

IO ON MAGURA GOVT STORE SCAM

Date-expired medicines supplied to shops for sale

HOSSAIN SERAJ, Magura

The case regarding alleged medicine scam at the store of Magura civil surgeon (CS) has taken a new twist.

Investigation has revealed new clues to sending 'date-expired' medicines towards Jessore at dead night. Police are now on hunt for the store keeper of civil surgeon's office.

Investigation officer (IO) of the case Sub Inspector Shajahan said, "Investigations revealed that the date-expired medicines were being taken towards Jessore at dead night in an ambulance for marketing those again after putting new dates.

"The storekeeper and a leader of pro-BNP doctors' association were the masterminds behind the misdeeds. We are trying to nab the storekeeper, which is essential for submitting of charge-sheet", the IO told this correspondent on Thursday.

date-expired medicines were supplied to different medicine shops in Jessore. The shop owners put new dates and sold those, the IO told this correspondent.

It was also revealed that medicines were stored for long at civil surgeon's store instead of giving to patients at different hospitals. When their dates expired, those were supplied to medicine shops, the IO said.

The storekeeper and the doctor were not brought to book initially as the driver of the medicine-loaded ambulance misguided the investiga-

tors through his confessional statement made under Section 164.

On May 25, at around 2-00 am, patrol police near Harishpur bus stand on Magura-Jessore highway saw the ambulance of Shalikhha Upazila Health Complex speeding towards Jessore.

On suspicion, police stopped the ambulance and seized 'date-expired' medicines worth about Tk 50 thousand. They arrested ambulance driver Zafar.

The medicines included Cotrim tablets and syrup, Irithromycin syrup and Aspectomycin injection.

Assistant Sub-Inspector of Shalikhha police station Sohrab Hossain as a complainant filed a case (no.9 date: May 26) under Section 25(Ga) of Special Power Act with Shalikhha police station. Zafar was produced before a court, which sent him to jail hajat following his confessional statement.

The IO said ambulance driver Zafar told them after arrest that the date-expired medicines were being taken for dumping into river near Simakhali bridge on Magura-Jessore highway. But investigations later revealed that those were being taken to Jessore for supply to medicine shops, the IO added.

The driver also said that the dumping was ordered by the store-keeper at Magura civil surgeon's office, the IO told The Daily Star.

Zafar gave the confessional statement when he was produced before court at Shalikhha upazila, the

IO said.

More information will be revealed after arrest of the store keeper, now on the run, police said.

This correspondent talked to the store keeper in his hideout. Store keeper Lutfor Rahman denied the allegation and claimed that he had no ulterior motive in sending the date-expired medicines. Those were sent for dumping in the river, he claimed.

When contacted, Magura Civil Surgeon Dr. Fariduddin Ahmed said that he was on leave till May 28 and that he did not know anything about the matter.

"After joining I discussed the matter with officials and came to know that the medicines were not date-expired and those were sent on May 25 for patients of Shalikhha Upazila Health Complex", the CS said.

The civil surgeon avoided direct replies when asked why the medicines were sent at dead of night on a holiday and why the ambulance was going towards Jessore instead of Shaikupa. He said those were dispatched from the store at 4-30 pm.

As by this correspondent, Medical Officer at civil surgeon's office Dr. Alimuzzamn who was the acting CS on that day (May 25) said, "On Thursday afternoon (May 25), I signed a paper written by the store-keeper for sending medicines to Shalikhha Upazila Health Complex".

In reply to another question,

Alimuzzaman said, "It's not my responsibility to see whether the medicines were date-expired or not".

The incident has now become a talk of the town. Many people in Magura raise questions how 'date-expired' medicines could be available in store while hospital authorities failed to meet the minimum requirement of medicine for patients for years before declaration of emergency.

"Before January 11 (this year), patients in four hospitals in the district had to buy even a syringe from outside and hospital authorities did not supply any medicine to patients", said an owner of a medicine shop adjacent to the Magura Sadar Hospital seeking anonymity.

This correspondent also talked to several doctors at Magura Sadar Hospital. Declining to be named, they alleged that in last 10 years, some unscrupulous officials amassed crores of Taka in the name of purchasing medicines and other materials for the hospitals.

Patients were deprived but medicines worth lakhs of Taka were shown as date-expired and sold, the doctors claimed.

Properly investigation will not only unveil last 10 years' misappropriation of medicine, but also will help to identify the culprits who were involved in grabbing patients' medicine for years, the doctors said.



PHOTO: FOCUS BANGLA

Two days' rain swamped many roads in Sylhet city as most of the outlets have been clogged due to encroachment.

Woman ward commissioner held in Chandpur

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Chandpur

A woman commissioner of Shahrasti Paurasabha Ward No 7 has been arrested on charge of extortion and land grabbing, police sources said.

Rabeya Begum, 27, was arrested following filing of a case by Sogir Ahmed with Shahrasti Police Station on Tuesday.

Court sources said Rabeya was sent to Chandpur jail hajot after her arrest on Wednesday.

Meanwhile, joint forces arrested a BNP leader and Union Parishad (UP) member of Union Parishad No 10 in Kochua Upazila on Wednesday for his alleged involvement in stealing a tube-well at Balgiri village.

Khulna jute workers now press only two demands

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Khulna

Jute mill workers in Khulna now press two demands as preconditions to join duty.

These are immediate removal of BJMC Zonal Coordinator Shamim Ahmed and payment of benefits for the lay-off period.

Shamim Ahmed is also general manager of state-owned Crescent Jute Mills.

Meanwhile, another worker of Star Jute Mill died at yesterday while under treatment at Khulna Medical College Hospital. He was identified as Abul Hossain, 55, a permanent worker at the mechanical section of the mill.

His wife Ayatunnesa claimed that her husband died of peptic ulcer. "I

could not provide medical treatment to my husband due to want of money as mill authorities did not pay his arrear wages for 14 weeks despite appeals in writing", she said.

With Abul Hossain, three jute mill workers so far died in two weeks. Two others died earlier. They are Abdul Kalam of Platinum Jute Mills and Sirajul Islam of Peoples Jute Mills.

Workers of Crescent Jute Mill and Pjubilée Jute Mill have demanded removal of BJMC Zonal Coordinator Shamim Ahmed, accusing him of creating a 'crisis' in Khulna-Jessore industrial belt. "In fact, he gave only lip service instead of taking any positive move to resolve the crisis", said convener of Khulna regional committee of Patkal

Sangram Pparishad (PSP) Sarder Motaharuddin.

The decision to demand removal of Shamim Ahmed was taken by PSP at a meeting held on Wednesday night on the compound of Crescent Jute Mills, sources said.

"I do not mind that workers have demanded my removal. I have nothing to do in payment of arrear wages of workers amounting to several crores of taka", said Shamim.

Shamim said that he just carried out orders and instructions of his top boss to deal with the crisis in the industrial belt. "How can I pay arrear wages if finds are not allocated by the government?" he said.



PHOTO: STAR

Artistes performing at a dance drama marking Rabindra-Nazrul Joyanti in Khagrachhari hill town yesterday.

ALLEGED IRREGULARITIES

3 cops closed in Pabna, Mymensingh

STAR REPORT

Two assistant sub-inspectors of Ishwerdi police station in Pabna and the officer-in-charge of Muktagacha police station in Mymensingh were closed for allegedly misbehaving with the people.

Assistant Sub Inspector (ASI) Masud Ali and Masud Parvez of Ishwerdi police station in Pabna were closed and transferred on Thursday, police said.

"They misbehaved with people. So the district police department transferred them from their stations as punishment," said Pabna police superintendent.

Masud Ali was transferred to Dhaka char police camp and Masud Parvez to Shangarkandi police camp in Shujanagar upazila.

Officer-in-Charge (OC) of Muktagacha police station Mohammed Hossain was closed to Mymensingh police line Thursday night for harassing people and other irregularities.

Additional Police Superintendent (South) SM Akhtaruzzaman admitted the matter and said that he visited Muktagacha Police Station yesterday to investigate the matter.

Mohammed Hossain joined the Muktagacha Police Station on May 13 this year.

IMPACT OF GLOBAL WARMING, CLIMATE CHANGE

Dhaka can demand compensation from G-8 countries

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Satkhira

Speakers at a seminar yesterday called for immediate steps to 'protect' over three crore people of in 39 upazilas in 13 coastal districts from the adverse impacts of climate change and intrusion of salinity into mainland.

They are facing a limping disaster as their means of livelihood are threatened due to inundation of 10

to 17 per cent of landmass due to wiring sea level and salinity in the mainland, the speakers said.

They urged the government to take up the matter seriously as climate change is not a 'far away topic' any more. Climate change and global warming pose threat to their existence, they said at the seminar held in Shyamnagar, a coastal area.

Bangladesh has already started

experiencing effects of global warming which will be a threat to its people within 15 to 20 years, they said.

Bangladesh can demand compensation from G-8 countries because they are responsible for the climate change, they said.

The seminar on 'climatic change and its adverse effect on coastal areas' was organised by two local NGOs—Leaders and Gana Unnayan Sangstha. It was held at Upazila auditorium with Atarjan Mahila College Principal Ashek e Elahi in the chair.

Shyamnagar Upazila Nirbahi Officer (UNO) Dilip Kumar Banik was the chief guest. It was addressed by local Union Parishad members, teachers, officials, journalists and NGO representatives.

They said about one third area in the coastal belt with about 710 km coastline in 39 upazilas will be worst hit by the sea level rise as well as other impacts of climate change, affecting millions of people.

Sundarbans, a world heritage site, will be lost to the sea if protective measures are not taken right now, they said.

They urged the government to immediately start a massive afforestation programme in the coastal areas and take steps to stop intrusion of saline water into the mainland.



PHOTO: FOCUS BANGLA

Rab arrested Imran Ali Manik, driver of JMB leader Bangla Bhai, in Mymensingh yesterday.

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Sylhet

The Board of Intermediate and Secondary Education (BISE), Sylhet will take action against 34 high schools for poor result in the Secondary School Certificate (SSC) examinations this year, official sources said.

Of the schools, 11 included in Sylhet, 11 in Sunamganj, eight in Moulvibazar and four in Habiganj districts.

Nne passed from three institutions of the remote areas. The schools are Maijgram High School in Barlekha upazila, Moulvibazar, Ekota High School in Chhatak upazila in Sunamganj and three from Barachatul High School under Kanaighat upazila of Sylhet district.

Thirty-one institutions got below 20 per cent pass marks. Those included Saptogram High School in Beanibazar upazila, Farhana Hossain High School, Paton Abdullahpur High School and Salam-Mokbul High School in Golapganj upazila, Sazzad Majumder High School and

Zakiganj Girls High School in Zakiganj upazila, Rasulpur High School and CMP Academy and Sadrunnesa High School in Balaganj and Ganinagar High School of Sylhet Sadar upazila in Sylhet district.

Dhol High School and Tarol High School of Derai upazila, Mahmud Nagar High School and Hafij Ali High School of Shulla upazila, Haji Abdul Khaliq High School, Jalalabad High

School, Haji Jamal Uddin High School and Ganipur High

School in Chhatak upazila, Abdus Subhan High School and Paigaoon TM High School in Jagonnathpur upazila of Sunamganj district are in the list.

In Moulvibazar district the schools are, Shantikul High School and Kodomhata High School in Rajnagar upazila, Ragna- Batuli High School and Rajnagar High School in Kulaura

upazila, Kechhrigul High School of Barlekha upazila, Abdul Mosobbir Academy in Komolganj upazila and Raipur High School in sadar Upazila.

In Habiganj district, the schools are, Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujib High School, Ekdala High School, SNP High School of Nabiganj upazila and JDN High School in Baniachang upazila.

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