

Licences of 20 companies cancelled last year

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The government has cancelled the licence of 20 pharmaceutical companies in 2011 for producing inferior quality drugs, Health Minister AFM Ruhul Haque said in parliament yesterday. "These pharmaceutical companies did not follow Good Manufacturing Practices (GMP), a guideline developed by of World Health Organisation for producing quality medicinal products," the minister said. Of the 837 pharmaceutical companies in the country, 265 manufacture allopathic drugs while the remaining specialise in producing unani, ayurvedic, homeopathic and herbal medicines, the minister said.

He also informed the House that at present the doctor-nurse ratio in the country is 1:0.5 compared to the international standard of doctor-nurse ratio which is 1:3.

The minister said that there are 53,063 registered doctors in the country while there are only 28,775 registered nurses.

"This reflects a country-wide shortage of around 1.59 lakh nurses," said the health minister.

The twenty pharmaceutical companies:

Farmic Laboratories Ltd, Chittagong; Mafnaz Pharmaceuticals Ltd, Chittagong; Enova Pharmaceuticals Ltd, Dhaka; Desh Pharmaceuticals Ltd, Dhaka; Indobangla Pharmaceuticals Ltd, Barisal; Paradise Chemical Industries Ltd, Barisal; Universal Pharmaceuticals Ltd, Pabna; Oasis Laboratories Ltd, Sirajganj; Rasa Pharmaceuticals Ltd, Sirajganj; White Horse Pharmaceuticals Ltd, Savar; Jalfa Laboratories Ltd, Sylhet; Medico Laboratories, Rangpur; Benham Pharmaceuticals Ltd, Savar; Selton Pharmaceuticals Ltd, Dhaka; Tropical Pharmaceuticals Ltd, Dhaka; Standard Laboratories Ltd, Chittagong; United Chemical and Pharmaceuticals Ltd, Chittagong; Dhaka Chemical Industries (unani), Amin Laboratories (unani) and Dayemi Pharmaceuticals Ltd (unani), Dhaka.

Great Wall

FROM PAGE 20
China's northern border.

The State Administration of Cultural Heritage released the results based on an archaeological survey done since 2007.

Previous estimates of the wall's length were mainly based on historical records.

Tong Mingkang, deputy chief, said that the survey revealed a total of 43,721 heritage sites that included stretches of the Great Wall, reports Xinhua.

Known to the Chinese as the "Long Wall of 10,000 Li", the Great Wall is a series of walls and earthen works begun in 500BC and first linked up under Qin Shi Huang in about 220BC.

Only 8.2% of the original wall remains intact, with the rest in poor condition, according to the report.

It was listed as a Unesco world heritage site in 1987.

Japan prince dies at 66

AFP, Tokyo

Japan's Prince Tomohito, cousin of Emperor Akihito, died yesterday, a palace official said. He was 66.

Tomohito, who openly admitted to an alcohol problem, had been suffering from cancer of the larynx which had caused a series of complications. He had undergone cancer-related surgery a reported 16 times, most recently in March.

Tomohito, known as "the bearded prince", was one of the more outspoken members of Japan's often staid imperial family and was known to be a fierce defender of the rules on male-only succession.

Huda quits

FROM PAGE 1
he said, adding that he wanted the party to get rid of them. He was speaking at a press briefing at his chamber in the capital.

He said that being outside the party he would conduct a cleansing drive and that he wanted to bring back those who had been close associates of the party founder and late president Ziaur Rahman, into the opposition.

"I want to see the party become stronger under the leadership of Khaleda Zia," he noted.

Before journalists Huda read out his resignation letter which, he said, he would submit to the chairperson and urge her to accept.

"I had hoped you would show us how to protect the country from anarchy and go for a dialogue," he said, adding that according to the constitution a changeover in government should happen through a peaceful election but the ongoing out-government movement was unconstitutional.

Alluding to party leader Moudud Ahmed, who was vice-president and prime minister during military

dictator HM Ershad-led Jatiya Party's regime in the 1980s, Huda said, "I have no intention to do politics in a BNP led by a man from the Jatiya Party."

In the letter, he warned Khaleda, saying, "You have already noticed how he [Moudud] has detached you from the army."

Replying to a query, he said he would return to the party if it freed itself of those who were trying to cause a split in it. He ruled out the possibility of floating a new political party. "The BNP is my first and will be my last destination," he added.

It may be recalled that on May 23, the former communications minister declared that he would quit the party if Khaleda did not invite Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina to a dialogue over the caretaker issue by June 5.

Huda was once expelled from the BNP on November 21, 2010 for violating party discipline. At the time, he was a vice-chairman of the party and the president of its Dhaka district unit.

The BNP standing committee on April 6 last year gave him back his primary membership, but he was not reinstated in other party posts.

Resolve differences

FROM PAGE 1
remarks" about the Speaker. They also demanded that the president ask the chief justice to constitute a Supreme Judicial Council for removing Manik from office.

Yesterday, eminent jurist Dr Kamal Hossain said he along with the whole nation expected a solution to the conflict in a constitutional and democratic way.

Parliament is a constitutional organ and the SC is the guardian of the constitution, Kamal Hossain told reporters at the SC.

Members of parliament and the judiciary should not use language that hurts each other and misleads people, he added.

The judiciary, which is independent, is a constitutional institution and those who believe in constitutional rule expect that parliament and the judiciary will respect each other, Kamal said.

Replying to a query, he said he would not say whose comment was right. "It should be said after discussing the matter with the lawyers and my suggestion is that the crisis be resolved constitutionally."

Everybody in parliament and in the judiciary should speak in a way which further strengthens the two institutions, he said.

Barrister M Amir-Ul Islam said the judiciary and parliament were two supreme organs of the state and he expected proper conduct and language from lawmakers as well as judges.

"Some unexpected arguments have been raised by the two sides.... I believe there is a solution to the problem. There is no room for one to give ultimatum to the other," he said.

"Statements given in parliament are usually a model for politicians. I still read the speeches delivered by Bangabandhu in the Pakistani parliament. Fantastic.... His speeches teach how one can dismiss one's opponent's remarks

Saudi beheads citizen for murder

AFP, Riyadh

Saudi Arabia yesterday beheaded one of its citizens in the holy city of Medina after convicting him of murdering a fellow national, the interior ministry said.

Hussein al-Awfi was found guilty of shooting to death Nayef al-Sahimi after a "feud" between the two, the official SPA news agency quoted the ministry as saying.

His beheading brings to 30 the total number of executions in the ultra-conservative kingdom so far this year, according to an AFP tally based on official reports.

Under the AFP count, at least 76 people were beheaded in 2011 in Saudi Arabia, while rights group Amnesty International put the number of executions last year at 79.

PM critical

FROM PAGE 20
BNP's criticism reflected the "frustrations" of its Chairperson Khaleda Zia as "the present government is performing well".

The BNP had placed its shadow budget on Tuesday at a city hotel.

"She [Khaleda Zia] criticised the budget without joining parliament and even before [the finance minister's] presenting it in parliament," the prime minister said while addressing a discussion on the eve of the historic six-point movement at Bangladesh International Conference Centre, organised by the Awami League.

Hasina, also AL chief, claimed that the BNP during its tenure had plunged so much in corruption that "each and every section of society today is riddled with corruption, and now it is very difficult to check it". The present government is trying to curb it, she said.

AL Joint General Secretary Mahbubul Alam Hanif asked the BNP to join parliament for any sort of discussion, saying that the government would accept any good proposal from the opposition.

Senior Awami League leaders, among whom were Syeda Sajeda Chowdhury, agriculture minister Matia Chowdhury, textile and jute Minister Abdul Latif Siddiqui, and post and telecommunications Minister Rajiuddin Ahmed Raju also spoke on the occasion.

Concern over

FROM PAGE 20
information about a plan by state actors to assassinate her.

The incident has been widely criticized. Demands have been made that the Pakistani government take necessary steps to protect her.

In a press statement, Commonwealth Human Rights Initiative (CHRI) urged Pakistan to ensure her safety. It asked the CHRI secretary-general to press the Pakistani government for a thorough investigation to find out who were behind the plan and punish them.

Asma has been an international figure for her integrity and long-term commitment to human rights, said CHRI, adding her strong actions against human rights violations by Pakistan's security agencies were what led to the threat.

The issue should be taken seriously, it added.

The Commonwealth should take the threat to Asma as a wakeup call to implement its mandate to ensure that its member states comply with its fundamental values, including human rights, in press statement says.

"The threat faced by Jahangir is symptomatic of the long-standing human rights and democracy deficit in Pakistan," it says. The recent series of events should move the Commonwealth Ministerial Action Group, the Commonwealth's watchdog body, to monitor the evolving situation in Pakistan and, in particular, to support actions to ensure Jahangir's safety.

South Asians for Human Rights (SAHR) said Asma Jahangir had always been a fierce defender of human rights and a strong critic of those who violate them. "Her continuing criticism of the military and state security apparatus, particularly with regard to their actions in Baluchistan, have made her a foe to these actors," SAHR said in a statement.

Sammilita Samajik Andolon, in a statement, held the Pakistani intelligence agency ISI responsible for the threat. It urged the Pakistan government to enhance security to protect her.

Justice Sachar and noted journalist Kuldip Nayar expressed their solidarity with her and stressed that her contributions to human rights were significant.

In a joint statement, they urged Pakistan and the international community to ensure that Jahangir was given proper protection and allowed to continue her work free of intimidation and harassment.

They called upon the UN Human Rights Council to address the issue at its upcoming session.

They also urged both the UN Special Rapporteurs on extrajudicial killings and human rights defenders to urgently look into the matter.

Ghulam Azam

FROM PAGE 20
the tribunal headed by Justice Md Nizamul Huq said it would decide on the issue after hearing the prosecution's arguments today.

Tribunal-1 also decided to defer decisions on another defence petition seeking transfer of the case against Ghulam Azam to International Crimes Tribunal-2.

Prosecutor Zeed Al Malum submitted his arguments against the transfer petition for about one and a half hours. On Tuesday, the defence submitted its arguments in favour of the petition.

Malum yesterday said according to section-11(A) of the International Crimes (Tribunals) Act, 1973, only the chief prosecutor could appeal for the transfer of a case from one tribunal to another for the sake of

speedy completion of a trial. According to the act, the tribunal reserves the right to transfer a case to expedite trial proceedings, he said.

"But my lord, they [defence] don't have the right. Their petition should not only be rejected but they should also be punished according to International Crimes Act for submitting such unlawful petition," said Malum.

Nizamul Huq then said the tribunal would decide later on the transfer.

Ghulam Azam's chief defence counsel Abdur Razaq then gave his arguments on the review of charges pressed against him.

In his submission he made several points. He said the prosecution mentioned the birthplace of Ghulam Azam, which was incorrect, and that Shanti Bahini

(Peace Committee) was named as an associated force of the Pakistani military.

He then urged the tribunal to review the charges framed against his client that were not clear and specific.

The tribunal adjourned the trial proceeding until today.

Ghulam Azam was charged with crimes against humanity on five counts based on 60 incidents during the Liberation War of 1971.

Ghulam Azam was brought to the court yesterday morning but around 11:30am his counsel told the tribunal that he was not feeling well and he should be allowed to go back to his prison cell at Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujib Medical University Hospital.

The tribunal allowed him to leave.

Rain brings misery

FROM PAGE 20
stopped around 7:00am.

Residents in these areas expressed their resentment over the indifference of Chittagong City Corporation (CCC) to addressing the water-logging problem.

Every rainy season, Agrabad area gets water-logged, but the CCC seems to turn a blind eye to this problem, complained Delwar Hossain, a local.

Movement of vehicles on the streets becomes almost impossible and a very few rickshaws ply the streets.

As a result, most commuters cannot hire rickshaws to reach their destinations and are compelled to wade through the filthy water overflowing from roadside drains.

Suraiya Akhter, a resident of Dewan Bazar, was taking her daughter from school at Kapasgola. Waiting for about

an hour in front of the school, she could not manage a rickshaw.

The rickshaw pullers refuse to cross the DC Road as it goes under water. "I offered high fares to many of them, but they didn't agree," she said.

A little perplexed, she started walking through the murky water with her daughter.

Talking to The Daily Star, CCC councillor Bijoy Kishan Chowdhury blamed it on unplanned construction in the city.

"The CCC has done a lot to address the problem," claimed Bijoy, also chairman of CCC committee on water-logging.

The city corporation alone cannot address the problem, rather cooperation between Chittagong Water Supply and Sewerage Authority, Chittagong Development

Authority and the CCC is imperative, he said.

To solve the problem, the CCC in November last year had initiated a project. Five hundred workers were hired under this project and around 40 lakh cubic feet of soil was excavated from different canals using 14 excavators, he mentioned.

The scheme has ended in April.

"We have submitted a project proposal to dig a canal from Bahaddarhat to the Karnaphuli river," said Bijoy adding, the proposal is under consideration of the local government ministry.

The seven-kilometre canal will pass through Khawza Road and the project cost has been estimated at Tk 297 crore.

He hoped the water-logging problem will ease considerably after completion of the project.

Recalling Six Points

FROM PAGE 1
general strike in the province in support of the Awami League's Six-Point programme of autonomy announced a few months earlier by Sheikh Mujibur Rahman.

The strike, in the course of which a number of individuals were killed in police firing and a number of others were injured, was a powerful instance of the Bangalees making their displeasure about their place in Pakistan known to the authorities.

But even as the general strike, or hartal, kept the province in its grip throughout the day, the central leaders of the Awami League -- Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, Tajuddin Ahmed, Syed Nazrul Islam and others -- stayed behind bars. The strike would be spearheaded by two young Awami League politicians, Mizanur Rahman Chowdhury and Amena Begum.

Mujib, who would not become Bangabandhu till three years later, had been placed in detention under the Defence of Pakistan Rules on 8 May 1966. The reason was not hard to understand: Field Marshal Mohammad Ayub Khan, president of Pakistan, had made clear his opinion on the Six Points. He told the country that the purveyors of the Six Points would be dealt with in the language of weapons.

Ayub Khan was not the only individual who spotted a threat to Pakistan's unity should the Six Points be acknowledged. His soon-to-be-out foreign minister Zulfikar Ali Bhutto challenged Mujib early in the year to a public debate at Dhaka's Paltan Maidan on the Six Points. It was Tajuddin Ahmed who accepted the challenge on Mujib's behalf. In the event, Bhutto did not turn up.

The Six-Point programme included the following:

1. Pakistan would have a federal structure of government based on spirit of the Lahore Resolution of 1940, with a parliament elected on the basis of universal adult franchise;
2. The central government would have authority

only in defence and foreign affairs and all other subjects would be handled by the federating units of the state of Pakistan;

3. There would be two freely convertible currencies for the two wings of Pakistan or two separate reserve banks for the two regions of the country;

4. The power of taxation and revenue collection would be vested in the federating units;

5. There would be two separate accounts for foreign exchange reserves for the two wings of Pakistan;

6. East Pakistan would have a separate militia or paramilitary force as a measure of its security. Sheikh Mujibur Rahman planned to announce the Six Points at a conference of opposition political parties in Lahore in early February 1966. He was not permitted to do so by the other participants, including the chief of the Awami League at the time, Nawabzada Nasrullah Khan. They found the plan too incendiary to be articulated. Rebuffed, Mujib announced the plan at a news conference in Lahore the following day, February 5, 1966.

Mujib's move raised howls of protest all over Pakistan. The civil-military bureaucracy and politicians straddling both government and opposition circles were quick to dub the Six Points as a secessionist plot to dismember Pakistan. Sheikh Mujibur Rahman's arrest in May 1966, followed by the 7 June strike, swiftly led to circumstances where the Pakistan government opted for repression in East Pakistan. Tofazzal Hossain Manik Mia, the respected editor of the Bangla daily Ittefaq, was arrested on June 16 over his support for the Six Points. The next day, a ban was clamped on his newspaper.

Events would move fast after June 1966. In January 1968, Mujib would be charged with conspiracy to break up Pakistan. The case, which would become notorious as the Agartala Conspiracy Case, would eventually be withdrawn under public pressure on February 22, 1969.

A day after his release,

Mujib would be honoured as Bangabandhu (friend of Bengal) at a historic rally in Dhaka.

ATN chairman

FROM PAGE 20
have been hurt by my comments," Mahfuzur said in a media statement yesterday.

He claimed that the partial revelation of his comments has made him and the channel controversial.

"I simply made the remarks in an honest and open mind in the face of aggressive questioning," the ATN chief said.

On May 30, Mahfuzur at a press briefing in London said, "Sagar and Runi were victims of an extra-marital affair." He also claimed that he had video footage relating to their killings.

"During the press conference, I made my position clear as an ordinary citizen in response to questions of a manager of a local newspaper, though the queries were irrelevant," he said in the statement.

Mahfuzur said he made the comments on the basis of reports published in several national dailies after the murder of Sagar Sarowar and Meherun Runi.

"Millions of people like me have gone through those articles," he added.

"I am repeatedly and unhesitatingly saying that only the law enforcement agencies could reveal the motive behind the killings," Mahfuzur said in the statement.

Terming the journalists of his media house 'devoted stars', the ATN chief said he had also been deeply shocked by the untimely demise of his staff Runi.

"I cannot even think about humiliating the image of Runi, who was like my daughter," he continued.

Journalists on Tuesday demanded legal action against Mahfuzur Rahman for his comments on the murder of the journalist couple.

On February 11, Sagar Sarowar, a news editor at the private TV channel Maasranga, and his wife Meherun Runi, a senior reporter for ATN Bangla, were brutally killed in the bedroom of their rented flat in West Rajabazar of the capital.

Boycott feat

FROM PAGE 1
none of the previous parliaments had to face such a situation as the current Jatiya Sangsad has been facing. The previous three parliaments between 1991 and 2006 had passed 16 budgets of which opposition MPs boycotted five.

The fifth parliament constituted in 1991 following the ouster of HM Ershad's regime passed three of five budgets with the opposition Awami League-led MPs in the House. The Awami League lawmakers boycotted parliament during the last two budget sessions of that parliament demanding the caretaker government system.

The seventh parliament, constituted through elections in June 1996, passed four national budgets between 1996 and 1999 with the BNP-led opposition lawmakers in the House. However, the seventh parliament had to pass its two last budgets without the opposition.

The eighth parliament, constituted in October 2001, passed all its budgets with the then Awami League-led opposition lawmakers in the House, except the last one.

The situation turned worse in the ninth parliament. The BNP-led opposition MPs have so far boycotted all three previous budget sessions.

According to information available at the Parliament Secretariat, over 147 hours were allocated for MPs to discuss proposed budgets in the last three budget sessions.

Experts say the records demonstrate the House's poor performance in exerting its financial control over the executive and in ensuring proper use of public money. They note that the main obstacle to a people-oriented budget is the lack of participation of lawmakers in the making of the budget.

BPC detects

FROM PAGE 20
The probe body in its investigation found the members of Padma Oil's sales committee on furnace oil "responsible" for the May 20 incident, which saw about 3.4 lakh litres on the way to blackmarket before Rapid Action Battalion (Rab) thwarted the theft.

It also recommended punitive action against the sales committee members.

On the night, Rab members seized 11 tank-lorries and an oil tanker loaded with the fuel from the port city's Anu Majhir Ghat area.

BPC Director (marketing) Mohammad Nurul Alam confirmed The Daily Star that they prepared the report and would submit it to the BPC chairman.

The probe body recommended that all the oil companies should have particular policy for the sale of furnace oil "in order to check irregularities in the future".

Alam declined to disclose further details.

It also suggested that the users of furnace oil have to be enlisted while the oil companies should sell furnace oil only to their enlisted companies including mills, factories and other installations.

Following the May 20 haul, it was found that the huge shipment of furnace oil was bound for companies who had used the names, fake logos and papers of big companies to buy the fuel illegally.

"It was found that the sales committee unilaterally approved the applications for furnace oil from local companies. The management of Padma Oil did not take the issue seriously," said the source close to the probe.

"As a result, it gave scope to the three-member sales committee to resort to corruption," the source added.

On May 31, Padma Oil took disciplinary action against four of its officials including three members of the sales committee and one of its former members in connection with the smuggling.