and Rapid Action Battalion (RAB) and 36 by

rival outlaws for supremacy in their respective areas, the police official said.

He however said outlawed parties are responsible for deterioration in the law and order.

Janajuddho faction of Purbo Banglar Communist Party (PBCP) claimed responsibility for 28 killings out of the 50 committed by outlaws.

Outlawed parties active in the district are PBCP-ML, PBCP-Red Flag, PBCP-Janajuddha, Biplobi Communist Party (BCP), New Biplobi Communist Party (NBCP), Jashod Gonobahini and Gono Mukti Fouz (GMF).

Another police official seeking anonymity said godfathers of the outlaws belong to major political parties. A ruling party lawmaker and an Awami League leader mainly shelter them, the police

official said.

Intelligence agencies last year identified the godfathers, 52 professional killers and 24 top leaders of outlawed parties and gangs in Jhenidah district.

Fifteen top leaders of different outlawed parties were killed in 'crossfire' with police and RAB in 56 days from November 1 to December 26 last year.

Sources aware of criminals' movement told The Daily Star that law enforcers had a plan to "eliminate criminals", in the wake of a surge in killings by them.

Corroborating the claim, a police source said, "It is better to kill them because they come out (from jail) on bail and are sheltered by godfathers".

7 hurt in JCD factional clash at BAU

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Mymensingh

Seven Jatiyatabadi Chhatra Dal (JCD) activists were injured in a clash between two factions of Bangladesh Agricultural University (BAU) on Sunday.

Campus sources said, the faction led by Pranta swooped on rival activists led by Munna when the news of formation of JCD central body reached BAU campus.

Later the Pranta group attacked Abul Kalam Azad, vice president of Shah Jalal Hall unit of JCD.

The clashes then spilled over to other dormitories on the campus. All the injured persons belong to Munna group, JCD sources said.

One of them--Roni-- was admitted at Mymensingh Medical College Hospital (MMCH).

The alleged attackers later held a procession on the campus welcoming the central committee.

The two rival factions are at loggerheads for long, the sources said.

The incident was discussed at an emergency meeting, held at the Proctor office.

Tender manipulation: Govt loses Tk 70 lakh

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Satkhira

The government incurred a loss of Tk 70 lakh due to 'tender manipulation' on Tuesday.

The Local Government Engineering Department (LGED) contractors were prevented from dropping tender schedules for Tk 3 cr rural road development work by a group of influential contractors on Tuesday.

The LGED invited tenders for rural road development work in 36 groups. According to sources in the LGED, 3,200

schedules were sold, but only 150 schedules were dropped. A group of influential contractors under a secret deal negotiated the work and prevented others from dropping schedules, according to a source.

When contacted, LGED Executive Engineer Nazmul Alam told The Daily Star at least 50 schedules were sold against each group. But he declined to say how many schedules were dropped. None submitted allegations to him regarding the tender manipulation, he further disclosed.

CAMPAIGN YIELDS GOOD RESULT

Kushtia schoolgirls now aware of Aids

AMANUR AMAN, from Kushtia

Thirteen year-old school student Anwara of a remote village knows about the killer disease AIDS and how it spreads.

She came to attend a Uthan Boithak (courtyard meeting) with her mother, held at Chakrajpur village in Kushtia Sadar upazila to make women aware of the disease and some common ailments.

Many teenaged girl and women in the area are now aware of AIDS.

"We know what is AIDS, how it spreads," Anwara, a student of class nine, told this correspondent after the meeting. Many elderly women are also now conscious about fatal and common waterborne diseases, which was beyond

imagination several months ago. FAIR and CDL (Community Development Library), two local NGOs, jointly organised the programme titled 'AIDS: Women are most vulnerable' on their own initiative.

At least 100 female students aged between 10 to 20 and women took part the Uthan Boithak.

The meeting was also addressed by, among others, Director of Kushtia Chamber of Commerce Samim Ahmed and NGO officials Dewan Aktaruzzaman, Akhtari Sultana and Khondokar Lutfra Rahman.

More such meetings will be held, said Akhtaruzzaman, Executive Director of FAIR.



Monipuri girls presenting a cultural programme at the 'health fair' at Moulvibazar Kashinath Alauddin High School ground.

A different 'health fair' at Moulvibazar

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Moulvibazar

It was a different day for teenagers in the town. Hundreds of enthusiastic youths and school students, joined by their parents, thronged an exceptional 'health fair', at Moulvibazar Kashinath Alauddin High School ground.

The 'Health Fair for Adolescents', particularly focussing on reproductive health, was the first such programme in the small town.

Besides healthcare, the teenagers learnt about problems from early marriage, dowry, drug addiction and other social ills, focussed in different stalls and in discussion programmes.

Painting, essay writing and recitation competitions, arranged by the Shishu Academy were added attractions.

A cultural programme presented by the tribal Monipuri children enthralled all on the concluding day.

The Marie Stops Clinic Society (MSCS), an NGO working in health sector, arranged the two-day fair that concluded on December 30.

HEED, Bangladesh brought another attractive issue 'Malnutrition and Nutrition' -- at their stall.

Financed jointly by the European Union (EU) and the United Nation's Population Fund (UNFPA), the fair was held with cooperation from the district administration.

Twenty government and non-government organisations participated in the fair.

These included Unnayan Sahayak Sangstha, district health department and family planning department, Sylhet unit of Sandhani Blood Bank, Moulvibazar Shishu Academy, scouts, HEED Bangladesh, Paribarik Swastha Clinic, Moulvibazar BNSB Eye Hospital, Kulaura CRP, Fulkari Ashar, Natun Kuri Mela, Glaxo, Protyasha, SIDA, Nari Progati, Moulvibazar Government High

School and the Monipuri Cultural Council.

The stalls provided information on reproductive health for adolescents.

Tania came to the fair with her parents.

"I learnt a lot of things which are neither discussed at family nor available in books", she told this correspondent.

Seema and Hasan also expressed similar views.

MSCS Managing Director Dr yasmin H Ahmed presided over the inaugural function, also attended by Deputy Commissioner Md Younisur Rahman, UNFPA representative Touhidul Alam and Foyes Kawser of Moulvibazar MSCS

Additional Deputy Commissioner Md Ayat Ullah Majumder gave away prizes on the concluding day.

Teenagers from Dhaka-based Jatiya Jubo Forum also took part in the fair.

WOMEN'S REPRESSION Most cases filed in Patuakhali 'false'

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Patuakhali

Most of the cases relating to repression on women and children were meant to 'harass' opponents.

About 1,903 cases were filed during the last three years. The court gave punishment in only eight cases. Allegations in most of the cases could not be proved due to lack of proper evidence or for inadequate medical report, court sources said.

In the eight cases, one person got capital punishment for murder, two got life term imprisonment for acid throwing and seven others got 10 years' rigorous imprisonment (RI) for torture for dowry.

The concerned court was set up on January 20 in 2002.

Big fire at Syedpur rly market

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Nilphamari

A devastating fire at Syedpur railway market on Saturday noon gutted goods in seven shops and five godowns.

The affected people claimed that the fire destroyed goods worth about Tk one crore.

Five fire brigade units from Syedpur, Nilphamari, Rangpur, Parbotipur and Domar put out the fire after over three hours' fight.

Painting in quest of 'perfect life'

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Magura

An 8-day exhibition of paintings by teenaged artists began at Magura Collectorate School auditorium on Sunday, attracting hundreds of children and enthusiastic people.

The theme of the exhibition is 'Ami chhabi aaki shilpi howar jonno noy, chhabi aaki sundar manush howar jonno' (I draw painting not for becoming an artist but to grow up a perfect man), a famous slogan of Shilpacharya Zainul Abedin.

A total of 306 paintings by 31 teenaged painters are on display at

the exhibition titled 'Aakijuuki', organised by the arranged by Chitrali Art School in Magura. The paintings depict tradition, history and culture of Bangladesh.

Magura Deputy Commissioner Md. Harisuddin, attended by Police Superintendent Sheikh Maruf Hasan and other officials.

Hundreds of people came to see the paintings on the first and the second day yesterday as this is the first such exhibition in Khulna division, said Biswajit Biswas Bappi, director of Chitrali Art School, organiser of the exhibition.



An AIDS awareness meeting at Chakrajpur village in Kushtia Sadar upazila.

20,000 phones still inoperative in Barisal

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Barisal

About 20,000 telephones are still inoperative in Barisal since the Digital T&T Exchange went out of order on December 15 due to mechanical faults.

The 5,000-line digital exchange set up in 1997 by Italian company Itelal went out of order as the its central processing unit (CPU) was damaged.

The authorities somehow made about 3,000 telephone lines operative. The rest can not be made operative unless the CPU is changed, officials said earlier.

CPU made in the Italy is not available in Bangladesh and has to be imported from Italy, they

said. Barisal City Corporation (BCC) Mayor Mazbar Rahman Sarwar MP who is also the minister-in-charge for the district after a meeting with Khulna T&T General Manager on December 18 wrote a letter to the Post and Teleco-mmunication Minister requesting him to set up another exchange with 7,000 lines.

The minister asked the T&T Board to set up a new exchange in Barisal soon.

But there has not been any progress in this regard, sources said.

When contacted, DET Jagadish Chandra Mondal declined to make any comment.



Paintings by teenaged artists on display at Magura Collectorate School auditorium.