

Diarrhoea still beyond control in Nilphamari

Scarcity of saline prevails in Gaibandha hospitals

NATIONAL DESK

Diarrhoea still remained out of control in Nilphamari district and an acute scarcity of IV saline aggravated the situation in Gaibandha district.

Our Nilphamari Correspondent reported that the diarrhoea situation remained beyond control even after two months of its outbreak.

Out of frustration and superstition people in the diarrhoea affected areas adopted a different way to prevent its spread further. Considering the disease as an act of evil power, villagers at Vengtiapara in Gayabari union under Dimla upazila, Panjapara, Amrul Bari and Kathali villages under Jaldhaka upazila formed a number of vigilance teams to guard their villages at night so that the evil power do not enter their villages. They were beating drums and other instruments at night and shouted "Allah Akbar" and "Yea Ali" with a view to frightening the evil power.

However, the district health

department sources informed The Daily Star that in the 24 hours ending Monday noon, 44 more diarrhoea patients got admitted in Nilphamari Sadar Hospital.

But when this correspondent tried to contact the control room, he failed to establish contact with anyone as none was available there till 2 pm on Monday.

The civil surgeon and other officials were found very busy with the appointment process of health assistants on Monday.

No report of stool and vomit culture reached here till Monday noon from the International Centre for Diarrhoeal Diseases and Research, Bangladesh (ICDDR, B), Dhaka.

When this correspondent asked the Deputy Jailor of Nilphamari jail Mominul Haq whether any new diarrhoea patients were shifted to the sadar hospital or not, he replied in the negative. He informed that steps had been taken to prevent its further spread in the prison. On Sunday, a convict named Ekramul Hossain, serving jail term in the

district prison was admitted to the 50-bed hospital.

Our Gaibandha Correspondent reported that an acute scarcity of IV saline had been prevailing in the upazila health complexes of the district.

Attendants of critical patients procured saline from medicine shops outside the hospitals at an exorbitant price.

Nearly 30 patients of Sunderganj Upazila Health Complex returned homes disappointed as no physician was available there on Sunday afternoon, according to eye witnesses.

President and Secretary of the Gaibandha unit of Bangladesh Communist Party expressed their concern at the spread of the disease. They also alleged gross negligence of the authorities concerned to combat the situation. They demanded of the administration to supply saline in the hospitals on an emergency basis.



Farmers at Ghuridaha under Shaghata upazila in Gaibandha district take measure to naturally control pest from paddy field utilising bamboo.

PHOTO: STAR

JSD forms human chains

DU CORRESPONDENT

The Jatiya Samajtantrik Dal (JSD-Inu) on Sunday observed its seventh day of the countrywide human chain programme protesting the 'misrule' of the BNP-Jamaat coalition government.

Human chains were formed at the Tongi-Gazipur-Trisal and Mymensingh highways and a rally was also held in Mymensingh town.

While addressing the rally the JSD President termed the alliance government's two years of rule as 'a black chapter' in the history of Bangladesh.

Feud in Sunamganj AL surfaces again

IQBAL SIDDIQUEE, Sylhet

The internal feud in Sunamganj district Awami League (AL) has surfaced again with the rivalry between central leaders like Abdus Samad Azad and Suranjit Sengupta.

The situation came into being when former foreign minister and presidium member Abdus Samad Azad MP, joined a meeting of a faction of the district AL's executive committee on October 11 as chief guest at Sunamganj Press Club auditorium. Important decisions were adopted at that meeting.

Protesting the decisions of the meeting, the rival faction of the district committee called another extended meeting on October 22.

Former prime minister's parliamentary affairs advisor Suranjit Sengupta MP, who is also a member of the presidium might attend the meeting. He will address a public meeting at the local traffic point on the day.

In the meeting on October 11, new committees of the pourashava and the Sadar upazila units were formed.

Besides, ex-general secretary of the district committee Ayub Bakht Jaglu, who was earlier expelled from the party was co-opted in the district committee. Similarly six

other leaders co-opted in the meeting.

A number of leaders protested such important decisions, without convening any conference. They also alleged that one of the district leaders was consulted prior to the meeting held in presence of a senior leader like Samad Azad.

Protesting the decision, a letter signed by the Sadar upazila committee president Abdur Rashid, Acting general secretary Nur Miah, Gouranga Chandra Banik and acting general secretary Alkas Miah was sent to the central committee.

In the letter, they termed the formation of the committees 'undemocratic and unconstitutional' and solicited attention of the party chief Sheikh Hasina.

Vice-president of the district committee and former member of parliament (MP) Muhibur Rahman Manik also lodged a strong protest at a press conference held at the district press club on October 17.

He alleged that only 14 to 15 persons including seven expelled party leaders were present in the meeting.

Earlier, the central body issued show-cause notices on those seven persons on charge of serving in favour of a rival political party in the last parliamentary polls adding the meeting was a conspir-

atorial one.

Hinting at Samad Azad, Muhibur Rahman alleged that, the activities of the elderly leader was really 'painful' when a probe body formed by the central committee was looking into the complaints against the leaders to whom the show-cause notices were served by the central committee.

The notices were served to them for showing black flags on July 14 to Suranjit Sengupta and declaring him 'persona non grata'.

The followers of Samad Azad showed black flags to Sengupta when he came to join party programmes in his own constituency in Sunamganj-1 (Tahirpur and Madhyanager upazilas).

Protesting this Sengupta announced a road march to Sunamganj from Sylhet on July 27.

However, it was suspended at the intervention of the central committee with an assurance of taking action against the responsible persons.

Those who were present at the press conference include acting secretary of district AL Advocate Nantu Roy, district Krishak League president Subir Talukder, ex-upazila chairman of Dharmapasha upazila parishad Abdul Awal and some other leaders of AL, Juba League and Chhatra League.



DutchBangla Bank Limited Managing Director Md Yeasin Ali speaks at the inaugural session of the Bank's 'Smile Brighter Programme' for Barisal division at a local clinic in the divisional city on October 10. Cleft-lipped boys and girls are being operated at Bank's cost under this programme.

Truck loaded with cloth hijacked in Sirajganj

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Sirajganj

Armed robbers on Saturday night hijacked a truck loaded with cloth worth Tk 50 lakh on Sirajganj-Belkuchi road near Sarotia under Sadar upazila.

They chopped and injured the truck's driver, Iqbal, 35, and 10 day labourers.

Police sources said a gang of bandits wearing pant and shirt

barricaded the road. The Baburhat-bound truck was coming from Enayetpur industrial area. The robbers fled away with the truck from the area.

Local people rescued the injured driver and workers and admitted them to Sirajganj General Hospital where condition of the truck driver was stated to be critical.

A case was lodged with Sirajganj Sadar police station.

Rape of indigenous girl: 5 including 2 'rapist' cops closed to police line

Police trying to hide facts, claim victim's family members

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Rajshahi

Five persons including two police constables of Hatgangopara police investigation centre (HPIC), who were allegedly raped an indigenous girl on Friday were closed to Rajshahi police line.

Rajshahi SP Anwar Kamal told The Daily Star on Saturday that action against the policemen was taken for 'a transparent probe into the incident'.

But family members of the victim claimed that police were trying to hide the facts of the incident.

Akhter Ali and Abu Bakkar Siddique, the two police constables of Hatgangopara police investigation centre (HPIC), who were allegedly raped the indigenous girl along with three other persons were closed to Rajshahi police line.

Sub-inspector Shawkat Hossain, In-charge of HPIC was also withdrawn and transferred to Charghat, official sources said.

Basanti Muimari, eldest sister of the rape victim claimed that police were trying to hide facts as they did not include names of the two policemen who were found during the rape of the girl.

She, quoting the girl, told that policemen induced her with sleeping pill before taking her to the court and she witnessed policemen during her rape at Kanaishahar village on the night of October 17.

Anil, Sunil, Chaina and Shandhya, brothers and sisters of the rape victim also raised similar allegations while talking to journalists. They also alleged that the girl was not produced before court for conviction as police claimed.

The girl was, however, virtually kept confined at the One-stop Crisis Centre (OCC) at Rajshahi Medical College Hospital (RMCH) and

journalists were barred to talk to her on Saturday.

Assistant Sub-inspector Shahnaj Begum who identified herself as the In-charge of the OCC, a foreign funded project to provide 'rich treatment and legal protection' to rape victims, told journalists should take permission from higher authorities for talking to the girl.

"Our superior officials told us not to allow any journalist without their notice", the female police official told when this correspondent and another journalist went to the OCC at around 10.30am.

There were no doctor at the OCC till 2pm when the journalists left the scene. When inquired, family sources of the OCC coordinator Dr

Majhhar Hossain said he went to Manda upazila of Naogaon for private practice.

When contacted, RMCH deputy director Rokeya Begum told that she could do nothing unless the OCC coordinator withdraws restrictions. The coordinator could not be contacted till filing of this report despite repeated attempts.

But a senior doctor of RMCH revealed that police asked the OCC authorities not to allow any journalist to meet the girl.

However, Rajshahi SP denied the allegation and told this correspondent that police had no right to interfere into activities of an organisation like OCC.



PHOTO: STAR

A student of Moulvibazar Government Women's College receives prize from the Principal of Moulvibazar Government College, Nani Gopal Roy who distributed prizes as chief guest at a prize giving ceremony following a cultural competition held at the women's college recently.

SNAPS

Big fire at Dimla BRAC office

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Nilphamari

A big fire broke out at Dimla upazila office of BRAC Development Centre on Monday morning.

The fire originated from the kitchen of the office which engulfed the entire office very fast.

Important office documents, four motor cycles, one computer, four microscopes, furniture of 14 rooms and cash amounting to Tk 5 lakh were completely burnt. The loss was estimated to be around Tk 50 lakh.

Drought affects aman farming

BSS, Meherpur

Continued drought has affected aman farming in the district this year.

Aman has been cultivated on about 20,000 hectares of land in the district in the current season. Solvent farmers installed shallow machines to irrigate their aman fields while poor and marginal farmers managed to procure irrigation water from the owners of different water bodies. Many poor farmers said to BSS that they could not buy irrigation water due to financial hardship.