

VIOLENCE BY INTERNS Action as per probe report

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Action against violent interns at different medical college hospitals is underway as per recommendations made by probe committees, Health Minister Mohammed Nasim told parliament yesterday.

Interns at the Rajshahi Medical College Hospital in late April attacked and injured journalists, who went to the hospital to cover the alleged professional negligence of doctors.

Similar incidents occurred at the capital's Mitford Hospital and Dhaka Medical College Hospital.

In mid-April, doctors at Birdem Hospital went on strike protesting an alleged attack on physicians by some relatives of a patient, who died allegedly due to medical negligence.

The government formed three probe committees composed of ministry officials, doctors and journalists to investigate the incidents. The committees have already submitted their reports.

Nasim said the government had plans to set up burn units at all public medical college hospitals.

In a scripted reply in the House, he said the government had already set up burn units at the Dhaka and Chittagong medical college hospitals. "Similar facilities will be introduced at other medical colleges in phases as well as at district level hospitals," mentioned the minister.

Ex-Norwegian PM Brundtland awarded Asian 'Nobel Prize'

AFP, Taipei

Former Norwegian premier Gro Harlem Brundtland was named yesterday as the first recipient of the Tang Prize, touted as Asia's version of the Nobels, for her work as a "godmother" of sustainable development.

Brundtland was awarded the debut prize, created by one of Taiwan's richest men with a \$100 million donation, with winners in three other categories to be announced this week.

The winner in each category will receive Tw\$50 million (\$1.7 million), with Tw\$40 million in cash and the remainder in a grant -- a richer purse than the eight million Swedish kronor (\$1.2 million) that comes with a Nobel Prize.

Brundtland was awarded the biennial prize for "her innovation, leadership and implementation" of sustainable development, of which she was known as the "godmother", said Yuan T. Lee, chair of the award selection committee.

A former director general of the World Health Organisation, she also headed the UN World Commission on Environment and Development. The commission's work paved the way to the first Earth Summit, which led to the Kyoto Protocol on greenhouse gases.

Winners in the three other categories -- biopharmaceutical science, Sinology (the study of China) and "rule of law" -- will also be unveiled daily from today to Saturday.

"The Tang Prize is not supposed to compete with the Nobel Prize but to make up for what it is short of," Lee, himself a winner of the Nobel Prize for Chemistry in 1986, told reporters.

Nobels are awarded in physics, chemistry, physiology or medicine, literature and peace.

Rivers drying up

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has been approved on a dredging of 24 river routes," he said, adding that the dredging work had already started on some routes. "As a result of the dredging, 628 kilometres of waterways have increased."

In response to another query, Shahjahan Khan said the shipping ministry had taken various measures, including the marking of "risky zones" on the waterways, aiming to reduce accidents on river routes.

The other initiatives include setting up shelter centres, pontoons, gangways, jetties and moorings in the risky zones.

Deal signed

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amended the constitution as per its wishes to hold the January 5 general election under a so-called election-time government, Fakhruddin mentioned.

"After doing so, they invited BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia for talks," he alleged.

Bangladesh in bird flu 'danger zone'

BBC ONLINE

The "danger zones" in Asia which are vulnerable to deadly bird flu have been mapped by scientists.

The virus, called H7N9, has infected 433 people mostly in China and has killed 62.

The study, published in Nature Communications, showed parts of Bangladesh, India and Vietnam could easily sustain the virus.

The research group said those areas should monitor poultry to ensure any threat is detected.

The H7N9 virus spread from birds to people and was first detected in March 2013 in China.

New viruses are always a concern because of their unknown potential to spread round the world as a deadly pandemic.

Data from the H7N9 outbreak was used to build a computer model of other at-risk areas in Asia.

It involved mapping 8,000 live-poultry markets and assessing how close together they needed to be to spread the infection.

The higher the peaks the greater the potential risk for H7N9 bird flu.

The map does not show where the virus will end up next, just those areas where conditions are suitable to sustain the virus if it managed to get there.

Bangladesh, northern India, the Mekong and Red River deltas in Vietnam and isolated parts of Indonesia and Philippines were identified as at-risk areas.

Thailand was not a risk zone due to cultural differences, which mean live-poultry markets are not common. It is also noticeable that the whole of China is not equally at risk.

H7N9 is not deadly in birds so there is no "body count" to help track the spread of the disease.

Dr Tim Robinson, a senior spatial analyst at the International Livestock Research Institute in Nairobi, told the BBC: "It is a risk map showing, if the virus arrived to an area, how likely it would be to spread and continue from there."

"H7N9 can spread very quietly throughout the poultry population."

"The main use of the maps is to target surveillance, I think these maps can show areas where there's a high chance of the disease flaring up if it arrives."

What is missing from the maps is how the virus is likely to spread.

The researchers want to factor in data on how poultry are traded in Asia.

Dr Simon Hay, from the University of Oxford, said: "H7N9 is confined to China at the moment and all the neighbouring countries are worried about when their chicken industry might be infected."

"The maps are a prediction if you dropped a new infection in that location would it stick and hold as a disease."

He said the tools developed could be quickly applied to other bird flus making the jump to people in the future.

Yet the great fear in novel avian influenza is that the virus starts to spread rapidly between people.

"I think the maps become redundant at that point," Dr Hay added.

"It's a very different disease process then, if it does jump to human-to-human transmission then you would use a classical influenza model using the proximity of people, volume of air flights and the amount of people

Confession, finally

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Bangladesh about the arrest of Nur Hossain, the prime accused in the gruesome seven-murder, according to foreign ministry sources.

A court source said Tareque knew about the developments of the abduction and killing of the seven. But he did not meddle in the matter as the whole thing was being monitored by one of his superiors.

The Daily Star, however, could not independently verify Tareque's confessional statement.

Contacted, ATM Habibur Rahman, director at the legal and media wing of Rab, said he does not know what Tareque confessed to the court.

Earlier, sacked Rab-11 officials Maj Arif Hossain and Lt Commander MM Rana made confessional statements admitting their involvement in the seven-murder.

Seven people, including Narayananj panel mayor Nazrul Islam and senior lawyer Chandan Sarkar, were abducted in Narayananj on April 27.

Three days later, six bodies were found floating in the Shitalakkhya, while the other was recovered from the river the following day.

Nazrul's father-in-law Shahidul Islam complained that Nur Hossain, councillor of ward-4, and a few others had bribed some Rab-11 officials Tk 6 crore to kill the panel mayor.

Tareque, Arif and Rana were fired and later arrested for their alleged involvement in the incident.

In Narayananj, lawyers and family members of the victims yesterday held a protest rally in the court area demanding speedy extradition of Hossain.

INDIA ON NUR HOSSAIN

In an official communication, India yesterday informed Bangladesh about the arrest of Nur Hossain at an apartment in Kolkata on June 14.

Disclosing this, State Minister for Home Asaduzzaman Khan Kamal said the Indian government has sent a note verbale to Bangladesh seeking some information about Hossain.

"India has sought some information [about Nur Hossain] and we are trying to collect those," he told reporters at his secretariat office.

On extradition of the arrestee, the state minister said efforts in this regard are underway.

However, a senior diplomat at the Indian High Commission in Dhaka yesterday told this newspaper that the matter has not yet been taken bilaterally as Bangladesh sought Interpol support to nab Hossain and the Interpol in Kolkata arrested the fugitive.

"This matter is still entirely very much within Interpol and the arrest and other communications being made is by Interpol," he added.

According to the Interpol website, Hossain is wanted by the judicial authorities of Bangladesh for prosecution. It also shows six charges against him, including murder, hiding of crime evidence and abduction.

Sources at foreign ministry said although Bangladesh has not yet made any formal request to India for sending back Hossain, it promptly informed the Indian authorities that it would soon formally ask the neighbouring country to extradite the arrestee.

Turkey sentences 1980 coup leaders to life in prison

AFP, Ankara

A Turkish court yesterday handed life sentences to two ageing generals behind a 1980 military takeover, the bloodiest in Turkey's coup-ridden history.

Kenan Evren, 96, and Tahsin Sahinkaya, 89, were found guilty of setting the stage for a military intervention, ousting the civilian government by force and committing acts against the forces of the state.

Prosecutors had demanded so-called aggravated life sentences for Evren, who became president after the coup, and Sahinkaya, the former air force commander.

The ruling sparked cheers and applause from the public gallery inside the courtroom, who chanted: "This is just the beginning, the coup authors will pay the price."

The generals seized power on September 12, 1980 but were only brought to trial for their role in the coup in 2012, after the ruling Islamic-rooted Justice and Development Party introduced constitutional changes.

Evren and Sahinkaya, who are being treated at military hospitals in Ankara and Istanbul respectively, appeared via

video screens for yesterday's hearing.

The two have been unable to attend any hearings because of their poor health.

In his first testimony in 2012, Evren had said he had no remorse over his actions and that he did "the right thing to do at that time."

Outside the Ankara court, a crowd of about 200 protesters had called for the case's two surviving defendants to be severely punished.

Turkey's once-powerful army, which considers itself the self-appointed guardian of the secular regime, has staged three coups since 1960, and forced out an Islamist government in 1997.

The 1980 coup was the bloodiest in Turkey's post-war history, with 50 people executed while dozens died from torture. Some 600,000 were arrested and many others went missing.

Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdogan has spent the best part of his 11 years in power trying to curb the military's influence through a series of trials, one of which resulted in more than 300 military officers being put behind bars for alleged coup plots.

WORLD CUP

Boy killed as fans clash

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Lalmonirhat

A restaurant boy was killed in a clash between supporters of Brazil and Argentina at Hatibandha upazila last night.

At least five others were injured in the clash at Kasaitari Botertal village of Tongbhanga union.

The deceased was Milon Hossain, 18, son of Abdul Hamid of the same village.

Police said two groups, one supporting Brazil and the other Argentina, had an argument over which team plays better. At one stage the groups started pelting each other with brick chunks around 8:00PM.

Milon was caught in the frenzy and got severely injured. He succumbed to his injuries on the way to the Hatibandha Upazila Health Complex. The injured were admitted to the hospital.

Officer-in-Charge Anowar Hossain of Hatibandha Police Station said additional police were deployed in the area to prevent further untoward incidents and a hunt was on to arrest those involved in the clash.

No case was filed in connection with the incident till this report came in at 9:00 last night.

China weapons facility blast kills 17 soliders: Xinhua

AFP, Beijing

At least 17 Chinese soldiers have died in an explosion at a weapon storage facility, state media said yesterday.

The blast Tuesday afternoon occurred in Hengyang city in central China's Hunan province as "soldiers were piling up ammunition", the official Xinhua news agency reported.

No cause for the explosion was given and authorities were investigating, it said.

In a separate incident involving the military earlier this month, a Chinese navy plane crashed on a training mission over the eastern coastal province of Zhejiang, Xinhua reported at the time. It was not clear if there were any casualties.

It's Chile-ing

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dropping veteran midfielder Xavi and defender Gerard Pique beforehand.

But del Bosque's decision to retain out-of-form goalkeeper Iker Casillas backfired, with the Spanish skipper at fault for Chile's second goal, lashed home by Aranguiz just before half-time.

Aranguiz had earlier helped to set up Chile's first, cutting back for Vargas to finish after a superb counter-attack.

The final whistle sparked delirium inside the Maracana, where Chilean fans had heavily outnumbered their Spanish counterparts and roared on their team relentlessly throughout.

The fervour boiled over before the match, with dozens of ticket-less Chilean fans attempting to force their way into the famous stadium by storming the press room.

Chile will now face Holland next Monday in what could well be a battle to avoid Brazil, who are expected to face the runners-up from Group B in the last 16.

The Dutch had earlier needed goals from Arjen Robben and Robin van Persie to fight back against Australia before Memphis Depay's long-range effort settled a thrilling game at Porto Alegre's Beira-Rio Stadium.

Van Persie will miss the next game against Chile though after picking up a second yellow card.

And Louis van Gaal's side were given an almighty fright by their fired up Australian opponents, who had taken a 2-1 lead through a spectacular Tim Cahill volley and a Mile Jedinak penalty.

Australia coach Ange Postecoglou paid tribute to his team after the loss.

"I just wanted the players to get the reward for the way they went about things today," said Postecoglou.

"I have put a lot of pressure on the players and the staff that we are going to be a certain type of team and take it to world class opposition, but it is one thing saying it and another thing doing it."

"They did that today but didn't get their reward. It's heartbreaking and massively disappointing."

Elsewhere Wednesday, in Group A, Cameroon and Croatia, beaten by Mexico and Brazil respectively in their openers, meet in Manaus where defeat for either side will mean the end of their last-16 hopes.

Croatia are still bitter from their opening loss to Brazil in which they had a goal controversially disallowed while the hosts won a dubious penalty.

Cambodia worker exodus hits 2.2 lakh

Phnom Penh blames Thailand

AFP, Poipet

The number of Cambodian labourers fleeing Thailand soared to 220,000 yesterday, authorities said, as Phnom Penh accused Thailand's new military rulers of sparking the flight of migrant workers.

Panicking Cambodians -- who help keep major Thai industries afloat but often lack official work permits -- have streamed across the border since the junta warned last week that illegal foreign workers face arrest and deportation.

At a meeting in Bangkok Tuesday, Cambodia's ambassador and a top Thailand foreign ministry official agreed to end "rumours" of a crack-down and set up a hotline on labour issues.

But Cambodian Interior Minister Sar Kheng later placed blame for the crisis squarely at Bangkok's door, claiming the junta had caused at least eight deaths and economic hardship for both countries.

"The total number of Cambodians who have returned from Thailand between June 6 and 18 is 220,000 across the different checkpoints between the two countries," Pich Vanna, chief of the Cambodia-Thai Border Relations Office, told AFP yesterday.

At the main border crossing in Poipet -- a bustling, seedy frontier town home to large casinos and hotels -- around 3,000 Cambodian migrants arrived in Thai military trucks and police cars by yesterday afternoon.

The junta which took power last month has insisted there is no crack-down and tried to calm the panic that has seen the exodus of what could be, by some estimates, the entire undocumented Cambodian population in Thailand.

On Tuesday Cambodian Ambassadors Eat Sophea dismissed rumours of the shooting and abuse of Cambodian migrants by Thai authori-

ties -- among the factors believed to have triggered the mass departures.

But Sar Kheng, who is also Cambodia's deputy prime minister, said the Thai junta had deported them and urged them to take responsibility for the upheaval.

"I think that the current leaders of Thai junta must be held accountable for what has happened," he said in Phnom Penh, adding that eight people had been killed in traffic accidents linked to the exodus.

Sar Kheng said Cambodian migrants had helped boost the Thai economy, which is the second-largest in Southeast Asia and draws large numbers of migrants from its neighbours.

"According to my informal information, (Thai) employers have started to protest against the issue," he added.

Kor Sam Sareut, governor of Cambodia's northwestern province of Banteay Meanchey where the Poipet checkpoint is based, said the number of migrants returning home was down compared with previous days, but he still expected more to arrive.

"The fear among them has not faded away. That's why they keep returning to Cambodia," he said.

Arriving back on home soil yesterday Kot Sok, 21, said rumours had triggered the flight.

"I heard that the Thai military will arrest Cambodians. Six friends and I have come back because we were scared of being arrested," he said.

The border relations official Pich Vanna said some of the returnees had been rounded up by authorities in Thailand.

"Some Cambodian migrants were rounded up from construction sites and put in trucks to Cambodia," he said.

Thailand's military regime has strongly denied it has forced Cambodian labourers out of the country and dismissed reports of killings as "groundless".

3 yrs on, SC yet

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court usually did not take so much time to release a full verdict in any case.

They also could not say why the SC still had not released the detailed verdict in the case.

The Appellate Division declared fatwa legal in "religious matters" on May 12, 2011, but it categorically said fatwa could not be used to punish anyone.

Fatwa also cannot be issued to violate or affect the rights or reputation or dignity of any person which are covered by the law of the land.

"No punishment, including physical violence and/or mental torture in any form, can be imposed or inflicted on anybody in pursuance of fatwa," it said in the short verdict.

After hearing two separate appeals, the apex court ruled that only "properly educated persons" might issue fatwa, but may not force anyone to accept it.

Any coercion or undue influence in any form to force it on anyone is forbidden, it said categorically.

A six-member bench of the Appellate Division, headed by then chief justice ABM Khairul Haque, had delivered the verdict by majority opinion as the judges could not unanimously agree on the decision.

The bench did not disclose the names of the judges who disagreed with the decision.

SC Registrar AKM Shamsul Islam recently told The Daily Star that the relevant file of the fatwa related case was now with Justice ABM Khairul Haque for writing the full judgment.

Once Justice Khairul Haque finishes his writing, the others judges

may agree with him or may add in the writing, he said.

The SC registrar also said the full judgment would be released after all the judges have affixed their signatures in the verdict.

Justice Khairul Haque told this correspondent yesterday that he did not receive the file of the fatwa case from the SC for writing the verdict and he did not know where the file of the case remained at this moment.

Sultana Kamal, executive director of Ain O Salish Kendra, told The Daily Star that criminal offences, including killing, were still taking place in the name of fatwa, although the number of such killings had gone down after the SC verdict.

Torturing people in the name of fatwa is illegal, she said, adding that people, who torture women in the name of fatwa, were taking the opportunity to misuse it in the absence of the detailed verdict.

If the full verdict is available, these people would be bound to obey its guidelines and would not misinterpret the religion, she added.

Zi Khan Panna, trustee member of Bangladesh Legal Aid and Services Trust, said the nation was being deprived of guidelines to stop torture in the name of fatwa, as the full judgment was not available.

Barrister Belayet Hossain, who moved one of the appeals, said if the SC had released the full text, the government would have got guidelines and could have taken effective steps to stop the misuse of fatwa and misinterpretations of Islam.

Fruit traders go on strike

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The Dhaka Metropolitan Police launched the drive on June 11.

The traders are not against the drive and law enforcers may punish anyone if they find him treating fruits with formalin, the statement says.

"None of the small traders treat fruits with chemicals but law enforcers have been harassing them by destroying their goods," Sana Ullah, president of the organisation, told The Daily Star by phone.

The wholesalers have extended their support to the strike, he said.

Fruit traders will also form a human chain in front of the Jatiya Press Club on Saturday, in which they will announce other protest programmes, said Afzal Hossain, secretary of the organisation.

Meanwhile, Commerce Minister

Tofail Ahmed told the House on Tuesday that formalin import had decreased significantly over the years as only 55,173 kg of formalin was imported last year.

Some 10.73 lakh kg of formalin was imported in the last four years by 38 organisations. Of them, five are pharmaceutical companies.

In the scripted reply, Tofail said over 5.4 lakh kg of formalin was imported in 2010 while 2.69 lakh kg in 2011 and 2.05 lakh kg in 2012.

The chemical is being used mainly in research in hospitals, laboratories and pharmaceutical industries, the minister said. But unscrupulous businessmen use the chemical to treat a wide range of food items, especially fruits, to have those look fresh for long, which poses a threat to public health, he added.