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Warning goes unheeded

Toxic intravenous saline and blood bags still being used

By Naimul Haq

The government is yet to take action against use of intravenous saline and blood bags which have been proved to expose patients to highly toxic chemicals - phthalates.

US scientists have sounded a warning against use of certain plastic materials in manufacturing medical products. These include vinyl products which, like intravenous saline and blood bags, directly expose patients to highly toxic phthalates, softening chemicals organically known as di-2-ethylhexyl-phthalate (DEHP). These can damage heart, liver, kidney and lung.

The warning is based on re-

search in the US.

On receipt of a health alert in this regard from Health Care Without Harm, a Washington-based organisation that campaigns for environmental health care, The Daily Star conducted an investigation to find out who are being exposed to the toxic chemical. A report in this regard was also published in this newspaper on April 6.

In Bangladesh, a large number of medical products are manufactured using DEHP. Besides two state-owned plants, there are at least two other intravenous saline bag manufacturing plants in the country.

Most of the blood bags available in the open market are imported from Korea.

The Institute of Public Health at Mahakhali in the city has two separate plants to manufacture saline and blood bags. Their production capacity is around 1800 IV saline bags and 1000 blood bags a day.

Officials concerned in the Institute, when contacted, said they have not yet received any instruction from the health ministry to look into the issue.

The official in charge of the two state-owned plants was also contacted regarding the issue.

He said, "We have read The Daily Star report. First I have

to be sure that blood and saline bags that we are supplying are damaging heart, liver kidney and lung. What I am saying is that there has to be scientific evidence that DEHP are toxic and act as a human carcinogen."

He went on, "Unless we are sure of the toxic effects, we cannot recommend to the government to stop using such materials in manufacturing IV saline and blood bags."

The state-owned plants supply saline bags and empty blood bags and accessory plastic tubing materials to all government hospitals and other institutions.

See Page 12 Col 3

Opposition may announce fresh agitation programmes on July 1

By Staff Correspondent

The BNP-led opposition alliance is expected to announce fresh agitation programmes, including countrywide demonstration and hartal, on July 1 if the government does not withdraw new taxes in the proposed national budget.

"We will sit day after the budget is passed and announce fresh course of action. The nature of our new programmes will depend on the mode of the budget due to be passed on June 30. Our protest programmes will not be fierce if the government

Road barricade: BDR called out Police-BNP gunfight in Feni: 25 hurt

FENI, June 25: Paramilitary BDR troops were called out as opposition BNP activists clashed with police here today, leaving at least 25 people including five policemen injured, reports UNB.

Officials and witnesses said three of the policemen were injured with bullets during the violent clashes that erupted after the arrest of two activists of Jubo Dal and Chhatra Dal in the town this morning.

The BNP activists put up barricades on the Dhaka-Chittagong highway disrupting road communication till 5 pm. A large number of vehicles, carrying passengers and cargo from the port city of Chittagong, were ransacked.

Official sources said the BNP activists tried to resist the police after they arrested their two colleagues from west Ukilpara in the town at about 8:30 am. The arrested two are Jubo Dal

leader Abdus Sobhan Chowdhury and Jatiyatabadi Chhatra Dal activist Abul Hossain. Sobhan was wanted in 30 cases, police said.

The BNP activists opened fire on the police who also returned fire," said an official, adding that three policemen received bullet injuries in the gunfight. They are SI Jahangir, ASI Ashok Kumar and constable Abul Khair.

Later, angry partymen gathered at Mohipal and clashed with police as they tried to remove the barricades put up on the Dhaka-Chittagong highway.

BDR personnel led by a magistrate were deployed in the town to avert further troubles. Of the injured, SI Mujibur Rahman and ASI Alok Kumar, Ayub, Shah Jalal, Shah Alam, Alamgir, Siraj, Ratan, Abu Mia and Farhad were admitted to Feni Sadar Hospital and local clinics.

BUET expulsion APSU demands judicial probe, threatens movement

By DU Correspondent

The All Party Student Unity (APSU) at the BUET is going for a "vigorous movement" on the campus from early next month to protest expulsion of some students and press its earlier demand for a judicial probe into the April 25-26 incidents at the university.

The movement programme will include procession, rally and strike, some APSU leaders told The Daily Star after their meeting at the Dhaka University TSC yesterday.

Meanwhile sources said the Academic Council of the Bangladesh University of Engineering and Technology will hold an emergency meeting on Monday to discuss the latest situation on the campus and take a decision on reopening of the university and holding of examinations.

See Page 12 Col 5

Anti-drug Drive Chinese style

BEIJING, June 25: Firing squads put at least 71 people to death for drug trafficking today in China's annual flurry of executions to mark UN anti-drug day, state media reported, reports AP.

In all, at least 98 people have been executed or sentenced to death nationwide in recent days ahead of tomorrow's International Day Against Drug Abuse and Illicit Trafficking, according to state media reports.

Twenty-eight traffickers were executed today in the southern provincial capital of Guangzhou, near Hong Kong, after their sentences were announced at public rallies attended by nearly 7,000 people, the state-run Xinhua News Agency said.

They included Qu Yongcai, who manufactured 2,085 pounds of the amphetamine "ice." Four others, Chen Shoubo, Dai Tianshi, Chen Guangrong and Chen Mingfa, were executed for selling 13.9 pounds of heroin, Xinhua said.

It did not name the others who were executed or give details on their cases.

Courts in northern Shaanxi province also executed 12 people today for selling and transporting drugs, Xinhua said. Another 14 traffickers were executed in southeastern Fujian province, Xinhua reported.

Shanghai, meanwhile, put to death nine traffickers and destroyed 661 pounds of drugs seized last year.

Eight people also were executed by gunshot today for selling, transporting or manufacturing drugs in southern Hunan province, Xinhua said.



Awami League brought out a colourful procession in the city yesterday, the last-day of its three-day golden jubilee celebrations. Story on page 11 — Star photo

DC 10 not procured Biman's plan to increase flights to ME hits snags

By Special Correspondent

Bangladesh Biman's plan to increase its flights to the Middle East and the Gulf has hit the snag due to its failure to procure a DC-10-30 aircraft on schedule from the supplier.

The national airlines went into an agreement with a US supplier — GIA — early this year for long term dry lease to bolster its DC-10 fleet consisting of four such aircraft.

The fifth DC-10-30 aircraft was scheduled to join the fleet by the middle of last month, Biman sources said.

It had planned to increase frequency of flights to the Middle East and Gulf destinations, currently the top revenue earning sector for the airline. It also wanted to use the aircraft in other international routes such as Dhaka-New York and for introducing flights to Manchester.

But the US supplier failed to provide the aircraft for unexplained reasons, causing heavy losses to the national airlines. It is now pressing the supplier to provide the aircraft by next month, the sources said.

Biman now operates occasional extra flights to the Middle East and the Gulf whenever its overworked DC-10s are free," they mentioned.

The flights in these routes mainly carry manpower for export and local food items for a huge Bangladeshi workforce in that region.

Khaleda blasts defence purchase from India

Opposition leader Khaleda

Zia has blasted the government for defence purchase from India. She also accused the government of handing over country's transport sector to Delhi, reports UNB.

Exchanging views with the members of the executive committee of Dhaka Reports Unity (DRU) at her official residence yesterday evening, she said the Indian vehicles purchased for the Armed Forces were not even used by the Indian Army.

The former premier said Bangladesh Armed Forces used to use the vehicles made in Britain, France, Germany. Now for the first time this government bought those from India.

Khaleda questioned in whose interest the government was buying Mig-29 aircraft. The aircraft, she said, are manufactured in Russia and also in India.

For spares the air force will have to depend on India. She alleged massive corruption in buying those fighter planes at high prices. "The government is buying the jet fighters to appease a particular country."

She said the Awami League was working to please its masters and opened up country's market to India.

To journalists, the opposition leader said, "Indian newspapers are flooding the market and journalists from India will

come here and you (journalists) will lose job as the local newspapers will face closure."

She said the ruling party had no success but only failures in its three-year rule. "It did not fulfil any of its election pledges — separation of the judiciary, autonomy to electronic media ..."

Turning to budget, the opposition leader disapproved of it, saying "this is not a good budget, it would make the poor poorer."

She said tax and VAT had been imposed on products and services used by poor people.

She criticised the government for a blanket cover of VAT on doctors, lawyers, small restaurants and others. "No industry will come up, if those VAT and taxes are not withdrawn," she said.

About Parliament, Begum Zia said the ruling party men made it ineffective and indulged in hurling abusive language at

See Page 12 Col 8

Seafood fair opens Export sector to get all help: PM

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina has urged all including the business community to join her campaign for freeing Bangladesh from poverty, reports UNB.

"I seek cooperation from people of all, including you (business community), in banishing poverty from the country," she said declaring war on the curse afflicting a great many in society.

The prime minister stressed the need for political stability, initiative, diligence, skill and productivity to win the war. "Whatever hurdles we face to achieve people's economic emancipation, we have to face with courage," she said while inaugurating the Dhaka International Seafood Fair '99 at Hotel Sonargaon yesterday.

Hoping that the export sector will play more effective role in national development efforts of the government, Hasina pledged all necessary assistance from the government for export sector.

Hasina said her government was working in close liaison with the private-sector people for rapid economic development of the country by boosting production and exports. She

See Page 12 Col 2

Double murder 2 policemen to die, 11 get life term in Patuakhali

From Staff Correspondent

BARISAL, June 25: Two police personnel were sentenced to death while five others got life term for double murder in Patuakhali yesterday.

The convicted seven are ASI Ayub Ali, constable Sagor Ahmed, Samsul Haq Mridha, Abdus Sattar Mridha, Maqbul Mridha, Sultan Mridha and Abul Kalam Azad.

Four others acquitted are constable Abdul Jabbar, Kader Sikder, Latif Sikder and Abdul Majid.

According to the prosecution story the convicted persons attacked the house of Kader Mridha over a land dispute in village Masudai of Baulai, Patuakhali on September 20, 1990. Kader's brothers Aziz and Amjad tried to resist them. At this stage ASI Ayub and constable Sagor opened fire and Aziz and Amjad died on the spot.

Later Kader Mridha filed a case accusing 11 people including the police personnel.

Additional district and session judge Biplob Goswami pronounced the verdict at a crowded court yesterday noon.

Terrorist held in Khulna

From Staff Correspondent

KHULNA, June 25: Kazi Asgar Ali alias Tara Kazi, one of the top terrorists, was arrested from his residence at Majgunni under Khalishpur thana this morning.

A leader of Khalishpur thana unit of Awami League and brother of Kazi Sikandar Ali MP, Asgar was arrested under Special Powers Act.

He has been charged with harbouring Ershad Sikder, another terrorist and KCC commissioner of Ward No 21. Police hunt for Ershad Sikder is going on as per directive of the Home Ministry.

Inside Today

Article

Costs of Character Assassination
Column: Beneath the Surface
by Abdul Bayes
Page 4

Star Literature

Essay: Language, eastern soul and solid heart; Book Review: Fish, water and people; and Musings: The greater common good
Pages 6 & 7

Supplement

Today's 20-page issue of The Daily Star contains a 4-page supplement on 'the inauguration of Beximco Industrial Park' on
Pages 17-20

Prayer Timings

June 26		
	Azan	Jamaat
Fajr	4:20	4:25
Johr	12:50	1:25
Asr	4:55	5:05
Maghrib	7:00	7:05
Esha	7:55	8:15

Source: Islamic Foundation

'ULFA informers for Pakistan'

Bid to disrupt troop movements to Kashmir alleged

GUWAHATI, June 25: India has accused separatists in its strife-hit northeast of informing Pakistan about troop movements to Kashmir, reports Reuters.

Lieutenant-General D B Shekatkar of the Indian army told reporters at a military base in the northeast that the militant United Liberation Front of Assam (ULFA) was making regular telephone calls to agents of Pakistan's Inter Services Intelligence (ISI).

"ULFA is passing on information on troops movement from northeast to some foreign agencies ... Regular messages out from the northeast are passed on to ISI by phone," he said.

Indian troops have been engaged in a month-long offensive to dislodge what it says are Pakistan-backed militants from its side of a ceasefire line in the Kargil and Drass sectors of Kashmir.

"The frequency of the calls has increased after the Kargil conflict," Shekatkar said.

He said ULFA was making calls to agents in the Pakistani cities of Karachi, Lahore, Gujrala, Sialkot and Narowar.

Earlier this week a bomb blast at a railway station in eastern India killed nine people, including three soldiers who were on their way to the Kashmir battlezone.

Indian police, on alert against possible attacks related to the Kashmir crisis, suspect the Kashmiri separatists.

EU calls for restraint

BONN, June 25: The European Union has called on both India and Pakistan to show maximum restraint and hold to their assigned borders in the dispute over Kashmir while trying to resume diplomatic talks, reports Reuters.

Germany, which holds the six-month EU presidency until the end of June, released a statement late on Thursday in which it demanded the withdrawal of armed infiltrators

from Kashmir.

The EU calls for the immediate withdrawal of the infiltrators and urges both countries to work for the immediate cessation of fighting, to fully respect the line of control and to prevent further cross border infiltration," the statement said.

The United States today stepped up pressure on Pakistan as a senior US general met Pakistani Prime Minister

See Page 11 Col 7

Swadhinata Phukan told Reuters by telephone.

PTI quoting an official statement said Assam Government has put police on maximum alert in view of rise in ISI-sponsored subversive activities throughout the country.

Security measures have been intensified at vital installations, oil pipelines, communication networks, bus stands, railway stations, air fields, oil refineries and security forces put on high alert, the statement said.

Government offices, hospitals, water reservoirs, rail and road bridges, petrol storage facilities, cinema halls and other public places are also being constantly guarded, the statement added.

The government urged people of insurgency-hit areas of the state to follow precautionary measures while visiting crowded areas. People have also been asked to inform police about any unclaimed baggage and movement of suspicious characters.

PSC report on 18th exam DU students capture 50pc of BCS posts

By Abul Kalam Azad

Students of Dhaka University (DU) got 50.2 per cent or 412 out of 820 posts on the basis of merit list in the 18th BCS Examination, according to the annual report of the Public Service Commission (PSC) released recently.

Students of Chittagong University (CU) got 12.8 per cent or 105 posts.

Rajshahi University (RU) and Bangladesh University of Engineering and Technology (BUET) were third and fourth respectively, with 94 and 59 posts.

Students of Jahangirnagar University (JU) got 53 posts (6.4 per cent), followed by Bangladesh Agriculture University (BAU) with 50 and Bangladesh Institute of Technology (BIT) with 27.

The PSC report said students of Shahjalal Science and Technology University got four posts (0.6 per cent).

Students of Islamic University got only three posts (0.4 per cent).

There was no student of Khulna University among the successful candidates in the 18th BCS Examination.

Students having degree from foreign universities got five posts, including one in Foreign Service and another in Police Service.

Out of the total 45 posts in the Administrative cadre, students of DU got the highest number of 27 posts and those of RU and BAU got six and four respectively.

In Foreign Service cadre, students of DU got two posts and those of RU and CU got one each. There were five posts only.

Out of 39 posts in Family Planning, students of DU got 17 and those of RU and CU got 11 and six respectively.

See Page 12 Col 1



Chittagong City Corporation Announcement

The Mayor of Chittagong City Corporation intends to set up a Management Institute of International Standard and repute in collaboration with local and foreign partners. The local partners must have the technical knowledge and expertise, foreign affiliation and valuable experiences of setting up and running such institution independently. Interested local counterparts are invited to contact the Mayor of Chittagong City Corporation along with a complete Project Profile and necessary documents in support of their eligibility within fifteen (15) days of publication of this announcement. The proposed institute will begin BBA and Executive MBA programs very soon.

ABM Mohiuddin Chowdhury
Mayor
Chittagong City Corporation

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