

Glaxo starts testing its swine flu vaccine

AP, London

Drugmaker GlaxoSmithKline PLC said Friday it has started testing its swine flu vaccine in humans.

Glaxo said it plans to conduct 16 clinical trials of its swine flu vaccine in more than 9,000 people in Europe and North America. It expects to have early results in September from its first trial in Germany. The data will be shared with drug regulators so they can make an early decision whether to license the vaccine.

Both Europe and the United States have fast-track approval systems for the swine flu vaccine, to ensure that the vaccine is available as soon as possible and before complete safety tests are finished. The European Medicines Agency has said swine flu vaccines could be approved within five days.

Two other major drugmakers, Novartis AG and Sanofi-Aventis SA, began testing their swine flu vaccines earlier this month. In July, Australian pharmaceutical company CSL started testing their vaccine in Australia.

Glaxo's first trial is being conducted in Germany among 128 people aged 16 to 60, according to spokeswoman Alexandra Harrison. The company said once it has initial results, these will be submitted to European and American regulatory authorities. Glaxo said it also would provide older data on a bird flu vaccine, on which the swine flu vaccine is based.

Other Glaxo trials will test the vaccine in infants, children and the elderly. The trials are scheduled to last about a year, although Harrison said the vaccine is expected to be on the market much sooner.

"We aim to get the first doses out in September," Harrison said, with major orders fulfilled by the end of the year or early 2010.

In Europe, Glaxo is testing vaccines with an adjuvant, a chemical compound used to stretch a vaccine's active ingredient and boost the body's immune response.

In Canada and the United States, Glaxo is testing vaccines both with and without adjuvants. Neither country has ever licensed any flu medications that contain the compound.

Army camps

Matiranga upazila of Khagrachhari district were pulled out.

"The camp was set up on the government's land. I'll be looking after the security of the area from now," said Mohammad Rahim Hossain, Sadar Upazila Nirbahi Officer (UNO), while talking to The Daily Star.

He said the camp consisting of 40 army members had been overseeing the security of five villages since 2004.

Matiangia UNO Mohammad Mostafizur Rahman confirmed that Baillachari army camp, which was established in 1986 to ensure security of 10 villages, has already been pulled out.

On July 29, the government announced that it would withdraw 35 temporary camps and one brigade from the CHT.

Meanwhile, members of the CHT commission yesterday visited several places of Dighinala upazila.

First Darbar

FROM PAGE 16 "We are going to sit on Monday at the Darbar Hall," BDR Director General Maj Gen Md Mainul Islam told The Daily Star last night.

It's the first official meeting after the mutiny, the DG said, adding that they want to discuss different issues with officers and jawans with an open mind.

"I have already held meetings at different places but not at the Pilkhana headquarters. Now I want to talk to all at the Darbar Hall as the situation at Pilkhana is calm now," he added.

He said 15 army officers deputed at BDR have already started residing there with their family members. He himself also lives there, he added.

Gen Mainul said members of the border security force in Dhaka would attend the Monday's meeting at the Darbar Hall.

A band of highway robbers yesterday looted money and mobile phones from drivers and passengers halting about five taxis on Feni-Sonagazi road on the north side of Dhaka Bazar.

Sonagazi Awami League member and former Chhatra League leader Zahirul Alam alleged he found fallen trees barricading the road while he was on his way from Feni to Sonagazi by a CNG-run taxi at around 12:30am yesterday.

Glaxo says it will donate 50 million doses of swine flu vaccine to the World Health Organization for use in poorer countries. The company also plans to set aside 20 percent of its Canadian production for the same purpose.

Since swine flu emerged in April, it has killed at least 1,462 people worldwide and is estimated to have infected millions.

Govt's market

FROM PAGE 16 which have already been opened, is made under the new duty structure, it might help keep their market prices stable.

Moulvibazar Traders' Association General Secretary Golam Mowla said the tax cut on the commodities would be more beneficial for consumers, if the government had taken the decision at least three months ago.

He however said the government move would help serve the purpose of import of huge quantities of goods is in the pipeline.

Soon after assuming power, the current government moved to make the TCB active to keep essentials' prices at a tolerable level.

But questions have been raised about the TCB's capability of influencing the local market, as it does not have adequate supply of commodities.

If the TCB identified the real demand of commodities during Ramadan, why did it fail to deliver the goods on time, asked Debapriya.

TCB cannot substitute the private sector but it will have a little effect on the domestic market through Open Market Sale (OMS) and fair price outlets, he said.

Bakht said TCB's major role is to ensure supply of essentials to the local market when their prices go up.

The government failed to import goods through TCB. But the commerce ministry, not the TCB should be blamed for it, he said.

There might be a collusion between the businessmen to keep the TCB inactive, Bakht said.

Jahir Uddin Molla, a customer at Karwan Bazar, said price hike of essentials ahead of Ramadan is quite common.

"It is predictable that essentials' prices will soar at a specific time, why can't the government check it?" questioned Jahir, who was bargaining with a grocer over sugar price that went up to Tk 48 from Tk 42 last week.

Federation of Bangladesh Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FBCCI) President Annisul Huq admitted to the fact that a few businessmen control the whole market.

He said right now the TCB is incapable of influencing market prices.

Most traders at wholesale and retail market continue to ignore the government's directive of hanging price list of essentials to let consumers know their real prices.

SQ Chy

FROM PAGE 1 taken against him on charges of killing in 1971 and setting fire to the houses of Hindus, said Qamrul Islam, reported ATN Bangla.

He told this to the media after distributing foods among the poor in front of the Awami League central office at Bangabandhu Avenue on the occasion of national mourning day.

The state minister said making such derogatory comments has become a regular practice of SQ Chowdhury. "He will continue this unless he is brought to justice," he added.

Qamrul Islam mentioned that the government has started the process of bringing the killers of Bangabandhu back from abroad to execute the verdict of the much-awaited Bangabandhu assassination case, UNB reported.

The verdict of the barbaric murder case will be executed soon, he said while addressing a gathering at Kalindi High School ground in Keraniganj yesterday.

A CORRESPONDENT, Feni

A band of highway robbers yesterday looted money and mobile phones from drivers and passengers halting about five taxis on Feni-Sonagazi road on the north side of Dhaka Bazar.

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As the taxi stopped, a gang attacked the passengers. They took away cash taka and mobile phones.

After they had proceeded to Balua Choumuhan Bazar, they told the incident to patrol police who with the help of the locals caught a gang member identified as Kamrul, 24.

On Kamrul's confession another mugger Mishuk, 21, was arrested. A mobile set and some money were recovered from them, said Aminul Islam, officer-in-charge of Feni Police Station.

A case was lodged in the connection.

Drug

FROM PAGE 1 populated camp throng the spot and took away Shahid in handcuffs, locals said.

They even stabbed two police informers, Apan, 32, and Kamal, 23, who accompanied the force, added locals.

They were admitted to Dhaka Medical College Hospital.

SI Jasim said the arrested is accused in several drug peddling cases. Shahid's parents and family members are also involved in pushing local liquor and Phenidyl from the areas, he said quoting locals.

Officer-in-Charge Abdul Malek of Pallabi Police Station said he heard a criminal had escaped police grip but he declined to elaborate.

Police recovered 11 hundred bottles of Phenidyl from the area in the last three days, sources said.

BDR trial

FROM PAGE 1 After getting President Zillur Rahman's approval, the law ministry will forward the reference to the SC registrar's office.

Shafique expressed hope that the reference will be submitted to the SC within this week.

The government finalised the reference on August 12.

Shafique said as there are some inadequacies in the BDR act and conventional laws for trying a savagery like the BDR mutiny, in which 73 people including 66 army officials were killed, the government decided to go for SC's opinion to determine which law should be applied to try the accused.

He said the army act has no such shortcomings but the government will follow the Supreme Court's guidelines to avoid any dispute.

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