

Rid Pharma

FROM PAGE 16
The accused in the case are Rid Pharma Managing Director Mizanur Rahman, directors Sheuli Rahman, also Mizanur's wife, Abdul Gani and Rid's pharmacists Mahbubul Islam and Enamul Haque. A case against them has been filed in Brahmanbaria as well.

Three other cases have been filed against Rid in Comilla, Narayanganj and Sylhet.

In his complaint, Shafiqul Islam said several children died at Shishu Hospital of Sher-e-Bangla Nagar in the city due to renal failure after intake of the paracetamol drugs of Rid Pharma.

He said the government realised the seriousness in the matter and published advertisements in national dailies asking all not to take any drug manufactured by the company.

On July 22, the Drug Administration sealed off Rid's factory in BSCIC area of Brahmanbaria district following the death of children after taking its drugs.

The government also formed a seven-member probe committee to investigate the matter. On July 29, the probe committee placed its report that found the presence of poisonous diethylene glycol in the paracetamol syrup of the company.

Rid Pharma used diethylene glycol, meant for tannery and rubber industries, instead of propylene glycol as diethylene glycol costs Tk 200 per litre while propylene glycol costs Tk 1,100.

Later, the government has banned two drugs of Rid Pharma - Ridacox (vitamin B-complex syrup), Temset (paracetamol suspension) for their sub-standard quality and harmful effects on public health.

Manufacturing, marketing, preservation, use and sale of the two drugs have also been banned in the country.

Sources at Drug Administration said Rid Pharma received drug-manufacturing licence in 2006 and started marketing 12 drugs. Though the company only had permission for producing paracetamol suspensions, it started producing paracetamol syrups.

Earlier Director of the Drug Administration Brig Gen Ismail Hossain said a fresh case would be filed against Rid Pharma under the Special Powers Act.

Asked about the case yesterday, he said at a meeting with the law ministry they have decided not to file the fresh case as it might weaken the previous cases.

JS BODY MEETING

A parliamentary sub-

Rajuk fills up

FROM PAGE 1
visible from the bridge how the project is killing the river, violating environment law.

Two satellite images of the Centre for Environmental and Geographic Information System (CEGIS) show the river before and after the earth-filling activity in 2005 and 2006.

The images show that the much wider Shitalakhya of 2005 shrank in 2006 because of Rajuk's earth-filling activity in Shimulia union of Rugganj while its bank-line changed.

"The Water Development Board raised the issue to the Rajuk. We do not know what Rajuk did afterwards," said an official of CEGIS.

According to the laws on rivers and canals, up to 50 metres from where river water reaches during high tide is considered the riverbank. Bangladesh Water Development Board and Bangladesh Inland Water Transport Authority are legally responsible to take care of this area.

Locals told The Daily Star that the Shitalakhya was a mighty river at Shimulia but it has now shrunk to half its former width.

The Purbachal New Town Project stretches from Shimulia up to Kaliganj upazila of Gazipur between the Balu and Shitalakhya rivers. Rajuk started the project in July 1995 and is supposed to finish it in 2012, developing 6,150 acres of lowland and wetland.

The total project area is divided into 30 sectors out of which 1, 2, 4, 11-14 and 17 have been completed, Rajuk officials said.

Talking to The Daily Star, Syeda Rizwana Hasan, executive director of Bangladesh Environment Lawyers' Association, said the government should announce the illegal part of the project and compel Rajuk to remove earth from there.

"If the government does not take any action against Rajuk's ill practice, it would not have any moral stand to tell people to obey the environment laws," she said.

committee investigating the issue of Rid Pharmaceutical's poisonous paracetamol syrup, which caused death of 28 children, yesterday asked the authorities concerned to find out the sources of the ingredients used in Rid's products.

Nazmul Hassan, chief of the investigation committee, said if the sources of the ingredients cannot be identified, unscrupulous businessmen will continue to use those and such unfortunate incidents will continue to take place, reports our staff correspondent.

"We have also asked the authorities concerned to collect samples of Rid Pharmaceutical's banned drugs and test them in laboratories to identify the ingredients so the government can take necessary steps to stop import of those materials," the ruling Awami League lawmaker said.

The parliamentary standing committee on health ministry formed the sub-committee on July 22 to investigate the death of 28 children from renal failure following intake of the Rid's paracetamol syrup Temset.

"We will be able to submit our report within one and a half months," said Nazmul, adding that an audit team comprised of a group of professors of Dhaka University pharmacy department is working with the team to investigate the overall situation of the pharmaceutical industry in the country.

During surprise visits the team has already found that a number of pharmaceutical companies are running without pharmacists. "There are even companies that we know as non-functioning but their drugs are being sold in the market. This is quite an alarming situation," Nazmul said.

The audit team is preparing a list of equipment, manpower and overall capacity different pharmaceutical companies have for producing certain drugs.

It would be helpful for taking actions against companies that are manufacturing fake or substandard drugs for lack of capacity, Nazmul said.

JS body

FROM PAGE 16
meeting at the Jatiya Sangsad Bhaban yesterday.

According to the Rules of Procedure, the standing committee should meet again within 30 days.

Talking to reporters, the JS body also refuted the national committee's allegations regarding terms and conditions under which foreign companies won the right to explore gas in the country's coastal waters.

On September 14, the national committee observed a six-hour hartal demanding the government scrap the gas exploration deals.

It claims the contracts would oblige the government to export up to 80 percent of the gas to be extracted from the offshore fields.

Shubid Ali Bhuiyan, the standing committee chairman, said, "They are confusing the issue by giving people wrong information. We have examined the deals and are convinced those carry no provision of gas export."

About plans to meet the national committee leaders, he said, "We want to know from them how they drew the conclusion that the contracts entail gas export."

Bhuiyan, also a ruling Awami League lawmaker, said they will submit a report to the government after the discussion.

At yesterday's meeting, the JS body recommended the power and energy ministry organise seminars on the issue and invite scholars, experts and representatives of the National Committee to Protect Oil, Gas and Mineral Resources.

It also observed that the issue should be discussed in parliament so people can get a clear picture.

About the claim of gas export provision, the committee chief said a clause (clause No. 15.5.4) in the contract says the company concerned shall sell gas to Petrobangla. If Petrobangla declines to buy from it, the company will be able to sell gas on the domestic market.

Sheikh Fazle Noor Taposh, a member of the JS panel, said, "The foreign company will be able to sell gas to other countries as liquefied natural gas only if our domestic need is fulfilled. But that is quite unlikely since our demand for gas is surely not going to ebb anytime soon."

The government has opted for foreign companies as it does not have enough experts and equipment required to explore offshore gas blocks. The country cannot afford any delay as Myanmar and India have already started exploration in the Bay of Bengal.

He also claimed there is nothing secret about the deals that are put up on Petrobangla's website.

ORPHANAGE CASE Hearing adjourned till today

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The High Court (HC) yesterday adjourned till today the hearing on the petitions filed by BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia and her elder son Tarique Rahman for quashing proceedings against them in Zia Orphanage Trust graft case filed by the Anti-Corruption Commission (ACC).

An HC vacation bench of Justice AFM Abdur Rahman and Justice Md Rezaul Hasan fixed 10:30 am today for further hearing on the petitions.

During the hearing, petitioners' counsel barrister Rafique-Ul-Huq told the court that since Zia Orphanage Trust is a private organisation, the ACC has no authority to interfere in the activities of the trust.

He also said his clients were not involved in any corruption and the proceedings of this case against them should be quashed.

Countering the submission of Rafiq-ul-Huq, Attorney General Mahbub Alam argued that it was not proved whether the allegations brought against the petitioners are true or false.

At this stage, there is no scope to move any petition before the HC to quash the proceedings, he said.

The attorney general will continue placing submission on the petitions before the court today.

The ACC filed the case against Khaleda, her son Tarique and five others on July 3 last year with Ramna Police Station in connection with embezzling over Tk 2.10 crore by forming the 'fake organisation'.

On September 7, the trial court took into cognisance the charges against Khaleda Zia, Tarique Rahman and four others in this case and fixed October 25 for next hearing.

The court issued arrest warrants against former principal secretary Kamal Uddin Siddiqui and Khaleda's nephew Mominur Rahman as they have been absconding since the case was filed.

The court also said proceedings of the case against Tarique would continue in his absence since he had earlier gone to London for treatment with permission from the Supreme Court.

Two separate petitions were filed with the HC on Tuesday for quashing proceedings against Khaleda and Tarique in the case.

Deshbandhu asked to return unsold sugar

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Bangladesh Sugar and Food Industries Corporation (BSFIC) asked private refiner Deshbandhu Sugar Mills Limited to return the unsold sugar to government that the company bought earlier to export to European Union, an official said yesterday.

Deshbandhu, however, claimed it had exported majority amount of sugar to European countries by refining. The company refined 4,605 tonnes of sugar out of the total 6,000 tonnes it bought from the BSFIC as it was melting and packed bags were being damaged due to stockpiling for a long time.

The corporation, which looks after sugar production in state-run mills, wanted Deshbandhu to return the sugar estimated at 5,155 tonnes by September 17, 2009, according to the BSFIC Chairman Ranjit Kumar Biswas.

The move by BSFIC came after the parliamentary standing committee on industries ministry asked the corporation to cancel the allotment in favour of Deshbandhu, which bought 6,000 tonnes of sugar from BSFIC to export to EU block, enjoying the duty-free benefits as a company from a least developed country - Bangladesh.

Earlier, the parliamentary standing committee expressed its intention to investigate into whether the company exported the sugar or stockpiled it to make windfall profit through creating a supply shortage at a time when sugar price was soaring.

Golam Mostafa, chairman of the Deshbandhu Group, admitted that the company received a letter from BSFIC to return the sugar.

"But we exported bulk of the bought sugar to Europe after refining. Now we have only 550 tonnes of processed sugar from that," he said, citing documents such as Bill of Lading for shipment of white refined sugar during the last couple of months.

"Due to unavailability of ship interested to carry 6000 tonnes of sugar as bulk, we in May this year informed the BSFIC about the difficulties and sold a total of 845 tonnes to the domestic market having due permission," Mostafa added.

On returning the sugar, Mostafa said it could be done after calculating various costs webored.

Jhau plunderers

FROM PAGE 1
As result, sea waves are lashing directly the nearby localities and the protection dam of water development board near Katabunia village under Sabrang union.

PM's Press Secretary Abul Kalam Azad briefed newsmen after the meeting.

The committee with the PM in the chair discussed the latest condition of country's rivers, lands, forests and the impacts of global warming on the country and government plans, programmes and preparation to face calamitous climate change.

The premier also ordered formulating a policy on sand collection from rivers in order to control human activities, which are severely harming the environment and contributing to climate change.

Taking serious note of massive water pollution in the rivers surrounding the capital city, Hasina said mills and factories would have to be compelled to use effluent treatment plant by June 2010.

She laid emphasis on industrial zoning for industrialisation in particular areas instead of haphazardly establishing mills and factories for the sake of maintaining healthy environment.

Concerned over the decrease in the number of ponds and other water bodies in the city areas, the PM emphasised that every housing scheme must include ponds and all the remaining water bodies must be preserved.

Besides, every high-rise building must have all requisite facilities, including fire service and car parking lot, to ensure ideal accommodation of the city-dwellers.

The PM said high-rise

buildings wouldn't be allowed to be built here and there rather there would have to be a proper plan in every case.

"Always not only personal interest and profit but also people's welfare and interest will be taken into account."

About the mismanagement of lands in the country, she said authorities concerned would have to have a sharp eye on the government lands so that these are not occupied in the name of taking lease.

The PM underscored the need for making best use of char lands through both tree planting and producing food-grains.

She reaffirmed her government's plans for building more embankments in the country to protect people from unexpected floods and tidal surges.

In this regard, Hasina said trees can be planted on the downsides of the embankments to make best use of the surface of the embankments.

As the longstanding power crisis in the country came up for discussion, she said the government needs to think about producing electricity from wastes, which now pollute the environment.

Besides, she said, the wastes can also be used to produce fertiliser.

Finance Minister AMA Muhith, Planning Minister AK Khandaker, Water Resources Minister Ramesh Chandra Sen, Agriculture Minister Begum Matia Chowdhury, Education Minister Nurul Islam Nahid, Land Minister Rejaul Karim Hira, State Minister for Forest and Environment Hasan Mahmud and the secretaries concerned were present at the meeting.

TCB sugar sale

FROM PAGE 16
banner inscribing the announcement "Sale of TCB sugar in open market" in front of their designated selling points. But during spot visits it was found that the dealers used fictitious addresses to get TCB allotments and consumers complained of not getting sugar at fair price from them.

Messrs Nayan Traders, an assigned shop, could not be traced on the city's Ahsan Ahmed Road though its proprietor Shamsuddin Ahmed Shyam obtained TCB dealership furnishing that address. Asked whether he had sold the allotted sugar to the consumers, Shyam told The Daily Star on Tuesday that he would start selling sugar from another shop adjacent to his residence at East Bania Khamar from Wednesday.

But locals said the TCB dealer put no sugar on sale till yesterday.

Asked TCB's Khulna Region Chief Rabiul Morshed said, dealer Shamsuddin Ahmed Shyam would lose his dealership if he sold sugar elsewhere instead of the designated selling point.

Two other appointed shops - Shaikat Enterprise and Shanta Store - could not be found on TB Cross Road in Khulna City. Local people alleged that they are not yet sure who their dealer is for selling sugar at fair price.

Rabiul Morshed acknowledged that both Shaikat Enterprise and Shanta Store used the TB Cross Road addresses for obtaining dealership and took delivery of their allotted sugar on September 9. However, Rabiul Morshed could not say for sure whether those addresses were genuine or false.

30 hurt

FROM PAGE 16
Two factions led by district Jubo League convener Moniruzzaman Monir and Fazlul Qader Maznu Molla chased one another with lethal weapons and firearms. Both groups exchanged several rounds of fire and threw brick chips at each other.

The cadres of Monir group also attacked the house of Fazlul Qader at about 1:30pm.

Later, police took control of the situation with help of senior AL leaders.

The injured including Moniruzzaman Monir, Mushtak Ahmed Shahin, Yasirur Rahman Biplob Molla, Tuhin Molla and Mamun were admitted to different hospitals and clinics of the town.

Fazlul Qader alleged that he had given reception to Yusuf Hossain Humayun as the party's newly selected president member and Bhola region in-charge.

Followers of former president member Tofael Ahmed created the chaos, as they were unhappy with the reception, claimed Qader.

Another source said the AL factions fought over a Tk 13 crore tender of Bhola Public Works Department.

Till filing this report, a tense situation was prevailing in the town and police took position on the line of control between the rival factions.

Md Habibur Rahman, additional police superintendent, told The Daily Star that the situation was now under their control and special police were deployed in the town.

Swine flu

FROM PAGE 16
of Drug Administration Brig Gen Ismail Hossain said the health ministry had prepared a list of pharmacies with the help of district civil surgeons, upazila nirbahi officers (UNOs) and drug superintendents.

"We haven't got any list till date but soon after getting it we would order the pharmaceutical companies to supply the anti-viral drug to the pharmacies," he said.

The fact is that the lists have already reached different districts by this time but no drug is supplied to those pharmacies yet.

Three pharmacies in upazila level, five in district level, 10 in metropolitan cities, 20 in Chittagong City and 50 in Dhaka City would be permitted to sell the anti-viral drug, said Prof Shah Monir Hossain on September 6.

To prevent misuse of the drug the government permits a limited number of pharmacies to sell the anti-viral drug, he said.

"Swine flu might spread during this Eid vacation as a large number of people will go to their home villages. So the decision to make the drug available in local pharmacies was taken at a meeting at the health ministry," said Prof Shah Monir Hossain.

He also said the drug would be sold at Tk 150 instead of Tk 180 per capsule.

Our Sylhet correspondent reports that the Sylhet civil surgeon's office has prepared a list of 40 pharmacies including the upazila and district pharmacies. But no drugs have reached those pharmacies yet.

"We don't get the full dose at a time," said an aggrieved patient at Dhaka Medical College Hospital who found it quite difficult to stand in a line for hours for four capsules in such health condition.

"I could easily buy the medicine from pharmacy if it was made available," she said preferring anonymity.

Lailatul Qadr

FROM PAGE 1
near and dear ones and offer special prayers for the salvation of the departed souls.

President Zillur Rahman, Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina and opposition leader Khaleda Zia gave separate messages on the occasion, greeting the Muslims across the world and seeking divine blessings for peace and progress of the country.

Different religious organisations will hold discussions, doa and milad mahfils on the occasion.

Bangladesh Television, Bangladesh Betar and private TV channels will air special programmes highlighting the significance of the holy night.

Outlaw killed

FROM PAGE 16
gathered together around 3:20am to commit a crime.

Sensing the presence of police, the outlaws opened fire forcing the law enforcers to retaliate.

Police said Mashubar died on the spot while his associates managed to flee the scene after a while.

Two policemen -- Sobhan and Tajul Islam -- were also injured during the incident. They were admitted to local upazila health complex.

Police also recovered a point 22-bore pistol and three bullets from the spot.

Mashubar was accused in 18 cases, including seven for murder, police said.

Phensedyl

FROM PAGE 16
constituency of Sathkira in the 8th parliamentary election.

The arrestees were identified as the driver, Sayeed Ali Gazil, and his friend Sohel.

NCD Inspector of Ramna circle Osman Kabir told reporters that on information they intercepted the car in front of Square Hospital on Panthapath at around 12:30pm. After searching the car they found the bottles, seized them and arrested the two.

During a primary interrogation, the arrestees said that the bottles had been kept at the Kalabagan residence of Habibur Rahman Habib on Tuesday, said the NCD inspector.

The arrestees told the reporters that the bottles had been taken to Dhaka from Kaliganj in Sathkira.

The NCD sources however could not ascertain where the bottles were being taken to.

Habibur Rahman told The Daily Star that it was a conspiracy against him to tarnish his image by staging a Phensedyl recovery drama.

New Japan PM

FROM PAGE 16
election landslide.

After naming his cabinet ministers, whose top priority is recovery from Japan's worst post-war economic recession, Hatoyama said he also wanted to redress the nation's long subservience to US foreign policy.

"Immediately after I was appointed prime minister, I felt a tremor of excitement at a change in Japanese history, and on the other hand I felt a grave responsibility," he said at his first prime ministerial press conference.

"We will probably face some trial and error, but I want to ask people to stay with us, patiently," he said.

Reaffirming his campaign promise to build a gentler, more "fraternal" society, Hatoyama said: "We have to shift the country toward a people-oriented society. Toward that end, I will lead the way."

Japan's usually risk-averse voters, tired with a stagnant political system and years of economic malaise, took a chance on the untested DPJ when they threw out the Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) on August 30.

But while the party itself is unfamiliar with power, Hatoyama's cabinet lieutenants encompass years of experience.

Hirohisa Fujii -- a 77-year-old former finance ministry bureaucrat who has attacked wasteful public spending -- was appointed finance minister, a post that he briefly held in the early 1990s.

Katsuya Okada, 56, a former DPJ leader known as "Mr Clean" for his straight-laced image, was named foreign minister tasked with overhauling Japan's relations with the United States and Asia.

Naoto Kan, a DPJ co-founder, was appointed deputy prime minister and head of the newly-formed National Strategy Bureau, which will have the crucial remit of wresting control over policy and budgets from the powerful state bureaucracy.

The new defence minister is Toshimi Kitazawa, a senior party official who once opposed sending troops to Iraq for reconstruction work and accused George W. Bush's US administration of "enforcing democracy by military might".

In opposition, the DPJ railed against US foreign policy and Hatoyama himself sparked consternation in Washington by recently penning an essay that attacked US-led globalisation.

Hatoyama plans to review the US military presence in Japan and scrap a naval mission that supports US operations in Afghanistan. But he also said he wanted a "relationship of trust" and frankness with President Barack Obama.

"I will not change our basic party position," he said at the news conference, ahead of his first talks with Obama at a series of international gatherings in the United States next week.

River survey

FROM PAGE 1
The High Court (HC) on June 25 issued a set of directives on the government to save the rivers Buriganga, Shitalakhya, Turag and Balu under the capital from encroachment and pollution.

The HC directives followed a public interest litigation by Human Rights and Peace for Bangladesh in the wake of a massive public awareness campaign by the mass media against raging grabbing and ruthless pollution, fashioned as Save Rivers, Save Dhaka addressed to the prime minister.

The Bangladesh Environmental Lawyers' Association (Bela) became a party to the petition.

The court directed the deputy commissioners of Dhaka, Narayanganj, Gazipur and Munshiganj to demarcate the exact areas of the said rivers as per the Cadastral Survey (CS) and Revisional Survey (RS) records by November 30.

Deputy Commissioner of Narayanganj Md Shamsur Rahman said the Department of Land Survey and Records (DLRS) has so far provided them with 29 CS and RS maps out of the required 109.

A 74-kilometre stretch of both banks of the Shitalakhya (Dhaleswari to Ghorshal), eight-kilometre stretch of one bank of the Buriganga and a seven-kilometre stretch of the Balu fall under the jurisdiction of Narayanganj district administration.

"We have embarked on a pilot project with whatever records are available and with our own fund," said Rahaman. "The survey of rest of the river areas flowing across Narayanganj depends on availability of records and fund."

The district administration has prepared a budget proposal of Tk 1.1 crore for survey, eviction of illegal structures and earth removal from the river areas and sent it to the land ministry. They are yet to get the fund.

"But this time, the main purpose of the meeting will be to build a trusting relationship."

Defeated prime minister Taro Aso and his cabinet earlier resigned en masse, bringing the curtain down on a virtually uninterrupted period of LDP rule stretching back to the 1950s.

The political sea-change comes a year after the collapse of US investment bank Lehman Brothers triggered the global economic crisis, which hit Japan's export-led economy hard and sent unemployment to a post-war high.

Hatoyama, a wealthy US-trained engineer whose father and grandfather were both in politics, has promised to undo an "iron triangle" that existed between the LDP, big business and the state bureaucracy.

Ruling party

FROM PAGE 1
Shafique Miah has provided 'a strong back up' to felling of Jhau trees, the sources said.

Meanwhile, a seven-member team led by Deputy Commissioner (DC) Gias Uddin Ahmed from Cox's Bazar visited the barren land yesterday noon.

Local people told the deputy commissioner that the forest workers took Tk 100 against felling of one Jhau tree as bribe. Local AL leaders and two UP members are involved in the felling of trees, they said to the DC.

They said Teknaf municipal BNP general secretary Mohammad Abdullah had built a shrimp enclosure after destroying a Jhau garden on about 150 acres of land in Sabrang beach in 2003.

After AL-led grand alliance came to power, over 100 party men led by Zahed Hossain and Noor Hossain captured the shrimp enclosure and put up a signboard on the J