

# Silent killer spreads in N dists

Buerger affected patients at RMCH increase four times in five years: Amputation of rotten limb no effective treatment

RAFIQUE SARKER from Rangpur

Buerger, a silent killer disease that rots vital limbs like leg, is spreading in northern districts.

The number of people affected with the disease is increasing "alarmingly" and even amputation of the affected limb does not stop its re-appearance, doctors at Rangpur Medical College Hospital (RMCH) say.

At least 350 patients came for treatment at Rangpur Medical College Hospital (RMCH) alone in the last two years. Only a few "got cured somehow" and the rest became disabled with their affected limbs amputated.

The figure is about four times higher than the number five years back, RMCH Principal and Head of Surgery Department Professor Abdus Sobhan told this correspondent during a visit to the hospital on Tuesday.

Though there is no statistics on the number of such patients in the country, particularly in northern districts, people coming to different hospitals in northern districts is increasing "alarmingly", he said.

This correspondent talked to a good number of patients at the hospital. They include Bablu, 38 and Kashem of Gobindaganj and

Mozammel Hoque of Sadullahpur in Gibanda district; Chanon, 50, of Hospital Para in Rangpur town; Jamir Ali of Gangachara, Amena Begum, 50, of Uttom and Mahmuda, 35, of Taraganj in Rangpur; Mohidul Islam of Shibganj in Bogra, and Arjina of Hawra in Nilphamari.

All of them said they were addicted to using tobacco, either smoking or chewing.

Doctors differ on the cause of the disease.

Specialists at RMCH say malnutrition and use of tobacco are the major causes. Unhygienic living conditions and barefooted walking on soil may also cause the disease, they said.

In the past, doctors used to amputate the affected leg so that it can not spread to other limbs. But it proved ineffective, doctors say now.

Despite amputation of an affected leg earlier, a large number of patients came to hospitals with the other leg or a hand affected, they say.

When asked about this, Prof Sobhan said patients who were operated upon became affected again due to use of tobacco. Treatment is not effective if the patient does not give up use of

tobacco.

He said a massive awareness campaign should be launched, particularly in northern districts, to check spread of the disease.

In 1996, the then Assistant Professor of Surgery at RMCH, Dr SN Aditta, had claimed that Omentopexy, a kind of surgical operation, could cure the disease. But the operation is ineffective in many cases.

Some RMCH doctors do not agree that malnutrition and tobacco use are the main reasons.

Abdus Sobhan said, it origi-

nates at the toe of the foot. At the beginning, the toe turns reddish and swells up. The patient stage feels pain in the toe. Within five to six months, the leg becomes thin and the patient feels excessive pain in the whole leg. At the last stage, gangrene forms and the skin, muscles and bone start rotting, he he said.

The patient becomes permanently disabled and can not move without anybody's support of other. Many are dying despite treatment, he said.

PHOTO: STAR



Two persons with their both legs amputated at RMCH following attack by Buerger disease. The photos were taken on Tuesday.

## 'Declare Land Rights Day a national day'

### 30,000 landless people hold grand rally in Santhia, Pabna

STAR NATIONAL DESK

Speakers at a rally of 30,000 landless people in Pabna on Thursday demanded of the government to declare the Land Rights Day a national day.

Their other demands are formation of a separate land commission for the indigenous people of plain land and changing the discriminatory anti-poor law of 1994 and distribution of 'khas' land among genuine landless people.

The grand rally was held at Bishnupur Primary School ground in Santhia upazila, Pabna on conclusion of an eight-day national programme chalked out by the Land Rights Day National Observation Committee marking the Land Rights Day. The programme began in Dhaka on June 3.

The mass rally was presided over by Khushi Kabir, Convenor of the Land Rights Day National Observation Committee while former BBC journalist Ataus Samad addressed the rally as chief guest.

Among others, Abdul Quader, Executive Director, Samata, Shamsul Huda, Executive Director

of ADSC, former Pabna Correspondent of The Daily Star Ranesh Moitra, Dhaka University Professor Mesbah Kamal, Samata Director Sarwar Alam and representatives of Indian development organisation Akta Parishad, Mertunjay Oza and Monjuli Dung Dung addressed.

Speakers emphasised on changing the existing 'Shikastayasthi' (Land Reclamation Act) in favour of landless people.

Two landless peasants Dula Kha and Achhia Khatun who actively took part in their movement against the landlords on June 10 narrated their experiences. Achhia who was pregnant for seven months described her bitter story, the way she was beaten and kicked by the musclemen of ruthless landlords sustaining severe injuries resulting in abortion of her unborn baby.

A separate land commission for indigenous people of plain land was one of the major demands on the Land Rights Day. The proposed land commission was demanded for protection of their rights after observing the limitations, contradictions and duality of the existing law which discriminates themselves from 'khas' land.



A partial view of a rally of landless people held at Bishnupur Primary School ground in Santhia upazila, Pabna on Thursday, organised by the Land Rights National Observation Committee marking the Land Rights Day.

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Nilphamari

The political situation has heated up centring a comment allegedly made at a function addressed by State Minister for Education Ehsanul Haq Milon at the town on June 6.

Nilphamari district BNP Secretary Anisul Arefin allegedly told the function that the people of the district were 'mofiz' (a word locally used as a slang to call someone a fool) because they always do a 'mistake' during election by not voting the right party for their development. Being simple hearted, they are easily befooled and made to vote for Jatiya Party in 1996 and for Awami League in 2001.

In his speech, Milon said 'Mofiz'

was the name of his uncle. But he came to know that the word 'mofiz' is used in Nilphamari to call someone a fool.

Protesting use of the word 'mofiz', both Jatiya Party and Awami League held rallies and brought out processions in the town on Wednesday, demanding an apology from Milon for using the word in his speech.

On Thursday, Jatiyatabadi Chhatra Dal (JCD), student front of ruling BNP, also held a rally to tell that the opposition parties were misinterpreting statements made at the June 6 BNP function.

Tension mounted in the town yesterday as Jatiya Party and JCD called protest rallies at 5 pm at places only fifty yards from their respective venues.

The rallies were yet to begin when the report was filed at about 4 pm.

### Meeting held on child rights

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Gaibandha

A meeting to exchange views for creating awareness among people to establish child rights was organised by the Sishu Academy at Public Library hall here on Thursday.

Presided over by Kausar Ahmed, District Child Affairs Officer, the meeting was attended by Deputy Commissioner, Gaibandha Tapon Chandra Majumder as chief guest.

BSF raising barbed wire fence on no man's land

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Sylhet

The Indian Border Security Force (BSF) is raising barbed wire fence on the no man's land in Padma Shakhra border in Sylhet Sadar upazila, violating the 1974 border agreement.

The work, started Wednesday morning despite BDR protest, is going on in full swing, BDR sources said yesterday.

On May 29, BSF had started raising barbed wire in the same area but abandoned it following protest by BDR.

BSF had postponed the work after a flag meeting, which decided for a joint border survey in the area.

But BSF resumed the work ignoring the meeting's decision.

BDR sources said higher authorities have been informed.

### They want to get rid of pourasabha

OUR CORRESPONDENT, B'baria

Local people held a big rally at Sarail upazila headquarters on Wednesday demanding dissolution of the newly formed Sarail Pourasabha, alleging that it has imposed taxes without giving localities.

The rally held at the Kachari Maidan with Sarail Bazar Committee Chairman Rafiqur Rahman is chair was addressed by among others, Abdul Wahab, Abdur Rashid, A Manuar Uddin Ahmed, Rafique Uddin Thakur, freedom fighter Monir Uddin Ahmad, Anwar Uddin Ahmed, Anwar Hussain, Kutub Uddin, Abdul Jabbar, Hamidullah, Ziaul Haque Sanu, Mahfuz Ali, Iqbal Hussain, Sayed Ali and Afzal.

Several thousand people from villages under three adjoining unions covered by the pourasabha attended the rally.

The rally was followed by a big procession. The processionists paraded the streets and marched up to the Deputy Commissioner's office and handed over a memorandum to the DC for dissolution of the pourasabha.

They chanted slogans like "we do not need pourasabha", "no facility, no tax".

### UGC team starts probe into Katka tragedy

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Khulna

Prof Dr Monirul Huq and Prof Dr. Mohammed Mahfuzul Huq, members of the University Grants Commission (UGC), have started probe into the March 13 'Katka tragedy' in which nine students of Khulna University (KU) and two of BUET drowned in the sea beach during a trip to the Sundarbans.

Prof Monirul Huq heads the two-member probe committee.

KU sources said they will also probe alleged corruption by Vice-chancellor Prof Dr. Abdul Kadir Bhuiyan and other irregularities by the university administration.

The nine KU students were of final year Architecture Department and the two of BUET were fourth year students of Mechanical Engineering Department.

### BCL activist killed in Barisal

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Barisal

A Bangladeshi Chhatra League (BCL) activist was murdered before his elder brother in Babuganj here on Wednesday night.

The victim, Sumon, 19, was shot and chopped to death beside his elder brother Shahid, 22, inside their medicine shop in Babuganj.

Policemen, witnesses and victim's family sources told this correspondent, both Shahid and Sumon were looking after the medicine trade of their father Md Abdul Bashar who is an inhabitant of Kawaria area in Barisal city. The medicine shop was situated at village Rakudia Natun Huti in Babuganj.

On the fateful night, a group of armed miscreants attacked both the brothers inside their medicine shop. The attackers held Shahid a hostage and opened fire on Sumon.

As Sumon fell down, the killers chopped him and left the place on confirmation of his death.

Superintendent of police (SP) of Barisal Mainor Rahaman Chowdhury visited the spot.

A murder case was lodged by Shahid with Babuganj police station on Thursday. Police arrested Bazlu, 29, brother of a local criminal, Manik who is also a businessman in Natun Huti and Abdul Rahman, 32.

Manik's shop is allegedly a meeting place of criminals and extortions.

### SYLHET SHRINE BLAST

## Team to quiz 'suspect' at Singapore hospital

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Sylhet

and CID will go to Singapore next week to interrogate Badrul Hossain Shamim, now under treatment at a hospital there for injuries he suffered in the May 21 grenade blast. The date will be finalised within a day or two, they said.

Shamim, a British citizen hailing from Sylhet, came to Bangladesh weeks before May 21.

One of his legs, badly injured in the blast, was amputated in Sylhet. He was then taken to Dhaka Medical College Hospital and then flown to Singapore.

Shamim married on May 3 last in Sylhet.

Bangladeshi born British High Commissioner Anwar Chowdhury was among the many injured in the blast.

blast that killed four persons.

Meanwhile, joining of Dr. Abdur Rahim as Police Superintendent of Sylhet has become uncertain, officials said.

He was Deputy Commissioner of Rajshahi Metropolitan Police. He was transferred to Sylhet as SP a week ago.

Sylhet SP Shahadat Hossain was put under suspension and withdrawn on May 24 for alleged lax security arrangement in the shrine area on May 21. Shahadat handed over charge to Additional SP Rezaul Karim on May 25.

Later, one ASP and the OC of Sylhet Kotwali thana were transferred. More actions are on the offing, sources said.

### FERTILISER HAUL ON KIRTANKHOLA

## 'Attempted smuggling by powerful syndicate'

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Barisal

A powerful syndicate involving at least 15 business firms and as many people from five districts were involved in the "attempted smuggling" of 834 tonnes of fertiliser, seized by police on the Kirtankhola river on June 4.

Names of the firms and the people involved were disclosed by the four arrested crew of the fertiliser-carrying vessels during interrogation while on remand, police said yesterday.

The syndicate members are from Barisal, Magura, Jhenidah, Jessor and Sylhet districts police said but declined to disclose the names for the sake of investigation.

The remand of the four crew ended on Thursday. They are in custody now.

But police are yet to uncover details about allotment, withdrawal and destination of the Tk

one crore fertiliser.

Some vested quarters are now trying for release of the arrested persons, police said.

Police seized three cargo launches -- MV Ropti, MV Imon and MV Rumi -- with 834 tons of urea fertiliser and three Sampans (big boat) and arrested 16 crew on June 4 while 20 fertilisers were being loaded to the Sampans from the vessels on the Kirtankhola river.

Sub Inspector Mizanur Rahaman lodged a case with Barisal Kotwali police.

But later, MV Imon and MV Rumi fled away with a huge quantity of fertiliser allegedly due to police negligence.

Immediately after the haul, the Barisal Deputy Commissioner at a meeting with the District Seed and Fertiliser Monitoring Committee decided to sell the unclaimed fertilisers through auction. A court approved the auction on Monday last.

But following a petition filed on behalf of the arrested crew, the District Judge Court on Wednesday stayed the auction order till hearing on June 23.

Officials said only 17 tonnes of urea were officially allotted to one dealer in Barisal district for the current season.

The big consignment was withdrawn with illegally and were being smuggled either to India or to Burma, they said.

Public Prosecutor Advocate Kamrul Ahsan Shahin yesterday said, as the court stayed the auction without hearing both parties, the government will appear before the court to pray for vacating of the stay order.

Advocate Abdul Majid Munshi who appeared for the arrested crew told this correspondent that they (crew) had valid documents regarding the fertilisers and that the seizure and arrest were illegal.



PHOTO: STAR

The people affected by expansion footpaths at Bogra brought out a procession in town demanding compensation.

### AL leader Khaleque faces corruption case

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Khulna

The district anti-corruption bureaus of Khulna and Bagerhat have submitted four chargesheets against the city Awami League (AL) president Talukdar Abdul Khaleque MP.

The FIRs were lodged in the first and second week of January last year by former Director of Bagerhat DAB Md Nazrul Islam and Inspector En