

Rid Pharma case

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Comilla zone, filed the case at Brahmanbaria Court accusing five officials of Rid Pharma on August 11. Three other cases were filed in Sylhet, Comilla and Narayanganj as well.

The accused are Rid Pharma MD Mizanur Rahman, directors Sheuli Rahman, also Mizanur's wife, Abdul Gani and Rid's pharmacists Mahbulul Islam and Enamul Haque who are now at large.

Brig Gen Ismail Hossain, Director of BDA, said to The Daily Star that BDA would file a case under the Special Powers Act against Rid Pharma this week after consultation with the ministries of law and home affairs.

But the drug regulatory authority is yet to sit with the joint secretary of home affairs ministry.

Earlier, a total of 34 children sought admission at Dhaka Shishu Hospital and Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujib Medical University since last two months and 26 of them died of renal failure.

A seven-member investigation committee, formed on July 21, found Rid Pharma guilty and revealed the company used poisonous diethylene glycol instead of propylene glycol that led to death of most of those children.

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Abdul Khayer Chowdhury locked and sealed Rid Pharma's factory at BSCIC area of Brahmanbaria on July 22, following an order from the health ministry.

He said, its other drugs -- Temset and Ridaplex syrups -- was proved "out of quality" at the Drug Testing Laboratory of the Public Health Institute at Mohakhali.

Meanwhile, two more children with acute renal failure were admitted to Dhaka Shishu Hospital last week after receiving Rid Pharma's paracetamol syrup. Parents bought that drugs from village doctors though BDA claimed that they had withdrawn all Rid Pharma products from market soon after government's order on July 22.

Rid Pharma received drug-manufacturing licence in 2006 and started marketing 12 drugs. Though it only had permission for manufacturing paracetamol suspensions, it started producing paracetamol syrups in the package of paracetamol suspensions.

In 1992, at least 339 children died after taking toxic paracetamol. The government had then cancelled registrations of five pharmaceutical companies.

PM vows

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National Mourning Day on August 15, the 34th death anniversary of Bangabandhu, with party presidium member and deputy leader of the parliament Syeda Sajeda Chowdhury in the chair.

In her speech, Hasina paid rich tributes to her father Bangabandhu, mother Sheikh Fazilatunnesa Mujib, brothers and other near and dear ones who were killed brutally by a few disgruntled army personnel on August 15, 1975.

The AL chief said the departed soul of Bangabandhu would get peace when they would complete building a golden Bangladesh.

The prime minister observed that conspiracy is still being hatched and directed her party leaders to concentrate on building the country by foiling all conspiracies.

"Forget what you gained, think what you gave to the country," she told her party men.

Saying that her father sacrificed his life for the wellbeing of the people, Hasina pledged that she would also do so for the people, if necessary.

Addressing the discussion, Syeda Sajeda Chowdhury alleged that former adviser to caretaker government Mainul Hossain, who gave a candle light dinner after the assassination of Bangabandhu, would have to bring to book.

AL leaders Suranjit Sengupta and Mohammad Nasim demanded immediate arrest and punishment of BNP leader Salauddin Quader Chowdhury for his 'audacious' statement on August 15.

AL General Secretary Syed Ashrafur Islam directed the party men to be alert to all conspiracies to save the life of Hasina. "We must protect our leader Sheikh Hasina in order to protect the country," he said.

AL presidium member Matia Chowdhury, also agriculture minister, castigated main opposition leader and BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia for observing her birth anniversary on August 15. Pointing finger to Khaleda, Matia questioned how many birth dates could there be of a person.

AL advisory council members Amir Hossain Amu, Abdur Razzak, Prof AK Azad Chowdhury, HT Imam, AL presidium member Yusuf Hossain Humayun, Jatiya Party Secretary General Ruhul Amin Hawlader, Workers Party President Rashed Khan Menon, AL leaders Mahbulul Alam Hanif, Jahangir Kabir Nanak, Ahmad Hossain, also spoke among others.

Raids upon alert

FROM PAGE 1

Saturday night, apprehending militant attacks on public gatherings or police establishments.

According to CMP, police headquarters in Dhaka received information that a militant attack might take place on any public assembly or police establishments in the port city in between 11:45pm and 12:10am on the days.

Informed by the police headquarters, CMP police conducted the drive for an hour till 12:45am yesterday by setting up 38 check-posts at different points of the city, CMP Deputy Commissioner (north) Engineer Banaj Kumar Majumder told The Daily Star.

They searched vehicles plying the roads and also strengthened security of different important establishments.

Teams from Rab 7 of Chittagong also patrolled the city from 9:00pm on Saturday to 5:00am yesterday.

When contacted, Rab 7 Commanding Officer Lt Col Zahidur Rahim said some 16 patrol teams have been deployed in the city while security has been beefed up in Feni and Cox's Bazar.

Police also enhanced patrol and started conducting pre-dawn raids in Rajshahi city and 16 other northern districts following the alert.

Senior police officials of Rajshahi metropolitan police (RMP) and Rajshahi division confirmed that they are conducting raids in all important places following the directives from the high-ups.

Reports received from other districts, including Natore, Chapainawabganj and Naogaon said that police patrolled the towns and kept vigil.

Lord Avebury hails

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He also hoped that the troop pullout will not deteriorate law and order in the hills.

Avebury, also vice-chair of Britain's all-party parliamentary group on human rights and the president of International Bangladesh Foundation, discussed with the foreign minister political and human rights situation in Bangladesh as well as the situation of ethnic minorities in the country.

Dipu Moni told him that her government is committed to implementing the Chittagong Hill Tracts (CHT) Peace Accord with a view to upholding political, social, cultural, and economic rights of all citizens living in the region.

"I've told the delegation about the government's commitment to implement the peace treaty. The commission expressed satisfaction over our policy on Chittagong Hill Tracts," Dipu Moni said after the meeting, adding, "Avebury hoped that the peace agreement will be fully implemented during the tenure of this government."

Avebury and other members of the international commission visited Rangamati, Khagrachhari, and Bandarban hill districts last week. The commission was formed in

Copenhagen in the 1990s to create pressure on the then Bangladesh government to stop human rights violations in the region.

Replying to a query about opposition to the army pullout, the foreign minister threw a counter question saying, "Would any government take any action that would cost the country's sovereignty?"

She mentioned that the government appointed retired Justice Khademul Islam Chowdhury as the chairman of the CHT Land Commission to resolve decades long land disputes there. "The 13-member commission will review land allocations once the land survey is completed."

Dipu Moni also said the present government is fully committed to promotion and protection of human rights of all citizens.

"Bangladesh has put appropriate legislative measures in place to promote the rights of children and women, focusing mainly on protecting them from violence, abuse, and discrimination."

The foreign minister mentioned that the National Human Rights Commission was established in September 2008. "The Government is committed to strengthening the regular functioning of the commission," she added.

Price hike

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Limited--a cooperative of vegetable growers.

He expressed frustration seeing the result of his own personal survey among vegetable traders and truckers, and said he conveyed the findings of his survey on extortion to the intelligence agencies for further probe.

"You (the minister) know who we have to pay during our journey from farmers end to consumer market," Razzak quoted a truck owner from his constituency, who informed him about the reckless extortion.

The food minister said the development of agriculture, the backbone of the country's economy, is unlikely to take place as long as the country would fail to go for commercial production.

In response to the concern over farmers' getting very little for their produce, he spoke of extortion that takes away the lion's share of the commodity price.

"I don't know whether it would be wise for me, as a minister, to tell you the story of extortion," said Razzak. To begin with, he said a truck owner received only Tk 7,000 for a trip from Jessore to Mymensingh although the trip was pre-settled at Tk 28,000.

"The rest Tk 21,000 had to be paid as extortion," he said, adding that the truck driver paid Tk 1,700 each at only two points within 15 kilometre distance in Gazipur.

"Who you had to pay," the minister asked the truck owner, personally known to him from his constituency in Modhupur, Tangail. The response was "You know who."

The food minister also received similar allegations of extortion about some spots and routes across the country, including Manikganj as well as Rajshahi-Dhaka and Dhaka-Sylhet routes.

He also cross-checked the allegation with a vegetable trader from his Tangail constituency and asked how the traders make profit after paying the extortionists.

"We deprive the farmers and fleece people like you who are living in Dhaka," he quoted the trader as saying.

Razzak said the government was trying to improve the market system and the wholesale

markets in the capital, reiterating the government's commitment to ensure fair price for the farmers as well as the consumers.

LAW ENFORCERS TO HELP KEEP ESSENTIALS PRICE STABLE DURING RAMADAN

State Minister for Home Affairs Shamsul Haque Tuku has said Rab and other law enforcers will be active in the field to ensure that prices of essentials remain stable during the holy month of Ramadan.

"We want to use law enforcers in phases to bring down the prices of essential commodities... Rab will also be engaged in stabilising the market," he told reporters after a meeting with Rab officials at the Rab Headquarters yesterday morning.

The state minister also sought cooperation from the media personnel to expose how the syndicate traders are trying to manipulate the market and increase the prices.

Replying to a question about instructions given to Rab, he said necessary directives were given so that Rab could act more appropriately to deal with the situation.

When a correspondent drew his attention to some reports that in some cases Rab is also involved in extortion and mugging, Tuku said action is being taken against those involved in such incidents.

About crossfire, he said there is nothing called crossfire. It is the responsibility of the state to protect life and property of the citizen and Rab will perform its assigned duty, he added.

Rab Director General Hasan Mahmud Khan, Additional DG (operation) Col Mizanur Rahman, Additional DG (admin) Col SM Matir Rahman and senior officials were present at the meeting.

Job-based

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centres, 68 dress-making centres, nine block and batik training centres, five centres for secretarial science, 32 centres for steno-typing, one human resource development centre and four zonal human resource development centres across the country.

The government since 2005 is running three five-year projects for youth development. These include training programmes on electrical wiring in 41 districts and electronics, air-conditioning and refrigeration work in 55 districts.

Only 7,619 persons have received training under these schemes till June 2008 though the target was to train 24,160 youths by June 2009, sources said.

The government also runs a project titled "Innovative management of resources for poverty alleviation through comprehensive technology (IMPACT) Project" which trains people to establish biogas plants through utilisation of solid waste and animal waste.

Meanwhile, the government also runs a project "Youth Empowerment through Life skills Education and Livelihood Opportunities" to create awareness regarding reproductive rights, HIV/AIDS and gender among adolescent girls and boys.

This project which began in January 2006 targets training to 16,122 people by December 2010. However, till June 2008 only 9,917 youths were trained.

Culprits

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Several hundred people from all walks of life formed a human chain and held a rally in the town yesterday to express their demand for the immediate arrest and exemplary punishment of the culprits.

Samajik Protirodh Committee, a conglomeration of Bangladesh Mahila Parishad, Mahila Unnayan Foundation, Shapla, Saptagram Nari Swarnirvar Parishad, RACINE and Bangladesh Legal Aid and Services Trust (BLAST), organised the protest in front of Faridpur Press Club in the afternoon.

Meanwhile, the medical test of the victim was not carried out yesterday due to non-availability of doctors at a hospital. A number of rights activists and lawyers, including Khushi Kabir, was present at the time to give the victim mental support.

THREE REMANDED

A Faridpur court yesterday placed the three people arrested four days ago on two days remand each.

The judicial magistrate of the court pronounced the order after Investigation Officer (IO) of the case produced the three men Shourabh, Masud Khan, and Tahir Kazi, before it with a five-day remand prayer.

Earlier defence lawyers filed a petition with the court seeking bail, which was refused. The lawyers argued that the arrestees are innocent.

However, prosecution lawyers opposed the bail prayer and sought the remand arguing that the arrestees might have information about the rapists who not only video taped the gang rape but also sold the footage in the market for commercial gain.

The victim named two men Kalam Khan and Tushar Khan and two other unidentified men in her complaint but police have not been able to arrest anyone yet.

Assistant Superintendent of Police Faridpur (circle) Rafiqul Islam said, "We are trying our best. Even all the male family members of the accused have gone into hiding."

Khairuzzaman

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Officials said the notification would be published in leading newspapers of the country within next few days.

A foreign ministry official said Khairuzzaman applied several times to the ministry for medical leave until July 3, 2009, the day of his leave preparatory to retirement (LPR), but the ministry turned down his appeal.

The official said the government has already cancelled Khairuzzaman's diplomatic passport.

Another foreign ministry official told The Daily Star that drastic disciplinary action like dismissal or suspension from service would be taken against Khairuzzaman if he does not respond to the public notification.

Sircar

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Mansuri said an additional 57 women and children were injured, seven critically, hinting that the death toll could rise further from the disaster in the town of Jahra west of Kuwait City.

"Most of the bodies were charred, many could not be immediately recognised. Forensic officials are working to identify the bodies," Mansuri said.

"The tent was burnt down within minutes and only the steel structures remained intact," he said, adding that there were between 150 and 180 women and children inside at the time.

Health Minister Hilal al-Sayer had earlier told the official KUNA news agency that 76 people with various degrees of burns had been taken to several hospitals in Kuwait, including to intensive care and specialised burn units.

A medical source said Sunday that more than 80 people were injured in the fire as relatives of some victims took them to private hospitals.

Many of the victims had fallen during a stampede as the flames spread through the tent, which was left a smouldering wreck. At least one car was also severely damaged by the fire.

Mansuri said the fire department was informed of the fire in Jahra in the desert about 50km west of the capital, at 9:20 pm (18:20 GMT).

He said the exact cause of the blaze was not yet known and an investigation has been launched to determine what started the fire and how it spread.

Local media said the fire may have been caused by a short-

Tiger's record win

FROM PAGE 1

The Tigers were up against it, chasing a hugely competitive total of 312 on a placid wicket of Queens Sports Club, built on the back of Charles Coventry's wonderful record-equalling 194 not out.

But the men from the sub-continent rarely looked in trouble and capitalised on a sparkling century from opener Tamim Iqbal to seal an ultimately comfortable victory.

Tamim, who has been consistent throughout the series, dispatched the Zimbabwe bowlers to all corners of the park with disdain. He repeated the heroics of Coventry earlier in the game, but had more able partners. Tamim's 154 of 138 deliveries saw seven boundaries and six majestic sixes. It was also the highest individual score by a Bangladesh batsman surpassing skipper Shakib Al Hasan's 134 not out against Canada in 2007.

He was ably supported first by opening partner Zunaed Siddiqui, restored to the side after a surprise exclusion, and they set the platform for the win. Zunaed's contribution was a rollicking knock of 38 from just 27 deliveries. The left-handers entertaining knock came to an end when he chipped one off Hamilton Masakadza to Coventry at short extra cover who held on to it in the third attempt. Mohammad Ashraful, hero of the first match, never settled before falling to a tempting delivery from the wily Raymond Price after scoring just 10 runs having played 28 balls.

However, there were few further hiccups as Rokibul Hasan, Shakib Al Hasan and Mushfiqur Rahim all chipped in with useful contributions towards the historic victory. The honour of hitting the winning runs fell to Caribbean hero Mahmudullah and his thumping boundary was the cue for the coach and players to come rushing into the ground to celebrate a mammoth achievement.

Earlier, having been sent into bowl on the same pitch used for the first ODI, the Tigers made a good start as the two new ball bowlers restricted the Zimbabwean batsmen from getting off to a flying start. And it didn't take long for them to get rid of the tall opener Mark Vermeulen, as he flicked a fairly innocuous delivery from Mahbulul Alam to Zunaed Siddiqui at short midwicket.

But that was as good as it would get before lunch for the Tigers. Coventry was a man on a mission as he stayed till the end to see his side post 312 on the board. The right-hander's 194 not out off just 156 balls was an innings to savour and it comprised 16 boundaries and 7 huge sixes. It equalled the highest individual innings in one-day cricket, which was set by legendary Pakistan opener Saeed Anwar twelve years ago against India.

Coventry's knock was, however, aided by shambolic fielding efforts from the Tigers. He also said the just-concluded council of AL and Jatiya Party were nothing but some formalities, which failed to uphold the spirit of the Representation of the People Order.

"They have completely failed to come out of the previous political culture," he commented.

ASM Shajahan said, "we utter so many good words while in opposition but forget those once we are in power."

41 die in Kuwait

FROM PAGE 16

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as they dropped him on two occasions, first by Syed Rasel at deep square leg off Mahbulul Alam when he was on 13 and then again on 137 at the same position, that time by Mahmudullah.

The only other notable contribution in the Zimbabwean innings came from Stuart Matsikenyeri who scored 37 off 54 balls.

Pacer Mahbulul Alam and left-arm spinner Enamul Haque took two wickets each for the visitors but the most economical was part timer Mohammad Ashraful who conceded only eleven runs in four overs taking one wicket.

The final match of the five-match series will take place at the same venue on Tuesday.

Democracy

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Abdur Rab, former chairman of the Privatisation Commission Inam Ahmed Chowdhury, former secretary Abul Kalam Azad, Dhaka University Professor Asif Nazrul, Communist Party leader Ruhin Hossain Prince.

Sujan Secretary Badiul Alam Majumder placed the concept paper at the discussion.

"We don't see any reflection of intra-party democracy in the political parties; we won't be able to establish a digital Bangladesh unless we ensure a democratic environment," Prof Mozaffer Ahmad said.

He appreciated 'aggressive activities' of the parliamentary standing committees saying that it would help ensure accountability and transparency of the respective ministries.

Muzaffer also raised a question about why BNP failed to hold its council within the EC's timeframe. "They should honour what they promised to the EC," he said.

He also said that income and expense of AL should have been discussed at their recently held council.

"But we don't know whether it was discussed in the council or not. We don't see financial accountability established in the political parties," he added. "Militancy will rise in the country in the absence of democracy in the country," observed the veteran economist.

Badiul in his concept paper said the ninth parliament had deleted and relaxed many provisions from the Representation of the People Order, which could have ensured intra-party democracy.

Thus an elected government turned the EC into a 'paper tiger', he said.

He also said the just-concluded council of AL and Jatiya Party were nothing but some formalities, which failed to uphold the spirit of the Representation of the People Order.

"They have completely failed to come out of the previous political culture," he commented.

ASM Shajahan said, "we utter so many good words while in opposition but forget those once we are in power."

Lawmakers demanded a swift inquiry into the cause of the fire and questioned the speed of the authorities' response.

Opposition MP Daifallah Buraimi said the Jahra fire has shown that the authorities' response to calamities is not quick enough.

MP Aseel al-Awadhi called for an investigation into the "fire disaster" and authorities' failure to apply strict safety and security rules for such tents.

The interior ministry advised citizens against setting up tents in crowded residential areas where rescue efforts would be delayed in case of incidents.

Several MPs called on authorities to enforce stringent safety rules for setting up tents.

Prime Minister Sheikh Nasser Mohammad al-Ahmad al-Sabah visited those wounded at hospitals and was planning to visit the fire site later on Sunday.

"Rescue efforts were hampered because the burning tent collapsed on the women and the power supply failed," the English-language Kuwait Times reported, adding that 20 fire trucks and dozens of firemen battled the flames.

"Many of the women were also killed in a stampede that ensued," it added.

Most wedding parties in the conservative Muslim Gulf state are segregated in line with local tradition.

The Kuwait Times said some of the victims were relatives of people who had perished in a similar incident in Jahra last year, when two women were killed and several others wounded.

JMB, Huji talk

FROM PAGE 1

"The law enforcers are looking for the godfathers. If they are netted and we learn about their roles, they will face the same punishment," he said in March 2007.

It has already been over two years when present Inspector General of Police (IGP) Nur Mohammad said: "We have already tentatively identified the patrons of the organisation [JMB]."

The ruling Awami League government also announced to take actions against the militant patrons.

Mysteriously enough, no action has been taken against anyone although names of some former BNP-Jamaat-led ruling alliance's political leaders, lawmakers and ministers surfaced as patrons of JMB in the northern districts.

The investigators working at the dictat of the then government high-ups also did not take any move to detect and expose them.

The JMB has meanwhile been trying to regroup to regain its strength. Moreover, the outfit is being united with another banned Islamist outfit Harkat-ul-Jihad-al Islami (Huji) Bangladesh chapter despite having some differences of opinion.

Sources say under the initiative of present JMB chief Moulana Saidur Rahman and Huji leader Omar the two outfits have recently held several meetings to discuss their unity move.

Rapid Action Battalion (Rab) Director General Hasan Mahmood Khandaker said they are aware of the latest move by the militants.

"We are aware of their present activities and we are after them," said the Rab DG without elaborating.

But sources inside Rab, which is leading the anti-militant drive for last few years, say they did not yet infiltrate into the militant organisations.

"If we could plant our sources in the militant outfits, we could have learned their every update soon after the development. And as we couldn't do it yet, we now operate drives based mainly on the information we obtain from the arrested militants," says a Rab official involved in the drive for long.

The sources say both JMB and Huji are divided into various groups due to internal feuds. But yet they have initiated the unity move to take revenge on the government for the execution of six JMB leaders and also the arrest of the leaders and activists of both the organisations.

The sources add the JMB and Huji leaders have past relations as executed JMB chief Abdur Rahman formed his outfit in 1998 after defecting from Huji.