

Call to amend Tobacco Control Act 2005

Pictorial warnings on tobacco packs stressed

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Pictorial warnings depicting the effects of smoking could discourage a significant number of people from smoking who cannot read the written warnings on tobacco packs, speakers at a view exchange meetings said yesterday.

Pictures of affected lung, heart and teeth on the cigarette packs would certainly discourage youths from taking up smoking, they added.

They also stressed the need to amend the Tobacco Control Act 2005 so that the tobacco companies cannot take the advantage of the loopholes of the law to expand their market through various tricky measures.

Health Reporters Forum, Bangladesh (HREB) and Bangladesh Consortium on Tobacco Control (BCTC) jointly organised the meeting on 'Show the Truth: Pictorial Warnings save lives' at the Consumers Association of Bangladesh (CAB) auditorium in the city.

The speakers said smoking is responsible for lung cancer, heart disease and various other diseases. Though the government earns Tk 24,000 crore revenue from tobacco companies, more money is spent on the treatment of smoking-related diseases.

Reading out the keynote paper, Member Secretary of BCTC Iqbal Masud said some 25 countries have started

using pictorial warnings and that the government should force the tobacco companies to use such warnings covering 50 percent of a cigarette pack.

"Consumption of tobacco can be controlled if the Framework Convention on Tobacco Control (FCTC) treaty and the government's National Strategic Plan of Action for Tobacco Control can be implemented properly," said Quazi Farook of CAB.

Borhan Ahmed, president of CAB and executive editor of the daily Janakantha, presided over the discussion while President of HREB, Moniruzzaman Uzzal and Dr Akramul Islam of The Union also spoke.

563 bags of rice for relief seized

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Khulna

A patrol team of Bangladesh Navy seized 563 bags (each bag weighing 50 kilogram) of rice from two trawlers in the river Shibsha at Nallian under Dakop upazila in Khulna on Sunday.

The government had allotted the rice to distribute among the cyclone Aila-hit people in Koira upazila.

The rice was being taken to Khulna for sale in the black market. Eight people were arrested for carrying the rice in two engine trawlers.

Rice trader Sohrab Sikari who purchased the rice from Koira has been absconding getting information of arrest of his eight employees who were carrying the rice to Khulna, police said.

When contacted, Koira Upazila Nirbahi Officer Md Arif Pasha said he is not aware of seizure of the rice meant for relief in his area.

Brac worker rescued five hours after abduction

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Dinajpur

The police arrested two people on charges of abducting a woman field worker of Brac who was finally rescued at Atwari border in Panchagarh five hours after her abduction yesterday.

The two arrestees -- Bashirul Islam alias Bashir, 45, of village Dhaidhaipara in Atwari upazila and Abdus Sattar, 47, of Panchagarh Pourasava area -- along with another accomplice Abdul Khaleque tried to traffic Parbati Rani, 20, to India, but local people rescued her.

On receiving information, police rushed to the scene and arrested the two. Khaleque managed to escape.

Quoting witnesses, the police said the three forced Parbati into a microbus on Monday morning when she was going to her workplace at Nalpukhuri village.

The three then took her to Mirgarh border in Atwari upazila to traffic her to India, according to Rani.

Chemicals worth Tk 3cr gutted in Benapole fire

A CORRESPONDENT, Benapole

Imported Goods Worth Tk 3.33 crore were gutted in a fire at No 33 chemical shade of Benapole port yesterday.

Port authorities said that the fire originated from an explosion caused by friction of chemicals at about 10:00am and soon spread to different areas.

Twelve people were also injured while trying to douse the fire.

Fire fighters and port workers managed to bring the fire under control after two hours.

Director (Traffic) of the Port Shyam Kishore Roy said 49 consignments of goods in the shade have been damaged while 33 consignments have been completely destroyed.

A five-member probe body has been formed to investigate into the incident.

Billal Hossain, owner of local importer Chowdhury Enterprise, said Tk 18 lakh magnesium sulphate imported by him have been reduced to ashes. He demanded compensation from the port authorities.



PHOTO: STAR

A visitor admires a bonsai at an exhibition at Nalinikanta Vattashali Gallery at National Museum in the city yesterday. Bangladesh Bonsai Garden organised the five-day exhibition.

ACC finds no wealth beyond disclosed income of Khaleda's APS

UNB, Dhaka

The Anti-Corruption Commission (ACC) did not find accumulation of wealth beyond the disclosed income of ex-prime minister Khaleda Zia's APS-2 M Abdul Matin.

According to a reliable source, a letter issued from the ACC on June 20 informed the persons and authorities concerned that allegation of amassing wealth beyond the disclosed income against Abdul Matin, now deputy secretary (OSD), Establishment Ministry, was not proved during the investigation.

It has been learnt that on March 2, 2008, Matin, as per directive of the ACC, submitted his wealth statement, as an anti-graft purge under the interim regime was underway then.

He was among 222 persons whose names were listed by the National Coordination Committee (NCC) against serious crimes during the rule of the last military-backed caretaker government.

Family members of Matin told UNB that his family members, including his father, mother, brothers and sisters, were "harassed by the task-force members" during the inquiry.

"Finally, they did get nothing illegal. What's the remedy for such harassment, mental torture and social humiliation?" one of his family members posed a question.

Conduct research on speed control device

HC asks BRTA

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The High Court (HC) yesterday directed the Bangladesh Road Transport Authority (BRTA) to conduct a research on a new device developed by NITS Services Private Limited, an organisation of Nitel Motors Limited, to control the speed of vehicles in order to prevent road accidents.

The HC bench of Justice ABM Khairul Haque and Justice Mamtazuddin Ahmed passed the order while two BRTA high officials were explaining before the court as to why they could not implement the HC verdict asking them to take steps to install 'speed governor seal' in all types of vehicle to prevent road accidents.

BRTA Chairman Md Ehsanul Haque and its Director (Engineering) Md Rafiqul Islam appeared before the court yesterday morning as per its earlier direction.

The lawyers concerned said that the HC bench passed the order following a report published in the daily Janakantha on June 9 stating that NITS Services Private Limited has created a new device that can control the speed of cars.

The court also asked the BRTA officials to appear before it on Monday in this connection.

BRTA officials told the HC bench that the 'speed governor seal' couldn't be installed in all automobiles, as the mechanism is only available in diesel-run vehicles.

They said that they communicated with the Department of Mechanical Engineering of the Bangladesh University of Engineering and Technology (Buet) following the HC order directing the authority to take steps to install 'speed governor seal' in all types of vehicle.

The Buet experts, however, told the BRTA that if sufficient financial assistance is provided, they can conduct a research to find out ways to install the seal in CNG-, petrol- and octane-driven vehicles, they said.

The 'Speed governor seal' is an in-built mechanism used to control the speed limit of motor vehicles. Whenever a driver tries to cross the speed limit fixed by the authorities concerned, the mechanism limits acceleration by adjusting engine fuel injection system.

An HC suo moto ruling in March last year directed that from March 2009 installation of 'speed governor seal' will be mandatory for all kinds of automobiles to reduce the growing number of traffic accidents caused largely by speeding vehicles.



Laurent Therond, managing director of Nestlé Bangladesh Limited, inaugurates a tank of clean drinking water at Pirujali High School in Gazipur sadar recently.

Nestlé constructs water tank in school

METRO DESK

Nestlé Bangladesh Limited has taken up a step to ensure good life by providing clean drinking water in a few village schools, says a press release.

As part of the effort, Nestlé constructed a tank of clean drinking water at Pirujali High School in Gazipur. Laurent Therond, managing director of Nestlé, inaugurated the tank recently.

The project also include education component -- water education programme to teach students about the importance of clean water, need for conservation of water and link between clean water, hygiene and health.



PHOTO: PID

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina presides over a cabinet meeting at the cabinet division at secretariat in the city yesterday. (Story on Page 1)

Mawa-Kaorakandi ghats inundated

Ferry movement disrupted

A CORRESPONDENT, Madaripur

Floodwaters have inundated the ferry ghats on both sides of Mawa-Kaorakandi highway disrupting ferry movement after water level at the river Padma rose abnormally in the last 24 hours.

BIWTA ghat sources said the Padma swelled by six centimeters in the last 24

hours and ferry ghat no 3 at Kaorakandi have gone under water. Water at ferry ghat no 1 at Mawa is almost touching the ghat. With this, the Padma water in this route rose by 16 cm.

Ferry authorities have said if the water level continues to rise in this rate, the two ghats may have to be closed any time.

The sources said as the

quick rise in water level increases the intensity of wave in the Padma, movement of ferry, launch and other riverine vehicles take more time.

About 200 vehicles have got stranded on both the ghats as dumb ferry Raipura has been remaining out of order for the last four days, dumb ferry Ranikhet for two days and type ferry Kishori from yesterday.



PHOTO: STAR

Prof Muzaffer Ahmad speaks at a roundtable on electoral manifesto and proposed budget at Cirdap auditorium in the city yesterday. On his right are S M Shajahan and Dr Badiul Alam Majumdar. (Story on Page B1)

'Media can play vital role to stop acid violence'

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Satkhira

Speakers at a workshop yesterday said the media can play a vital role to stop acid violence by creating mass awareness.

They also urged all to resist acid throwers and demanded the acid throwers be punished.

As the culprits escape punishment through loopholes, acid violence has become a regular phenomenon in the country, they said.

Manusher Jonno Foundation, Acid Survivors Foundation (ASF) and Agragati Sangstha, a local NGO, jointly organised the workshop on 'The role of local journalists to resist acid throwers' at Officers' Club in the town.

The Daily Star Correspondent Abu Ahmed chaired the workshop while ASF Manager Partnership and Networking Khaleda Yasmin Eti, Kalyan Banarjee of the daily Prothom Alo, Mizanur Rahman of the daily Janakantha, Yab Hossain, Advocate Abul Kalam Azad, Sheikh Abdul Wazed Kachi, Mostafizur Rahman Uzzal, Advocate Dilip Kumar Dev and Abu Taleb also spoke.

Noor Banu, an acid survivor, spoke on the ordeals she had experienced as an acid survivor and called on everyone not to ostracise the acid survivors.

Terminating acid throwers enemies of the society, the journalists expressed their determination to resist acid throwers even at the cost of their lives.

They called upon all to stand by the acid survivors to help them lead a normal life.

Two held for beating journo

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Sylhet

Habiganj police arrested two cadres, including organising secretary of Habiganj district unit of Chhatra League, from Chowdhury Bazar yesterday in connection with the attack on ATN Bangla's district correspondent Abdul Halim.

A group of cadres led by organising secretary of district unit of Chhatra League Muhibur Rahman Mamun attacked Halim on May 9 for covering some news of misdeeds of the cadres.

Halim, also a correspondent of a regional daily, took treatment in Habiganj and Dhaka. He filed a case against Mamun and others.

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