

Dhaka Day by Day

Plague Alarm

by Lavina Ambreen Ahmed

Red alert: The "Black Death" is back again, claiming lives in the neighbouring country, India and spreading waves of panic in other countries as well.

By now, everyone has heard of this highly contagious disease, which poses threats to our normal lives, capturing our thoughts and disturbing our peace of mind.

All the major dailies, weeklies and the television have been trying to create public awareness by elucidating the origin, symptoms, treatment and preventive measures for this fatal disease. They have also been giving regular updates on the situation in India.

The government has declared a ban on Indian food imports; announced the temporary

bananas and guavas. A young mother was seen scolding her son for wanting those delicious "Cadbury" chocolates. On the other hand, the scene at the cosmetics section does not look too bright either. All the Indian brand names such as "Lakme" and "Godrej" sit forlornly at the racks, while the local brands appear to smile with glee. It never hurts to be over cautious — that appeared to be the motto of a young man, who was sceptical about purchasing an "Archie" card. The shopkeepers dealing in foreign items are complaining that if this paranoia continues for long, they might even go bankrupt. However, one good thing could come out of all this fear: the local products might capture the customers' eyes, at last.



closure of all but seven entry points along the Bangladesh-India border; instructed the screening of incoming passengers and the fumigation of all transports coming to Bangladesh from plague-stricken India.

Yet, these are just the common procedures in dealing with any kind of deadly epidemic. What about the average Bangladeshi nationals? How are they reacting to this foreboding news?

Take the market scenario, for example. The plague fear has changed some peoples' eating habits. Now everybody thinks twice before buying big fish like rohi, vegetables, onions, eggs, pulse and even sugar.

In their effort to avoid Indian labels, some hypochondriacs even steer clear of the products made elsewhere, fearing that they could come via India, as in the case of a woman in one of the city shops yesterday, who always preferred Bhutanese "Druk" ketchup, and who decided to settle for local "Nahar's" chili sauce, to be on the safe side.

No luscious, succulent fruits are there for us now. Bad luck for the fruit vendors, as the people are even afraid to go near the local

Wherever you go, you will hear people murmuring about pneumonic, bubonic and septicemic plagues. It appears as if six letter words have taken control of your mind. Even grapevine is spreading rumours about how some plague-affected people, in Bangladesh, are in hiding.

Reports show no plague cases in Bangladesh as yet. Yet a person with an ordinary cold is instantly under suspicion. One little sneeze, or cough in public — and you may be sent to Coventry.

While business is bad for all other shopkeepers, it ought to be very profitable for say, mouse-traps, rat poison, and pesticide dealers, as many people are taking personal initiative in rodent eradication venture.

This alarm of a disease that wrought havoc in the 14th century is certainly justified as we all have our fair share of dirt in our health departments — as do our counterparts, on the other side of the borders.

Let us hope that there are no loopholes in the measures taken by the government. For there will be a very dear price to pay for any small slip.



Maj Gen Ali Muhammad, chief of Kuwaiti armed forces, was seen-off at the Zia International Airport yesterday by Chief of Army Staff Lt Gen Abu Saleh Mohammad Nasim, Bir Bikram. — ISPR photo

Navy receives 4 British mine-sweepers

Bangladesh Navy received four river class mine-sweepers from the Royal Navy at the British naval base of Portsmouth on Monday, according to a message received in the city yesterday, reports BSS.

The four ships were handed over to Rear Admiral M Mohaiminul Islam, Chief of Bangladesh Navy by Admiral Sir M Layard, second Sea Lord and Commander in Chief, naval home command of the British Navy.

Sailors and officers from Bangladesh Navy hoisted the national and naval colours at a ceremonial presentation by the Royal Navy.

After guard of honour and Tilawat-e-Quran, Bangladesh

Navy took command of the BNS Shapla, BNS Surovi, BNS Saikat and BNS Shaibal.

The ships would enhance the mine sweeping capabilities of the Bangladesh Navy and help the country safeguard national independence and sovereignty over the territorial waters.

He thanked Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia and the Royal Navy for facilitating the acquisition of the ships.

Rear Admiral Islam and Admiral Layard later inspected the ships which were decommissioned by the British Navy under its reorganisation programme. The ships are expected to sail for home later this month.



Chinese Ambassador to Bangladesh Xiang Xujiang, distributing certificate at a function in the city yesterday. The Bangladesh-China Friendship Association organised the programme to mark the 45th founding anniversary of the People's Republic of China.

Tax lawyers asked to help govt realise revenue

President Abdur Rahman Biswas urged income tax lawyers to help the government towards proper assessment and collection of income tax, reports UNB.

Biswas said this while exchanging views with a 50-member delegation of Narayanganj Taxes Bar Association at Bangabhaban yesterday.

He also advised the lawyers to study the law seriously and help their clients as well as the government to realise its appropriate revenue.

Earlier, the members of the association suggested certain modification of the income tax ordinance 1984 and sought the President's cooperation for their library. The President gave his assurance to look into the matters.

Founder president of the Taxes Bar Association Alhaj M A Wahab, president Sheikh Mostafizur Rahman, general secretary Ruhul Amin and Abdul Malek were also present on the occasion.

Performing arts deptt at DU soon

By Staff Correspondent

Dhaka University authorities have decided to start a new department for Dramatics and Music and will enroll Masters degree students from 1994-95 education year.

The decision was taken at a meeting of the Syndicate of Dhaka University held on September 1 this year.

Initially, the new department will provide post graduate degree courses — preliminary course (MA in Drama) and Master degree course in music (M Music) — from the next 1994-95 academic year. However, necessary decision has not yet been taken regarding the introduction of honours course.

Syed Jamil Ahmed will be the chairman of the new department and Professor Mamtazuddin Ahmed (Drama), Rezwana Chowdhury (Music), and Dr. Krishnapada Mandal (Music) will serve as part time teachers there.

Earlier, under the care of the Dean of Arts Faculty of Dhaka Varsity, two related subjects — drama and music — used to be taught as subsidiary courses.

Russian envoy meets Keramat

Ambassador of the Russian Federation to Bangladesh Eduard Shevchenko called on Minister for Religious Affairs Muhammad Keramat Ali at the Secretariat yesterday, reports BSS.

The ambassador and the minister discussed matters of bi-lateral interest.

BOU general meeting held

Bangladesh Open University (BOU) Vice-Chancellor Dr Shamsur Ali has urged the teachers to work hard to help build up the university infrastructure and introduce different courses, reports UNB.

He was addressing a general meeting of the university teachers and officials at Gazipur on Monday.

Speaker leaves for Canada

Speaker Shaikh Razaque Ali left Dhaka yesterday for Canada to attend the 40th Commonwealth Parliamentary Conference to be held at Banff, Canada, reports UNB.

The Speaker is leading six-member delegation to the conference.

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Prize giving ceremony

The annual cultural function and prize distribution ceremony of Sher-e-Bangla Girls College was held in the city yesterday, reports BSS.

State Minister for Cultural Affairs Prof Jahannara Begum was present as chief guest at the function.

Team attends FAO confce in Manila

Additional Secretary of the Ministry of Agriculture Muhammad Ahsan Ali Sarkar left Dhaka on Monday for the Philippines to attend the 22nd FAO regional conference for Asia and the Pacific, reports BSS.

Mostafiz attends OIC meeting in New York

Foreign Minister ASM Mostafizur Rahman Monday attended the ministerial meeting of the Organisation of Islamic Conference in New York, reports BSS.

He also attended a luncheon hosted by the Secretary General of the United Nations, Boutros-Boutros Ghali, in honour of visiting heads of delegation to the 49th session of the General Assembly.

Mostafiz held a series of bilateral meetings with his counterparts from Mauritius, Republic of Korea and the United Arab Emirates to discuss issues of common concern particularly economic co-operation, a message from New York said.

At the meeting with the Foreign Minister of Mauritius he discussed further manpower export in some labour intensive sectors including tuna fish processing.

'Healthy city' project for Ctg

CHITTAGONG, Oct 4: World Health Organisation (WHO) representative Dr G Goldstein said here today that an action plan was being prepared under 'healthy city' project for Chittagong metropolitan city, reports BSS.

Dr Goldstein was talking to Chittagong City Corporation Mayor A B M Miahuddin Chowdhury at the latter's office. Health strategy expert Dr E Werna and 'healthy city' management coordinator Dr Andrew Lyon were also present on the occasion.

Chittagong metropolitan city has been brought under 'healthy city' project on the recommendation of the WHO and preliminary works have been started in this direction.

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প্রাথমিক ও গণশিক্ষা বিভাগের অধীনস্থ সমঝিত উপাণ্টনিক শিক্ষা বিস্তার কার্যক্রমের মৌলিক, প্রাক-প্রাথমিক, বয়স্ক ও কিশোর-কিশোরী শিক্ষার বিপুল সংখ্যক বিবিধ বই ও ফ্লিপ চার্ট মুদ্রণের জন্য এনসিটিবি এবং অন্যান্য সরকারী/আধা-সরকারী ও স্বায়ত্বশাসিত প্রতিষ্ঠানের তালিকাভুক্ত মুদ্রণকারী প্রতিষ্ঠান হইতে সীলমোহরকৃত বায়ে দরপত্র আহবান করা যাইবে। (মুদ্রণকারী প্রতিষ্ঠান হিসাবে সংশ্লিষ্ট সংস্থার তালিকাভুক্তির আদেশের সত্যায়িত ফটোকপি দরপত্রের সহিত সংযুক্ত করিতে হইবে। অনাধায় দরপত্র গ্রহণ করা হইবে না।) দরপত্র আগামী ১৩-১০-৯৪ ইং তারিখ বেলা ১২.০০ ঘটিকা পর্যন্ত নিম্নস্বাক্ষরকারীর দপ্তরে দরপত্র বায়ে পৌঁছাই হইবে এবং এদিন বেলা ১২.০৫ ঘঃ সময়ে দরপত্রদাতাদের উপস্থিতিতে মোহোরা উপস্থিত থাকিবেন। খোলা হইবে।

২। দরপত্রের সহিত মোট উক্ত ২১% আর্নেষ্টমনি যে কোন বাণিজ্যিক ব্যাংকের পে-অর্ডারের মাধ্যমে নির্বাহী পরিচালক, সমঝিত উপাণ্টনিক শিক্ষা বিস্তার কার্যক্রমের বরাবরে দাখিল করিতে হইবে।

৩। দরপত্র বিজ্ঞপ্তির বিশদ বিবরণ ও শর্তাবলী ইত্যাদিসহ দরপত্র শিডিউল আর অফিসের (প্রশাসন শাখা) হইতে সাপ্তাহিক ও সরকারী ছুটির দিন ব্যতিতকে অফিস চলাকালীন সময়ে টাকা ৩০০/- (তিনশত) (অফিসের/মোহোরা) নগদ পরিশোধের বিনিময়ে আলগা ১২-১০-৯৪ ইং তারিখ পর্যন্ত দর পদনে অগ্রাহী মুদ্রণায় সংগ্রহ করিতে পারিবেন।

৪। কোন কারণ দর্শানো ব্যতিরেকে যে কোন আর্নেষ্ট বা সকল দরপত্র গ্রহণ বা বাতিল করার অধিকার কর্তৃপক্ষ সংরক্ষণ করেন।

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