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Fog disrupts flights at ZIA

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The country was covered in a blanket of fog for the fourth consecutive day yesterday disrupting normal life across the country and affecting flight schedules at Zia International Airport.

The thick fog also disrupted normal launch and ferry services and vehicular movement, especially on long routes, for hours causing huge sufferings to passengers.

An flight operation official at Zia International Airport said that due to the dense fog not a single flight was able to take off from or land at Zia

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1 killed in train-truck collision

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A collision between a train and a truck left a labourer dead and four others injured last night at the city's Baraitala in Shyampur when the truck

SEE PAGE 15 COL 7

Tricksters thrive on textbook crisis

Low quality books being printed, marketed outside Dhaka

ERSHAD KAMOL

Many unscrupulous traders capitalising on the current crisis of textbooks for secondary school students are marketing pirated books in sub-standard newspapers in a bid to make brisk business much to the chagrin of students and parents.

These dishonest and unauthorised dealers are not only making a dent in the pockets of parents of students of classes VI to IX, they are also depriving the National Curriculum & Textbook Board (NCTB) of its royalty.

Printers at Loharpool under Sutrapur Police Station and Babu Bazar under Kotwali Police Station are involved in bringing out such textbooks in low-graded papers.

The wholesalers do not sell these books in Dhaka; rather they sell them in district towns, especially remote areas, to avert being caught as people in those areas are gullible and can easily be trapped.

Printing cost of Bangla textbook for class VIII

authorised by NCTB is Tk 39 while a pirated book costs only Tk 17.

The government has set a subsidised price of Tk 35.20 for this book but students have to spend as much as Tk 10 to Tk 15 more to buy both pirated and NCTB authorised books.

As the problem persists with the supply of inadequate number of textbooks in the market printed by authorised publishers, dishonest traders are taking the advantage of the crisis, sources said.


Our Chittagong correspondent confirmed that students are buying pirated books, taking them for original ones, for extra Tk 10 to 15.

"Many wholesalers are marketing pirated books with the help of the latest computer technology in substandard paper and making lucrative business," an authorised printer told The Daily Star, adding that they cannot compete with such cheap products.

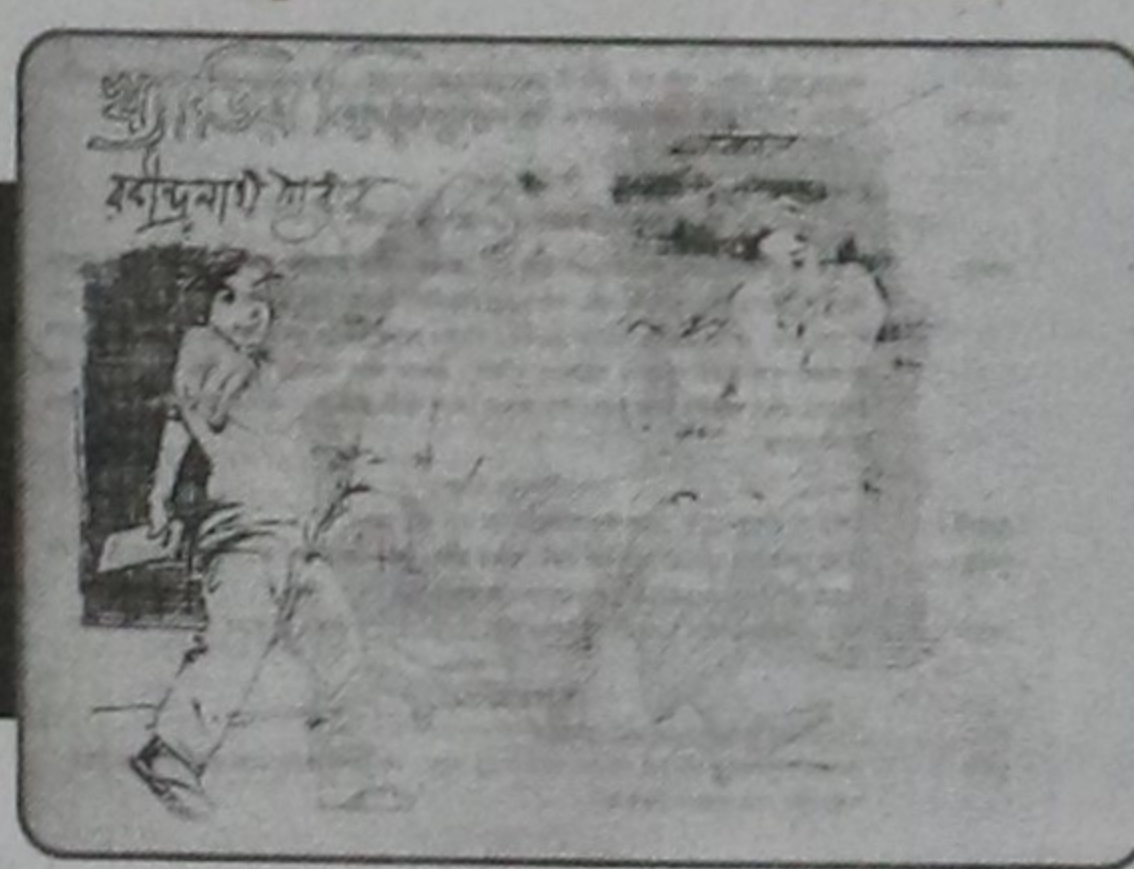
"These unscrupulous traders are so powerful that we cannot do anything about them," he

SEE PAGE 15 COL 8

Original Text Book



Duplicate Text Book



Hazardous purified water given with drug

MAHBUBA ZANNAT

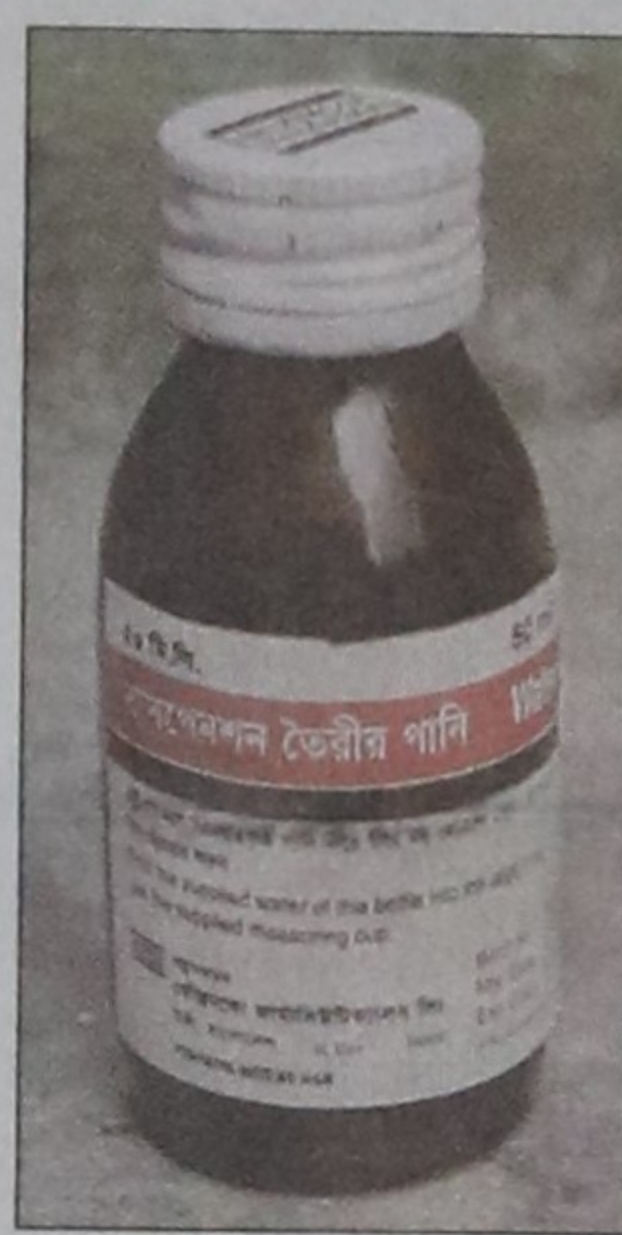
A thick substance has been found floating in a bottle of purified water supplied with a medicine called Neofloxin manufactured and marketed by Beximco Pharmaceuticals Ltd.

The purified water is provided with a pack of Neofloxin to make a suspension with ciprofloxacin granules.

On January 11, AHM Foysool, an NGO worker, bought a 60 ml bottle of Neofloxin -- Beximco's brand name for ciprofloxacin -- from Talukder Pharmacy on Dhaka Shishu Hospital premises in the capital.

The batch number mentioned on the bottle is SRJ184

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A thick substance floats in this bottle of purified water which is supposed to be mixed with a drug and used by patients.

PHOTO: STAR

Biharis kept waiting for passport

HC verdict paper has not reached home ministry in 8 months

SHAHNAZ PARVEEN

Despite obtaining country's citizenship, the Urdu-speaking Bihari are still being deprived of getting Bangladeshi passport as copy of the High Court (HC) verdict is yet to reach the home ministry even after eight months of the ruling.

On May 18 last year the HC ruled that about three lakh Biharis living in the country are citizens of Bangladesh.

After obtaining the citizenship, many Biharis have applied for getting passport. Though they have submitted the applications after following proper system, the passport offices have rejected the applications depriving their citizen rights, many Biharis alleged.

Secretary for Home Affairs Md Abdul Karim told The Daily Star that the ministry is bound to follow the HC ruling but its copy yet to be

received. "Without knowing the verdict clearly, we can't do anything for issuing passport to Biharis," he said.

The passport officials are still unaware of new government policy regarding issuing passport to Biharis.

Abdur Rab Hawlader, director general of Department of Immigration and Passport said, "We didn't receive any instruction from the authorities on issuing passports to the Biharis."

While Kafil Uddin Bhuiyan, deputy director of Regional Passport Office, Dhaka said, "We provide passport on the basis of police verification. Without police clearance, we can't do anything in issuing the passport."

But the residents at different Bihari camps said, they are still being addressed as 'Stranded Pakistani' in police verification, which is the main barrier to get the passport. In some cases,

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Global warming could unleash 'dead zones' in the ocean

AFP, Paris

Global warming may create "dead zones" in the ocean that would be devoid of fish and seafood and endure for up to two millennia, according to a study published yesterday.

Its authors say deep cuts in

SEE PAGE 15 COL 7

Siraj, Habibur granted bail

Obaidul Karim asked to surrender

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A High Court (HC) bench yesterday granted three months bail to former BNP minister Shahjahan Siraj in a tax evasion case.

In another move yesterday,

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RCC to sack 470 staff to cut expenditure

Authorities say they were appointed on political consideration

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Rajshahi

The Rajshahi City Corporation (RCC) authorities yesterday decided to dismiss some 470 "unnecessary and politically-appointed" employees to cut expenditure.

RCC councillors said the decision was made at a meeting in the afternoon and it will be executed a month later following negotiations with the employees' union.

Meantime, the employees formed a com-

mittee to protest the move and staged demonstration on the Rajshahi Nagar Bhaban premises in the afternoon.

The RCC has to spend around Tk 1.5 crore annually on the 470 staffs appointed on daily wage-basis, said RCC Secretary Emdadul Haque.

The listed staffs include 243 from conservancy, 37 from mosquito control, 28 from development, 20 from administration, 26 from

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6 female muggers arrested

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A team of Rapid Action Battalion (Rab-1) personnel yesterday arrested six female muggers from different parts of the city and two members of an "Agyan Party" (robbers stealing from people by drugging) from Paltan.

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Prayer Timing		
January 26		
	Azan	Jamaat
Fajr	5-35	6-10
Zohr	12-45	1-15
Asr	4-15	4-30
Maghrib	5-46	5-50
Esha	7-15	7-45

Source: Islamic Foundation

Last Tamil Tiger town tumbled

Says Sri Lankan army chief

AFP, Colombo

Sri Lankan troops yesterday overran the last town controlled by Tamil rebels, army chief Lieutenant General Sarath Fonseka said, striking a major blow in Asia's longest-running ethnic conflict.

"We have completely captured Mullaitivu," the army chief said in a televised address to the nation.

The fall of Mullaitivu is a huge loss to the Tiger rebels, who were dislodged three weeks ago from their political capital of Kilinochchi, where they had the trappings of a separate state.

Since July 2007, the Tigers have been steadily losing territory and are now confined to a 300-square-kilometre (115-square-mile) area of jungle along the northeastern coast, Fonseka said.

"We have cleared 95 percent of the work (to defeat the Tigers)," Fonseka said. "The end of terrorism is near and we will definitely win. The Tiger garrison of Mullaitivu was destroyed today."

He said troops fought their way through 40 kilometres

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A mother takes her daughter to school through the dense fog that wrapped the capital yesterday morning. The photo was taken at Ahmabagh in Dhaka.

PHOTO: STAR

Pakistan urges Obama to halt missile attacks

Troops kill 8 militants in Swat valley

AP, AFP, Islamabad

Pakistan urged President Barack Obama to halt US missile strikes on al-Qaeda strongholds near the Afghan border, saying Saturday that civilians were killed the previous day in the first attacks since Obama's inauguration.

Earlier Pakistani security forces on Sunday killed eight militants in the northwest Swat valley, where the army is battling extremists waging a violent campaign for Islamic law, officials said.

Troops launched a pre-dawn operation against a militant hideout in the town of Ningolai, a military spokesman said.

"The clash left eight militants dead including their commander Nur Bakhtiar," said the spokesman, who requested an anonymity.

Heavy arms and ammunition were recovered from the hideout, he added.

Pakistan's military is battling extremists loyal to radical cleric Maulana Fazlullah who have launched a violent campaign to introduce Islamic Sharia law.

Pakistani security officials said eight suspected foreign militants, including an Egyptian al-Qaeda operative, were among 22 people killed in Friday's twin strikes in the Waziristan region.

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