

Special Eid treat



LUTON DRAMA TO APPEAR ON TV

A Luton-based Bangladeshi drama group has filmed an educational drama that will be broadcast by ETV around Eid.

Purbachal or Eastern Sky, formed five years ago, has created a five-episode educational drama, written and filmed in Luton with all local performers. The drama will deal with issues plaguing Bangladeshi culture such as the unhealthy practice of forced marriages, and mindless belief in the occult, apart from bring-

ing out the importance of family values. Purbachal was born of Mirtalee Youth Association, local community members and an unnamed youth group. This combination had visited Bangladesh in 1999 on a three-week programme and returned to the UK full of ideas.

With help from music store Sangeetha UK Ltd, that has a post-production unit called Ornet Visuals in Bangladesh, Purbachal wrote and

filmed the drama last summer.

Drama organizer Ashuk Ahmed said: "The idea of producing this drama was to give an opportunity to the local talented performers a boost and at the same time raise awareness on several key issues that implicate the Bangladeshi community in Luton, including forced marriages."

In keeping with the Asian culture of street plays to spread public awareness on socio-economic or health issues, Purbachal hopes to

improve the Bangladeshi community in the UK or at least in Luton and eradicate existing social evils.

The theatre group has produced and staged several dramas so far and plans to bring out three more creations highlighting drug abuse and health issues among the Bangladeshi community. The group is looking for local performers of all backgrounds and ages for the upcoming productions. Interested persons may contact Mr Ahmed on 01582 725029.

RACISTS JAILED

A LEADING member of the National Front and supporters of the neo-Nazi group Combat 18A and a gang of racists was jailed for a total of 25 years reported The Independent.

According to the report, seven of the eight-man gang were caught in a van with darkened windows carrying an array of weapons, including an imitation gun, CS gas canisters, an axe, a knuckle duster, and plastic handcuffs.

Eight gang members later headed guilty to conspiracy to commit racially aggravated assault and were given sentences ranging from 18 months to four years and four months at Kingston Crown Court.

Searches at the racists' homes in London discovered more weapons and National Front and neo-Nazi literature. Police also found links between members of the gang and the extreme right-wing organisation Combat 18.

One of those jailed, Simon Northfield, 23, was a National Front "officer" and "organiser", the court heard. Literature from the far-right group described Northfield, a builder from Wallington, south London, as a leading figure in the Young National Front. In February 2000 he admitted attacking members of the Ariti-Nazi League and shouting racist abuse while taking part in a National Front rally in Margate.