

TOXIC PARACETAMOL CASE

Accuser now speaks for the accused

Puzzled prosecution promptly seeks adjournment on the proceedings started 19 years after death of 76 children

CHAITANYA CHANDRA HALDER and EMRAN HOSSAIN

The accuser yesterday sided with the persons accused of manufacturing adulterated paracetamol syrup that caused the death of 76 children in 1991.

Standing on the dock 16 years after hearing of the much-publicised case against Adflame Pharmaceuticals began, complainant Abul Khair Chowdhury, the then drug superintendent, spoke in favour of the five accused, three of them still on the run.

A puzzled prosecution immediately sought an adjournment on the proceedings. The Drug Court of Judge Mohammad Abdul Majid adjourned cross-examination of the complainant till January 5 following the petition by prosecutor Mahmud Hossain Jahangir.

Prosecutor Jahangir said, "I was stunned hearing the answer. I saw the case was going to be lost and I had no other

- Over 2,000 children died from toxic paracetamol of 5 companies between 1980-92
- Corruption sabotaged the criminal cases
- Never-ending High Court stay orders prevent cases from being tried
- Families kept in heart-breaking wait for justice in one of the worst ever crimes
- Case against Adflame reopened November 11, 2009 upon The Daily Star inquiry; one company was not even prosecuted, two other cases stuck in stays, another acquitted

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CJ in disguise visits Dhaka lower courts

COURT CORRESPONDENT

Chief Justice ABM Khairul Haque in guise of a general visitor made surprise visits to different lower courts in Dhaka to see their proceedings yesterday.

ABM Khairul Haque, the 19th chief justice of the country, is the first CJ known to make such visits.

Sources said the CJ went to the court area around 11:30am and visited different court-rooms of the Dhaka District and Sessions Judge, Metropolitan Sessions Judge, Chief Metropolitan Magistrate and Chief Judicial Magistrate.

Supreme Court Registrar Ashraful Islam and others accompanying him were all in plain clothes.

Most of the judges and magistrates while conducting

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Population 16.44cr

States UNFPA report; minister Razzaque feels food security threatened

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The country's population is now 16.44 crore while the population growth 1.4 per thousand, said a UNFPA report.

The United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) yesterday launched its world population report 2010. As for Bangladesh, Food and Disaster Management Minister Muhammad Abdur Razzaque unveiled the report "State of World Population 2010" at a city hotel yesterday. The theme of this year's flagship publications was "From Conflict and Crisis to Renewal: Generations of Change."

The UNFPA report also predicted that the population of the country would be 22.25 crore by 2050.

Ganesh Chandra Sarkar, director of

Population	16.44 crore
Population growth	1.4 (/1000 people)
Infant mortality	41 (/1000 people)
Access to improved water	80%
Under-5 child mortality	boy 58%, girl 56%
Primary school enrolment	boy 89%, girl 94%
High school enrolment	boy 43%, girl 45%

Directorate of Family Planning, however, claimed at the report unveiling programme that the population of the country is around 14.4 crore. In the fourth Population and Housing Census 2001, the population of Bangladesh is stated 12.43 crore, he added.

According to the UNFPA report 2010, 28 percent people of the country live in urban areas where the population growth is 3.2 per thousand. The fertility rate in the country is 2.25 percent with 72 of every 1,000 female aged between 15 and 19 years' old giving birth to their first child. Only 18 percent women of the country receive service from skilled attendants in their labour.

The mortality rates of under-five-year-old male and female in the country are 58 and 56

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No extra flight

Biman pilots threaten in demand for restoring benefits

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Pilots of Biman Bangladesh Airlines yesterday threatened to stop flying extra hours, unless airline authorities withdrew an order that increased their retirement ages but curtailed some benefits.

Hajj flights will, however, remain out of the movement, they said.

"From October 22, we won't fly extra hours, unless our demands are met," said Captain MA Basit Mahtab, general secretary of Biman and Bangladesh Pilots' Association (BAPA), at a press conference.

This means, Biman's scheduled flights might be delayed in case authorities deny the pilots' demands.

The ultimatum came just one and a half months after the national flag carrier was jolted by violent staff protests over pay.

The press conference was held at a restaurant in Uttara, as the authorities imposed a restriction on BAPA, an umbrella body of

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Padma bridge work from Mar

Cost rises to \$2.9b for design change; Muhith terms talks with WB fruitful; donors firm on graft issues

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Construction of the Padma Bridge will start in March next year instead of this year, and the cost will be \$2.9 billion instead of the earlier projection of \$2.4 billion, said Finance Minister AMA Muhith yesterday.

The construction cost increased due to changes in the design, and some other factors, he said.

Speaking at a media briefing returning from a month-long visit to the US, leading a delegation, the finance minister said they had fruitful discussion with the World Bank about the Padma Bridge project.

He also said although there were some differences of opinion with the WB on the bridge, those were resolved.

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