

Phensidyl floods country for lax border patrol

Home ministry orders special anti-drug drive

M ABUL KALAM AZAD

Phensidyl, a popular drug among youths, has been entering the country in huge quantity due to lax border patrol over the past few months and the negligence on the part of the government in implementing anti-smuggling measures.

An internal security report recently revealed that Phensidyl bottles flooded the country due to lax security following the carnage at the Bangladesh Rifles (BDR) Headquarters at Pikhana, sources said.

Home ministry officials said lax border patrol has created opportunities for the smugglers' syndicates, corrupt law enforcers and influential ruling party members to make a quick buck through such illicit trade.

They said about five lakh Phensidyl bottles are entering the country through different

border points a day. This huge supply led to a decline in its price. Before the BDR mutiny, a bottle of Phensidyl sold at Tk 1,000, but the price came down below Tk 500 in recent months as the drug is now easily available.

Against this backdrop, the home ministry directed the divisional commissioner, deputy commissioners and the law enforcement agencies to launch special anti-smuggling drives and recover drugs.

"I came to know that Phensidyl smuggling has become a dangerous phenomenon. We discussed the issue in a recent meeting of the divisional commissioners at the home ministry," Home Secretary Abdus Sobhan Shikder told The Daily Star.

"Combating the smuggling of Phensidyl was the main agenda of the meeting. We have asked the police, Rapid Action

Battalion (Rab) and even the members of the armed forces involved in the Operation Rebel Hunt to launch drives on regular basis," he added.

The home ministry also asked Rab to form a separate team to fight the menace.

The national committee to resist smuggling, which is headed by the home minister, failed to hold a meeting in the last six months. Its last meeting was held on January 15.

The Department of Narcotics Control (DNC), which is responsible for checking drug trafficking inside the country, also appears to be ineffective in tackling the menace. "We can only recover a small number of bottles out of those being smuggled in every day," said a senior officer of the department.

According to the internal security report submitted to the home ministry, Phensidyl bot-

ties are entering the country in huge quantity. "The younger generation is becoming addicted to it and leading themselves astray. They are also getting involved in various social crimes," it added.

The report said that as the border patrol had been lax following the Pikhana events, the local smugglers' syndicates with the help of Indian border guards smuggled in various drugs.

It also said that Phensidyl are coming in huge quantity through the borders in the three districts -- Lalmonirhat, Dinajpur and Kurigram.

A government official in Lalmonirhat said, "Border of this district has always been used to bring in drugs. But nowadays huge quantity of Phensidyl is being smuggled with the help of ruling party people."

Train, bus, truck, microbus, ambulance, pick-up van and water transport are being used to carry the drugs to the capital city and other places, the report said, adding that the present operations of the syndicates are more active than in the past.

The report suggested motivating the BDR jawans to strengthen the border patrol and involving the police, Rab and the administration of the bordering districts in checking the smuggling.

"This menace can be curbed easily if members of the armed forces of the Operation Rebel Hunt are engaged in anti-smuggling drives," it added.

The report also emphasised the strong role of police but said the police personnel who have been posted in bordering districts and upazilas for long have developed good relations with local drug traders and smugglers. "They should be transferred immediately."



Citizens' Rights Movement forms a human chain at Shahbagh in the city yesterday demanding that the government give death sentence to the criminals involved in food adulteration and restart its anti-adulteration drive. (Story on Page 5)

Be cautious while investigating cases

Magistrates tell police officials

COURT CORRESPONDENT

Speakers at a view exchange meeting yesterday asked police officials to be cautious while investigating the cases that help the prosecution and the defence get justice.

District and Sessions Judge Mohammad Abdul Gafur presided over the meeting at Dhaka District Judge's Court.

High police officials, including officers-in-charge (OCs) of different police stations in Dhaka were present at the meeting while Chief Judicial Magistrate Mohammad Rafiqul Alam, Additional Chief Judicial Magistrate Mohammad Shahjahan Kabir and Senior Judicial Magistrate Shahriar Kabir made different defects in investigating cases.

On the other hand, police officials mentioned their problems at the meeting and requested the magistrates to solve them.

District Judge Abdul Gafur said during the trial of different

criminal cases filed with eight police stations in Dhaka, they have found flaws of investigating officers (IOs) in probing the cases.

Due to lack of proper investigation, real culprits are being acquitted of charges while the victims and their family members are being deprived of justice.

In most of the cases, police do not bring specific charges against those involved in the incidents.

On the contrary, police officials requested the judges and magistrates to pass any order on remand and bail petitions considering depth of offences brought against the arrestees.

One of the police officials said they arrest a number of offenders and forward them to the courts with remand prayers, but the court reject the remand prayers.

Moreover, arrestees are released on bail soon after they are produced before the courts.

On the other hand, judges and magistrates turned down

their appeals and said they have nothing to do when someone is arrested on vague allegations.

Dhaka Metropolitan Bar Association President Advocate Arfan Uddin Khan said a number of people have to face problems due to lack of proper investigation into criminal cases.

District Judge Gafur said they send warrants of arrest against fugitives to different police stations asking reports about them but police do not submit reports to the courts years after years. As a result, they do not begin trial proceedings of many cases for long and the litigants do not get fair justice from the courts.

Two judges of Nari-Shishu Nirjatan Daman Bishesh Tribunals Abdus Sobhan and Mahmudur Rahman, Dhaka Bar Association President Moklesur Rahman Badal, its General Secretary Gazi Mohammad Shah Alam and District Public Prosecutor Khandaker Abdul Mannan also spoke at the meeting.

VIQARUNNISA ADMISSION

Criminals were hired to kill Dr Mujibur Say police

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A gang of miscreants, who made attempt to kill Dr Mujibur Rahman a member of the governing body of Viqarunnisa Noon School and College on April 29, received Tk 1.5 lakh, said detective police yesterday.

The four attackers of the gang, who were arrested in this connection on Friday, during primary interrogation said they have received Tk 1.5 lakh to kill Dr Mujibur. They also disclosed names of three governing body members and a teacher of the school who engaged them, DB sources said.

The arrestees were identified as Nupur, 28, of Gulbagh of Malibagh, Halim of Narsingdi, Saheeb Ali alias Saheeb and Tipu of Munshiganj.

The criminals attacked Dr Mujibur at his chamber in the city's Moghbazar intersection on April 29 evening with machetes to kill him. They fled the spot leaving him injured seriously as locals and his patients rushed to the spot.

Dr Mujib filed a case in this regard with Ramna Police Station which later was shifted to DB, police sources said.

Assistant Commissioner (AC) Nasir Uddin Khan of DB said in preliminary interrogation the arrestees said a gang of 15 killers led by Jasim, son of a police constable, was hired for Tk 3 lakh to kill Dr Mujibur as he tried to stop illegal trading of admission in the school.

Nasir quoting the arrestees said Jasim received Tk 1.5 lakh in advance. Jasim paid his three accomplices Tk 10,000 each and bought a motorbike for himself, Nasir added. Nasir said around 300 students were admitted to the school illegally in exchange for Tk 1 to 1.5 lakh from each student.

Investigation officer (IO) of the case DB Inspector Munshi Ruhul Kaddus said they found names of three governing body members and a teacher of the school but for the sake of investigation they will not disclose the names.

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Mutual Trust Bank-Daily Star Debate Competition begins today

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

The weeklong Mutual Trust Bank-The Daily Star Debate Competition 2009 begins in the port city today.

Editor and Publisher of The Daily Star Mahfuz Anam is expected to inaugurate the competition at the Theatre Institute Chittagong (TIC) auditorium at around 10:00am.

Deputy Commissioner (DC) Farid Uddin Ahmad, Resident Editor of the Prothom Alo poet Abul Momen and Mutual Trust Bank Senior Vice President Md Nazrul Islam will also be present on the occasion.

Drishya, a cultural organisation, is organising the competition featuring 17th Inter-School Debate, 2nd Children Debate and 6th Inter-University Debate in association with Equity Properties Management Limited.

ATN Bangla and Radio Foorti are the media partners of the competition.

The participating schools at the school level debate are Chittagong Government High School, Dr Khastagir Govt Girls' High School, Nasirabad Govt High School, Ispahani Public School and College, BM School and College, BAF Shaheen College, Chittagong Collegiate School, Government Muslim High School, St Placid's High School, Kapashgola City Corporation Girls' High School, Aparanacharan City Corporation Girls' High School, Imaratunnesa City Corporation Girls' High School, Krishnachura Girls' High School, City Government Girls' High School, Agrabad Govt Girls' High School and Silver Bells Girls' High School.

Debaters from eleven institutions, including Chittagong University (CU), Dhaka University (DU), Jahangirnagar University (JU), Rajshahi University (RU), North South University (NSU), Premier University, Chittagong University of Science and Technology (CUET), International Islamic University of Chittagong (IIUC), University of Science and Technology, Chittagong (USTC) and Chittagong Maa O Shishu Hospital Medical College will participate at the inter-university debate competition.

POPULATION GROWTH

Formulate effective management strategy

Speakers urge govt

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Speakers at a discussion yesterday urged the government to take necessary steps to formulate an effective population management strategy, as uncontrolled population growth is the key obstacle to development in the country.

They laid emphasis on empowering women by involving them in all sectors of development, because the concept of women empowerment is closely related with birth control strategies.

They made the remarks while addressing the discussion on 'Empowering women in reinforces development' jointly organised by United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) and Department of Population Science of Dhaka University (DU) at Nabab Nawab Ali Chowdhury Senate Bhavan on the campus.

The discussion was organised to observe the World Population Day-2009 with the slogan of 'Responding to the economic crisis: Investing in women is a smart choice'.

Addressing the discussion DU Vice Chancellor AAMS Arefin Siddique said, "All the people in the country are asset. They will remain burden of the society, if the country failed to make them skilled. We want to see them asset rather burden. The government should take initiative to convert the vast population into resource. That is why it is must to adopt combined population control strategy."

Arthur Erken, UNFPA representative in Bangladesh, at the discussion expressed great concern over the women's death during pregnancy and childbirth in the least developed countries.

"The whole world losses \$15 billion for the death of women in pregnancy and childbirth, while it would cost \$6 billion to provide the health services needed to save women lives," he said.

He called on the policymakers of the country to make the health and rights of women a political and development priority. "Investing in women and girls will set the stage not only for economic recovery but also for long-term economic growth that reduce inequity and poverty," he added.

Md Mehedi Hasan Khan, chairman of the department, chaired the programme while

Pro-VC Harun-or-Rashid, Dean of Social Science Faculty Prof Sheikh Abdus Salam, population science expert Prof Dr AKM Nurun Nabi, among others, spoke.

Teachers, students and officials of the population

science department also brought out a procession on the campus marking the day.

After the discussion awards were given among the winners of debate and essay writing competition organised on the occasion.

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