

NOAKHALI TOWN

Children suffer for lack of playgrounds

NURUL AMIN, Noakhali

Children in the town are deprived of games and recreation facilities due to lack of sufficient playgrounds and open spaces.

Surprisingly, no children's park was set up in the municipality area since its establishment in 1876.

The situation is not conducive to smooth physical and mental development of the children, observe doctors and guardians.

The municipality comprises nine wards and has a population of about 2.5 lakh. Unplanned construction over the recent years has turned it into a concrete jungle.

Most of the children in the town do not know swimming as most of the water bodies and ponds in the municipal area have already

been filled up for construction work and other purposes, locals said.

"My three school going children spend quite a long time watching television, especially Hindi serials on different channels, as there is no playground or open space near my house. I know it is not good for them but what can I do? Where will they go to play?," said businessman Azizur Rashid of local housing estate.

Non-government rural worker Monu Gupta said, "Majority of the children in the town are students of private schools but most of these schools do not have any playground or open space."

"Besides, a large number of children working at tea stalls, hotels, restaurants, workshops, factories, shops and other places in the municipal

area have hardly any recreational facilities", he added.

Unplanned construction of numerous dwelling houses and commercial structures across the municipal area ate up the open spaces while the authorities seem to be indifferent to the necessity of children's play and recreation, observed several senior citizens of Noakhali municipality.

Harunur Rashid Azad, mayor of Noakhali municipality said, "We are very much aware about the problem. We have already planned to set up parks and create other recreational facilities for children in the municipal area within a very short time."

"We are preparing a proposal in this regard to submit it to the Ministry of Local Government", he added.



UTTERLY GREEDY, THEY DEplete FISH STOCKS: A section of unscrupulous fishermen set large current nets near the banks of rivers and canals to trap fry during the high tide and collect them when water recedes, defying authorities' ban on such wicked act. The photo was taken from near Boga ferry terminal on Lohalia River in Patuakhali district yesterday.

PHOTO: SOHRAB HOSSAIN

50 girls fall sick at school

Reason unknown

A CORRESPONDENT, Gopalganj

Around 50 schoolgirls all of a sudden fell sick in Kashiani upazila of the district yesterday morning.

Of them, 14 have been admitted to Kashiani upazila hospital.

Teachers and guardians said, a number of girl students of Bhadulia Ideal High School fell sick at around 10:30 am.

The teachers started pouring water on their heads. Within no time, the number of sick students reached 50, said headmaster Bholanath Pandey.

The school informed the matter to upazila hospital over phone and some doctors along with upazila health and family welfare officer Dr Abul Khair Mohammad Rafiqul Haider came to the school.

Resident Medical Officer (RMO) of the upazila hospital Dr Tarun Mondal terming it a case of heat stroke said, most of the girls were mentally affected after a few of their classmates fell sick.

He said all the sick girls complained of stomach ache, pain in body and head and strained breathing.

Dr Abul Khair Mohammad Rafiqul Haider said it was probably a case of mass hysteria.

Freak baby

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Pabna

A baby girl with two heads and three legs died two and a half hours after birth at a clinic in Pabna town on Friday evening.

The baby was born at caesarean section at around 7:00pm at Dipa Clinic in Shalgaria area.

Hamida Khatun, wife of Shahjahan Ali of Nayanpur village in Bera upazila, was admitted to the clinic at around 6:30pm in a critical condition. She was immediately taken to operation theatre where doctors performed caesarean section on her.

Doctors said they did not get enough time to examine the new born baby as her all internal organs stopped functioning after two and a half hours.

The baby's mother was taken to the clinic in a critical condition. So, we could not properly examine the woman, said gynaecologist Ismat Ara.

Hamida's husband Md Shahjahan Ali said he could not ensure proper treatment of his wife due to financial problem.

Arms peddlers, outlaws active ahead of UP polls in Jessore

QUAZI AMANULLAH, Khulna

Seizure of ten foreign-made firearms and 26 bullets from Benapole and arrest of nine of outlaws on Tuesday bear testimony to arms smuggling and reappearance of outlaws, much to the worry of candidates ahead of the union parishad (UP) elections in Jessore district.

Elections to 91 union UPs under eight upazilas of Jessore district will be held from June 6 and July 5 this year.

Tipped off, a team of Rapid Action Battalion (Rab) on Tuesday afternoon seized the arms and ammunition at Raipur village under Benapole Port police station and arrested Sujon of Mankia village in the area for possessing it.

The seized materials and the arrested 'arms trader' were handed over to Benapole police station the same day and an arms case was recorded with the police station on Wednesday.

Sources of Benapole police station

said that an organised syndicate of arms traders are involved in smuggling of Indian arms into the country through different border routes of Jessore district, including Raghunathpur, Putkhali, Daulatpur, Saidpur and Gatopara.

Seeking anonymity, a candidate for the post of UP chairman in Jessore Sadar upazila expressed fear that most of the smuggled arms would be supplied to outlaws.

Ahead of the upcoming UP elections in Jessore district, arms smuggling through border routes has increased while cadres of different underground organisations, especially PBCP (Janajuddho), Biplobi Communist Party, Sramajibi Mukti Andolon and Gano Bahani are regrouping in the area, reliable sources said.

Armed members of these underground parties are being contacted by a section of UP chairman and member candidates belonging to both ruling Awami League and main opposition

BNP in these eight outlaw-infested upazilas of Jessore district to flex muscle 'whenever needed', they said.

On Tuesday night, a police team led by Assistant Superintendent of Police Anisur Rahman of Jessore arrested nine outlaws from their hideout at Haridaskati village under Monirampur upazila of Jessore district.

The outlaws were holding a secret meeting in their hideout, said Monirampur police station officer in charge Sairuddin Ahmed, adding that at least ten more outlaws managed to escape, after exploding two powerful hand bombs during the incident.

Admitting the incidents of arms smuggling through different border areas of Jessore district and reappearance of outlaws, ASP Anisur Rahman said, "We are always on high alert and trying our best to arrest outlaws and seize illegal arms so that the upcoming UP elections in Jessore district are held peacefully."

Worker crushed under truck's wheels as he asked for dues

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Thakurgaon

Men of a road construction company allegedly crushed a worker under the wheels of a truck on Boda-Debiganj road at Chandanbari village under Boda upazila in Panchagarh yesterday for demanding dues.

Following the incident thousands of agitated locals barricaded the road demanding arrest of the killers.

The deceased, Rafiqul Islam, 35, son of Salimuddin of Munshipara village in Boda upazila, had gone to the spot to ask for his due money at about 12:30pm, said police and locals.

At one stage of altercation with Rezaul Islam, site engineer of Abdul Monayem Limited, a firm constructing Boda-Debiganj road, a truck driver of the firm picked Rafiqul up on the truck.

Then the driver and helpers of the truck

threw Rafiqul from the truck and crushed him under its wheels, leaving him dead on the spot, said locals.

As the news spread, locals vandalised a truck of the construction firm and barricaded the road.

Police were trying to restore the road communication as of filing this report at 4:30pm.

When contacted, project manager of Abdul Monayem Limited engineer Sharifuzzaman said, "A man was killed in a road accident by our truck but he was not our worker. He might be a worker of our sub-contractor."

He refuted the allegation of killing Rafiqul.

After investigation it will be known what actually happened, acting officer in charge of Boda Police Station Harun-or-Rashid told this correspondent over cell phone.

Lawyer killed by siblings over land dispute

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Jhenidah

A lawyer was hacked to death allegedly by his two siblings following a land dispute at Bhutiargati in Jhenidah town yesterday morning.

The deceased, Anwar Hossain Kadar, 48, was executive member of local unit of Jatiyatabadi Lawyers' Forum and former cooperative secretary of district BNP, said advocate SM Moshir Rahman, president of the forum.

Iqbal Bahar, officer-in-charge of Sadar police station, said Anwar was hacked indiscriminately with axe and iron rods by his two brothers -- Aminul Islam Kadu and Aktaruzzaman Modhu -- in front of his Bhutiargati residence when he was returning after morning walk at about 7:00am.

He succumbed to his injuries on the way to Jhenidah Sadar Hospital, the OC said.

Anwar had a conflict with his brothers over a piece of disputed land worth Tk 2 crore. A number of cases filed in this connection are also pending with the Jhenidah courts, the OC said.

The body was sent to the morgue for autopsy. Kadu and Modhu went into hiding soon after the incident.

In Brahmanbaria, at least eight people were injured in a clash, over a piece of disputed land, between two rival groups in Doruin village under Binauty union of Kasba upazila yesterday, reports our correspondent.

According to villagers, hospital and police sources, there was longstanding enmity between Yakub group and Anwar group in the village over the land.



PHOTO: STAR

Hindu devotees pour water from nearby Chitra River at the foot of an old banyan tree beside Nishanthalta Temple in Narail town yesterday, following the age-old local tradition of offering water, milk, oil, flower and sweetmeat as token of reverence to the tree esteemed as a god, on every Saturday and Tuesday during the Bangla month of Baishakh.



PHOTO: STAR

Students of food technology and nutritional science department of Maolana Bhasani University of Science and Technology start fast unto death at Shaheed Smrity Pouro Udyan in Tangail town yesterday to press for their two-point demand including BSc (Engineering) degree instead of BSc (Honours) degree.

DEMAND FOR RENAMING DEGREE AT BHASANI UNIVERSITY Students again on fast unto death

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Tangail

Over 200 students of Food Technology and Nutritional Science (FTNS) department at Maolana Bhasani University of Science and Technology (MBUST) in Tangail have started fast unto death again yesterday.

The programme is being held at Shaheed Smrity Pouro Udyan in the town to realise their two-point demand.

The demands are immediate removal of the vice-chancellor (VC) of the university and conferring BSc (Engineering) degree instead of BSc (Honours) degree on the FTNS students.

The agitating students vowed that this time they will continue the programme until death to realise the demands in black and white.

The students of the department have been boycotting their classes since July 12 last year and holding series of agitation programme demanding BSc (Engineering) degree

in place of BSc (Honours) degree.

To defuse agitation, the university authorities declared the FTNS department closed for indefinite period twice. They also filed two criminal cases against 180 students of the department, expelled 45 of them and declared all students of the department 'unwanted' on the campus bringing allegations against them.

At this stage, the agitating FTNS students started fast unto death programme on Tangail Shaheed Minar premises on March 19 to realise their seven-point demand including renaming of degree.

After three days, the students suspended their programme when the authorities assured them of considering their demands without delay.

Final year student of the department Abdullah Al Hadi told this correspondent that 52 days have already gone after the assurance but nothing has been done to implement the students demand. He blamed the VC

solely for it.

Contacted, Prof M Nurul Islam, vice-chancellor (VC) of MBUST termed the demand for renaming of degree by the FTNS students illogical.

"Actually we cannot manage the agitating students as a local powerful political quarter is instigating them to continue their meaningless agitation."

The vested quarter is doing this in order to realise their personal interests," the VC said, without elaborating.

Agitating FTNS students, however, said they are forced to go for fast unto death as their demand is logical.

"Many universities at home and abroad are giving engineering degree to their food department students," said one of them.

"We are not instigated by any quarter as we have been persistently demanding it. We have already lost about one year from our academic life due to the agitation," the student added.