

Six killed, over 2,000 down with diarrhoea

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

In the worsening diarrhoea situation, six people died while 2,153 more fell sick from the disease across the country yesterday.

Number of deaths from the water borne disease in last one month now rises to 18.

During the period, the disease spread among 50,406 people, exceeding last year's March 25 to April 25 figure by a small margin, health directorate sources said.

Experts warned of an early attack of the disease this year and said the situation would worsen with the onset of heat wave.

Meanwhile, raining in the evening yesterday brought a brief respite from the heat wave that was continuing for the last few days.

People ill with diarrhoea yesterday were from 89 upazilas of 29 districts. Of the dead, three died in Chandpur, two in Faridpur and one in Kurigram, health directorate sources said.

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JOURNO BELLAL KILLING Charges pressed against four, 'mastermind' spared

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Khulna

Police yesterday pressed charges against four people -- three outlaws and one drug peddler -- under the Explosive Substances Act for the bomb attack at Khulna Press Club on February 5 killing journalist Shaikh Belaluddin and wounding three other newsmen.

Belal was local bureau chief of Dainik Sangram and president of Khulna Metropolitan Union of Journalists.

The officer-in-charge (OC) of Khulna thana submitted the chargesheet to the Court of Chief Metropolitan Magistrate.

The chargesheeted accused are outlaws Syed Iqbal Hossain alias Shadhin, Chowdhury Rafiqul Islam alias Hasan and Mirajul Islam alias Miraj, and drug peddler Goda Yunus. All are now in Khulna District Jail.

Sources pointed out, however, that the mastermind behind the bomb attack is not on the chargesheet of the case investigated by OC Iqbal. Shadhin and Goda Yunus had earlier made confessional statements implicating themselves and the two others in the crime.

Twelve people, including the four chargesheeted, were arrested as

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No subsidy for irrigation despite diesel price hike

Saifur tells Economic Reporters' Forum

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The government has decided not to subsidise irrigation although it is going to increase diesel prices once again.

"It is not possible to provide subsidy for irrigation as it can create ways for misuse,"

Finance and Planning Minister M Saifur Rahman a delegation of the Economic Reporters' Forum at his secretariat office yesterday.

The shallow tube-well engines are being used for various purposes -- from irrigation to transportation - making it difficult to undertake a subsidy plan for irrigation, he said.

The minister, however, said only the deep tube-wells, fixed installed ones, can be considered for some subsidy on oil prices during the irrigation season only.

But the Agriculture Extension Department has failed to identify the deep tube-wells that are genuinely used for irrigation purposes, he said.

"The government is facing a huge loss due to the recent price hike of oil in the international market," Saifur said. "We have to adjust oil prices with the international market to avoid a loss."

The minister said the government is considering a withdrawal of 'zero-tariff' imports in the next

budget.

The forthcoming budget will be a pro-people budget, not a pro-election one, the minister said, adding that the next budget will reflect a development strategy aimed at reducing dependence on foreign aid.

Avoiding a categorical reply on the question of the increase in interest rates, the minister said, "Foreign investors will not invest here if the macroeconomic stability is hampered due to expansionary measures by the government."

"For this we have taken a balanced policy and it will be reflected in the next budget," he added.

NBR cuts up 2 luxury cars on tax evasion

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The National Board of Revenue (NBR) yesterday made into scrap metal a Mercedes Benz and a Toyota Corolla imported under false declaration for tax dodging.

NBR officials cut up the luxury cars for scrap at Kamalapur Inland Container Depot in the capital in line with a High Court ruling. NBR Chairman Khairuzzaman Chowdhury was present there at the time.

"We could have realised Tk 20 lakh to 50 lakh in duties against the two cars, but we preferred to dismantle them to set an example so that no-one dares to commit the crime in future," the chairman told The Daily Star.

Sources in the NBR said Steel Trading owned by Mohammad Anisul Islam brought the cars inside a container two years ago to Chittagong port under a false declaration that scrap metal was inside

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PHOTO: STAR

Workers of the National Board of Revenue cut up into metal pieces a Mercedes Benz at Kamalapur Inland Container Depot in the capital yesterday. Two luxury cars were imported under false declaration for tax evasion.

Top tax boss embarrassed over costly gift

Deposits it in treasury

BDNEWS, Dhaka

The chairman of National Board of Revenue (NBR) was embarrassed about being presented with a Rolex Oyster wristwatch on April 19 and deposited it in the government treasury.

Partex, an industrial group, gave the expensive wristwatch to NBR Chairman Khairuzzaman Chowdhury.

In a letter to the cabinet secretary, the NBR chairman said Partex

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EXPRESSWAY Thai team due May 12

UNB, Dhaka

A high-powered Thai delegation will arrive in Dhaka by May 12 to prepare a 'plan of action' for constructing a two-storied elevated expressway connecting all important intersections in the capital.

The \$400 million project has been conceived as part of government efforts to 'ease the capital city's traffic jam permanently', a preparatory meeting at the communications ministry with a Thai delegation was told yesterday.

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EMBASSY RANSACKING

Kuwaiti cops launch investigation

Govt last year stopped workers from joining the cleaning firm over its maltreatment

RAFIQ HASAN

Kuwaiti police have launched an investigation into Sunday's attack on the Bangladesh embassy in Kuwait City by a huge mob of expa-

triate workers of a cleaning company, while officials in Dhaka termed the attack "mysterious."

A high official at the Ministry of Expatriates Welfare and Overseas Employment yesterday said the

company accused of not paying salaries of the workers had a bad reputation.

The government had stopped allowing Bangladeshi workers to

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Two businessmen gunned down

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Unidentified criminals killed two cable traders and wounded a bystander in a hail of bullets, before setting ablaze one of the dead inside an office at the Banasree Housing Project in Rampura yesterday, apparently in a business feud.

Witnesses said a gang of eight stormed the offices of Crystal Cable Network in the project at about 12:45pm, opening fire on two of the

eight owners of the cable network -- Sayem Rahman, alias Mithun, 35 and Shariful Islam, alias Titu, 32.

After shooting Mithun once in the eye, they doused him with kerosene and set on fire, causing severe burns to his head, face and hands. Titu suffered three bullets in the back and the hand.

When the criminals had fled, locals rushed immediately to the office and sent the wounded to the

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Desa slated for Tk 1,576cr loss in 10 yrs

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A parliamentary body yesterday criticised Dhaka Electricity Supply Authority (Desa) for incurring losses amounting to Tk 1,576 crore in last ten years.

Besides, the parliamentary standing committee on power, energy and mineral resources ministry at a meeting yesterday accused the ministry high-ups of trying to give work order for 450-megawatt Megnaghat-3 power plant in favour

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Better overseas trade impossible without good ties with India

ICC-B business dialogue told

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Eminent economist Prof Wahiduddin Mahmud yesterday said it is impossible to boost Bangladesh's overseas trade and investment without a good relationship with India.

"Bangladesh needs to project its business environment to foreign

nations, especially neighbouring countries to accelerate international trade. In the process of globalisation, neighbours should come first," Mahmud said at a business dialogue in the capital.

The International Chamber of Commerce-Bangladesh (ICC-B) organised the dialogue on 'Impact of Globalisation in the Asia-Pacific Region' to place a set of recommendations on safeguarding the country's interest and that of the least developed countries (LDCs) at the Asia-Pacific Business Forum to be held in Bangkok May 13-15.

ICC-B President Mahbubur Rahman presided over the dialogue where Prof Mahmud delivered the keynote speech.

Mahmud, also a former caretaker government adviser, said the border

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Prayer Timing		
April 26		
	Azan	Jamaat
Fair	4-20	4-55
Zohr	12-45	1-15
Asr	4-45	5-00
Maghrib	6-29	6-34
Esha	8-00	8-30
Source: Islamic Foundation		

