

13 more girl students of Benapole High School fall sick

UNB, Benapole

Thirteen girl students of Benapole High School fell sick in their classroom yesterday due to a "mysterious disease".

Sources said Shirin, Mukti, Mousumi, Reshma, Sumona, Jannatun Nesa, Mukti, Azmira, Sarmin, Munni, Mariya and Rima, students of class VI, suddenly fell unconscious when their class was in progress.

With them, a total of 47 girl students of the school fell unconscious in the last four days, the school authorities said.

Hearing the news, a medical team from Sharsha Health Complex rushed to the spot yesterday and gave them first aid.

When contacted, health officer Dr Abdul Hai said, "We've checked up the students, but could not diagnose what caused the problem."

Define time frame to hold credible election

Speakers tell Rajshahi roundtable

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Rajshahi

Speakers at a roundtable yesterday called for defining a time frame to hold a free, fair and credible election.

But the tenure of the caretaker government (CG) depends on complete electoral reforms and saving of politics from corruption and nepotism, they added.

The roundtable on 'Reform Discussion: Fair Election' was organised by Sujan (Sushasoner Jonno Nagorik) at Rajshahi Chamber of Commerce and Industry auditorium.

Sujan Central Secretary Dr Badiul Alam Majumder read out a keynote paper at the roundtable.

Former Rajshahi City Corporation mayor Abdul Hadi, Rajshahi University teachers Prof Dr AHM Zehadul Karim and Prof ANM Saleh, Rajshahi Bar Vice-president Hamidul Haque and former Rajshahi Board chairman Prof Nurul Alam took part in the discussion.

The speakers discussed a 10-point reform proposals prepared by

Sujan.

They pointed out that holding of a meaningful election free from the influence of black money and musclemen is the demand of the time.

They also hailed various actions taken so far by the CG against the corrupt politicians.

President greets Amir of Kuwait

UNB, Dhaka

President Iajuddin Ahmed felicitated Amir of Kuwait on the occasion of their national day that falls today.

In a message to Kuwati Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmed Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, the President said, "I am confident that the bonds of friendship that so happily exist between our two friendly countries will flourish in many-fold dimension in the days ahead."



Child artistes perform music to welcome Bashanta (spring) at a ceremony organised by Katha Lalitkala Academy at Shishu Academy auditorium in the city yesterday.

Rly land recovered from encroachers at Akhaura

A CORRESPONDENT, Brahmanbaria

Bangladesh Railway (BR) has recovered two acres of land from encroachers at Akhaura in the district.

Led by first class Magistrate and Divisional Estate Officer Delwar Hossain, a railway team demolished more than 50 structures including two two-storey buildings and a market on its land at the western side of Borobazar.

Upazila Nirbahi Officer of Akhaura Kamrul Alam was present during the drive.

The team demolished one Yasin market comprising 10 shops in it. Advocate Yasin illegally built the market on the railway land some 35 years back, said the magistrate.

They also demolished a two-storey building where a medicine shop of Sadhona Oushadhalay was established some 70 years back.

One Harun-ur Rashid Bhuiyan claimed that their family took the possession of the land from the

Moharaja of Agartala in 1936 and produced papers in favour of his claim.

But the magistrate and the UNO did not listen to him and demolished the building, he added.

Harun said he will go to court.

The team also demolished more than 40 other tin-roofed structures including two stationery shops, two fertiliser shops and two wholesale rice shops.

One Ali Azgar Kha claimed that he and his relatives are the actual owners of the land since Pakistan period and he, too, will go to court.

Meanwhile, the railway authorities evicted some 65 families who had been residing on the railway land since the liberation of the country.

One Zohra Khatun told this correspondent that a former employee of railway allowed them to live there in exchange for toll revenue.

They are now living under the open sky, she added.

7 pirates held at Araihaazar

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Narayanganj

The army yesterday arrested seven pirates and recovered firearms, ammunition and explosives from Kadmirchar village at Araihaazar Upazila in the district.

The pirates are Yunus, Liakat Ali, Rekmat Ali, Kamal, Ali Hossain, Swapan and Al Amin, while the recovered arms are two foreign revolver, one shotgun, four cocktails, six rounds of revolver bullets and huge amount of lethal arms. The arrestees were taken to Fatullah army camp.

The army sources said they encircled the remote village to catch the pirates who mainly used to commit robbery in the Meghna river and after five hours of raid they arrested the thugs.

Meanwhile, members of Rapid Action Battalion (Rab) yesterday arrested one Abul Kashem, 40, as he demanded Tk 15,000 from trader Abdul Kader at Shanir Akhra identifying himself as a Rab member.

Rab sources said Kashem of Dewri Chourpara of Sadar Upazila, Narayanganj, has been extorting money from the people in Dhaka-Narayanganj area for long.

2 Russian tourists shot dead in Thai beach resort

AFP, Pattaya

Two female Russian tourists were shot dead Saturday while they were relaxing on the beach in the popular Thai seaside town of Pattaya, police said.

Tatiana Tsimfer, 30, and Liubov Svirikova, 25, were found dead in their deckchairs on Jomtien beach, Pattaya, some 150 kilometres (93 miles) southeast of Bangkok, they said.

A nearby hotel guard told police he heard several gunshots and saw a Thai man speeding away on a motorcycle after the shots.

"At the moment, we don't know why they were shot," Major Sretha Maklon of Pattaya police told AFP on the telephone. The women arrived in Thailand on February 16 as part of a group tour.

Pattaya is one of Thailand's popular beach resorts and is also known for its thriving nightlife.



Children crowd a stall at the Amar Ekushey Book Fair at Bangla Academy in the city yesterday when the fair opened only for children in the morning.