

Price spiral of medicine negates rights to health

Speakers tell human chain

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Speakers at a human chain yesterday said price spiral and spurious medicines are depriving the common people of their constitutional rights to health.

They said the price of raw materials has decreased worldwide, but at least 25 companies in the country hiked the medicine prices of their 35 items recently by 40 to 60 percent without any prior declaration.

This is a kind of looting people's money, they added.

The human chain was organised by Nagorik Sanghati, Doctors for Health and Environment and Chikitsak Sangsad at Shahbagh in the city.

Taking advantage of the price hike of medicine, the unscrupulous businessmen have flooded the markets with spurious and low standard medicines which is a matter of concern for public health, the speakers said.

The government's major responsibility is to see the interest of the people, not the interest of the medicine companies, they asserted.

The speakers demanded closure of the diagnostic centres that misdiagnose the patients.

They also urged the government to check medicine price hike, stop sale of counterfeit and low standard medicines, and make essential medicines available in public hospitals.

Doctors for Health and Environment President Doctor Rashid-e-Mahbubey, General Secretary Dr Shaki Akhter, Nagorik Sanghati President Dr ASM Atiqur Rahman, General Secretary Sharifuzzaman Sharif, and Chikitsak Sangsad President Dr Moshtak Hossain spoke at the human chain.

KMP suspends two policemen for negligence

UNB, Khulna

Two policemen of Khulna Metropolitan Police (KMP) have been suspended for their negligence during a bomb attack on Shiromoni police outpost in the city.

KMP Commissioner Khan Saeed Hasan issued the suspension order, with effect from yesterday, on police sergeant Mashur Rahman and constable Jafrul Islam.

KMP sources said unidentified criminals hurled a bomb at the police outpost in Khan Jahan Ali area at about 1:00am on Wednesday, but there was no casualty.

Later, a departmental investigation found the two policemen guilty of negligence.

Meanwhile, the police failed to arrest anybody in connection with another bomb attack on a car at Shiromoni busstand on January 1.

District BJP General Secretary Akram Hossain was travelling in the car during the attack. He escaped unhurt, but the car was damaged.

SHAH AMANAT AIRPORT BSC protests move to hand over ground handling work to Thai co

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

Biman Steering Committee (BSC) yesterday staged a demonstration protesting the move to hand over the ground handling work of Biman Bangladesh Airlines at Shah Amanat International Airport to a Thai company.

The Chittagong unit of BSC, a conglomeration of five organisations of Biman Bangladesh (BB) officials, employees and workers, organised the demonstration on the premises of the airport.

Addressing a rally, BSC leaders termed the 10-year agreement to hand over the ground handling work to a foreign company as an "anti-state move" and a "conspiracy" against Biman.

They vowed to resist the move at any cost. Central Committee Chairman of the organisation Fakhrul Alam Bhuiyan was the main speaker at the rally with BSC Chittagong President Nazmul Imam in the chair.

BSC President Mohammad Ibrahim Majumder, Society of Aircraft Engineering Bangladesh General Secretary SM Panna, Biman Bangladesh Sramik Union (BBSU) President Md Solaiman, BBSU Chittagong unit President Salimullah, former president of BSC Chittagong Jamal Uddin and BSC Chittagong leader Shah Alam Bhuiyan also addressed the rally.



Nagarik Sanghati forms a human chain at Shahbagh in the city yesterday protesting price spiral of drugs and demanding steps to eliminate adulterated drugs.

'Take steps to preserve Mughal structures'

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Environmentalists at a rally yesterday demanded of the government to take necessary steps to preserve the historical Mughal structures Boro Katara and Chhoto Katara located in the old part of the city.

They said these archaeological sites should be preserved in the same way as Lalbagh Fort and Nawabbari have been preserved.

The rally was organised by Paribesh Bachao Andolon, a movement to save environment, in association with Old Dhaka Environment Development Forum on Boro Katara premises near

Sowarighat.

Abu Naser Khan, convener of the movement, said heritage is also a part of environment and many such old structures are becoming extinct due to lack of government's effort to preserve them.

He said most parts of the two Kataras have already been destroyed while the remaining parts are very dilapidated, but the archaeology department is taking no initiative to preserve them.

Construction of high-rise buildings and setting up of shops and other structures around them are causing the dilapidation of the kataras, he added.

Ikma Hossain of Peace, Nazimuddin of Dhakabashi, Ashraf Amirullah of Old Dhaka Environment Development Forum, Architect Ashraf Gani of Bangladesh Tourism Expansion Forum (BTEF), and Architect Nahas Khalil also addressed the rally presided over by Dr Abu Sayeed of the University of Asia Pacific.

Later, BTEF organised a mobile photo exhibition on two kataras meaning house with arches.

Chhoto Katara was built by Shayesta Khan in 1663 while Boro Katara by Meer Qashem in 1664.



Gono Mukti took out a procession at Mukhtangan in the city yesterday protesting price hike of essentials.

Govt urged to reinstate teachers

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Leaders of Jatiya Shikshak-Karmachari Front yesterday demanded that the government reinstates over 2000 teachers and employees of different educational institutions who were suspended during the present government.

Speaking at the token hunger strike of the national teachers-employees front at Mukhtangan in the city, the leaders also demanded

withdrawal of the false case against teachers' leader Qazi Faruk Ahmed who fought for establishing the rights of the teachers and employees and was subject to repression and harassment.

Demanding release of salaries of the teachers who have been appointed legally, the speakers also said the government must cancel all the rules and regulations against the interests of the teachers and ensure the teachers' dignity in line with the Unesco-ILO conven-

tion.

Former chairman of parliamentary standing committee on education Nurul Islam Nahid, former vice chancellor of Jahangir Nagar University Dr Alauddin Ahmad and Bangladesh University Teachers Association Federation's former president Professor AAMS Arefin Siddiqui spoke at the hunger strike programme presided over by Bangladesh Teachers' Association Convenor Azizul Islam.

110 fake notes of Tk 500 recovered

5 forgers held

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Chittagong

Chittagong Detective Branch (DB) police in a three-day drive since Wednesday recovered 110 fake notes of Tk 500 and arrested five criminals of a forgers' syndicate in this connection.

The four members including Chittagong area chief of the gang engaging in making fake notes were held from different areas of the port city on Wednesday and Thursday. They were Zafar Bhuiyan, Badsha, Azad and Mosharraf.

Acting on their confession, the DB of Chittagong Metropolitan Police (CMP) arrested one Mamun, reportedly the leader of the forgers' syndicate at Uttara in the capital yesterday afternoon.

They also recovered some equipments and machines including computers required for producing fake notes from Mamun's Uttara house.

The forgers' syndicate had already released fake notes of Tk 1.5 lakh in the last few days ahead of the Eid-ul-Azha, sources said.

According to sources, the DB police in a raid at a local hotel of New Market area arrested Badsha with some fake notes of Tk 20 thousand on Wednesday.

Acting on his confession, they arrested another member of the gang - Azad with fake notes of Tk 20 thousand in front of Sonali Bank at the city's Laldighi area on Thursday.

Police arrested Zafar Bhuiyan, reportedly the Chittagong chief of the gang and one Mosharraf, who used to bring the fake notes to Chittagong from Dhaka, from Zafar's house at Alanker intersection area on Thursday evening.

Fake notes of Tk 15 thousand were also recovered during this drive.

A team of DB went to Dhaka taking Mosharraf with it and arrested the ringleader Mamun last evening, said Assistant Commissioner (DB) AKM Mosharraf Hossain Miaje while talking to The Daily Star.

Ten bombs recovered in Dinajpur

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Dinajpur

Police recovered ten bombs in Dinajpur in the last three days.

Acting on information, a police force of Birganj upazila raided a rice mill at Vognar union yesterday morning and recovered seven powerful bombs, according to police sources.

Sources said the bombs were found at an abandoned toilet near the mill.

The bombs were taken to Birganj Police Station and kept under water to be defused. However police could not arrest anybody in this connection as of yesterday.

Earlier on Thursday, in a joint raid of Biral and Dinajpur police forces, a police force searched the house of Belal Uddin where they recovered two circuit bombs wrapped with red tape.

Police sources said Belal, a teacher of local Madrasa, claimed that he knew nothing about the bombs.

SI Mozaffar Ahmed, a bomb expert, told this correspondent that the recovered bombs were very powerful.

Besides, Birganj police recovered and defused a bomb on Wednesday morning, police said.

Electoral reform demanded

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Leaders of Communist Party of Bangladesh (CPB) yesterday at a rally demanded reform of the electoral system to make it free from monetary game, muscular power, communal propaganda and administrative conspiracy.

Appointing the partisan people to make the voter list and cancelling the previous voter list are part of a blue print of the alliance government to cling to power, they said.

CPB leaders organised the rally at the city's Hazzaribagh Tannery crossing demanding withdrawal of the false cases filed against the CPB leaders and activists.

CPB Central Committee Secretary Ruhin Hossein Prince and General Secretary of Tannery Workers' Union Abdul Malek addressed the rally.

Addressing the rally the CPB leaders demanded immediate arrest and trial of Jatiya Party leaders and activists who attacked the CPB rally on January 1.

They also demanded withdrawal of the false cases filed against the CPB leaders and activists.

They urged all to strengthen the movement against the misuse of the four-party alliances by restoring the constitution of 1972.

Govt patronises militant outfits to cling to power

Jalil tells discussion

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Awami League (AL) General Secretary Abdul Jalil yesterday said in a deliberate bid to cling to power the alliance government has been patronising the fanatic militant outfits to launch attacks on the pro-liberation forces.

He said the militant activities are aimed to destroy the achievements of the liberation war and make the country ineffective to turn it into a province of Pakistan.

Jalil was speaking at a discussion titled 'We want a Bangladesh free from terrorism, communalism and militant activities' at the National Press Club in the city.

The discussion was organised jointly by World Bengali Conference and Bangladesh National Personality Research Centre to celebrate the 36th anniversary of Bangladesh Literature Culture Sangsad (BLCS).

Accusing the alliance government of trying to destroy the country, Jalil urged the pro-liberation

forces to get united to build a mass upsurge to compel the government to quit power.

He hoped that a strong agitation by the 14-party combine led by AL President Sheikh Hasina would oust the four-party alliance government soon.

'Today the countrymen and their independence are hostage in the hands of Razakars,' he added.

Acting AL President Zillur Rahman MP said Khaleda-Nizami alliance government has pushed the country to the fire of hell.

He said the militant activities started in the country when late President Ziaur Rahman rewarded the murderers of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman.

To save the country's freedom and sovereignty from the clutches Khaleda-Nizami, the opposition coalition will strengthen its movement, he added.

AL presidium member Abdur Razzak MP called upon the democratic, progressive and pro-

liberation forces to build rock-solid unity in uprooting the repressive alliance government from power through a massive people's movement.

AL Joint General Secretary Obaidul Quader said the government does not want fair election and that's why it is not agreeing to reform Election Commission and Caretaker Government.

'The government knows well that if the reform proposals are accepted it will face defeat in the next general election' he said.

Obaid said due to division among the pro-liberation forces, Jamaat-e-Islami has been able to come to the present stage.

Language Movement Veteran Mahbub Alam Chowdhury, President of Bangladesh Federal Union of Journalist Iqbal Sobhan Chowdhury, Sector Commander Lt Col (Retd) Abu Osman Chowdhury, and Dr Ruhul Haque also took part in the discussion presided over by BLCS Chairman Poet Abdul Khaleque.



Bangabandhu Ain Chhatra Parishad forms a human chain in front of the High Court in the city yesterday protesting corruption in textbook publication, distortion of history in textbooks and failure to supply adequate books.

2 Bangladeshis killed, 6 missing

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collapsed, but went there to visit his relatives," said Ambassador Haque.

The body of Shafiq, son of Abu Sama of Naiknkhali in Teknaf in Cox's Bazar, has been kept at a hospital in Meena.

The Bangladesh mission said three of the missing from one family are Golam Mohiuddin, son of Sheikh Wajed Ali of Banani, his wife Jahanara Begum and her sister Begum Dilruba Islam, wife of Sheikh Nazrul Islam.

Mohammad Abdul Mukit, son of Abdur Rob, of Uttara Sector 10, and his wife Begum Nahida Hossain are also missing.

The sixth missing pilgrim is Mohammad Mantazul Haque, son of Mohammad Mozammel Haque of Raninagar village in Boalia upazila, Rajshahi.

"The missing and the dead came to Makkah to perform the Hajj through Al Tayera International, a hajj agency in Dhaka," said Ambassador Haque.

They checked in to Lulu'at Al-Khair hotel in Makkah and were staying in three rooms booked by their agency.

Shah Mohammad Ibrahim and his wife Rokeya Begum survived the accident, as they were late to return after the Jhr prayers.

"Our officials and employees are checking every hospital to see whether there is any Bangladeshi,"

Ambassador Haque told the news agency.

Meanwhile, reports from the port city say the families of Habibullah, 36, and Mohammad Hossain alias Moti Member, 40, of Satkania have received their death news from Saudi Arabia.

Both of them had been working at Saudi groceries for the last eight to 10 years.

Habibullah, son of Nurul Alam, hailed from Madarsha village in North Rampura union and Moti Member, son of Mohammad Petan, from Eochia village.

Hajj officials in Dhaka say they are yet to receive any casualty report of any Bangladeshis.

Jalal Abdel Rahim, a Bangladeshi porter at the neighbouring Al-Zaydi hotel, said six of his Bangladeshi friends, who worked in shops at the bottom of the collapsed building, are missing, reports AFP.

The Saudi rescue teams are hunting through the rubble of the collapse building for survivors, the head of the pilgrimage civil defence force told the news agency.

"The death toll now stands at least 53 and the number of wounded remains as before (at 64)," Major General Alwani Jeddawi said by telephone from the scene.

The multi-storey hotel collapsed on Thursday in the latest deadly tragedy to mark the Hajj or annual pilgrimage to Makkah, the holiest place in Islam.

"As of 2:00am (2300 GMT) we had 53 dead and 64 wounded," the head of the pilgrimage civil defence force said in Jeddah.

"We may find some more people under the rubble, but we are looking to finish our work today and reopen the road," said the major general who is leading the rescue effort.

Earthmovers and heavy lifting equipment had worked through the night as rescuers hunted for survivors.

Interior ministry spokesman General Mansul al-Turki on Thursday said the rubble of the hotel in a crowded street near the Grand Mosque was being removed "very carefully" in the hope of finding entombed survivors.

The spokesman gave no breakdown of the nationalities of the dead, who included at least eight women. But survivors said most pilgrims staying in the hotel came from India, Libya, Pakistan or the United Arab Emirates.

The English-language Arab News yesterday said Saudi authorities confirmed that three of the dead were Emiratis.

Emergency teams armed with sound-detecting gear have been working frantically since Thursday try to locate survivors amid the rubble of the hotel, which an official charged was overcrowded.

"Through our inspection of the site... there was a clear indication that the building was overloaded," said Regional Civil Defence Director General Adel Zamzami.

Turki also cast doubt on the soundness of the building structure, claiming "some additions might have been made illegally."

On Thursday, witnesses spoke of their horror at the speed with which the block collapsed after a fire.

"It looked like a scene from September 11," said Talhah al-Mazi, 40, referring to the 2001 attacks in the United States.

"I saw people rushing out, crying and screaming for help," he said, adding, the cave-in happened just as pilgrims were finishing midday prayers in the square outside.

Anguished survivors pleaded with the emergency services to rescue missing loved ones trapped beneath.

"My two brothers are inside," Tunisian pilgrim Aiysha bin Jaber, 66, begged the security personnel pushing her back from the tight cordon formed around the collapsed building.

French pilgrim Abderrahmane Ghoul said a firefighting helicopter was already tackling the initial blaze when the tower collapsed. There was no immediate word on what might have started the fire.

Surveyors were checking the structural safety of adjacent buildings and had already ordered two evacuated, Zamzami said.

Earlier, stampedes killed 251 pilgrims in 2003 and 1,426 in 1990 in Makkah.

DHAKA TODAY advertisement with various event listings like Discussion, Exhibition of art works, Seminar, Memorial meeting, Workshop, and Rotary Dhaka Central.

52,286 pilgrims reach Jeddah advertisement with details about the Hajj pilgrimage and BSS, Dhaka.

WEATHER TODAY advertisement with a weather forecast table for Dhaka, Chittagong, Rajshahi, Khulna, Barisal, Sylhet, and Cox's Bazar.