

Scientists

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Research at Mill Hill and colleagues in Switzerland looked at more than 1,00,000 samples of immune cells from patients who had flu or a flu vaccine.

They isolated an antibody -- called F16 -- which targeted a protein found on the surface of all influenza A viruses called haemagglutinin.

Sir John Skehel, MRC scientist at Mill Hill, said: "We've tried every subtype of influenza A and it interacts with them all."

"We eventually hope it can be used as a therapy by injecting the antibody to stop the infection."

Professor Antonio Lanzavecchia, director of the Institute for Research in Biomedicine, Switzerland, said: "As the first and only antibody which targets all known subtypes of the influenza A virus, F16 represents an important new treatment option."

When mice were given F16, the antibody was "fully protective" against a later lethal dose of H1N1 virus.

Mice injected with the antibody up to two days after being given a lethal dose of the virus recovered and survived.

Sir John said the structure of the antibody and how it interacted with haemagglutinin had been worked out, which would help in the search for a vaccine, but that was "definitely years away".

Indian home

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Airport at 9:45pm, reports UNB.

During his visit Bangladesh and India will sign a border management agreement with a view to bringing down incidents of killing and crime along the border.

The agreement styled Coordinated Border Management Plan (CBMP) is expected to be signed after Chidambaram's meeting at the home ministry with his Bangladesh counterpart Sahara Khatun today.

The Indian home minister is also scheduled to call on Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina and Foreign Minister Dipu Moni.

Two joint secretaries of Indian home ministry -- Kamal Kanti Mittal and Shambhu Singh -- arrived in Dhaka Thursday to finalise the proposed deal and other issues to be discussed between the home ministers.

The proposed agreement also aims at stopping smuggling of arms and narcotics, activities of extremists and terrorists, insurgency and human trafficking.

Bangladesh will hand over a list of vulnerable areas along the Indo-Bangladesh border to the Indian home minister. As per the new agreement expected to be signed tomorrow, border guards of both the countries will exchange information on the vulnerable areas to ensure joint patrolling in a coordinated way. None of the troops will cross the border during patrol.

30 injured

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scuffles while getting into the train. At one stage of their quarrel, the groups fought a running battle at the station that lasted for about two hours, he said.

Police on information rushed to the spot and charged truncheons to disperse the conflicting supporters.

They fired around 40 rubber bullets, leaving six activists bullet-hit, sources said.

Of the injured, Mujibur Rahman, 39, was admitted to Gafargaon Upazila Health Complex while the rest took treatment at different local clinics.

Five policemen including the OC and two assistant sub-inspectors were also injured by brick bats thrown by clashing groups, police sources said.

Additional police have been deployed at the railway station to avoid further incidents.

Political decisions

FROM PAGE 1
minister says political decisions will be taken about allowing new banks, and when it is reported that about 15 new banks are set to get licences.

The initiative to allow new banks has its many sides, most of them are raising concern among us. The central bank was against new banks at this moment and probably this was because of the recent decision to put a brake on monetary growth. The central bank wants to cool down the inflation and that would mean a squeeze on credit. There is also the real possibility of a global dip for a second time. Amid such a scenario, it might not look prudent to allow new financial intermediaries in the market.

The central bank must have weighed other parameters to negate entry of new banks at this moment. For example, look at the deposit figure which is about Tk 2,96,000 crore, and the banks are still in liquidity crisis. Many of the leasing companies are facing acute shortage of funds because of the banks' dwindling situation. This situation naturally does not justify new banks now. There is no magic wand at work to suddenly jack up our GDP next year to dramatically increase savings in economy to accommodate 15 new banks.

The other impact of a bunch of banks entering the market would be on the capital market. When too many competitors would fray for the pie, their profitability would fall and so would their market price. The investors would be hurt and bourse board would look gloomy.

And do not forget the human resource aspect. Already banks find it difficult to get the right persons for the right jobs while salary is going through the ceiling. When the new banks would enter the market, it is quite understandable what would be the impact on the job market. The same efficient people would be divided all of a sudden and low efficiency people would be inducted. The result -- loss of efficiency. And if it happens, the ultimate reasoning for allowing more banks -- getting better services -- would be defeated.

But most worrisome is the recklessness of the nature of decision making. The decision to allow new banks has to be made purely on economic and business considerations and not on political considerations. In the process, political favouritism might happen. But that would not mean that a business decision has to be made

Security was inadequate

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coastal districts was held from March 29 to April 3.

And election to more than 100 UPs remains postponed due to legal complexities, and will be held later, said a senior EC official.

Sakhawat said the commission could focus more on every polling centre and polling areas, if the UP election were held division-wise, and not staggered across the country.

Moreover, hartal and other political programmes were going on across the country, and a large number of law enforcers were deployed to ensure security. So, there was a shortage of law enforcers, he mentioned.

Initially, the EC had planned to hold UP election division-wise. But the home ministry wanted nationwide polls at a time. That is why required number of security personnel could not be deployed at many places, said an EC official who was in charge of monitoring the UP polls.

"There were many vulnerable [to violence] polling centres in different districts. Election officials of these areas sought more law enforcers. But we could not do that," he said.

As per law, 15 security

personnel including police and ansar were deployed at every polling centre, while 20 were deployed at each vulnerable polling centre.

The 36-day second phase of UP election witnessed incidents of violence including killings, capture of voting centres, attacks on polls officials, snatching of ballot boxes, setting fire to houses and shops and torture on members of minority communities.

At least 45 people were killed and over 12,000 were seriously injured during the second phase. Those killed include two school boys in Coz's Bazar and Kurigram. Both were shot dead by rival groups.

In most cases, violence erupted when the defeated candidates launched attacks on the winners.

Around 25 policemen and dozens of police officials were injured in different districts.

Meanwhile, Sushashoner Jonno Nagorik Secretary Badiul Alam Majumder said violence in UP election is the reflection of political unrest across the country. The law enforcers could not prevent that because they worked to satisfy the ruling party men.

purely for political reasons. This might lead to drop in governance in the banking system as we saw in the past.

The identities of the persons, who have applied for the new banks, reveal the reason for the finance minister's statement of political decision for new licences. As far as information could be gathered, these "entrepreneurs" are closely linked with the ruling party -- some of them lawmakers. In the past we also saw people with political links getting banks. Getting a banking licence has now become a rent seeking practice in which some people are favoured, who then rope others into it and money changes hand. If this becomes the rule, then the banking system is set to suffer.

The entry of a bunch of new banks can also result in imprudent financial decisions. When the same profit pie would be sliced up, banks might race for more loans and advances to keep their profits intact at the risk of financial judgment. The end result would then be more non-performing loan and bad asset.

At this juncture of the economy when we are poised to take up quite a few big infrastructure projects, it is important that the country retains its credit rating. If the financial system weakens with the fallout on the economy, the rating will go down. That would mean costly borrowing from outside. With a weakening reserve position, that would have a widespread impact on inflation and growth.

Having said all this, one can still argue that there is room for new banks, specially when banks' profit has surged over the years. New banks would create more competition and better rates and services for clients. And there cannot be any dogmatic stance that new banks cannot be allowed. But for better services and better rates, a lot of reforms and policy changes are crucial as well. When inflation is high one cannot expect rates to be low. So a lot of work has to be done in applying proper monetary and fiscal tools rather than allowing new banks to lower rates. On the other hand, a central bank with a modern outlook is crucial to get better services. Many banks decry how the central bank blocks innovative product launching. Instead of allowing new banks, what is more needed is beefing up governance of the banks. And unless we do it, banks, especially the new banks, would be susceptible to trouble which would ultimately affect the whole economy and politics as well.

More goods being taken to Nepal thru' Bangladesh

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Chapainawabganj

Two Indian goods trains have left the Rohanpur Railway Station here for Nepal with the second consignment of 2,478 tonnes of diammonium phosphate (DAP) imported from Morocco by Agriculture Import Corporation Ltd of Nepal.

One train with 1,652 tonnes of fertiliser in 28 wagons and the other with 826 tonnes in 14 wagons left Rohanpur at 8:15am and 2:00pm yesterday.

The trains will enter Birganj of Nepal via Singabud in Malda district of India.

On July 16, two Indian goods trains left Rohanpur for Nepal with 2,389 tonnes of DAP imported by Agriculture Import Corporation Ltd.

This was for the first time Bangladesh allowed Nepal to use the Chittagong port, river route and railway facility in line with a decision taken by Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina and her Indian counterpart Manmohan Singh last year.

According to the Joint Communiqué issued during Hasina's visit to India in January last year, Bangladesh agreed to give Nepal and Bhutan access to Chittagong and Mongla ports.

The two leaders also agreed to establish a broad gauge railway link between Rohanpur and Singabud for transit to Nepal. Besides, they also agreed allowing trucks from Bhutan and Nepal to enter about 200 metres into Bangladesh through Indian territories.

The imported DAP reached Chittagong port on May 17. Cargo boats carried it to Nowapara Railway Station in Jessore.

Bangladesh Railway brought forty-two Indian wagons up to Jessore and loaded the fertiliser in four days from July 10.

One lakh tonnes of DAP would be carried to Nepal through this route, Mohammad Shahidullah, station master of Rohanpur Railway Station, told The Daily Star.

Bangladesh and India have already permitted transit of 50,000 tonnes of DAP to Nepal, he noted.

LDP, BNP

FROM PAGE 1
at her Gulshan residence. Oli's wife former BNP lawmaker Momotaj Oli and BNP acting Secretary General Mirza Fakhrul Islam Alamgir were also present in the meeting that lasted more than an hour and a half.

Oli was once a standing committee member of BNP but he broke away and joined Liberal Democratic Party in 2006, making accusations that the Zia family had plunged into corruption.

Asked about the accusations he made earlier, Oli sidestepped the question and said, "I don't want to say anything about any individual. Now we will try to protect the country from the government's grip with the people's support."

Replying to a question on whether he has agreed to work with Jamaat-e-Islami, Oli, who had been very vocal against Jamaat, said he believes that not all the men of Jamaat opposed the country's independence, as many of them weren't even born then.

He said, "A number of Awami League leaders including Obaidul Quader and State Minister Hasan Mahmud met me but I told them that I have decided to go for a movement against the wrongdoings of the government."

Promising singer

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According to Cox's Bazar Superintendent of Police Selim Mohammad Jahangir, the youths might have been trapped in quicksand.

In last 10 days at least four tourists died being stuck in quicksand, Md Sayed Nur, director of Robi Lifeguard, said.

2 policemen suspended

FROM PAGE 1
investigate the incident of detention and torture of Kadar.

The law ministry, however, is yet to get a copy of the directives, ministry sources said.

Appearing in the court on Thursday, Kadar said Helal Uddin chopped the calf muscle of his left leg with a cleaver while other policemen beat him severely.

Meanwhile, a Dhaka court yesterday fixed August 1 for hearing of a bail petition in a case filed by Mohammadpur police against Kadar on charges of carjacking. Kadar's lawyer Abdul Matin Khasru submitted the bail petition with the Metropolitan Magistrate's Court.

Also on August 1, another Dhaka Court will hear a police petition seeking to take Kadar on a seven-day remand in the same case.

A master's student of biochemistry and molecular biology at DU, he is now undergoing treatment at Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujib Medical University (BSMMU) with injuries on different parts of his body.

Khilgaon police arrested him early on July 16. Following the arrest, they filed two cases against him

on charges of attempted robbery and possessing firearms.

Bail petitions in the two cases were also submitted before the Metropolitan Magistrate's Court yesterday. But the court did not hear them on grounds that hearing of those has already been fixed for August 3 in Metropolitan Session Judges' Court.

Kadar's family, and classmates and teachers at DU, including the chairman of his department, say he is a good-natured, brilliant student who was never involved in any criminal activities.

In another development, police tried to prevent his mother Monowara Begum from visiting him at BSMMU around 10:00am yesterday.

Police, however, let her enter his cabin after she referred to the HC order that said Kadar's parents can visit him any time.

Doctors said there are six stitches in Kadar's left leg and those will be removed in two to three days. The wounds were recovering, they added.

"Kadar has been prescribed for x-ray to determine whether his leg has

also been internally damaged," said Anwarul Islam Chowdhury, professor of orthopaedic department at BSMMU.

Note: The spelling of Kadar's name was confirmed by his sister yesterday. Previously, we spelt it Quader.

Philippines storm death toll rises to 41

AFP, Manila

The death toll in the Philippines from tropical storm Nock-ten climbed to 41 yesterday, as millions of people across the main island of Luzon mopped up after a week of heavy rain, officials said.

Food and medical supplies were being sent by land to hard-hit areas, especially Bicol on the southeastern tip of Luzon as widespread floods ebbed, the National Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Council said.

Bicol officials have asked the national government for help in speeding up search and rescue work, and aid delivery, said its executive director Benito Ramos.

Expressway faces delay

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On the other side, the project's contractor Ital-Thai could not yet arrange bank loans to kick-start the work, insiders told The Daily Star.

Earlier on January 19 this year, the government signed a deal with Ital-Thai Development Company Ltd to construct the four-lane expressway from Shahjalal International Airport to Kutubkhali on the Dhaka-Chittagong Highway to be constructed under a Public-Private Partnership (PPP) project.

As per the agreement, the company must begin construction within six months of signing the deal. At the same time, the Bangladesh Bridge Authority (BBA), the implementing authority of the project, must hand over one-third of the project land to the constructor within that period.

Besides, the government has to pay the company a compensation of \$10,000 a day if it fails to hand over the land within the stipulated time, July 19. The company, on the other hand, must pay the government liquidated damages of \$50,000 a day if the work remains unfinished after the 42-month construction deadline of June 2014.

"We are holding meetings with Ital-Thai and the people having either land or houses on the alignment to resolve the problems," said Bridge Division Secretary Mosharrar Hossain Bhuiyan, adding that they are going to hand over some land to the firm soon.

"Both the government and the constructor are flexible and are trying to overcome all the hurdles amicably," observed the secretary.

The Ital-Thai has suspended its primary activities like piling and soil tests it has been doing since signing of the deal. The firm is now conducting an environmental and social study, a prerequisite for getting fund from donor agencies. Started in June, the study requires eight to 10 months to complete, say experts.

"It's unlikely that any funding agency will come forward before the study is done," Prof Shamsul Hoque of Buet's civil engineering department told The Daily Star.

He said a design for the expressway was prepared but that has to be vetted by an independent consultant who has not yet been appointed.

Meanwhile, a group of residents of Kuril whose land and houses fall on the expressway alignment met the communications minister at Setu Bhaban recently with a proposal to modify alignment at Kuril point.

They said their land and houses will be saved if the alignment is shifted to the western side of the airport road from the eastern side. However, to meet their demand, the authorities must take clearance from the Civil Aviation Authority as the eastern side falls within the air funnel.

The first nine-kilometre segment from airport to Tejaon will require 96 acres of land, 18 acres of which are owned by private owners. Of the remaining 78 acres, 10

acres belong to the Cantonment Board, four to the Roads and Highways Department and the rest to Bangladesh Railway. The authorities have to remove 258 structures including 16 five-storey and eight six-storey buildings.

The main expressway route starts from Shahjalal International Airport and runs along the rail alignment through Mohakhali, Tejaon, Moghbazar and Kamalapur Railway Station. It then touches Golapbagh, south of Kamalapur stadium, and east of Jatrabari before connecting Dhaka-Chittagong Highway near Kutubkhali.

Its total length will be 42 kilometres with two elevated links of five kilometres and seven interchanges and 35 ramps of 16 kilometres. Vehicles from different directions will have the options to travel from one place to another.

The first elevated link will connect Manik Mia Avenue-Holy Cross College-Tejaon Crossing, while the second one will touch Palashi-Kataban-Hatirpool-Hotel Sonargaon (rear)-Moghbazar level crossing. The interchange points are Kuril, Cantonment, Banani, Farmgate, Shaheed Tajuddin Road, Moghbazar and Kamalapur.

There will be 11 toll plazas and toll for end-to-end journey on the expressway will be Tk 125 for cars, jeeps and other light vehicles. The rate will be double for buses, four times for six-wheel trucks, and five times for above six-wheel trucks.

Libyan rebel military chief

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line near the oil port of Brega.

"It seems this was an assassination operation organised by Gaddafi's men," London-based Libyan journalist and activist Shamis Ashour told Reuters.

"By doing that they think they will create divisions among the rebels. There certainly was treason, a sleeping cell among the rebels. Younes was on the front line and was lured to come back to Benghazi and was killed before he reached Benghazi. This is a big setback and a big loss to the rebels."

The killing coincided with the start of a rebel offensive in the west and further international recognition for their cause, which they hope to translate into access to billions of dollars in frozen funds.

Witnesses said the killing was greeted with jubilation by Gaddafi's supporters in the Libyan capital Tripoli.

After a day of rumours, rebel political leader Mustafa Abdel Jalil said Younes and two bodyguards had been killed before he could make a requested appearance before a rebel judicial committee investigating military issues.

It was not clear where the attack took place.

Younes was not trusted by all of the rebel leadership due to his previous role in cracking down on anti-Gaddafi dissidents.

But his death is likely to be a severe blow to a movement that has won the backing of some 30 nations but is labouring to make progress on the battlefield.

The rebels claimed to have seized several towns in the Western Mountains on

Thursday but have yet to make a serious breakthrough. With prospects of a swift negotiated settlement fading, both sides seem prepared for the five-month civil war to grind on into the Muslim holy month of Ramadan in August.

A rebel official said no deal was worth talking about unless it meant Gaddafi and his powerful sons left Libya, while the veteran leader vowed to fight on "until victory, until martyrdom."

At least four explosions rocked the centre of Tripoli on Thursday evening as airplanes were heard overhead. The city has come under frequent Nato bombing since Western nations intervened on the side of the rebels in March under a UN mandate to prevent Gaddafi's forces from killing civilians.

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AL activist killed in gunfight

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Munshiganj

A youth was killed and at least 22 others were injured in a gunfight between two rival groups of locals at Solarchar village under Sadar upazila yesterday over establishing a mosque.

The dead is Mohammad Rubel, 27, of the same village, said Shahidul Islam, officer-in-charge of Sadar Police Station.

Local Awami League leader Suruj Member claimed the deceased was an AL activist.

According to the OC, Suruj Member had a rival in Ali Hossain Sarkar in the turf war. The two along with their supporters gathered at Solarchar Eidgah in the afternoon for an arbitration.

But before reaching any solution, both the groups got involved in an altercation. At one stage they opened fire on each other, leaving at least 23 injured, added Shahidul quoting witnesses.

Of them, Rubel received a bullet in his chest and was rushed to Munshiganj General Hospital, where doctors declared him dead.

Police force has been deployed in the spot to defuse tension.

Central bank

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said some new banks would be given licence and BB would soon invite applications for that.

He had earlier said that only two banks--Probashi Kalyan Bank and the NRB (Non-Resident Bangladeshis) Bank--would get approval.

Probashi Kalyan Bank has already got the approval and the NRB Bank has been asked to submit its application.

At a meeting with the finance minister on July 17, most members of the BB board of directors opposed giving licence to new banks.

After the meeting, Muhith said the central bank would conduct a study to find whether new banks can be approved in the prevailing situation. The findings will be placed in the BB board meeting next month.

BB will send the study report to the government with the board's opinion.

The minister at a meeting with the Economic Reporters' Forum the same day said political decisions will be taken about allowing new banks on receipt of the central bank's report.

Asked whether the new ones will be allowed to operate at the behest of political leaders, he said, "May be. I don't know."

Twenty people have applied for banking licence since the AL-led grand alliance came to power in January 2009.

Among the big shots, AL President M. M. Hossain Mohiuddin Khan Alamgir has so far submitted applications twice. Also chairman of the parliamentary standing committee on public accounts, he submitted an application in April 2009 to set up SME Bank. In 2010, he filed another application for a new bank, The Farmers' Bank Ltd.

An application for setting up Modhumati Bank Ltd was submitted in 2010. AL lawmaker Sheikh Fazle Noor Taposh is one of the directors of the proposed bank.

National Professor Kabir Chowdhury, Prof Deen Mohammad and Prof Azizur Rahman have taken initiative for setting up Self Employment Bank.

After the Liberation War in 1971, there were only six banks and all of those were state-owned.

During the Ershad rule, nine banks were set up in the private sector including the denationalised Pubali and Uttara banks from 1982 to 1987.

The BNP government gave permission to eight new banks from 1992 to 1996. In 1999-2001, the AL government allowed 13 new private banks. After that, no licence was given for opening new banks.