

Extortionists, brokers take toll on SBMCH blood transfusion centre

AROOP TALUKDAR, Barisal

Extortionists and brokers stand in the way of smooth functioning of Blood Transfusion Centre (BTC) at Sher-e-Bangla Medical College Hospital (SBMCH) in Barisal, depriving patients of proper services.

Usually the extortionists and middlemen exact money from professional blood donors. Besides harassing the BTC staff, they often collect 'toll' from relatives of patients on the centre premises, some employees said.

Professional blood donors are supposed to get Tk 90 for each bag, but actually they get Tk 80. The rest Tk 10 goes to the terrorists, brokers and a section of unscrupulous BTC employees. Patients are supposed to pay Tk 100 for a bag of blood from the centre, but in reality they are often forced to pay Tk 180 to Tk. 200, relatives of patients said.

Some BTC staff said the terrorists often intimidate them when they are denied blood bags at lower prices.

While visiting the BTC recently this correspondent found that the professional blood donors loitering in the corridor of the hospital. These professional blood donors are rickshawpullers, day labourers or vagabonds, at least fifty per cent of them are drug addicts or malnourished.

Presence of haemoglobin in the blood of professional donors is lesser, as most of these blood donors give blood twice or thrice a month, said an employee of the BTC.

Sources with Sandhani, the organisation that collects blood across the country, said at least 15,000 blood bags are required for the SBMCH annually.

But the collection is not more than 12,000. So the shortage is to be filled up by these blood donors, sources with the SBMCH said.

Last year, however, Sandhani collected nearly 4000 bags while Medicine Club procured nearly 1500 bags. Red Crescent collected about 2000 bags and about 1200 bags were collected from the relatives of the patients. The rest of the blood was collected from the professional blood donors.

Now, screening of blood is being done in the centre. At least five to seven per cent of collected blood could not be used, as that was found infected by different virus and germs, said doctors in the BTC.

The centre also faces manpower shortage problem. Both the posts of professor and associate professor have been lying vacant for a long time. Only one assistant professor, one medical officer and four technicians are now working in the BTC. Besides, one deep fridge is not adequate for storing the blood.

Bribed law enforcers turn a blind eye to deluge of smuggled goods

UNB, Kushtia

Smuggled goods that flooded Kushtia district are being sold openly in different markets before the eyes of the law enforcing agencies.

Local people and the business

community alleged that the law enforcing agencies, including BDR, are in fact helping the smugglers in carrying out their illegal activities in exchange for huge bribe.

Locals said smuggling of various goods, including Indian bullocks,

sugar, salt, bicycles, imitation and gold ornaments, spices, sarees, lungis, crockery and dry cell batteries are rampant along the border areas and huge quantum of such items are coming into the country every day.

Unemployed youths, boys and

girls who live near the border areas are allegedly carrying out this smuggling business and acting as carriers of the smuggled goods, said the local people.

Activities of the smugglers have been intensified following the relaxation of checking border trade.

368 abducted woodcutters, fishermen rescued

UNB, Bagerhat

Some 368 woodcutters and fishermen, who were held for ransom by pirates in the Sundarbans, were rescued in last three weeks.

Of them, police rescued 314 while the rest 54 were released after payment of ransoms to the kidnapers.

Police said the pirates had demanded a ransom of Tk 5 lakh for the release of 25 woodcutters they picked up from Goranpata area of the world's largest mangrove forest on January 13.

They later set 11 of them free after payment of Tk 50,000.

On January 17, police in a drive rescued 14 more woodcutters. Three of them suffered bullet wounds in a shootout erupted when

police raided the pirates den.

On January 14, the pirates kidnapped 300 woodcutters from Alibanda area of Swarankhola range of the forest and demanded Tk 3 lakh as ransom. But police rescued them two days later.

The pirates abducted eight fishermen from Hironpoint of the Sundarbans on January 29 and demanded a ransom of Tk 50,000 for their release.

Families of the victims rescued them giving ransoms to the kidnapers, as police could do nothing in this regard.

Besides, 35 woodcutters were abducted from Morapashu and Nandabala areas of the mangrove forest. They were released on January 30 after payment of Tk one lakh as ransoms.

Textbook crisis Ctg DC office besieged

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Chittagong

Students of different schools in Chittagong city led by Bangladesh Chhatra Union last week laid a siege to deputy commissioner's office and submitted a memorandum, demanding adequate supply of textbooks.

In the memorandum, which was to be forwarded to the education minister, the students also demanded punishment to people responsible for the crisis.

Before submission of the memorandum the students also held a rally on central Shaheed Minar premises. Chhatra Union Chittagong unit President Rahamatullah Chowdhury Sujan presided over the rally.

The rally castigated the authorities for publishing books full of printing mistakes.

In absence of the DC, the memorandum was received by ADC Md Ismail. Later the students brought out a procession that paraded different city streets.

Girl murdered in Rajshahi

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Rajshahi

A four-year-old girl child has been murdered allegedly by her neighbours at Char Shyampur in Mathiar police station in Rajshahi.

On a secret information, police raided the residence of Hatem Ali and recovered the body on Wednesday. The girl had been missing since Tuesday.

The girl was identified as Brishty, daughter of Jahangir Alam.

Police arrested Hatem Ali, his wife Anwara and one Joinal in connection with the killing.

Brishty was killed as a sequel to family feud, police suspect.

The body was sent to Rajshahi Medical College Hospital for autopsy. A case was filed with Mathiar police station.

Cop killed in road accident

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Jhenidah

A police constable was killed in a road accident in Jhenidah town last week.

The dead was identified as Ashraf Hossain Kusum, 43, a wireless operator in Jhenidah police.

Kusum was killed when a motorbike hit him from behind. He was rushed to Jhenidah Sadar Hospital in critical condition.

He succumbed to injuries on way to Dhaka Medical College Hospital. The accident occurred when the victim was crossing a road.

A case was filed with police in this connection.

10 injured in Patuakhali launch robbery

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Barisal

At least 10 passengers were injured and gold ornaments and over Tk two lakh in cash were looted when a gang of pirates numbering about 15 swooped on a Barisal-bound launch in Patuakhali on Monday.

According to police, ML Saheen, a small launch, which started from Lalmoan Launch Station in Bhola district, came under the armed attack at about 7-30 am.

The passengers tried to resist the robbers. While resisting the robbers Zahidur Rahman, 35, Malek Mia, 42, Nazir Rahman, 38, Nepal Chandra, 29, Mainul, 30, received bullet injuries. Others received stab injuries.

The pirates boarding a mechanised boat intercepted the launch at gunpoint.

Training course on child rights

UNB, Madaripur

A three-day training course on child rights was held in Madaripur recently at the Training and Resource Centre of the Legal Aid Association.

A total of 26 representatives from 15 schools, kindergartens and children organisations took part in the course conducted by a UNICEF expert.

NEWS SNAPS

Mysterious disease claims four

UNB, Kurigram

A mysterious disease that has broken out in Nageshwari and Rajibpur upazilas of Kurigram district claimed 13 lives in last four days. Six of the dead were identified as Abdus Shafi, 14, of Madhur Hailya village, Jahanur, 30, of Ansarhat Gachhari, Nurunnahar, 9, of Ghughurhat, Amjad Hossain, 35, and his son Al Helal, 10, of Masterpara and Anwara, 17, of Saphkawa villages. Two of them died at Rangpur and Mymensingh Medical College hospitals. At least 100 people in the two upazilas were suffering from the disease that causes high fever, vomiting and headache. Recognising the outbreak of the unknown disease Dr Sobhan at Nageshwari Upazila Health Complex said, "we cannot diagnose it for lack of lab equipment."

Body of BDR personnel recovered

UNB, Khagrachhari

The body of a BDR Nayek Subedar was recovered from Ramgarh Abhya road in Ramgarh upazila under Khagrachhari district Thursday afternoon. Receiving information, BDR men from Khedachhara BOP rushed to the spot and recovered the body of Nayek Subedar Wali Ullah, who was the commander of Laxmichhara BOP.

Soon after recovery of the body, there was a rumour that he was killed by terrorists. The local terrorists are allegedly threatening the Ramgarh Boyidya Para BOP to reduce its patrolling in the area. But the body did not bear any injury mark. Local physicians said he died of heart attack.

Toxic fodder kills 16 cattlehead

UNB, Tangail

Some sixteen cattlehead died of fodder poisoning at a farm at Palashtali in Tangail town on Thursday.

Forty-two cows of the farm, owned by Abdul Hamid Bhuiyan, fell sick after these were fed rice bran bought from a rice mill at Pakuta. Of the total deaths, eight were cows, four oxen and four other calves.

Farming of new corn gains popularity

UNB, Thakurgaon

Cultivation of a new corn locally known as Marua has gained popularity in Thakurgaon district. Agriculturists said they know nothing about the new corn. Locals said it is a granular corn like Kaun paddy, which normally grows well on sandy and loamy soil and is free from pest attack. Marua is drought friendly crop and probably comes from Indian State of Bihar and other deserted areas.

The corn grows plenty in Rani Sonkail, Balidangi, Peerganj, and Haripur upazilas. Farmers make flour from the new corn and it is used for preparing bread. Besides, the corn may be used for preparing delicious Bangalee sweets.

Struggle for survival

PHOTO FEATURE: HOSSAIN SERAJ



In our society old people usually play the role of a catalyst keeping family bondage together. Old people are the people of great respect, though they lack economic security. Of course, the present government has taken some steps to help them financially in a limited scale. Let us have a look at some elderly people of Magura district. How are these people passing their time now? Top (L-R) (1) a 105 year-old woman thinking about her good old days, (2) another 96 year-old man with a sense of deep rooted self-respect still earn his living by making traditional traps for catching fish, (3) a self-reliant elderly man takes care of his vineyard, (4) an old widow returning home after collecting jute fibre for repairing her poor cottage. Bottom (L-R) (5) an octogenarian enjoys the game of fishing, (6) a 105-year-old man recalling memories of bygone ages, (7) another 102 year-old woman extends her helping hand to her daughter-in-law and (8) a man pulling a rickshaw at the age of 70.

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