

Fake drinking water factories busted

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A Rapid Action Battalion team led by its executive magistrate busted three fake drinking water factories during a drive in different parts in the city yesterday.

Executive Magistrate Anwar Pasha fined seven factory owners, including three fake factories, with Tk 4.40 lakh during the eight hour long drive that ended at 6:00pm.

Magistrate Pasha said the factories were not using hydrogen peroxide to make the empty jars germ free before refilling water.

The factories were washing

the jars manually rather than using washing plants, which poses additional health hazards.

The magistrate said that none of the factories used ultra violet rays to make the bottled water germfree. The factories also breach regulations by failing to employ chemists and by not conducting their operations in a laboratory.

He also said that unhygienic conditions prevail in the factories.

Magistrate Pasha fined Sony Drinking Water in Mirpur-2 Tk 20,000, Nir Drinking Water in Mirpur-6 Tk 1 lakh, Foods and Flavour of

Yummy Yummy Company at Kalshi Road in Mirpur-11 Tk 1.5 lakh, Mon Dew Drinking Water in Mirpur-11 Tk 15,000, Prashanta Pure Drinking Water in Mirpur-1 Tk 70,000, Marigold Drinking Water in Maddya Monipur Tk 65,000 and Minim Drinking Water in Barabag, Mirpur-2 Tk 20,000.

Prashanta Pure Drinking Water, Marigold Drinking Water and Nir Drinking Water did not have valid operating licences.

Foods and Flavour of Yummy Yummy Company was found preparing foods and other fast food items in a car parking place that is also used to process chicken meat.

Follow up words with action

Islamabad calls on US

AFP, Islamabad

Pakistan's Foreign Minister Shah Mehmood Qureshi said yesterday the need to rebuild trust with the United States was key to upcoming talks and called on Washington to follow up words with action.

"My message to the US is that the time has come to walk the talk," he told a news conference in Islamabad.

Qureshi and Secretary of State Hillary Clinton are scheduled to lead talks in Washington next week aimed at boosting the economy and security of Pakistan, a key ally in the fight against al-Qaeda and the long war in Afghanistan.

They will chair the March 24 talks on what the State Department says will be economic development, education, agriculture and security.

"I believe our forthcoming dialogue will provide a good opportunity to re-build confidence and trust on both sides," said Qureshi, adding: "we need to build comfort on all sides."

"We want these talks to be broad based and that is why I am proposing a completely different format for interaction between the two countries."

President Barack Obama's administration has sought to engage more deeply with Pakistan, which has long seen Washington as interested only in securing its military cooperation in the fight against the Taliban and al-Qaeda.

AL leaders

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them to remain alert against any conspiracy. The programme seeks to drum up support in favour of the trial of war criminals and elicit people's aspirations and suggestions for the government.

AL Joint General Secretary Mahbubul Alam Hanif told The Daily Star that people's demands would be put forward to the prime minister for implementation.

Recruitment of new members and renewal of primary membership will be done during the month-long programme.

A team with AL presidium member Satish Chandra Roy, Asaduzzaman Noor, Yafesh Osman, Khalid Mahmud Chowdhury, Niphamari and another with Mohammad Nasim, Khairuzzaman Liton and Abu Sayeed AL Mahmud Swapan visited Rajshahi.

One team with AL leaders Mahbubul Alam Hanif and Mizbah Uddin Siraj toured Sunamganj while another with AL presidium member Yusuf Hossain Humayun, AFM Bahauddin Nasim and Abul Hasanat Abdullah visited Patuakhali.

Hanif at an extended meeting in Sunamganj asked local lawmakers to resolve internal disputes immediately through due process.

He asked the lawmakers to communicate more with the grassroots leaders who contributed a lot to their victory in the last parliamentary election, Sunamganj district unit president Matiar Rahman Moti told The Daily Star last night.

NGOs run illegally

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involvement in extremism and anti-state activities.

Meanwhile, some NGO officials complained that the bureau takes too much time for the renewal job.

"As per the rules, we have applied six months before expiry of our registration. Eight months have gone since then, but we haven't yet got our licence renewed," said a project director on condition that he and his NGO remain anonymous.

During a recent visit to the NGO bureau, officials from different local and foreign-funded NGOs were seen waiting at the reception.

No-one, however, would say much about issues like inefficiency and shortage of manpower at the bureau, as they fear they might have a hard time if they go public with these.

"Some of the foreign-funded NGOs have decided not to renew registration as they currently have no projects running on foreign funds," said an NGO official.

A technical coordinator of a local NGO told The Daily Star, "We have submitted application for renewal at least two

In January, Clinton unveiled a long-term, non-military strategy to stabilise both Afghanistan and Pakistan, where anti-American sentiment is high.

The plan calls for sending dozens of staff from the US Agency for International Development and other personnel to Pakistan by the end of the year to enhance oversight of contracts and improve the management of programmes developed with Islamabad.

It also calls for boosting Pakistan's capabilities to fight a growing Islamist insurgency and to enhance the US partnership with Islamabad, partly through supporting political and economic reforms.

Qureshi said the Pakistani foreign minister and US secretary of state should meet annually and the Pakistani foreign secretary and US regional envoy Richard Holbrooke should hold talks twice a year.

"I am also proposing 10 tracks of sectoral engagements in economy, energy, defence, education, science and technology, counter-terrorism strategic stability and non proliferation, health, communication, agriculture and public diplomacy," said Qureshi.

BNP leaders

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opposition Chief Whip Zainul Abdin Faroque gave the hint while talking to reporters. "Parliament is not running properly. We will protest on Sunday," Zainul told reporters after attending a human chain programme organised by Jatiyatadabi Chhatra Dal in front of the national press club.

"If the speaker fails to run the House neutrally we will decide during parliamentary party meeting if we will return to parliament," he said.

"Our microphone is switched off in parliament. We cannot organise programme in the street either due to police interference. We have no alternative but to forge street movements," he said.

MK Anwar was talking to reporters after he attended a dialogue at the press club organised by the Centre for Democracy and Peace Studies.

He said they will make a decision after a discussion in the party forum.

After being absent from 64 consecutive sittings since June, lawmakers of BNP, Jamaat-e-Islami and Bangladesh Jatiya Party returned to the parliament on February 11.

Meanwhile, at a meeting commemorating former BNP secretary General KM Obaidur, BNP leaders said retired army officers and former bureaucrats are dominating the party.

Army officers and bureaucrats should not control party politics, they added.

BNP leaders DR Gani, Nurul Islam Manjur, Abdullah Al Noman, Moazzem Hossain Alal, M Ilyas Ali and Jappa president Shafiul Alam Proddhan, among others, spoke at the meeting.

"BNP leaders have no link with workers and they are mainly busy with giving public speech and participating on television talk show," said Manjur.

BCL faction takes control of Dhaka College hostel

DU CORRESPONDENT

Shihab-faction of Bangladesh Chhatra League, Dhaka College unit took control over Dakkhinayan Hall yesterday, within a day after overnight raids and arrests following Tuesday night's clash over dominance on the dormitories.

Two BCL factions of Dhaka College engaged in a fierce clash on the campus Tuesday night over gaining control of the dormitories. Following the incident, police conducted overnight raids in all the seven dormitories.

They arrested 58 students, mostly BCL cadres, and recovered 52 bullets. Sources said some 15 to 20 armed cadres of Shihab-faction led by Akhter and Kabir drove away resident students of their rival Titu-faction and took control of the dormitory yesterday around 5:30pm.

Meanwhile, tension grew intense as Titu-group was reorganising to win back the hall. Preferring anonymity, three resident students of the hall said armed cadres took position at the entrance but police or college authorities did nothing to prevent it.

However, both the BCL factions claimed to be controlling the dormitory from before and blamed each other for muscling in on them.

BCL sources said the conflict between the two groups erupted when a number of students on completion of their masters exam were going to vacate their rooms.

Meanwhile, New Market police said they knew nothing about the taking-over incident.

Jubo League men

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regal culprit as he was outside Bogra for a training programme.

Kunu said Belal was implicated in the case though he told police at the DB office that Belal did not shoot him. Belal's father Ramzan said Jubo League leader Sujon involved in the incident assured him that they would procure bail for Belal by April 9. He also said Sujon's men are giving Tk 100 every day for upkeep of his family. They have also promised to pay Belal's house rent.

Ramzan said his son Belal was arrested while collecting rents at the bazar. Later, he was blindfolded and taken to the graveyard. A revolver was recovered from there and police gave a story to journalists that Belal hid the revolver there on instructions of Mostaque.

Education

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section of people," he added. He was speaking at a discussion on the proposed education policy and trial of the war criminals.

Ekatturer Ghatak Dalal Nirmul Committee organised the programme at Dhanmondi's WVA (Women Volunteer Association) auditorium to mark the 90th birth anniversary of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman.

The minister said the policy will be implemented in phases within the tenure of this government.

Certain quarters are working against it, using religious sentiments, he alleged.

"I want to reiterate this policy will do no harm to Islam. It will only seek to modernise the madrasa education system."

A 16-member committee formed to formulate the education policy submitted the final draft on September 2 last year.

Of war crimes trial, Nahid said the government is very much aware how people want to see the war criminals brought to book, and it is working so the trial begins soon.

National Professor Kabir Chowdhury, who chaired the discussion, said the government should waste no more time in starting the trial of war criminals.

"The [religious] fundamentalists know the ground beneath their feet is moving away and so they are turning to BNP. I don't think BNP will be interested to shoulder their [war criminals] blame."

The other speakers included Justice Golam Rabbani, president of the Citizen's Commission for Trial of War Criminals, Prof Ajay Roy, president of Human Rights Congress for Bangladesh Minority, Rasheda K Chowdhury, former adviser to caretaker government, and journalist Shahriar Kabir.

China pledges

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infrastructure connecting Chittagong with Kunming through Gundum of Myanmar, construction of eighth Bangladesh-China Friendship Bridge, Water Purification Project in Pagla, Financial and Technical support for construction of power plant in Bangladesh, strengthening organisational cooperation between China National Hybrid Rice Research Centre and Bangladesh Rice Research Institutes and waiving Chinese loan.

PM's Press Secretary Abul Kalam Azad briefed reporters after the talks.

Welcoming Hasina to the Great Hall, the Chinese PM lauded her leadership, saying that democracy has been strengthened further in Bangladesh after her assumption of office of prime minister.

"Stability in socio-economic sectors has been brought back after your assumption as the prime minister of Bangladesh," Jiabao told Hasina and expressed hope that Bangladesh will achieve further progress in this vital sectors in future under her prudent leadership.

Referring to excellent bilateral relations existing between the two countries, the Chinese premier said the cooperation in the country's socio-economic sectors would be bolstered in the days to come.

In reply, Hasina recalled the visits of Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman to China in 1953 and 1957 and said through these visits bilateral links between Bangladesh and China had been established.

Hasina said China is a trusted friend of Bangladesh and her country attaches highest importance to its relationship with China in the greater interest of the two Asian nations.

Mentioning the Chinese support for Bangladesh's development sector, Hasina said the Chinese cooperation in the country's infrastructure, trade and business, agriculture, energy and power have been playing an important role in the country's socio-economic development.

In this context, she referred to Bangladesh-China Friendship Bridge, Bangabandhu International Conference Centre and other projects being implemented through Chinese support.

During the talks, Hasina sought Chinese support and cooperation in modernising flood forecasting and warning centre, river dredging projects, satellite launching and setting up remote sensing satellite, increasing stipend for Bangladeshi students up to 150 and providing scholarship facilities to the foreign service officials.

Referring to defence cooperation, the PM requested the Chinese government to provide two frigates with three helicopters under long-term loan assistance and called for extending support to her government's endeavours in tackling the challenges of climate change.

Laying emphasis on regional cooperation, Hasina said relations among the countries in the region, especially China, India and Myanmar, have to be strengthened for the overall benefit in the region.

She said concerted efforts have to be taken to eliminate terrorism and militancy from the region.

Describing poverty as a common enemy, Hasina said united steps have to be taken to eradicate poverty from the Asian region.

Food inflation

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measures in place including unhindered supply of commodities, to contain inflation.

Bangladesh Bank in its quarterly update released last month said, "Given the current trends of internal and external prices, both food and non-food point-to-point inflation looks set to continue over the coming months with some upward bias."

"Given the supply sources of emerging inflationary pressures, the policy focus needs to be directed at improving both the supply conditions and the supply chain, for more efficient distribution," it added.

The central bank update also said the open market sales (OMS) operation along with food for work, and vulnerable group feeding (VGF) programmes will be of some help, but the real emphasis should be put on raising boro production to ensure food security.

As the Bangladesh premier sought Chinese cooperation in these sectors, Jiabao assured her to provide his country's support for these sectors for overall development of Bangladesh.

Regarding the climate change issue, the Chinese premier appreciated the role of Bangladesh premier for her prudent leadership in those forums where she raised the vulnerability of the affected countries and sought international support to tackle the climate change challenges.

Foreign Minister Dipu Moni, Communications Minister Syed Abul Hossain, Industries Minister Dilip Barua, Ambassador-at-Large M Ziauddin, Foreign Secretary Mohamed Mijarul Quayes, Bangladesh Ambassador to China Munshi Foiz Ahmad, among others, were present.

Pakistan warns of fresh attacks in major cities

ANI, Lahore

Pakistan's Interior Ministry has warned of fresh terror attacks by the Taliban in all major cities, including Lahore, Islamabad and Peshawar.

According to a notification issued by the ministry, a group of 15 trained militants from the restive Waziristan region could wreak havoc across the country in coming few days.

Army helicopters and aircrafts could also be targeted by militants there are reports that they also possess a 12.7 mm anti-aircraft gun, The Daily Times reports on Thursday.

Terror activities in Pakistan has increased substantially in Pakistan in the past few days with extremists striking at their will killing dozens of people in various parts of the country.

Last week, Lahore was rocked by two powerful bomb blasts, killing more than 50 persons and wounding over 100 others.

A series of 14 low intensity explosions which followed the twin blasts triggered panic among local residents, who feared more bloodshed.

The explosions came less than a week after a suicide car bomber tore through the office of the Special Intelligence Agency (SIA) killing at least 13 people and injuring over 20 others.

Following the recovery of a huge cache of arms and explosives from different part of Lahore, security agencies are planning a massive operation to bust 'militant hubs' situated in the outskirts of the provincial capital.

DCC

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barred the DCC officials and its workers from removing illegal hoardings, he alleged.

At one stage, the police personnel without taking his permission left the scene around 10:30pm, he added.

The DCC team, which was scheduled to dismantle 13 illegal billboards in front of the police control room last night removed only two hoardings.

Sirajul Islam, chief town planner of DCC, told The Daily Star that the DCC has set a target to remove all illegal hoardings from the city within three months.

The DCC team along with over 50 workers, one bulldozer, two cranes and other equipments started the drive, he said adding that Dhaka Metropolitan Police authority illegally leased out the space for billboards in front of the police control room.

DMP Commissioner AKM Shahidul Haque said the DMP authority has leased out its space in front of the control room for the hoardings.

If DCC had served notice earlier, DMP authorities might have taken steps accordingly, he added.

The DCC gave permission to set up only 1,370 hoardings but several thousand illegal billboards have been mounted across the city, Sirajul Islam of DCC said.

Talks 'positive'

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Senior officials of water resources and foreign ministries of both the countries were also present at the JRC meeting.

Besides Ramesh and Wahid, the Bangladesh delegation included Dr Mashur Rahman, adviser to Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina, and High Commissioner to India Tariq Ahmed Karim.

Bangladesh Foreign Secretary Mirajul Quayes will join the talks today.

The two-day ministerial-level JRC meet is being held after five years.