

Painkillers cause kidney damage

BBC ONLINE

Taking too many painkillers can damage some people's kidneys permanently, scientists claim.

Overuse was defined as taking two doses of full strength aspirin or extra strong paracetamol every day.

The risk only affects people who are susceptible -- most people, including cardiovascular patients taking small doses of aspirin -- are not at risk.

But doctors told the American Society of Nephrology they had no way of spotting the few who are at risk.

The researchers found that heavy use of aspirin or paracetamol - defined as 300 grams a year - was linked to a condition known as small, indented and calcified kidneys (SICK).

The condition was detected in patients with irreversible kidney failure by carrying out computed tomography (CT) scans.

Over 200 patients treated for kidney failure across the US were scanned for SICK and asked about their use of painkillers.

Seven per cent were found to have SICK, and a third of those patients had overused analgesics.

Scientists from the National Analgesic Nephropathy Study said: "We conclude that heavy use of analgesics at least nine

years prior to the development of irreversible kidney failure is associated with the anatomic changes of small, indented and calcified kidneys."

Dr Vardaman Buckalew, a kidney specialist at Wake Forest University Baptist Medical Center in North Carolina said: "If a patient does have SICK, there is an increased likelihood of analgesic abuse."

He added: "We think just some individuals are susceptible. But there is no way yet to figure out which individuals are susceptible and which aren't."

A spokeswoman for the National Kidney Research Fund told BBC News Online: "Large doses of some analgesics, including aspirin and paracetamol, may depress kidney function in patients who already have kidney disease."

She added: "Extremely large doses of aspirin and paracetamol can cause acute renal failure, usually when taken as a suicide attempt."

"And there is some anxiety that if large doses can cause disease in many subjects, lower doses may cause it in a few subjects."

"The advice is don't take analgesics unless you really need them, take single drugs such as aspirin and paracetamol, carefully study the instructions - and if you have any kidney disease, seek medical advice before taking analgesics."



PHOTO: STAR

Destitute women gather at a house at Fakirpool in Dhaka yesterday to receive zakaat, an obligatory payment made every year during Ramadan by all Muslims to the needy.

Ahmadia mosque

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for assaulting them and creating barrier to their duty and torching their motorcycles.

On Friday night, two sub-inspectors filed the cases against Mahmudul Hasan Momtazi, Nazmul Haq, Mojibur Rahman, Enaytullah Haq, Ehsan Idris, Nasir Uddin and Kala Mia and 10,000 to 12,000 unknown others.

Locals allege Momtazi, khatib of Rahim Metal mosque in Tejgaon, gave rabble-rousing speeches on different occasions "to free the mosque from non-Muslim Ahmadias".

From different processions and rallies under the banner of Khatme Nabuawt Movement, Mufti Amini of Islamic Oikya Jote, Shamsul Haq, president of Aamra Dhakabashi, Nazmul Haq, president of Bangladesh Khademul Islam Chhatra Parishad, Enaytullah Abbasi, son of the pir of Jainpuri, vowed to continue a movement until the declaration of Ahmadias as non-Muslim.

Another top police officer, Dhaka

Four hurt as oil tanker catches fire

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

At least four crew of a local oil tanker received burn injuries when it caught fire at Jamuna Oil Company jetty in Patenga yesterday.

Mithu Mian, 32, Rafiqul Islam, 27, Mizanur Rahman, 40, and Noor Mohammad, 30, were injured when the engine room of a lighter tanker, anchored to load petroleum products from the oil company, burst into flames at around 3:10pm, sources said.

They were admitted to Chitta-gong Medical College Hospital. Mithu's condition was critical, Patenga police and fire brigade sources said.

Four fire fighting units from Chittagong Export Processing Zone and Dock Fire Station doused the blaze after half an hour.

Businessman

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from the businessman before they fled. "I believe they saw us enter the hall gate and left the building under the cover of dark," said Nafiul who was accompanied by Sergeant Anwar Hossain in the raid.

The abduction case amid security watch by police to curb extortion, in which the law enforcers found Jewel and his gang operatives involved.

It recalls another incident by the same JCD group: two salesmen were released from Shahidullah Hall on a ransom of Tk 7,000 a couple of days ago after they were abducted from Makka-Madina Pharmacy at gunpoint, sources said.

Party insiders accused Jewel, senior vice-president of JCD's now-dissolved hall unit, of extracting tolls from drug-stores, other shops and restaurants in Dhaka Medical College Hospital (DMCH), Chankhar Pool and Ananda Bazarareas.

Some pharmacists alleged telephone extortion threats from the JCD hall unit leaders who asked each of them to give a toll of up to Tk 10,000 by November 24.

The DMCH area was a hotbed of extortion by leaders and workers of Bangladesh Chhatra League when its parent organisation, Awami League, was in office.

Amirul Islam Khan Alim, JCD DU unit president, told The Daily Star by phone that the JCD DU unit had earlier cancelled its Shahidullah Hall unit.

"We have requested law enforcers to take action against toll takers," Alim said. He also promised action against the JCD activists, if found guilty.

Rahmat

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the seven as the killers through a Test of Identification (TI) parade yesterday. They are Mobarak, Rahman, Ibrahim and Faruq, all operatives of Arman.

The four in their second attempt in 24 hours shot Rahmat -- vice-president of ward-54 unit of the Jubo League, youth front of the AL -- dead in front of Lipi in the post-operative unit of Chest Diseases Hospital at Mohakhali Saturday evening.

Lipi filed a case with Gulshan Police Station yesterday.

Meanwhile, the slain Jubo League leader was buried at Azimpur graveyard yesterday after a namaj-e-janaja in front of the AL's Bangabandhu Avenue office in the afternoon. AL Joint Secretary Obaidul Kader and Dhaka city unit general secretary of the AL Mofazzal Hossain Chowdhury Maya were present.

HR group

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victims, the Odhikar report said local Hindus were taking to the town, fearing any untoward incident.

It also said police was informed of the incident at 6:00am but they showed up at 9:00am.

"Police probe into the incident would not reveal the facts, as police have taken it as a case of robbery," the report noted.

"The pace of investigation may slow down due to the Eid vacation and closure of newspapers," the report said quoting the relatives.

A chairman of the adjacent Union Parishad had been pressing Tejendra Shil to sell his land properties and house, it alleged.

Beside the locals' demand of transferring the case to the Criminal Investigation Department (CID) of police, Odhikar demanded judicial investigation to unearth the real cause behind the killings.

Khaleda returns

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peace. She also met the expatriate Bangladeshis.

The 19-member entourage of the premier included her youngest son Arafat Rahman and his wife, State Minister for Civil Aviation and Tourism Mir Mohammad Nasiruddin and his wife, and her Political Secretary M Mosaddek Ali and his wife.

Listed criminal shot at Rampura

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Rivals shot and injured a listed criminal at Rampura Bazar yesterday following a dispute over business.

A gang encircled Abul Hossain, gang-leader of Abul group, and his associate Shohag at about 1:15pm when they were going to Rampura bazar stand. They shot Abul in the abdomen while Shohag fled away, police said.

Abul is an accused in four cases including that of a murder at Rampura Bazar and might have been targeted by his rivals seeking supremacy in the area, police added.

Locals admitted him to Dhaka Medical College Hospital and police held him there.

Abul claimed himself a jhut (garment by-products) trader and alleged the gang led by Master Sohel, Western Titu and Chhotto Wali shot him following a dispute over the business.

Police failed to nab any of the criminals till filing of this report at 7:00 last evening.

US troops killed

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Since Washington declared major combat in Iraq over on May 1, 185 US soldiers have been killed in action.

Mosul has seen an upsurge in violence in recent weeks. Guerrillas brought down two US Black Hawk helicopters over the city this month, killing 17 American soldiers in the deadliest single strike on US forces since they invaded in March.

Saturday, a bomb in a cart loaded with oranges exploded in the city as a convoy of three US military vehicles was passing. The convoy was unharmed but two Iraqis were killed.

Southeast of Mosul, in the oil city of Kirkuk, explosions shook the North Oil Company compound late Saturday, wounding four contractors working for the American services firm Kellogg, Brown & Root, a US spokesman said.

Overnight, witnesses said U.S. fighter jets bombed areas around the town of Samarra, about 60 miles north of Baghdad, as coalition forces maintained an offensive against guerrilla targets.

Landline phone

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perform well and make sure their service is fail-safe, a telecoms expert suggests.

The thrust to allow the private sector to set up telephone exchanges is to meet the increasing demand for landline phones, the BTRC chairman said.

The registered fixed-phone demand in the waiting list totalled over 2.55 lakh until July 2002 and the unregistered unmet demand was estimated at around 10 lakh in 2002, officials said.

The BTB has seven lakh fixed phones across the country against 15 lakh cellphones, provided by four private operators in joint ventures.

The past Awami League government had awarded a contract to the Bermuda-based WorldTel to install three lakh fixed phones in the capital, but the BNP tagged the deal as opaque after taking office.

WorldTel was the first to install and operate a private telephone exchange in Bangladesh.

The BTB takes an installation fee of Tk 10,000 a connection in Dhaka and Chittagong and Tk 8,000 in district towns, which is one of the highest in the world. The high fee is used as a mechanism to control the registered demand.

Georgia plunges

FROM PAGE 12

The parliamentary session broke up in pandemonium on Saturday when opposition supporters stormed the building, forcing Shevardnadze to flee.

Opposition officials said some members of the National Guard and the interior ministry's special forces were now supporting them instead of Shevardnadze.

But the BBC's Chloe Arnold in Tbilisi says the picture is confused and it is not at all clear which side the army is supporting.

Armed personnel carriers have been spotted on Tbilisi's streets, but security forces allowed demonstrators into parliament - some even offering words of encouragement, our correspondent says.

She says thousands of protesters are still standing outside parliament waving flags amid a real sense of celebration.

After Shevardnadze was forced out of his offices by protesters, the outgoing opposition parliament speaker, Nino Burjanadze, said she was temporarily assuming the presidency.

Our correspondent says there is a bizarre situation in Georgia where there are now effectively two presidents and no parliament.

The US and the UN have urged President Shevardnadze to exercise restraint in resolving what he has called a "coup" and the opposition describe as a "bloodless revolution".

"PEACEFUL CHANGE"

Parliament had opposition leaders before holding talks with Shevardnadze at his Tbilisi residence.

Following their meeting, the leader of the opposition National Movement, Mikhail Saakashvili, said he had told Ivanov he was calling for a peaceful change of government and president in Georgia.

Saakashvili told the BBC that he had secured a promise that Moscow would

not use its own military forces in the conflict.

There was surprise and wild applause when Ivanov appeared as opposition supporters were celebrating at the parliament building just after 0300 on Sunday (2400 GMT).

He told them he was there to help find a way out of the crisis.

US Secretary of State Colin Powell and UN Secretary General Kofi Annan have made a joint telephone call to the embattled Georgian leader.

"They encouraged him to deal with the current crisis with restraint and within the framework of the Georgian constitution," a State Department spokesman said.

Governments around the world have urged both sides not to allow the situation to become violent.

Former Soviet republics have condemned the opposition move.

PARLIAMENT GRAB

Saturday's dramatic developments began when thousands of people led by Saakashvili stormed the parliament building.

Shevardnadze had been addressing the first session of the newly-elected parliament after the victory of his party and its allies in the November 2 elections, which were declared fraudulent by international observers.

The president was bundled away by armed bodyguards as protesters entered the building.

Opposition supporters then drove Shevardnadze's supporters from parliament under a hail of books and pens after some fist-fights.

Live television pictures showed scenes reminiscent of the revolutions that toppled the communist governments of Eastern Europe more than a decade ago.

Saakashvili and other opposition leaders declared they had carried out a bloodless - or "velvet" - revolution.

Hakaluki haor

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South Asia, says a survey of Sustainable Environment Management Project (SEMP).

No recent survey is available, but locals say the catch has dropped to a significant low and may hit half of the 2000 level.

"Our catch has dwindled over the years. We're not even getting what we got last year. We see some of the fish rarely," said Md Romiz Ali, who has been fishing in the haor for years.

Locals say the catch has slid to one-tenth of the yield 15-20 years ago.

Degradation in the environment inflicted by loss of habitat, water pollution and fishing overkill is making the 45,000-acre haor inhospitable to its fish population, experts say.

The species of Foli, Bamos, Aeir, Kazli, Golsa, Tarabaiem, Rita, Bacha, Garoya, Bagha Aeir, Chep Chela, Tatkini, Kalibaas, Dankini, Naftani, Boro Baim, Goinna, Tengra and Rita are facing extinction.

About 100 villages have sprung up around the haor over the years and according to a survey 65 percent of the villagers depend on the water body, especially fishing and bird hunting in its lowlands, for a living.

Over 117 bogs of the haor, spreading over 212 big and small bogs, have started gathering silt making them unfit for various fish varieties in dry season when 33,651 acres of the haor bed dry up.

The Juri river and some of its branches that crisscross the haor also dry up, driving the fish population away from the swamps.

"Now fish can not migrate from the bogs to rivers or rivers to the bogs in the breeding season," said Malay Sarker,

field manager of the Center for Natural Resources Studies (CNRS), a non-governmental organisation implementing a project on the sustainable management of haor.

The government leases out the bogs to influential non-fishermen who do not know the sustainable use of water-bodies in fishing.

Locals held the 'wrong lease policy' responsible for the depletion of fish resources in the haor that has inspired innumerable stories and tales in the region.

2 killed in 2 days

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Two men have been killed in separate road accidents at Kalyanpur in Mirpur and near Matshya Bhaban in Ramna in the last two days.

The identities of the victims could not be known till filing of this report at 7:30 last night.

A city service bus of Metro Link Company knocked down a man aged about 35 near Kalyanpur at around 11:45am yesterday when he was crossing the road, killing him instantly. Police arrested the driver and filed a case.

In the other incident, a passenger bus ran over a 65-year-old man near Matshya Bhaban intersection at around 6:30pm Saturday.

He was rushed to Dhaka Medical College Hospital where he died half an hour after his admission.

Police seized the bus and arrested the driver.

3 muggers nabbed

BSS, Cox's Bazar

Law enforcers held three armed snatchers at Link Road in Cox's Bazar yesterday with arms and ammunition.

A gang stopped a scooter and looted about Tk 10,000 from Mohammad Ali of Ramu upazila. Ali boarded the vehicle from the tourist city for Ramu.

A police patrol team chased and arrested the miscreants with a foreign revolver, a local gun, three bullets and two cartridges.

Two separate cases were filed.

Khulna Jubo Dal dissolved

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Khulna

Jatiyatadabi Jubo Dal has dissolved its Khulna city chapter following a rift between president and general secretary of the organisation on Friday.

The central committee in Dhaka dismissed all activities of the city unit due to infighting between Tariqul Islam Jhir, Khulna unit president, and Fakhru Alam, general secretary of BNP's youth front, over allegations of tender manipulation, toll collection and blackmailing.

Mayor of Khulna City Corporation Shaikh Tayebur Rahman and Ali Asgar Lobi MP confirmed they had received a faxed message from Dhaka regarding suspension of activities of the unit.

Indian minister

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Assam Chief Minister Tarun Gogoi and federal State Minister for Home Affairs Swami Chinmaayanab.

Pakistan was also bracketed with Bangladesh for the Assam unrest, which according to diplomats, is rooted in the state's socioeconomic problems.

But the Indian minister, as quoted by PTI, saw the violence in Assam as "part of a big game" played by Bangladesh and Pakistan.

Slow loris

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the animal as "Lajjaboti Banor" or slow loris and said the animal can still be seen in the deep forests of Bandarban.

Professor of Zoology Department of Dhaka University Dr M Khalilur Rahman told the BSS that it was a "critically endangered" species, which lives in solitude.

He said the animal with the scientific name Nycticebus Coucang grow up to 40 centimetres.

Two years ago an infant orangutan was found in the deep forests of Roangchhari, which is now kept at Chittagong Zoo.

The rush of passengers increased sharply yesterday with a number of launches seen leaving the terminal loaded with passengers far beyond the capacity.

A shipping department official at the terminal said some launches were fined for over-loading and some were forced to leave for destination before schedule once they filled up to the capacity.

But terminal sources said some launches received passengers on the mid-river from boats and also from other terminals like Fatullah and Munshiganj after they left Sadarghat.

The launches also kept charging extra money on various routes and many of those did not even bother to hang the fare list as per government orders.

Civil society

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worried. We're watching the situation arising out of Chowdhury's recent activities. We'll do the needful in due time."

Speaking at an Iftar party earlier this month, BNP Secretary General Abdul Mannan Bhuiyan termed Chowdhury's anti-government statements as an outburst of a person suffering the pangs of losing power.

Main opposition Awami League General Secretary Abdul Jalil said they were watching what shape the initiative by the former president takes.

"Politicians, not the civil society, dominate politics across the world and politicians are not dictated by the civil society members either. There is no instance in the world where the civil society runs a state," Abdul Jalil told The Daily Star.

"The civil society can help the politicians run the state properly with their knowledge," Jalil noted.

B Chowdhury has not contacted the Awami League, neither has he sent any letter to it, said the AL leader. "We'll consider joining if Chowdhury invites the Awami League to any dialogue," Jalil added.

Jatiya Party (Ershad) Chairman and former president HM Ershad said, "We do not believe in any third force. We belong to a political party and we are trying to form a coalition with others. Everybody will come to know of it after Eid."

Ershad told The Daily Star that Chowdhury did not contact Jatiya Party either.

Asked about the former president's upcoming dialogue, the JP Chairman said, "It invites us to participate in his dialogue, we'll consider his invitation."

Anwar Hossain Monju, chairman of the other faction of Jatiya Party, said Chowdhury has brought the squabbling inside the BNP out to public domain. He has turned to the civil society instead of the political parties to resolve the problems, which are very political in nature.

"I think people will not accept any third force led by the civil society. The government has failures and the opposition is staying off parliament. If I am invited to participate in a dialogue initiated by the former president, I'll consider that."

Coordinator of the left-leaning 11-

party conglomerate Rashed Khan Menon said, "We're happy that getting out of the power he (B Chowdhury) is now realising what the party, which once he belonged to, is doing and he must do self-criticism as he contributed greatly to bringing this party (BNP) to power."

On Chowdhury's move to form a civil society platform, Menon said one cannot expect the civil society to run the country. A civil society can at best operate as a pressure group.

"He (Chowdhury) has not communicated with us so far to discuss any new ideas but we've to be very clear first whether his move is a political scheme to get back to power," said Menon, who also heads the Workers Party.

Hasanul Haq Inu of Jatiya Samajtantrik Dal (JSD) welcomed Chowdhury's move, saying "his realisation is like the joining of a 'big soldier' in our fight against the alliance government."

Inu fully agreed to Chowdhury's observations that crime and corruption have pervaded society and also shared the latter's sense of urgency on forging a greater unity.

"But before entering any effective dialogue process with him (B Chowdhury), we need to know in clear terms exactly what force he is representing. Is it the civil society or any political party?"

General Secretary of the Communist Party of Bangladesh (CPB) Mujahidul Islam Selim told The Daily Star yesterday that the problems raised by Chowdhury at Saturday's Iftar party were essentially political and "these must be resolved politically. Civil society cannot solve political problems."

"Mere realisation of problems would not do, let him come up with policy statements envisaging how he intends to get to the solutions," said Selim. "The moment a civil society gets organised to take up political agenda, it ceases to be a civil society and turns into another political party or para-political party."

The CPB leader was sceptical about whether extra-constitutional forces were trying to push forward their hidden agenda through a civil society platform in the guise of resolving political problems.

Banshkhali carnage

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Sadhanpur Shilpara of the coastal upazila of Banshkhali Sunday.

The five-member committee headed by the party's Organising Secretary Bir Bahadur MP went to the scene in the morning and visited the lone survivor of the carnage, Bimalendra Kanti Shushil, at a city clinic in the afternoon.

"The Banshkhali carnage was not a stray incident, it was a part of the continued repression on the minority members of the country since the present government came to power in late 2001," Bir Bahadur said.

The motive behind the incident was not robbery. It was an evil design to terrorise the minority people to drive them out of the country and snatch their democratic and voting rights, the probe body said.