

COVID-19 REGULATIONS

Tk 51 lakh realised from violators

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Barishal

Barishal District Administration realised fines worth Tk 51 lakh after drives against violation of Covid-19 regulations in the district during the last three months.

According to the administration, from March 10 to June 19, mobile courts operated 343 drives in different areas of Barishal district, including the city.

Tk 51,01,250 was realised as fines from 649 persons and 691 enterprises, authorities said.

The main violations including failing to maintain social distancing -- going to or creating public gatherings, and businesses not establishing proper distancing rules.

Fifty-five were jailed for various reasons, and 13 businesses were fined for violating health regulations, they added.

Barishal Deputy Commissioner SM Ajjar Rahman said such drives will continue for public interest throughout the pandemic.

"First we warned everyone and then started operating mobile courts to prevent the situation from getting worse," he added.

He asked citizens to raise awareness against unnecessary roaming around, and suggest people to always wear face masks.



An exterminator of Dhaka South City Corporation glances at a pothole on the street on Dhaka University campus, possibly trying to see if mosquito larvae are there. City corporation staff are working in two shifts every day to ensure that the mosquito menace does not get out of hand in the capital, especially since the rainy season is officially underway. Last year, a dengue outbreak put severe pressure on hospitals in the capital, and even a fraction of that can be absolutely devastating for an already-struggling healthcare system due to the Covid-19 pandemic. The photo was taken yesterday.

PHOTO: FIROZ AHMED

Concerted plan needed to deal with Covid-19, climate change: speakers

Suggest better implementation of budget

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The country's economy is going to face a double blow due to the Covid-19 pandemic and recurring natural calamities owing to climate change, speakers said yesterday.

Suggesting adoption of a concerted plan, they asked the government to spend money allocated for climate change in a planned way to combat the upcoming crisis.

They said this at a press conference titled "Climate Budget Press Conference 2020", jointly organised by ActionAid Bangladesh, International Centre for Climate Change and Development and International Budget Partnership.

The press conference was carried out through live streaming in social media.

On June 11, the government disclosed the national budget for the next fiscal where Tk 24,225 crore is allocated for climate change.

Of the total allocation, about 41.25 percent will be spent for food security, social protection and health, while the climate relevant allocation for knowledge management received only 3.5 percent.

Dr SM Munjurul Hannan Khan, additional secretary to the information ministry, said the budget allocation for climate change is not sufficient. "We need to focus on getting money from different global funds related to climate change."

He suggested improving the infrastructure at root level for better implementation of budget allocation.

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Unauthorised masks, hand sanitisers galore in markets

Law enforcers continue drives against producers, sellers

MOHAMMAD JAMIL KHAN

Amid growing demand of face masks and sanitisers, unscrupulous producers and contractors are pushing unauthorised and off-brand products into the markets, raising alarm about public health and safety.

Some of these products are ending up at reputed pharmacies in the capital, and according to some producers' claim, have been supplied to a government agency working in the frontline of the Covid-19 pandemic as well.

Law enforcers and Dhaka District Administration officers learned about these rackets after arresting around a dozen people from different areas of the city.

Criminal Investigation Department (CID) yesterday arrested five people in a drive from the capital's Wari and Narinda, who were allegedly producing unauthorised surgical masks for the last three months,

additional superintendent of CID Rajib Farhan told The Daily Star.

CID also recovered 1.40 lakh surgical masks and 1,000kg mask making materials.

Rajib said one of the arrestees had a bag-making factory, and had imported machinery for it. But he started producing surgical masks in the factory after collecting fabric locally, after the coronavirus crisis hit the country, he said.

"In primary interrogation, Erman the arrestee said he used to get orders from different contractors, and supplied masks to them. He claimed that he also supplied these masks to a government agency working in the frontline," said Rajib.

The factory owner employed some 20 staffers to produce masks, and has supplied several lakh surgical masks so far, he said.

"We have got details of some contractors who he supplied these

masks to. We are conducting drives to take action against these types of illegal factories and responsible persons behind these rackets," he added.

Meanwhile, a mobile court of Dhaka district administration in separate drives in the capital's Shahbagh area on Friday and Saturday fined pharmaceutical shop owners Tk 63,500 for selling fake sanitisers and disinfectant fluids.

Mahnaz Hossain Fariba, executive magistrate of district administration who led the drive, said Shahbagh has one of the central medicine markets of the country, and some renowned pharmacies were seen selling unauthorised products.

"We have come to know from pharmacy owners that some people are making sanitisers in different chemical factories in the capital's Mitford area and supplying them to

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Indigenous beauticians in hardship: activists

Demand new employment opportunities

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Rights activists have pointed out that women working in the beauty industry of the country, many of whom belong to indigenous communities, have been in severe hardship amid the Covid-19 pandemic.

The comments came from an online seminar organised by Bangladesh Indigenous Women's Network on Saturday, on the current state of indigenous women who were employed at beauty parlours.

Beauticians from indigenous communities described how they have been let go from their job during the pandemic, and are facing hardship.

"We are not getting any salary for more than two months. Almost all the parlours are closed at present. I could not pay my house rent due to this situation. I have taken this profession to support my family and my education. However, my future is now completely uncertain," said Emelia Maji, an indigenous beautician.

Sabina Rangma, another beautician and a victim of the current situation says, "A large number of indigenous women, who have been working in beauty parlours all over the country, have lost jobs during this pandemic. We demand incentives and job security from the government."

Rights activists present in the seminar also agreed on these issues and expressed their concern.

Eminent human rights activist Shaheen Anam, executive director of Manusher Jonno Foundation, said, "We are deeply worried about the plight of the beauticians from indigenous communities. They made immense contributions to the beauty industry in our country. The indigenous

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WORKS OF ABUL MANSUR AHMAD
5 winners named in book review contest

CITY DESK

Five people have been named winners of a review competition on books of renowned writer-journalist-politician Abul Mansur Ahmad.

Abul Mansur Ahmad Smriti Parishad organised the contest for bookworms staying home during the pandemic. In response to the call, more than 100 reviews were submitted.

Abul Mansur researcher Dr Chengis Khan, essayist Kudrat-E-Huda, and researcher Ashik Reza in consultation with Parishad's coordinator Emran Mahfuz announced the names.

Among the five winners, Abu Sayeed Nayan stood first for review of the book "Aina", Mohammad Raihan Kaderi second for "Food Conference", Anis Rahman third for "Food Conference", Zahid Hasan fourth for "Amar Dekha Rajnir Panchash Bachhar", and Rashida Peu fifth for "Aina".

Although three people were supposed to receive the award, the jury selected the five, considering three basic factors: proper understanding of Abul Mansur Ahmad's

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Demand for masks, sanitisers and hygiene products and paraphernalia has gone up so much that the products are being sold by street hawkers as well. Most of these have not been approved by regulatory authorities. The photos were taken last week from Tajmahal Road in the capital's Mohammadpur.



PHOTO: RASHED SHUMON

TANG PRIZE IN RULE OF LAW

Bela gets int'l award

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Bangladesh Environmental Lawyers Association (Bela) has received the 2020 Tang Prize in "Rule of Law" for its "efforts in furthering the rule of law and its institutions through education and advocacy".

Two other NGOs -- Dejusticia: The Center for Law, Justice and Society from Colombia and The Legal Agenda from Lebanon -- were also named joint winners of the award, according to a press release.

Introduced in 2012, this is the first time any Bangladeshi organisation has received this award given by Taiwan-based The Tang Prize Foundation, said a press release signed by Syeda Rizwana Hasan, chief executive of Bela. The winners of the "Rule of Law" category were announced yesterday.

The awardees will be officially honoured on September 25. In addition to the honours and medals, US \$1.33 million will be divided equally among the three organisations.

Besides, they will receive an US \$0.33 million in grants for research work, to be distributed equally, added the release.

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Kamal Lohani laid to rest with state honours

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Pabna

Renowned journalist and cultural personality Kamal Lohani was laid to rest with state honours at his family graveyard in Shantala village of Sirajganj's Ullahpara upazila on Saturday night.

Earlier, the body of Lohani, who died from Covid-19 at the capital's Sheikh Russel Gastro Liver Institute and Hospital around 10am that day, reached his ancestral village around 9:30pm. Local administration and relatives received his body, keeping health guidelines in mind.

Lohani, a Language Movement veteran and freedom fighter, was given a guard of honour in front of the graveyard around 10pm, said Md Arifuzzaman, Ullahpara upazila nirbahi officer.

A namaz-e-janaza was offered by local administration, family members and villagers, following health guidelines, the UNO said.

Born in Shantala on June 26, 1934, Lohani played a significant role in the Language Movement, when he was a student in Pabna. He also had an impact on socio-political and democratic movements, and the Liberation War. He worked with Swadhin Bangla Betar Kendra during the war as news editor. Lohani left a huge mark in journalism and gave power to cultural activists across the country since independence.

The people of Shantala, as well as Sirajganj and Pabna, were deeply shocked by his passing. "The death of Kamal Lohani is a great loss for us. Denying communalism, he practiced secularism his whole life. He will live forever in our hearts," said Sirajganj-4 lawmaker Tanvir Imam.

"Kamal Lohani's death separated him from us physically, but his lessons will always be with us in spirit," said Herok Gun, secretary of Uldichi's Sirajganj district branch.

Talking to The Daily Star, Language Movement veteran Ranesh Maitra said he was devastated to have lost his childhood friend.

KILLING OF DR RAKIB

Khulna OC closed over negligence in duty

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Khulna

The officer-in-charge of Khulna Sadar Police Station was closed yesterday for negligence of duty over the murder of Dr Abdur Rakib Khan, who was beaten to death by the relatives of a patient.

Following an order of the Khulna Metropolitan Police (KMP) commissioner, OC Aslam Bahar Bulbul was closed and attached to the district police lines, confirmed KMP spokesperson and Additional Deputy Police Commissioner Sheikh Moniruzzaman Mithue.

Bulbul was an inspector (investigation) of that police station. However, as there was no OC, he used to hold the post, he added. The official said Bulbul was closed as the initial allegations against him were found true.

Dr Rakib, director of Raisa Clinic and Diagnostic Centre in Khulna and principal of Bagerhat Medical Assistants' Training School, was assaulted by a patient's family members on June 15 over the allegation of wrong treatment which led to her death. The 59-year-old physician passed away while undergoing treatment at a hospital the next day.

The incident triggered protests across the country. Doctors in Khulna called for an indefinite strike and demanded the arrest of the accused and withdrawal of the OC.

They said the OC did not accept the case immediately from Dr Rakib's family, and recorded the case 18 hours after the doctor's death. Besides, there is a police box just 30 feet away from the clinic where Dr Rakib was beaten mercilessly, but no one came to save him, they said.

Dr Sheikh Baharul Alam, president of Bangladesh Medical Association in Khulna and central vice-President of the organisation, said they have withdrawn their strike as their demands have been met.

So far, police have arrested five persons, including the main accused, in the murder case while one of the arrestees gave a confessional statement on June 18 under section 164 of the Criminal Procedure Code.

SC stays Rashedul Haque Chisty's bail

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Supreme Court yesterday stayed the orders issued by the lower court and the High Court in connection with a Tk 159 crore money laundering case filed against Rashedul Haque Chisty, son of Farmers Bank's former audit committee chairman Mahbulul Haque Chisty.

A Dhaka court on May 19 this year granted bail to Rashedul Haque Chisty in the case, which the High Court later stayed.

Yesterday, Chamber Judge of SC appellate division, Justice Hasan Foz Siddique passed the stay order after virtually hearing a petition filed by Rashedul Haque Chisty challenging the HC stay order.

Chisty cannot get released from jail following the SC order, Anti Corruption Commission's lawyer Khurshid Alarm Khan told The Daily Star yesterday.

He added, the ACC had moved a criminal revision petition before the HC against the lower court order. The SC yesterday stayed the lower court order of bail considering the gravity of Chisty's offence.

The apex court chamber judge also sent to its full bench three other petitions filed by the ACC challenging the HC orders that upheld the lower court orders of bail to Rashedul Haque Chisty in three other corruption cases.



All eyes were on the sky yesterday afternoon, to observe the annular solar eclipse. Initiated by the Bigyan Andolon Moncho in Barishal, children and teenagers put on solar filters to witness the exciting celestial phenomenon from the city's Bangabandhu Udyan.

PHOTO: TITU DAS