

People with swine flu should stay at home: Experts

Call for raising awareness to prevent spread of virus

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Experts at a view exchange meeting yesterday said people affected with swine flu should keep themselves confined to their houses rather than going to their village home ahead of the Eid-ul-Fitr to avert further spreading of the virus.

"During this period bus and launch terminals as well as the railway stations are experiencing huge gathering. So those who have been suffering from severe flu or swine flu positive should not move outside as their travelling to be risky for others," said Dr M Mushtaq Husain, senior scientific officer of the Institute of Epidemiology, Disease Control and Research (IEDCR).

The view exchange meet-

ing on 'Swine Flue and Our Duty' was organised by Shasthya Andolon at the National Press Club in the city with Prof Dr Mesbah Uddin Ahmed, child health specialist of Gonoshasthya Nagar Hospital, in the chair.

The experts said there is no need to be panicked over swine flu virus as it is responsible for very low mortality rate.

They also called for creating massive awareness among the people to prevent the spread of swine flu virus as prevention is better than cure.

They alleged that a vested quarter has been conspiring to create panic over swine flu issue to earn some quick bucks through drug and musk business though musk hardly helps to prevent the virus.

"Instead of taking massive steps to prevent swine flu virus a vested quarter is involved in doing business over musk and drugs," said Dr Zafarullah Chowdhury, trustee of Gonoshasthya Kendra.

He criticised the government for fixing anti-viral drug Oseltamivir at Tk 150 as its production cost does not exceed Tk 90.

Dr Zafarullah urged the government to strictly follow the national drug policy to avert such unusual prices of drugs.

Prof Rashid E Mahbub, president of Health Rights Movement, called on the government to inform public what initiatives it has taken for protecting the health of poor or slum dwellers who have no

access to health facilities.

"Those who are malnourished or living in unhealthy condition are most vulnerable to swine flu and the government should take necessary steps regarding them," he added.

Dr AM Zakir Hussain discourages the government to import anti-viral swine flu vaccine as it would create Guillene Barre syndrome, one kind of skin disease.

Farida Akhter, executive director of UBINIG and joint convener of Shasthya Andolon, Dr AM Zakir Hussain, former director of the Directorate of Health Services, and Dr Aminur Rasul, member secretary of Unnayan Dhara Trust, also spoke on the occasion.



Participants at a roundtable on 'Community clinic - Effect on health services'. The Daily Star and Health 21, a platform for health rights activists, jointly organised the event at The Daily Star office yesterday. (Story on Page 16)

Develop rail service to ease traffic jam

Speakers tell roundtable

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Speakers at a roundtable yesterday underscored the need for developing the railway communication system to ease traffic congestion.

Train is an environment-friendly mode of transport, which is also the cheapest and safest for communication, they said, adding that the country's economy, environment and communication can be boosted through developing the railway system.

They were speaking at a roundtable on 'Development of railways urgent for removal of traffic jam and carrying passengers and goods' jointly organised by Paribesh Bachao

Andolon, Media Forum for Human Rights and Environmental Development (MHED) and Work for Better Bangladesh (WBB) Trust at the National Press Club in the city.

Chairman of Paribesh Bachao Andolon Abu Naser Khan presided over the meeting while its Executive Director of Kazi Mohammad Shish, Prof Sarwar Jahan of Bangladesh University of Engineering and Technology (BUET) and former railway official Kabir Hossain also spoke.

Sarwar Jahan said traffic jam cannot be eased through constructing more roads, as new roads will create more crossings that will cause more

traffic jam in the country.

Nazmul Karim Sabuj of WBB Trust presented a written statement where he said that the country's railway is being ignored since it is considered a losing and ineffective institution due to lack of proper plan, budget, development, reform, manpower, structural development and rolling stock.

Major plans are being or have already been undertaken to develop the rail communications in many countries of the world, as railway is a very popular system for communication, but proper plans and steps have not been taken for developing the railway sector in Bangladesh, he added.

Khaleda performs Umrah at Makkah

UNB, Makkah

Opposition leader and BNP chairperson Khaleda Zia performed umrah at Makkah yesterday, on the second day of her visit to Saudi Arabia.

She performed tawaf at Holy Kaabah and visited Safa-Marwa, among other religious rituals, in the evening.

Wife of Arafat Rahman Koko, younger son of Khaleda, her brother Shamim Eskander and his wife, Khaleda's Press Secretary Maruf Kamal Khan, and Khaleda's special assistants Advocate Shimul Biswas and Mahbub Al-Amin Dew also performed Umrah.

Khaleda prayed for peace and progress of Bangladesh and the people of the country. She arrived in Makkah from Jeddah in the afternoon.

Khaleda arrived in Jeddah on Friday night. She came here to perform Umrah at the invitation of the Saudi king.

Jessore now has own interactive web portal

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Jessore yesterday became the first district in Bangladesh to launch its own interactive web portal www.jessore.info

Introduced by the Greater Jessore Foundation (GJF), the site would contain news and information about the district of Jessore as well as a rundown of its rich history, culture and heritage along with biography of renowned local personalities.

The site also features lists of local businesses, doctors' chambers, restaurants and other establishments as well as details of the tourist spots suggesting a number of heritage walks to appreciate the city's architecture.

Launching the site at the Public Library auditorium in the city, Information Minister Abul Kalam Azad said the government is committed to developing the infrastructure for information technology and modernise governance.

"I am hopeful that the website will establish itself as a means of serving public interest from being just an informative website, as well as an interactive community to bridge the gap between the people of Jessore at home and elsewhere," he said at the programme to celebrate the launch of the website and the 7th anniversary of Greater Jessore Foundation.

He said the website is a praiseworthy step to fulfilling the nation's dream of a digital Bangladesh.

Lawmaker Mostafa Faruq Mohammad, who is one of the patrons of the website, expressed hope that the web portal would grow with time and establish itself as a useful source of information for everyone.

Lawmaker Khan Tipu Sultan, another patron of the web portal, said the site can be taken as an example of how information technology can be used for greater good of the people and society.

The web portal contains over 700 pages of information including the districts' 25,000 years of history, a rundown of notable events and timelines from the liberation war in the district, information about over 200 educational institutes, a telephone directory with over 5,000 contact numbers of people and businesses as well as news headlines from a number of local newspapers.



PHOTO: STAR

Garment Sramik O Shilpa Rakkha Jatiya Mancha forms a human chain at Muktangan in the city yesterday demanding payment of salary arrears and bonus before Eid.

Expatriate killed in road crash

5 of his family injured

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

An expatriate worker was killed and five others of his family were injured in a road accident in the city yesterday morning.

The dead was identified as Shamsul Haque, 50, of Singair in Manikganj.

The accident took place when a passenger bus hit the taxicab Haque and his family members were travelling in at Agargaon intersection.

They were going to the Zia International Airport from Gabtali since Haque was scheduled to catch a Saudi-bound flight.

Sub-Inspector Khokon Devnath of Kafur Police Station said Shamsul Haque died in the spot while his three sons and two other family members who got injured in the accident were rushed to Shaheed Suhrawardy Medical College Hospital.

Police seized the bus and arrested the driver Raja Mia.

Obituary

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Khulna

Advocate Sheikh Mohammad Ali, a freedom fighter and founder president of Khulna City Awami League, passed away at a clinic in Khulna on Friday at the age of 80.

He was also founder president of Khulna District Bar Association and Vice-Principal of Khulna City Law College.

He left behind his wife, two sons, four daughters, grandchildren and a large number of relatives and admirers to mourn his death.

He was buried at Tootpara graveyard yesterday.

Fazlul Kabir

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Freedom fighter Fazlul Kabir, a retired officer of Bangladesh Rifles, passed away at his village home at Faridganj in Chandpur on August 31 at the age of 78.

He was buried at his family graveyard with state honour, said a press release.

His eldest son Abdullah Al Mamun is a teacher of Quamrunnesa Government High School.

Attack on Ansar men at BSMMUH

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A gang of criminals yesterday attacked the Ansar men deployed at the west gate of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujib Medical University Hospital (BSMMUH) in the city, leaving two Ansar men injured.

The Ansar personnel caught five attackers during the attack and handed them over to Shahbagh Police Station.

The attack was made in revenge for arresting their ringleader Tunda Rahim along with three others on Tuesday from the hospital compound as the Ansar personnel deployed in the hospital helped Rapid Action Battalion (Rab) arrest him.

BSMMUH sources said a gang of 20 to 25 cadres led by Habib, second-in-command of Tunda Rahim gang, attacked the Ansar men with sticks and iron rods around 11:30am.

During the attack, Ansar personnel caught five attackers and later handed them over to Shahbagh police.

The injured Ansar members were admitted to BSMMUH where they were undergoing treatment, hospital sources said.

Habib was a cook in the hospital but he was suspended for his criminal activities on May last, the sources added.

Police said the gang members, who reside in the staff quarters of the hospital and adjacent areas, are engaged in mugging, extortion and other crimes in and around the hospital and Shahbagh area.

Habib ran an ambulance business in the area and his men oftentimes worked as brokers in the hospital, taking patients to other private clinics and at nights they used to rob belongings of attendants in the area, Ansar sources said.

Hospital sources said Habib and Tunda Rahim also trafficked heroine in the ambulances and Rab members seized heroine from one of their ambulances few months ago.

Brig Gen Abdul Majid Bhuiyan, Superintendent of BSMMUH, said cook Habib led the attack as Ansar members helped in arresting their ringleader Tunda.

The gang used to extort money from the patients' attendants, traffic heroine and commit other crimes in and around the hospital area and in Shahbagh, he added.

Rab members with the help of Ansar men caught Tunda Rahim and his three accomplices from the hospital compound in the morning on September 8. Later, Rab personnel handed them over to Shahbagh police in the afternoon.



Moderate rain likely

UNB, Dhaka

Light to moderate rain or thundershowers accompanied by temporary gusty wind is likely to occur at one or two places over all the six divisions in next 12 hours till 6:00pm today.

Day temperature may rise slightly over the country, Met Office said.

The sun sets in the capital at 7:04pm today and rises at 6:45am tomorrow.

Yesterday's highest temperature of 35.8 degree Celsius was recorded at Jessore and the lowest of 24.5 degree at Kheupura.

The highest and lowest temperature and humidity recorded in some major cities and towns yesterday were:

City/Town	Temperature in Celsius	Humidity in percentage
	Max	Min
Dhaka	35.1	26.2
Chittagong	33.0	26.2
Rajshahi	34.8	26.0
Khulna	35.4	27.0
Barisal	35.4	27.0
Sylhet	35.2	26.5
Cox's Bazar	33.1	25.3
	Morning	Evening
Dhaka	77	53
Chittagong	75	81
Rajshahi	84	74
Khulna	80	76
Barisal	77	83
Sylhet	77	65
Cox's Bazar	77	85

Youth held with pistol in Rajarbagh Police Lines

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The police arrested a youth with a foreign-made pistol inside the Rajarbagh Police Lines in the city last night.

The arrestee, Shahabuddin alias Khokon, 27, identified himself as a bus helper, but after an interrogation, the police confirmed that he is not helper of any bus.

Police continued to interrogate him at Paltan Police Station as of filing of the report at 1:20am today to know his real identity and why he got into the police lines.

"We're interrogating him to know whether he entered the police lines to carry out any subversive activities. We also cannot rule out the possibility that he might have been a militant," Officer-in-Charge of Paltan Police Station Mujibur Raman told The Daily Star.

Shahabuddin entered the police lines with a requisitioned bus identifying himself as a helper of the bus.

On suspicion, the police searched Shahabuddin around 6:30pm and found the pistol tied to one of his legs with a towel. However, no bullet was found.

As police confined Shahabuddin to a room after the arrest, he tried to escape breaking open the glass of a door. As a result, he sustained minor injuries. Later, he was given first aid at Dhaka Medical College Hospital (DMCH).



Roundtable

Jatiya Samannita Unnayan

Foundation organises a roundtable on the role of teacher-engineer society in developing human resources. Venue: National Press Club. Time: 4:00pm.

Seminar

National Association of Sports for the Persons with Disability (NASPD) organises a seminar on 'Inclusive sports towards facilitating education of children with disabilities'. Venue: Jatiya Krira Parishad. Time: 4:00pm.

Birth anniversary

A seminar and award giving ceremony will be held to mark the 105th birth anniversary of noted litterateur Syed Mujtaba Ali. Venue: National Press Club. Time: 11:30am.

Dialogue

Manusher Jonno Foundation and Shamunnay will jointly organise a dialogue on 'To what extent is our national budget open?' Venue: Hotel Sheraton. Time: 11:30am.

Seminar

EMINENCE organises a seminar on 'Health policy: Nutrition and infant and young child feeding practices (IYCF)'. Venue: National Press Club. Time: 11:00am.

Condolence meeting

Sound Bangla will hold a condolence meeting to mourn the death of Baul Samrat Shah Abdul Karim. Venue: Teacher-Student Centre (TSC), Dhaka University. Time: 10:00am.

New inverter developed to reduce irrigation cost

BSS, Dhaka

The Renewable Energy Research Centre (RERC) of Dhaka University (DU) has invented an inverter to run solar pumps with the aim of reducing irrigation cost in agriculture.

The RERC researchers said the inverter would largely cut down the installation cost of solar pumps and contribute to mitigating the power shortage in irrigation.

It costs Tk 4.5 lakh to import a four-horse power (hp) inverter but the inverter invented by RERC will cost only Tk 50,000, RERC Director Prof Nimchandra Bhowmik told BSS.

"We can easily make these inverters if we get support from the government in this regard," RERC researcher Prof Saiful Huq said.

The new solar system will replace the existing diesel-run water pumps leading to reduction of users cost, he said.

He said installation of one-hp water pump would cost Tk 3.75 lakh, while Tk 7 lakh for a 2-hp pump, Tk 1.3 million for a 4-hp pump, Tk 2.1 million for a 6-hp pump and Tk 4.2 million for a 10-hp pump under the solar system.

On the other hand, the cost of other solar systems now available in the market will be reduced by 25 percent, he added.

Train derails in Sirajganj

UNB, Sirajganj

Train services between capital and country's north-southern region remained suspended for three hours yesterday following derailment of two compartments of a train in Kamarkand upazila.

Sources said two rear bogies of the capital bound inter-city train 'Lalmoni Express' from Lalmonirhat went off the track near Chak Shahbajpur village on Dhaka-Ishwardi route at about 5:00pm, suspending train services for three hours.

The train services on the route, however, resumed at 8:00pm after the derailed bogies were rescued.

Habibul Haque, senior sub-assistant engineer of local railway station, said the derailment took place due to fault in railway tracks.

Death of Shah Abdul Karim condoled

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Different political and socio-cultural organisations, professional bodies and individuals yesterday condoled the death of renowned 'Baul Samrat' Shah Abdul Karim.

They said in his death the country has lost a folk lyricist, a poet, and a philosopher who learned form the nature.

Recalling his invaluable contribution to the field of folk songs, they said his death has caused an irreparable loss for the country.

They also prayed for the salvation of the departed soul and conveyed sympathy to the members of the bereaved family.

Jatiya Sangsad Chief Whip Abdus Shahid expressed his profound shock at the death of Shah Abdul Karim and conveyed sympathy to bereaved family members.

Terming the 'Baul Samrat' a legend in the arena of folk songs in a condolence message, Abdus Shahid said the artist always thought for the country and its people and expressed his feelings through his eternal songs.

"Shah Abdul Karim was a singer, a composer and a poet," said the chief whip, adding that he upheld the folk culture of Sylhet before the world.

"His death has created a vacuum in the arena of country's folk songs," the chief whip added.

Finance Minister Abul Maal Abdul Muhit condoled the death of Shah Abdul Karim who used to lead a very simple life and played an active role in every progressive movement.

"The nation will never forget his immortal songs like 'Gari Chhalena Chhalena or Age Ki Sundar Din Kataitam,'" said the finance minister, adding that though the Baul Samrat composed his songs in local language of Sylhet, it was accepted by all for his universal appeal.

Workers Party of Bangladesh President Rashed Khan Menon MP and General Secretary Bimal Biswas expressed deep shock at the death of Shah Abdul Karim and conveyed sympathy to the members of the bereaved family.

In a condolence message they said the Baul Samrat through his eternal songs upheld the country and its non-communal culture before the world.

His songs and composition

would remain an invaluable and unending source of Bangalee culture, they added.

Communist Party of Bangladesh (CPB) President Manjurul Ahsan Khan and General Secretary Mujahidul Islam Selim in another condolence message said Shah Abdul Karim played an active role in the struggle for social change.

"He took part at the historic Kagmari conference and rendered there his immortal songs that introduced him to the great leaders including Maulana Abdul Hamid Khan Bhasani and another noted folk singer Ramesh Shill," they added.

Sylhet City Mayor Badar Uddin Ahmed Kamran also expressed his profound shock at the death of Shah Abdul Karim who sang his entire life for the welfare of people.

"The Baul Samrat had been in the field of folk and spiritual songs since his early age and will be remembered forever for his devotion and sincerity to country's folk culture," said the mayor, adding, "He was a luminous figure in our cultural arena."

The other organisations and individuals who condoled the death include Suranjit Sengupta MP, Jatiya Party, Citybank NA Bangladesh, Bangabandhu Sangskritik Jote, Joybanga Sangskritik Oikya Jote, Kendrio Khelaghar Asar, Jatiya Gonatantrik League, Bangladesh Nari Mukti Andolon, Bangladesh Sangeet Sangathan Samannya Parishad, Sangeet Sangskriti Prangan, Azizur Rahman Smiriti Natya Sangsad and Nibedan.

3000 litres of liquor seized in Gazipur

A CORRESPONDENT, Gazipur

Police and Rapid Action Battalion (Rab)-1 in a joint raid at Kumarkhada in Gazipur yesterday seized 3,000 litres of locally produced liquor and arrested two in this connection.

The arrestees were identified as Krishna Chandra Barman, 24, and Kheli Chandra Baran, 35.

First Class Magistrate Md Amir Uddin led the drive.

Two sacks of molasses and huge amount of raw materials for producing liquor were also seized.