

Panic leads to unconsciousness

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anxiolytic medicines, he said adding that there are trained physicians in every district of the country and they could call for teams from the capital if needed.

Girls are mostly affected, as females of certain ages are more hysteria prone, Parvez Chowdhury psychiatrist of the National Institute for Mental Health said.

He, however, blamed the bandwagon effect. When students hear about the disease, many of them start thinking they could be affected by it. Sometimes without any fathomable reasons, they start feeling that they have become a victim of the "mysterious disease". "If someone becomes sick, others might be affected just by watching him or her. So the sick should be treated separately," said the psychiatrist.

He recalled the fuss about insects in Dhakolmi plants and the Jhin Jhin disease that created panic in the previous two decades. If the media did not cover the incident, the spread of the disease would slowdown to some extent, he added.

The Ministry of Health will organise a press conference today [Thursday] to explain the reasons for the illness of students.

Meanwhile, a total of 119 students of different schools of the country became fresh victims of the disease.

In Narayanganj, 38 students and a teacher of Adarsa High School of Mithaboi in Rupganj upazila became unconscious in the morning.

Of them, 16 were taken to Dhaka Medical College Hospital (DMCH) while the rest were admitted to Bihuta Health Complex and Rupganj General Hospital.

Currently, a total of 30 students of different schools of Narsingdi, Manikganj and Narayanganj are undergoing treatment at DMCH.

In Natore, 42 students, including a boy, of Bahimali High School in Boraigram upazila fell unconscious yesterday. Thirty-eight of them were admitted to local hospitals, UNB reports.

On information, a team of army

Market products

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medical corps, led by Major Mahfuzur Rahman, visited to the spot and inquired about the health condition of the students.

In Gazipur, 11 students of different classes of Malek Chowdhury Memorial Girls' High School in Kaliakoir upazila became unconscious yesterday morning.

Of them, six were admitted to Kaliakoir Upazila Health Complex while the others were released soon after they were taken there.

In Bagerhat, 19 students of Bagerhat Government High School became unconscious yesterday noon.

They were admitted to Bagerhat Sadar Hospital. One of them was later moved to Khulna for treatment. A three-member medical team was formed to provide proper treatment to the ailing students.

He said Chittagong was a major source for Sri Lanka's urea fertiliser demand and that it should be rejuvenated.

He added, "We need cheaper freight carrier costs between Colombo and Chittagong. We encourage Dhaka to look at taking a more direct southern route to Sri Lanka rather than a east-bound route."

The Lankan foreign minister also said Colombo is a 'good hub' that Bangladesh can exploit for stronger shipping and trading links.

He added that a deep seaport in Chittagong would attract the top-range shipping lines to Bangladesh that could work as a feeder to a hub in Sri Lanka.

Regarding the Saarc, he said it is now a mature and progressive-looking organisation that has started to break away from the past impediments, especially Indo-Pak tensions, as he believes, the two South Asian giants have softened their stances regarding each other.

"While the MPS focuses on curbing inflation, it does not set any inflation target that will be acceptable to the central bank, except that the rate of inflation with the tightened monetary policy stance now adopted will be below 4 percent."

The MCCI said much of the inflationary pressure in the economy is believed to have been due to excessive public spending out of large borrowings from the banking system. Such expenditures and with that the government's borrowing are likely to increase further in the coming year which is due to see a general election.

The chamber recommended that an appropriate inflation control measure should include mechanisms to rein in the government's profligate spending and thus cut budgetary deficits.

It should be understood that any increase in government borrowing from the banking system means less credits available for the private sector. Lesser credit to the private sector will have a negative effect on industrialisation and growth, The MCCI noted.

"We have similar cultures, similar trade and similar behavioural patterns, which make it much more easier for us to work together than a lot of the other regions on earth," he added.

When asked whether any progress has been made in Saarc given that Safta is mired in an Indo-Pak disagreement over product list, Bogollagama said that creation and progress in the Saarc Development Fund shows that the member states can cooperate and work together.

Asked how Indian preponderance affects Saarc and its smaller member states, Bogollagama said countries like Sri Lanka and Bangladesh can work to increase India's intra-Saarc trade.

"Why not use the strength of our neighbours and milk it? We must work to make the strong stronger," he said.

"We have to engage India more and more within the region. India can play a significant role in the region through its service sector," he said.

Taking the tourism industry as an example, he said if Indian tourists start visiting other Saarc countries it would open up a massive potential in the hospitality sector alone.

"India is also developing nuclear power and we have an energy crisis in the Saarc region," he said adding other South Asian countries could use India's advancements for their own benefit.

He said transfer of India's technology to the region's less-developed countries could be highly significant in their development.

Quizzed on the effect of internal political and security problems on the multilateral organisation, he said that internal matters should be Saarc's focus but the member states have realised the need for cooperation if required.

But Bogollagama underlined the need for greater regional cooperation in eliminating terrorism, as he said it is imperative for states to cooperate in the region to cut off the terrorists' lifeline.

He identified money laundering, drug and human trafficking, and gun-running that need to be reined in to 'eliminate terrorism' from the region.

The Lankan foreign minister also said that the Sri Lankan government is committed to eliminate terrorists from the country and trying to delineate between Tamils and the LTTE, which he said was a terrorist organisation.

Bogollagama leaves today with the Sri Lankan delegation. He was leading the delegation to receive the relic of Gautama Buddha's hair from the Chittagong Buddhist Temple.



PHOTO: STAR

Former law minister Moudud Ahmed being taken to a court in the city yesterday.

BERGER ART CONTEST Entries invited

Entries are invited from the young artists for the 12th Berger Young Painters' Art Competition (BYPAC), says a press release.

The first prize for the competition is Tk 40,000, 2nd prize Tk 30,000 and 3rd prize Tk 25,000 while 4th, 5th and 6th prize is Tk 20,000 each.

The six award winning paintings will then be used in Berger Paints' Annual Corporate Calendar 2008.

The subject of the painting is open and the artists can use oil paint.

Rules of the competition are: Entrants have to be residents of Bangladesh and must be aged between 18-35 years to be eligible to compete. For preliminary selection, artists have to submit a 5R-size colour photograph of their painting(s) (actual size: 24x24).

Entrants need to submit photocopy of their SSC certificate and a color photograph attested by a first class gazetted officer as proof of age. An entrant can send as many entries (i.e. paintings) as he/she wishes.

The actual painting should be framed and backed with necessary information in a write up. Entrants must write their name, parents' name and address accurately. In addition to this, they must submit their bio-data, name and title of the artwork in English.

The last date for submission of the colour photograph (size: 5R) is September 3.

The six winning paintings will be considered property of Berger Paints Limited. If any award-winning painting is accused and proved of plagiarism or adaptation, the award will then be withdrawn by an announcement in the newspapers.

The paintings should reach Shah Waliul Manzoor, Unirend Ltd, House# 70 (New), Road# 15/A (New), Dhamondi, Dhaka-1209, Bangladesh by September 3.

Buet MME dept programme today

DU CORRESPONDENT

Department of Materials and Metallurgical Engineering (MME) of Bangladesh Engineering and Technology (Buet) organises a 'Meet the Dept of MME' programme at the Buet Council Building at 9:00am today.

Energy Adviser Tapan Chowdhury will be present at the programme.

Authorities of the department at a press conference yesterday said they are organising the programme to make the department's activities and its machines familiar to all the concerns of the country.

comprising government representatives, industry people and representatives of other institutions concerned to provide necessary suggestions to the government.

Salaries of the committee members and expenditure of the committee is to be met by donations from scrap-ship importers and ship breakers, the sources added.

Ships imported for scrapping cannot be used for other purposes and an importer has to acquire necessary approval from the government before importing a ship.

To keep the environment clean, the draft policy suggested all ships imported for scrapping have to be free from any kinds of explosives, gases and poisonous materials. Ships may not have fuel, lubricants, refrigerators, batteries, asbestos and PVC pipes in them either.

It also suggested restricting the sale of a number of interior decoration objects, which are hazardous to the environment, to the local market. There would also be restrictions on building scrap yards near sensitive environments like the Sundarbans.

Sources said the draft suggested making some safety equipment mandatory for workers' protection like fire extinguishers, emergency recovery equipments, first aid boxes, protective masks, goggles, overalls, safety harnesses and face shields. It also suggested making scrapping-plans for every ship before the workers start tearing it down.

The government as part of a reforms initiative decided to implement a shipbreaking policy as the industry never had a policy since it started in Bangladesh in the early 70's. Nearly 725 shipbreaking related accidents occurred and 2,117 workers lost their lives since then.

The shipping ministry official hoped accidents and loss of lives would decline in number dramatically if the policy was implemented and the scrap yards follow the rules. The official said the draft policy was formulated following the Environment Protection Rules 1997.

He said the implementation of the policy is urgently needed as different scrap yards are trying to import ships hazardous to the environment.

In February 2006, there were initiatives to bring in 1,200 tonne asbestos-carrying ship SS Norway and in December that year there were efforts to bring in MT Apsheron, which the Green Peace listed as a harmful ship.

The government on an average earns Tk 600-700 crore revenue a year from the sector. The industry fulfills 80 percent local demand for iron and creates employment of around 5 lakh people across the country.