

Pioneer adult stem cell trial approved by Japan

BBC ONLINE
The first trial of stem cells produced from a patient's own body has been approved by the Japanese government. Stem cells can become any other part of the body - from nerve to bone to skin - and are touted as the future of medicine. Researchers in Japan will use the cells to attempt to treat a form of blindness - age-related macular degeneration. The announcement was described as "a major step forward" for research in the field.

Minorities

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The report noted that between January 2012 and June 2013, there were 16 attacks against Hindus and 3 attacks against Sikhs resulting in the death of two Hindus and one Sikh. Four Hindus were also injured. There were three incidents of targeted shootings and seven rapes against Hindus, the report said.

Noting that the project's findings "paint a grim and challenging picture for the new government of Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif," the report said "concrete, resolute action is needed to ensure that perpetrators of violence are arrested, prosecuted and jailed."

"To stem the rising tide of violent religious extremism, groups and individuals responsible for attacks on religious communities must be punished," it said.

"While banned militant groups and private citizens are responsible for the majority of attacks on religious communities, government actors are not blameless," the report said suggesting that "police officers have turned a blind eye to mob attacks or have refused to file police reports when victims are religious minorities."

"The climate of impunity threatening all Pakistanis, regardless of their faith, also is exacerbated by the much-abused blasphemy and anti-Ahmadi laws," the report said.

Yunus centre

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He said the Yunus Centre expressed apprehension that the publication of the news may leave a negative impact on Bangladesh's relations with two friendly countries -- Norway and the USA.

"The apprehension is completely baseless because good relations with friendly nations are not hampered by publication of unconfirmed reports," he added. "Bangladesh's relations with Norway and the US are deep, friendly and they will remain so in future."

The rejoinder said the government hoped the Yunus Centre would withdraw the statement published in The Daily Star and Dainik Ittefaq and refrain from spreading "such propaganda". Otherwise, it added, the government would be compelled to take legal action.

According to the rejoinder, the PM, on her return from London and Belarus visit, met some ministers, lawmakers and party leaders at the Gono Bhavan where no representative of the print or electronic media was present. It was a completely informal meeting.

About the Yunus Centre's observation that since the prime minister did not protest the media reports, her remarks had to be taken seriously, it said the PMO did not think it was necessary to protest news published "on the basis of guesswork and unsubstantiated information".

The press secretary's statement said the Yunus Centre's allegation that the government was spending intellect and money to prove Prof Yunus a "fraud" was completely untrue, misleading and motivated.

The government has no intention to belittle the Nobel laureate, it added.

Kerry launches new bid to rescue ME peace

AFP, Amman

US Secretary of State John Kerry was to dash to the West Bank yesterday to meet Palestinian president Mahmud Abbas as he battled to salvage his Middle East peace bid.

A Palestinian official announced the surprise move after Kerry met twice with Palestinian chief negotiator Saeb Erakat yesterday morning in his Amman hotel.

A senior US State Department official confirmed the report saying: "Secretary Kerry will travel to Ramallah this afternoon to meet with President Abbas."

The whirlwind diplomacy came after the Palestinian leadership in Ramallah rejected Kerry's proposals for a framework to guide the relaunch of peace talks with the Israelis stalled for nearly three years.

Erakat had planned to tell Kerry that a return to

talks could not happen based on his plan, a Palestinian official told AFP on condition of anonymity. "Erakat will inform Kerry that without a clear basis on the 1967 borders, a settlement freeze and a clear position on the release of Palestinian prisoners held by Israel, the Palestinian side thinks there will be no talks," he said.

Their first meeting lasted barely 45 minutes, but Kerry and Erakat then went back into talks which lasted over an hour and half, State Department officials said. Shortly after the second talks broke up, a Palestinian official told AFP that Kerry was now travelling to the West Bank.

"Kerry will go at 3:00 pm (1200 GMT) today to meet Abbas, travelling by Jordanian helicopter," the official told AFP on condition of anonymity.

The setback to Kerry's peace push came from the

governing Revolutionary Council of Abbas's own Fatah movement, which demanded changes to the US plan.

The broader Palestine Liberation Organisation, which also includes leftwing factions less sympathetic towards a compromise, said it was also drawing up a formal response to Kerry's proposals.

Talks have stuttered and started for decades in the elusive bid to reach a final peace deal between the Arab world and Israel.

But they collapsed completely in September 2010 when Israel refused to keep up a freeze on settlement building in Palestinian territories.

A State Department official said in a statement issued just after midnight that serious Palestinian debate over resuming talks was "appropriate and encouraging."

Huge rush for shopping

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reached out to the adjacent streets, intensifying the traffic congestion, said traffic policemen.

The weekend (Friday and Saturday) was followed by the strike enforced by the Jamaat-e-Islami from Monday to Thursday. Most of the residents were virtually confined to their houses during the shutdown.

Locals and traffic policemen said traffic jams in the capital worsen during weekends and holidays ahead of Eid.

Since there were consecutive hartals, city dwellers had to come out of their homes to get their work done yesterday, they added.

People got stuck on different roads and intersections for hours under the scorching sun.

Even the severe gridlock coupled with intermittent rain throughout the day could not discourage the shoppers from rushing into the shopping malls and markets.

Shahnur Sultana, a housewife from Indira Road, started for New Market by a CNG-run three-wheeler, and experienced long tailbacks for two hours. On usual days, it takes around 30 to 35 minutes to reach New Market from Indira Road.

"It was like getting cooked by the heat of the motor engine during our

two-hour-long stay inside the three-wheeler," she said.

"Since it was a weekly holiday, many people like us came out for shopping," she added.

But, Jubayer Ahmed had a terrible experience yesterday. He started for Nilkhet from Asad Gate by a local bus, but eventually lost his patience in the midway.

"I had to get down from the bus at Kalabagan and walk towards Nilkhet due to severe traffic congestion at noon," he said.

As the Eid approaches, the traffic situations get worse in Gausia, New Market and New Elephant Road areas, where a good number of people do their shopping.

Yesterday's situation was not different. A huge number of private cars were parked haphazardly on Mirpur Road while hawkers had occupied pavements, narrowing down the street.

During a visit to the area yesterday noon, a long tailback was seen on Mirpur Road from New Market to Asad Gate.

A traffic sergeant, preferring not to be named, said "The traffic pressure is mounting as the Eid is approaching. When we clear a section of the road, they park cars on the other end."

Khan Muhammad Rajowan, deputy commis-

sioner (traffic-south) of Dhaka Metropolitan Police, said people usually prefer to go for shopping on weekends and holidays during Ramadan.

The same thing happened yesterday after a four straight dawn-to-dusk hartals, which intensified the tailbacks, he added.

The other thoroughfares of the city also witnessed traffic congestion. Hasan Rahlan started for Khilgaon from Farmgate but he finally took a U-turn.

"The way the vehicles were moving it seemed to me that I would not be able to reach there in time, so I came back," he said.

Witnesses said the traffic jams were severe in Mouchak Market, Bangabazar, Bashundhara City Shopping Mall, Eastern Plaza, Rapa Plaza, Farmgate, Elephant Road, Karwan Bazar, Moghbazar and Gulistan areas.

Asked what measures the authority has taken to tackle the traffic woes, Rajowan, DC of DMP, said a special team has been working from 3:00pm to 10:00pm, apart from two regular shifts, for proper traffic management.

The ongoing road digging in different parts of the city including Green Road, Sutrapur and Kalabagan spelled more troubles for the city dwellers.

Fresh move for building safety

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Rajdhani Unnayan Kartripakkha (Rajuk), which will see the town planner's total manpower hiked to 2,000 from the existing 1,087.

"We hope that the new recruitment would be complete in the next four months," Rajuk Chairman Nurul Huda told The Daily Star.

The nine-storey Rana Plaza, which housed several garment factories, came crashing down in April, killing 1,131 people, mostly garment workers.

The housing and public works ministry is going to set up coordination committees led by the deputy commissioners (DC) to ensure building safety in each of the districts, except for Dhaka, Chittagong, Rajshahi and Khulna.

The Rajuk, Chittagong Development Authority, Rajshahi Development Authority and Khulna Development Authority will enforce building safety standards in the four divisional cities.

Nurul Huda said the Rajuk will open four more zonal offices in Savar, Gazipur, Narayanganj and Keraniganj in addition to its existing offices in the capital's Gulshan, Uttara, Mirpur and Dhanmondi.

The BC committees will receive applications and independently approve building's layout plans at zonal level, he noted. Only the large scale development

schemes will have to obtain approval from the Rajuk headquarters.

Headed by a Rajuk board member, a BC committee is comprised of an authorised officer as its member secretary, an architect from the Department of Architecture and two executive engineers.

At present, four BC committees run as many zonal offices of Rajuk. Under the Rajuk's new organogram, its 24 BC committees will be supported by 288 building inspectors, mentioned Huda.

"We are going to seek more engineers and town planners from the Public Works Department [PWD], Roads and Highways Department, Urban Development Directorate and Department of Architecture to meet the demands of the zonal offices," he added.

To give approval to a building plan, the Rajuk only examines the architectural layout of the proposed building. But now it mulls hiring private consulting firms to examine the foundation, structural and mechanical designs of a building.

A BC committee will approve a building plan only after the consultants have examined its foundation and structural design.

The PWD, local municipalities, and even the union parishes give building approval across the country, though only an authorised officer appointed under the building construction act

has the mandate to do the job.

Contacted, outgoing president of the Institute of Architects Bangladesh, Mubassar Hussein said hiring private consultants for design scrutiny would create scope for nepotism, corruption and difficulties in building approval.

Noted civil engineer Prof Jamilur Reza Chowdhury said the Rajuk should depend only on those engineering and architectural firms that are registered with it. The consulting firms must be selected carefully, he added.

Works Secretary Khondaker Showkat Hossain said the government has agreed in principle to form coordination committees led by DCs to oversee building approval and ensure safety at district level as per the Bangladesh National Building Code.

The committee will be comprised of engineers from Public Works Department and Local Government Engineering Department and representatives of district council and environment department.

"This committee will prevent overlapping in building approval by several local authorities until a BC committee with an authorised officer is formed [in the district] under the building construction act," mentioned Showkat.

The cabinet, he noted, is to approve the committee soon.

Merkel says 'Germany not a surveillance state'

AFP, Berlin

Chancellor Angela Merkel said "Germany is not a surveillance state" and insisted she only learnt of sweeping US online snooping through press reports, during a lengthy election-campaign media grilling yesterday.

Pressed on the US National Security Agency's PRISM programme, and Germany's knowledge of it, she said was unfamiliar with the details and that Berlin was still awaiting answers from Washington.

Merkel stressed that "German law applies on German soil" but also conceded that this has its limits in the age of global telecommunication systems, as she spoke during an annual summer press conference that lasted 100 minutes.

Nine weeks before elections, pressure is growing on Merkel over spying claims made by fugitive US intelligence contractor Edward Snowden, who also said Germany's BND foreign intelligence service cooperated with the NSA.

Ex-BNP

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The rest were admitted at the Ramganj Health Complex and Janata Clinic.

Officer-in-Charge of Ramganj Police Station Monjurul Haque Akand said additional police had been deployed in the town and that they were trying to arrest the people involved in the attack.

No trace

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inspecting equipment in a mobile phone tower for state-run carrier TeleTalk, were abducted by unknown criminals at Baribindughat of Baghaichhari on July 8.

One of them was released by the abductors that night.

The army, Border Guard Bangladesh and the police were jointly conducting raids in Baghaichhari since the kidnapping incident 12 days ago.

On Thursday, the members of the joint forces held two suspects at Balukhali village but Rafique Ullah Khan, officer-in-charge of Baghaichhari Police Station, said, "We are yet to identify the kidnappers and know the whereabouts of the four."

"I have no information about any ransom demand and we could not make contact with the abductors," he said.

The abductees were: Akhter Hossain, Hemayet Uddin, Imrul, and Suja Miah. Monthu was released.

On February 7, two employees of carrier grameenphone were also kidnapped from Kutukchhari and released later on.

Muslims demand Vatican envoy leave Malaysia

AFP, Kuala Lumpur

Several Islamic groups yesterday demanded the recall of the Vatican's first envoy to Malaysia, describing him as an "enemy of the state" after he supported the use of the word "Allah" by non-Muslims.

Dozens of protesters gathered outside the Vatican's mission in Kuala Lumpur, the capital of Muslim-majority Malaysia, after prayers on Friday, urging the government to expel Archbishop Joseph Marino.

Marino, who arrived in Kuala Lumpur less than six months ago, recently elicited a rebuke from the government after he waded into a religious row over the right to translate "God" to "Allah" in Malay-language

Bibles and other literature. He had described arguments supporting the move put forward by the Catholic Church in an ongoing court battle with the government over the issue, as "logical and acceptable".

He was on Tuesday summoned to the foreign ministry over his remarks, and has since apologised.

It was not enough for some Muslim organisations in the country, however.

"Joseph Marino is an enemy of the state. His actions have strained race relations in the country," said Ibrahim Ali, president of right-wing group Perkasa. Ibrahim has previously drawn controversy by calling for the burning of the Bible.

"Marino must leave Malaysia," said Hasan Ali,

the head of Islamic group JATI, who urged the government to close the mission and not to accept any envoy from the Vatican.

The government has argued that the word "Allah" should only be used by Muslims, as it fears using the word in Malay-language Bibles is an attempt to confuse and proselytise.

On Thursday, a Malaysian couple known for publishing a sexually explicit blog were charged with sedition and denied bail after they caused outrage with a prank Ramadan greeting on Facebook that showed them eating pork -- which is forbidden in Islam.

Malaysia has more than 2.5 million Christians in a population of 28 million, of which about 60 percent are Muslim.

Top Pakistan foreign adviser to meet Karzai

AFP, Islamabad

Pakistan's top foreign affairs official will meet the Afghan president in Kabul Sunday to discuss stalled efforts to begin talks with the Taliban in Qatar, a senior Pakistani official said yesterday.

The visit by Sartaj Aziz comes after Hamid Karzai's chief of staff claimed the Taliban's office in the Qatari capital Doha was part of a plot to break up Afghanistan, orchestrated by either Pakistan or the United States.

Pakistan's support is seen as vital to achieving lasting peace with the Taliban in

Afghanistan. But relations between the two neighbours are rocky, with Kabul regularly accusing Islamabad of supporting the militants.

Pakistani Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif kept the foreign affairs portfolio under his own control after winning the May general election, but Aziz, an elder statesman who served as a minister in the 1990s, is effectively the foreign minister.

A senior official told AFP Aziz would pay a day-long visit to Kabul on Sunday to hold talks with Karzai and other top Afghans.

He said the talks "will

primarily focus on ways to promote reconciliation in Afghanistan with reference to the Doha process".

"We remain supportive of the reconciliation process in Afghanistan and want an Afghan-led and Afghan-owned mechanism to be in place enabling all Afghan groups to decide about their future," the official said.

When the Taliban opened their office in Doha on June 18, it was hailed as a first step towards a potential peace deal, but a furious Karzai slammed it as an unofficial embassy for a government-in-exile.

British lawyer

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publication of the evidence the tribunal can be dissolved with the help of people concerned in and outside Bangladesh," said the report.

The British lawyer said that through an interna-

political unrest and violence.

The two tribunals have delivered verdicts in six war crimes cases since January this year, in which four were awarded the capital punishment and two sentenced to jail terms.

Hefajat blames govt

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On Saturday last week, Hefajat in a statement accused "atheists and anti-Islamic section" of carrying out a smear campaign against its chief Shafi by misconstruing his sermons on women.

In the statement, it also claimed that the anti-Islamic section had resorted to falsehood against Shafi failing to face Hefajat in any other way.

Hefajat leaders used to claim that their movement was not against or in favour of any political party but yesterday at the discussion

they said they would wage such a strong movement after Ramadan that the Hasina-led government would "fall into the Bay of Bengal".

"Like a mad person, Hasina [the prime minister] is not thinking about her future. That's why she is publicly conspiring against Alem and Ulemas [Islamic scholars]. We ask none to cast their votes for boat [Awami League's electoral symbol], in the next national polls," said Ahmadullah Ashraf, central Neyebe-Ameer (vice-president)

of Hefajat and chief of Bangladesh Khelafat Andolan.

Although Khelafat did not officially belong to the BNP-led 18-party opposition alliance, the Islamist party is widely regarded as an ally of BNP.

"We are planning to wage a tougher movement against the atheist government," said Jashimuddin, president of Hefajat, Lalbagh zone, who was presiding over the discussion. He is also involved in Islami Oikya Jote, a component in the 18-party alliance.

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395-397, Tejgaon Industrial Area
Dhaka-1208

LOCAL RE-TENDER NOTICE

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Name of work	Earnest Money	Cost of Tender Schedule	Time for completion after getting work order	Last date of Closing & opening
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Tender schedule will be sold from the Accounts Department of **Essential Drugs Company Limited, Dhaka** on payment as stated above during office hours on all working days (except Friday, Saturday and Govt. Holidays).
No tender schedule will be sold on the opening date of the tender.

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For : Managing Director.