

Diarrhoea claims 3 more

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Diarrhoea claimed three more lives pushing the death toll to 101 yesterday, while more than 40,500 patients have been admitted to different hospitals across the country since January this year.

One each died in Noakhali and Laxmipur yesterday and the other died at the ICDDR, B in Dhaka on Saturday.

And at least 850 more patients have been admitted to different hospitals across the country in last 36 hours until yesterday evening.

The situation has remained worst in Noakhali and Bhola for the last three days. Three people died and 465 others were hospitalised in Noakhali. Three hundred and eighty three patients were hospitalised in Bhola during this time.

The control room of Directorate of Health said last evening 154 patients of diarrhoea have been hospitalised in Noakhali, 52 in Patuakhali, 43 in Bagerhat, 65 in Pirojpur, 31 in Barguna, 52 in Patuakhali, 33 in Barisal, 34 in Feni, 140 in Bhola and 85 in Laxmipur since yesterday morning.

According to experts, the simplest treatment for diarrhoea is to give patients re-hydration therapy. Normally, oral re-hydration therapy is recommended. In severe cases, the intravenous therapy should be applied but only after consultation with a doctor.

Doctors say if diarrhoea persists even after a week, one should consult a doctor. In case of bleeding also, one should consult a doctor, but as long as the blood loss is not heavy, the patient can wait a day.



Sunita Punam Agar and Bindu Maya Gorong of Nepal were caught yesterday at the departure lounge of the Zia International Airport with nearly nine kilograms of marijuana in their possession.

2 Nepalese women held with 10kg marijuana

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Two Nepalese women were arrested by customs at ZIA yesterday for carrying marijuana.

Customs officials recovered 9.4 kilogrammes of marijuana from the possession of Sunita Punam Agar, 30, of Dairacourt, Hawkhanpasa, Nepal, and Bindu Maya Gorong, 25, of Bashedi, Dhading, Nepal.

Prior to boarding a TG flight number 322 to Thailand scheduled for 2:00pm yesterday, the two were asked by airport security to run their bags through the scanner. As they hesitated, security checked their bags and found the contraband drug.

The marijuana was stuffed in 20 packets and each woman carried 10 packets inside their luggage.

Sources said they travelled from Katmandu on April 4 and visited Kolkata, then Shiliguri before entering Bangladesh through the Burimari border by road.

A top Department of Narcotics Control (DNC) official said the market rate of the narcotic drug is Tk10,000 per kg.

The two women were handed over to the Cantonment police. A case was filed with police station in this regard.



Members of the Bangladesh Ansars try to maintain order at the parking and canopy area of the Zia International Airport yesterday after police forces were withdrawn following a dispute with CAAB on Thursday.

Accord with PDB tomorrow AES has to supply power from Haripur in next two weeks

STAR REPORT

The Power Development Board (PDB) is going to sign a short-term agreement tomorrow with the AES for supplying 235 MW power from the Haripur Power Plant much ahead of schedule.

The AES, a US power company, would have to start supplying power to the PDB within two weeks of signing of the contract, sources said.

The Haripur-360 MW AES Power Plant was inaugurated by the prime minister on April 15. But the plant could not kick off properly as it was still undergoing various tests. Moreover, the contract between PDB and AES was not finalised.

With the election nearing, the government decided to push AES to begin its operation much ahead of schedule. The AES-PDB contract suggests that the AES begin com-

mercial power generation on January 28, 2003. However, the AES itself declared last year that it would begin commercial operation using combined cycle technology on October 31.

At the request of the government, AES had agreed to supply 240 MW power starting on April 15 through simple cycle technology. It has spent additional 15 to 20 million dollars to supply this additional power, said the sources.

As this power supply has been arranged outside the actual contract, its tariff would be higher than the contractual pricing of 2.72 US cents per kilowatt hour rate considered one of the lowest in the world. The sources said it would be around 5.5 cents per unit (or Tk 3). However, the PDB would purchase the power at 2.72 cents as of October 31.

PM to open two halls at DU today

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Prime Minister is expected to inaugurate two new dormitories of Dhaka University this afternoon although much of the construction work is still incomplete.

Campus sources said the university authorities decided to open the under-construction Begum Fazilatunnesa Mujib and Amar Ekushey residential halls much ahead of schedule on purely political grounds.

"Such an arrangement is only meant to have the halls opened by the Prime Minister," said a senior DU teacher preferring anonymity. He claimed construction would continue way beyond July 13, the end of tenure of the Hasina government.

This correspondent yesterday found construction work going on in full swing in both halls. "Only two buildings of the halls have so far been completed and a lot more work remains to be done," said a construction worker at Begum Fazilatunnesa Mujib Hall yesterday. The 500-bed women's dormitory is

Tito returns to earth ending multimillion dollar tour

AP, ASTANA (Kazakhstan)

The Russian Soyuz capsule carrying the world's first paying space tourist landed successfully in the Central Asian steppe yesterday, ending Denis Tito's multimillion dollar cosmos adventure.

Recovery helicopters saw the capsule's retro rockets blast to brake its descent about a meter above the ground and bring it to what Mission Control called a "soft landing." Three spotter planes, 10 helicopters and four all-terrain vehicles converged on the landing area in northern Kazakhstan to meet Tito and cosmonauts Talgat Musabayev and Yuri Baturin.

"It was perfect. It was paradise," Tito said rapturously of his six days in space, which were capped with a lightning, three-hour journey back to Earth.

"It was a great flight, a great landing, a soft landing," he said.

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Lightning kills 4 in Bogra, Satkhira

UNB, Dhaka

At least four people were killed in lightning during storm in Bogra and Satkhira districts yesterday and the day before.

Of them, three were killed in Bogra and one in Satkhira.

In Bogra, five labourers were struck by lightning, three of them died during a storm that lashed.

Sherpur upazila of the district yesterday afternoon.

Villagers and police said Shukur Ali, 40, of Basunia, Baseth, 13, of Bagmara and Ali Ahmed, 16, of Chowbaria village died on the spot while lightning struck them. The three were harvesting paddy in a field.

The identity of the injured could not be known.

In Satkhira, a villager was killed and another injured as norwester lashed the district Saturday night.

Police said Abdus Salam, 30, was killed in lightning during the storm that continued for three hours from 9 pm.

Ibrahim, a college student of Atunia village, was injured when a branch of tree crashed on him during the storm. He was undergoing treatment at a local hospital.

The storm coupled with thunder-shower uprooted trees and damaged crops on several hundred acres of land in Kolaroa, Tala, Asasuni, Sadar and Debhata upazilas.

BSF assault 5 Bangladeshi fishermen

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Khulna

Five fishermen were severely injured when BSF jawans attacked them on Saturday evening in the Kalindi river of Kaliganj upazila in Satkhira district.

The injured admitted to Upazila Health Complex were identified as Siraj, 22, and Golam of Harhdaha village, Nurul Islam, 25, Khaleque, 27, and Malek, 24, of Bashantapur village.

A group of 12 BSF jawans intruded into the Bangladesh territory and assaulted the fishermen without any provocation, witnesses said. They took away fishing nets and a boat. They also threatened to kill anyone found fishing in the Kalindi river, the injured fishermen said. Kalindi river borders both Bangladesh and India.

Kaliganj Sadar union parishad chairman said the situation was alarming as hundreds of villagers have got themselves prepared to repulse any further BSF intrusion.

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BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia responds to a query during a meeting with the country's business leaders yesterday. FBCCI president Abdullah Yussuf Haroon is one her right and former finance minister Saifur Rahman MP on the left.

Assembly elections in five states three days away

Opinion polls predict win for Left Front in West Bengal

PALLAB BHATTACHARYA, New Delhi

Just three days ahead of the May 10 assembly elections, electioneering in the five Indian states has reached its peak with pollsters working overtime to come up with projections on the likely outcome.

According to opinion polls, conducted separately by two top Indian newsweeklies, the ruling Left Front will finish ahead of its main rival, the Trinamool Congress-Congress alliance, in West Bengal. However, the polls predict victory for Sonia Gandhi's Congress-led alliance over the Left Front in Kerala.

In Tamil Nadu, the ruling DMK, a constituent of Prime Atal Behari Vajpayee's government, will come second behind the AIADMK-led front, led by film star-turned-politician Jayaram Jayalitha, the polls say.

The opinion poll by India Today and ORG-MARG market research survey predicts that the Left Front in West Bengal would get 150 to 165 seats out of 294 seats while the Trinamool Congress-Congress alliance would secure 120 to 135 seats.

However, in the southern state of Kerala, the opinion polls project a clear defeat for the Left Front. According to it, the Congress-led front in Kerala will get 93 to 103 seats in the 140-strong state assembly against 43 to 53 by the Left Front.

The opinion poll forecasts the alliance led by Jayalitha's party is likely to get 120 to 130 seats against 105 to 115 by the front led by DMK.

The India Today-ORG-MARG opinion poll was carried out between April 17 and 26 in West Bengal, Kerala and Tamil Nadu using stratified random sampling of 8,000 voters of 28 constituencies in West Bengal and Tamil Nadu and 4,300 voters of 18 constituencies in Kerala.

Another poll conducted by the magazine "Outlook" and CMS survey agency also predicts that Left Front with 145 to 155 seats will finish ahead of Trinamool Congress-Congress combine with 129 to 139 seats in West Bengal. It also forecasts that Congress will return to power in Kerala and Assam and will be on the winning side in

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Buddha Purnima celebrated

UNB, Dhaka

Buddha Purnima, the biggest festival of the Buddhists, was celebrated yesterday with a renewed call to establish peace throughout the globe.

The day is observed commemorating the birth, attainment of divine knowledge and passing away of Gautam Buddha, whose main teachings were peace, harmony and non-violence.

The day's programmes included prayers for peace, hoisting of national and religious flags, breakfast of monks, peace procession, Buddhapuja, Pindadan, seminar on Buddha and world peace, Prodeep Puja, and illumination of monastery.

Bangladesh Betar and Television broadcast special programmes while newspapers published articles highlighting the teachings of

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CPA recovers 25 acres of land from illegal occupation

OUR CORRESPONDENT, City

Chittagong Port Authority (CPA) yesterday recovered around 25 acres of its land which was under illegal occupation for long.

About 1500 structures including 1200 residential ones erected on CPA land illegally in front of the Chittagong Export Processing Zone (CEPZ) and adjoining Bandar area were evicted in a twelve-hour drive started at 7 am.

The drive was conducted by CPA Magistrate Munir Chowdhury. Over 300 labourers took part in the operation.

One Deputy Commissioner, four Assistant Commissioners of police, ten police inspectors were present and around 20 platoons of forces were deployed to avert any untoward incident during the drive.

Five workers' organisation offices including Dock Sramik Union, ten co-operatives, ten hotels and around 300 business establishments including jewellery and furniture shops were evicted.

Apart from some business establishments housed in two illegal markets, most of these structures were thatched quarters.

The land which belongs to Dock Management Board was under illegal occupation since 1982-83. A section of labour leaders were, reportedly, involved in occupying the land.

The land was a safe haven for criminals and drug dealers. Thirty-four acres of land were acquired for a residential area for the workers under Bondor Dock Sramik Porichalona Board in 1984-85, sources said.

One killed, 25 hurt as AL factions clash in Rajshahi

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Rajshahi

One person was killed and 25 were injured, two of them seriously, when two rival factions of the local Awami League clashed at Ambagan Kadiganj area under Boalia thana in the city yesterday evening.

The victim was identified as Chunnu Mia, 45, of the local Ambagan area.

The clash was sequel to enmity over submitting tender at local BMDA office.

A group led by Farhad attacked the private chamber of AL Mamun, leader of another faction at Ambagan area at 6:30 pm.

Both the factions exchanged at least 50 rounds of gunshots and exploded crude bombs and cocktails, during the half an hour clash.

Many houses and shops were ransacked during the clash. At least four vehicles were also damaged in the clash. Chunnu Mia was rushed to Rajshahi Medical College Hospital (RMCH) where the attending doctors declared him dead.

Police rushed to the spot and brought the situation under control firing tear gas shells and resorting to massive lathi charge.

Tense situation was prevailing at the area.

Phensidyl seized from BNP Slum: 3 arrested

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Detective police arrested three alleged drug traders and recovered 1670 bottles of contraband cough syrup from Balurtek BNP slum in the city's Agargaon area yesterday.

They raided the slum at about 4:30 pm, arrested Hasan, Mosarrif and Rokon and recovered 14 sacks full of phensidyl hidden under the ground in a shanty.

A case was filed with Mohammadpur thana in this regard.



Two devout Buddhist women offer prayers at Kamalapur monastery in the city on the occasion of Buddha Purnima yesterday.