

DGHS refutes new malaria threat

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

While the Directorate General of Health Services (DGHS) boasts of containing the spread of malaria in the country, some researchers anticipate that a new variant of malaria might pose a risk to more than one third of Bangladeshis.

Owing to highly successful malaria prevention programmes, the number of deaths caused by malaria has fallen sharply from 501 in 2005 to 11 in 2012, said Prof Be-Nazir Ahmed, director of disease control, DGHS at a press conference yesterday.

However, at a recent conference titled "2013 Research Advances in Malaria" held at Johns Hopkins University, USA, Nazrul Islam, a physician, claimed that Bangladesh has all elements necessary for transmission of a possible new type of malaria.

Nazrul Islam said Myanmar, parts of India and a significant part of Bangladesh were mapped within the geographic distribution of anopheles leucosphyus, a mosquito that can cause the new type of malaria.

Moreover, Bangladesh is inhabited by macaca fascicularis, an endangered species of monkey that is the mosquito's host, he claimed.

But at the press conference organised by DGHS in the capital, Prof Be-Nazir said transmission of the new type of malaria is unlikely as the particular species of mosquito has not been found in the country yet.

He added the monkey is also rare in Bangladesh.



Some of waiting passengers sleep at Kamalapur Railway Station during their wearisome, long wait for trains, which ran behind schedule due to the hartal yesterday.

PHOTO:
AMRAN HOSSAIN

14 Amardesh press staff get bail

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A Dhaka court granted bail to 14 press staff of Bangla daily Amar Desh yesterday.

On April 13, Amar Desh's 19 staff were arrested for printing the daily at Al-Falah Printing Press at the office of another Bangla daily Sangram.

The court fixed today (Wednesday) for the hearing on the bail prayers of the rest five staff.

Dhaka Metropolitan Magistrate Tanvir Ahmed passed the order after their lawyers sought their bails.

With the help of Ramna police, three magistrates of Dhaka district administration raided the Al Falah Printing Press at Moghbazar on charges of printing the Amar Desh from the press of another daily news paper for two days without permission.

On April 11, Mahmudur Rahman, acting editor of Amar Desh, was also arrested in separate cases filed for acts of violence and assaulting police during hartals; and publishing skype conversations between Justice Md Nizamul Huq, former chairman of International Crimes Tribunal-1, and Ahmed Ziauddin, an expatriate Bangladeshi legal expert.

OIL AND GAS EXPLORATION TECHNOLOGIES Russian, Bangladeshi scientists to share ideas

DU CORRESPONDENT

A group of 30 Russian scientists will join a seminar today to share their findings in the field of oil and gas exploration with Bangladeshi experts.

The two-day international seminar on "Oil and Gas Exploration Technologies" begins today at Nabab Nawab Ali Chowdhury Senate Bhaban of Dhaka University.

Gazprom International, a subsidiary of Russian company Gazprom; Petrobangla and the university authorities have jointly organised the seminar.

The university Vice-Chancellor AAMS Arefin Siddique yesterday announced the programme at a press briefing at the Old Senate Building where Gazprom CEO Eduard S Shevchenko also spoke.

Foreign Minister Dipu Moni; Towfiq-E-Elahi Chowdhury, energy advisor to the prime minister; and Russian Ambassador to Bangladesh Alexander A Nikolaev, among others, are likely to attend the programme.

The VC also said the university authorities would soon establish an Institute of Petroleum Geo Sciences in cooperation with Russia to promote knowledge for new technologies in exploring and utilising oil and gas.

MIGRANT LABOURERS IN SAUDI ARABIA HR organisation calls for scrapping sponsorship

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

National Society for Human Rights (NSHR), a Saudi Arabian rights organisation, called for scrapping the kafala system (sponsorship system) in the Arab state and limiting the relationship between the employer and worker to the contract only.

If the sponsorship is cancelled, the workers can change their employers through terminating their contracts, reported Saudi-based English daily Arab News yesterday.

The Saudi government last month declared a three-month general amnesty for illegal migrants.

In NSHR's regular meeting, Mufleh Al-Qahtani, president of NSHR, said positive aspects of the decision include regulating the labour market, reducing the security and social danger by correcting the expatriates' situations, allowing expatriates who did not get their iqama renewed to

shift sponsorship to another employer without previous employer's approval and creating more jobs for Saudis.

"But the sudden enforcement of the decision will result in an increase in the manpower cost which will, of course, increase prices. It will also delay the deadlines for infrastructure projects," he said.

On the recent inspection campaign by the labour ministry in this regard, he said it has created disturbance in the labour market.

Al-Qahtani said the campaign came at a time when there are not enough detention centres for illegal workers and the available ones do not meet the requirements of human rights.

Abdul Rahman Al-Haijan, NSHR member, said, "There should be an amendment to the ministry's by-law to prevent it from entering any company without prior notice."

Road crashes kill 4

METRO DESK

Four people were killed and one person was injured in separate accidents in the country on Monday and yesterday.

Our Bogra correspondent reports, two men were killed and an unidentified boy was injured as an oncoming truck hit their motorbike on Bogra-Noagaon highway in Kaliar Pukur area of Kahaloo upazila on Monday.

The dead are Khalilur Rahman, 40, of Sherpur upazila, and Abu Saleh Torun, 35, of Dhunat upazila. The injured boy was rushed to Shaheed Ziaur Rahman Medical College Hospital.

An unnatural death case was filed with Kahaloo Police Station.

A Gopalganj Correspondent adds, a helper of a pick-up van driver was killed as the vehicle hit a standing bus from behind on Dhaka-Khulna highway in Chandradigulia area of Gopalganj Sadar upazila yesterday.

The victim is Polish, 19, of Faridpur.

A Pirojpur correspondent adds, a day labourer was killed as a truck hit him while he was unloading goods from another truck at Bhandaria Bazar in Bhandaria upazila yesterday.

The deceased is Yunus Ali, of the upazila. Police detained Rubel Sorder, the driver along with his truck.



Foreign Minister Dipu Moni hands over a formal letter from the Saarc secretary general to singer Runa Laila on her appointment as Saarc goodwill ambassador for creating awareness about HIV/AIDS, at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs yesterday.

PHOTO:
STAR

Five passport snatchers held with mugged items

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Rapid Action Battalion (Rab) arrested five alleged snatchers with passports at the capital's Motijheel on Monday night.

Saiful Islam, Sohel Hossain, Abdur Rahim, Abdullah Al Quaiyum, and Md Shahjahan allegedly used to snatch passports with visas from travelers abroad and realise money from them through blackmailing.

Six passports with visas of different countries and 10 cell phone sets were also seized from them.

Sabbir Ahmed, acting commanding officer of Rab-3, said they arrested the five after one Md Jahangir, 45, of Chandpur filed a complaint alleging that

a gang of criminals had snatched a passport with visas of Saudi Arabia on it and other belongings while he was on the way to Pan Pacific Hotel Sonargaon around 3:30pm on April 19.

"When the victim made a call to his snatched phone, the criminals demanded Tk 1 lakh for the return of the passport, the air ticket and the cell phone," said the Rab-3 chief quoting the victim. He said the muggers also had asked to stay at Motijheel with the money for receiving the mugged items.

He said based on the complaint, a Rab-3 team arrested Saiful, Sohel and Rahim around 8:00pm while Quaiyum and Shahjahan at 11:30pm.

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