

Minor boy dies in rooftop fall

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A minor boy died after falling from the roof of a six-storey building in the city's Sutrapur area yesterday evening, when he was flying kite on the roof.

The victim was identified as Sadman Ali Siam, 10, a student of class three of Saint Gregory's High School at Laxmibazar.

Victim's family sources said he succumbed to his injuries at Dhaka Medical College and Hospital (DMCH) four hours after he was admitted to the hospital at around 4.00pm.

He fell from the roof at around 3.30pm while he was flying kite at Kalta Bazar and sustained serious injuries

DEATH OF SHAPLA Probe demanded

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Bangladesh Mahila Parishad yesterday demanded proper investigation into the death of Shapla, a domestic help at Rupayan Lotus Tower at Segun Bagicha in the city.

The Parishad demanded punishment to the criminals and security to the family members, says a press release.

Shapla, 16, was found dead at a flat of an intern doctor at Lotus Tower on Tuesday.

JNU 'Ka' unit interview on Jan 17, 18, 19

BSS, Dhaka

The interview for the primarily selected admission seekers against vacant seats for 'Ka' unit (Science faculty) of Jagannath University (JNU) for 2008-09 session will be held on January 17, 18 and 19.

The interview will be held from roll number 1501-1700 on January 17, from 1701-1900 on January 18 and 1901-2100 on January 19.

The admission seekers have been advised to bring necessary papers including admit cards and original mark sheets of SSC, HSC and equivalent examinations.



Participants fly kites at a kite festival at Dhupkhola playground in the city yesterday. Dhakabashi organised the festival on the occasion of Poush Sankranti marking the end of Bengali month Poush.

PHOTO: STAR

New vaccine to protect children from five killer diseases

First shots in Khulna today

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Bangladesh for the first time introduces a new combination vaccine that will protect its children against five killer diseases in one injection, including the deadly bacterium Haemophilus influenzae type b (Hib).

Hib causes some severe forms of pneumonia and meningitis. It is estimated to cause millions of serious illnesses and 400,000 deaths globally, the majority of them among children under five. Even with treatment, thousands of children die of Hib disease every year.

The new combination or

5-in-1 vaccine will protect children against Hib and four other deadly diseases -- diphtheria, tetanus, pertussis and hepatitis B.

Health and Family Welfare Minister AFM Ruhul Haque, representatives of UN agencies and development partners will administer the first shots of the combination vaccine to children in Khulna today.

The vaccine will be provided under the routine immunisation programme to nearly four million children born in the country every year. As it records high routine immunisation coverage, it is estimated that Hib vaccine can save about 20,000 children's lives annually.

Director of Hib Initiative at Johns Hopkins University Dr Rana Hajjeh said, "Hib vaccine is a safe, effective and highly cost-effective intervention used for more than 18 years in developed and many developing countries. Where used routinely, it has virtually eliminated Hib disease."

Instead of three different injections (for DPT, Hepatitis B and Hib), children will only need one injection at three different times during their first year of life -- at the age of six weeks, 10 weeks and 14 weeks.

The introduction of the vaccine in Bangladesh is

carried out with the financial and technical support from the GAVI Alliance and its key partners, including Unicef, WHO and the Hib Initiative.

Renowned Pakistani phaco surgeon Dr Syed Mohammad Asif will conduct free phaco surgery to 300 patients on first come first serve basis for five days beginning on January 25, says a press release.

Patients are requested to enlist their names at Lion A Badal, Eye, Hospital, E-163 South Banashree, Eastern Housing, Goran Project, Dhaka or dial 7293054, 0191-3590856, 01712785051 or 01191152137.

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Free phaco surgery Jan 25

METRO DESK

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Govt to sue Siemens

FROM PAGE 1

Rajuddin Ahmed Raju, minister for post and telecommunication.

Asked if Siemens will be black listed in Bangladesh he said, "The government has already taken the issue very seriously as it is related to the country's image. After examining all sides we will consider whether Siemens will work in Bangladesh or not."

The law ministry already initiated a move to find out the details of the irregularities that had taken place in the government owned mobile phone network project, he added.

Mohammad Mahbubur Rahman, post and telecommunication secretary, who is also the chairman of the TeleTalk board of directors, said, "If the government asks the board, we will look into the matter."

He however said the government's investigation is still going on. The Anti-corruption Commission (ACC) and other intelligence agencies are also investigating the international scam.

Meanwhile, NSN officials yesterday said they should not be blamed for the scandal as the illegal activities took place before the formation of new company.

"We are a newly registered company. We have no connection with the earlier practices of Siemens," said a high official of the company adding, "If the government wants to take any action, it should be against Siemens Bangladesh Ltd not against NSN."

"They spent a huge amount of money to pay bribes, without accounting for it properly in the company's balance sheet," he said adding, when such irregularities were noticed in Siemens headquarters in Germany, an investigation was launched unearthing the entire racket.

An NSN official, who had also worked as a high official of Siemens Bangladesh Ltd for six and a half years, claimed that the bribery deal was handled entirely by Siemens' Germany and Italy divisions.

"We had no idea about it, neither did we know the amount of the bribe or where it was transferred or deposited," he said adding, "Everything happened abroad, beyond our knowledge."

Since formation of NSN, at least 600 telecom wing officials of Siemens and Nokia got transferred to the Bangladesh division of the new company.

The raging bribery and money laundering scandal has become a source of much discomfort for them, some of whom are also complaining about depression.

The NSN official said, "Sometimes we feel ashamed when we come face to face with our new colleagues who came from Nokia, as we are now known as former employees of an internationally known corrupt company."

The ACC on December 18 of last year with the help of Singapore government traced 20.61 lakh Singapore dollars and 2.61 lakh US dollars in Koko's Singapore bank accounts, which are allegedly linked to the bribery.

The US Department of Justice recently moved to confiscate nearly \$3 million from Koko's bank accounts in Singapore.

The justice department is currently seeking a forfeiture action against the accounts, said Acting Assistant Attorney General Matthew Friedrich of the Criminal Division on Friday in Washington DC.

According to an international investigation the total amount of bribe money paid to Bangladeshi officials, politicians, and Koko was \$200 million, which might even turn out to be much more upon further investigation.

An international delegation of investigators including an FBI agent was in Bangladesh recently, sharing evidence with local law enforcement agencies, and seeking help from them in recovering the laundered bribe money for handing it over to Bangladesh.

The delegation left Tuesday, saying FBI agents will frequently come and go for a while until the laundered money is recovered and handed over to the Bangladesh government.

Sources in the Attorney General's Office disclosed on Tuesday that more than 25 influential persons including former ministers of BNP-led four-party alliance government and some people of Hawa Bhaban, the erstwhile 'alternative power centre' during the regime, were also involved in the racket.

Involvement of Khaleda Zia's elder son Tarique Rahman who was known as the 'prince' of Hawa Bhaban, and of his business partner and close friend Giasuddin Al Mamun, were also alleged by the sources.

Kite festival held

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Dhakabashi, a cultural organisation, organised a kite festival on the occasion of Shakraim (a festival held at the end of Bangla month Poush every year) at the field of Gendaria East and Club of Dhupkhola area yesterday.

The festival was held in cooperation with central office of Ghuri Federation at Hazaribagh. The festival was followed by a cultural function and discussion.

Eminent media personality Dilara Zaman attended the function as the chief guest. Dhakabashi Club President Shukur Ali and Secretary Mohammad Alauddin spoke at the discussion.

DMC orientation Jan 25

BSS, Dhaka

The orientation meeting of the newly admitted first year MBBS students of Dinajpur Medical College (DMC) for 2008-09 session will be held at 10:00am on January 25 at the auditorium of the college.

The regular classes of the students will be started on the same day, said an official handout issued yesterday.

Call to ensure economic, human security for all

METRO DESK

Drishtipat, a London-based global human rights watchdog on Bangladesh, yesterday placed some recommendations before the newly elected government, says a press release.

"We urge the government to deliver on an election manifesto that promised economic and human security for all citizens," said Asif Saleh, executive director of Drishtipat, a global human rights watchdog on Bangladesh.

"We believe this is a unique and historic moment for Bangladesh to respond to the needs and demands of all her citizens and not just a few," added Saleh, while releasing a charter of demands.

The Charter for Rights issued by Drishtipat specifically focused on five key areas. They are ensuring rule of law, various economic and cultural rights, rights of expatriate Bangladeshis and religious and ethnic minorities and rights of those threatened by global warming.

Drishtipat also demanded immediate steps to try the war criminals by working with Sector Commanders' Forum, legal experts, forensic scientists and organisations that

have been involved in documentation process over the last 37 years.

Drishtipat also called for repealing various black laws like vested properties act, which has, in various times, disenfranchised all citizens, and especially the minorities.

It also demanded full implementation of Chittagong Hill Tracts Accord 1997, with priority given to withdrawal of security camps from the region.

Highlighting the rights of the global diaspora, Drishtipat called for voting rights for all Bangladeshis citizens around the world and demanded specific actions to protect the rights and dignity of millions of migrant workers, whose remittance is a key pillar of the country's economy.

It stressed the government argue the case of impact of climate change on Bangladesh from a position of strength in the international forums, and from a point of view of basic economic rights of millions of people.

It also highlighted the need for the adaptation fund created for Bangladesh to be managed by a national body rather than any international donor agency.

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