

Justice delayed, not denied

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 One victim's elder brother, Mohiuddin, told The Daily Star, "We are happy that the culprits are getting punishment at last."
 "However, we would have been happier had they received death penalty."

His brother Masud was among 15/20 children who had died after being given the Paracetamol syrup distributed at the health facility set up for employees at the Bangabhaban.
 On July 17, as the date for delivering the verdict was announced, Abdur Rashid said the drug ordinance did not provide for a tougher sentence.
 Public Prosecutor Shaheen Ahmed Khan then pointed out that the accused should have been charged with murder. But this too is not allowed by the law.
 Still, the judgment is believed to have a significant impact on drug adulteration trials, particularly the two stayed since 1994 following a High Court order.
 The Adflame trial proceedings, which had remained halted for 16 years, resumed in 2009 after The Daily Star ran a report exposing how corruption and manipulation had been delaying the trial.
 The Adflame case was apparently the strongest among the four filed by the Directorate of Drug Administration (DDA) in December 1992. The samples of Flammadol were collected by Dhaka Shishu Hospital and sent for test earlier that year.
 The government-supervised test, assisted by a World Health

Organisation consultant, found 10 to 20 percent diethylene glycol in the samples of Paracetamol brands produced by five companies. The producers used the cheap industrial toxic replacing diluents Propylene Glycol.
 Owners and high-ups of four companies were sued after the test result came. All cases were stayed in 1994 with most of the accused securing bail.
 Many accused, including those released on bail, later absconded. Helena's eldest son Afzar Pasha, who was tried in absentia in the Adflame case, had gone to Canada sometime after 2000.
 Another accused, Anwar Pasha, Helena's husband, passed away.
 Afzar and Md Noman, an accused who was also tried in absentia, were acquitted by the drug court as the case statement did not mention how they were involved.
 City Chemical & Pharmaceutical Works Ltd, one of the five companies, was not even sued apparently for one of its directors having connection with the then BNP government.
 One of the cases was filed in Mymensingh as the sample of syrup produced by Rex Pharma was collected by DDA officer Tomas AK Biswas from the area. The accused got acquitted in 2003.
 According to a survey by Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujib Medical University, as many as 2,700 children died due to renal failure after taking toxic syrup from 1982 to 1992.
 At the court yesterday, Helena, 75, and Mizanur, 68, sat side by side, apparently relaxed, as they waited for

the verdict from 11:00am.
 They were called to the dock around 12:30pm and the judge started reading out the verdict.
 Talking to The Daily Star, victims' families expressed concern that the culprits might take advantage of the remaining lengthy legal process.
 Even PP Shaheen could not reply directly, when asked how long it might take for the case to pass through all the phases.
 "The accused might seek bail and thus delay the process," he said. "I cannot make any guess."
 Defence counsel Khondker Bashir Ahmed, however, said his clients would appeal to the HC anytime soon.

China storm death toll rises to 46 as Typhoon Matmo nears

AFP, Beijing
 The death toll from the strongest storm to hit China for decades has reached 46 with another 25 missing, authorities said yesterday, as another typhoon approaches the country's eastern coastline.
 Typhoon Rammasun has left 19 people dead in south China's island province of Hainan, 18 in southwestern Yunnan and nine in neighbouring Guangxi, the Ministry of Civil Affairs said in a statement on its website.

There'd be no

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 journalists present at an inter-ministerial meeting at his secretariat office, said meeting sources.
 The minister added, "There should be certain limit What happened with the seven murders? You [TV] were projecting the recovery of the bodies [from the river] repeatedly."
 Referring to the 9/11 attack on Twin Towers in New York, Mohsin asked whether international media like the BBC or CNN showed the bodies of hundreds of people who were killed.
 Press freedom does not mean the media would do whatever they like, and all these are happening as media licences have been issued [at will], he observed.
 On the recent eviction of a brothel in Tangail, the minister said those who gave fatwa to evict the brothel should have been decapitated. "Had there been Islamic law, he [Maulana] would have been the first to be beheaded."

2 Rab men

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 This was the first time since the murders in April when any member of the Rab-11 testified in the case as witnesses, he added.
 The two Rab men yesterday told the court that they witnessed how the seven people were abducted and their bodies were dumped into the Shitalakhya, said sources.
 Three former Rab officials -- Lt Col Tareque Sayeed Mohammad, Maj Arif Hossain and Lt Commander MM Rana -- have already confessed to their involvement in the murders before the Narayanganj court.
 The bodies of seven people including Narayanganj City Corporation Councillor Nazrul Islam and senior lawyer Chandan Sarkar were found floating on the river on April 30, three days after their abduction.
 Later, Selina Islam Beauty, wife of Nazrul Islam, filed a case with Fatullah Model Police Station naming Nur Hossain as the main accused for the murders.

Religion-based

FROM PAGE 2
 Malala Yousafzai of Pakistan. British Prime Minister David Cameron also spoke at the session.
 Hasina also revealed her government's plans to take free education and stipends for adolescent girls up to the graduation level which she has been currently administering for 1,33,000 girls from the Prime Minister's Special Fund.
 "From that fund we have started providing stipends to girls. Of course we'll give to boys also, but gradually we'll increase these up to the master's level so that our girls can get education and parents don't need to give any money," she said.
 The PM mentioned that her government has enacted the country's first Children's Act, 2011 and a National Children Policy 2012, supported by Bangladesh's compulsory Birth Registration Act that provide a comprehensive legal redress against child marriage.
 In addition to updating laws, she noted, her government aims to have a National Action Plan on prevention of child marriage with time-bound targets.
 "We must also break the patriarchal mindset in our men and boys so that they are convinced to say 'NO' to child marriage as a social pledge. To this effect, we've lunched our National Forum on Social Norm Change involving the civil society, politicians and the media to transform the society's attitude towards child marriage," the PM added.
 She also flagged a practical problem that the reproductive health cycle in adolescent girls in tropical countries such as Bangladesh is triggered much earlier than that in colder countries.
 "Hence we need to further expand social and physical protection to our young girls so that poor parents stop considering marriage as the easiest means for ensuring safety-security of the girl child," said Hasina.
 The UK government and Unicef jointly hosted the summit aimed at mobilising domestic and international efforts to end Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) and Child, Early and Forced Marriage (CEFM) within a generation.
 Representatives from 52 countries including Bangladesh joined the summit.

Britain to hold public inquiry into ex-spy Litvinenko death

AFP, London
 The British government yesterday announced a public inquiry into the death of Alexander Litvinenko, the Russian dissident who was poisoned in London with radioactive tea in 2006.
 The move comes as Britain presses for further sanctions against Russia over the downing of a passenger plane over eastern Ukraine, allegedly by pro-Moscow separatists.

BCS EXAMS JS committee against MCQs

STAFF CORRESPONDENT
 The Public Service Commission should figure out a better way to judge the merit of prospective civil servants than with exams that have multiple-choice questions, said a parliamentary body yesterday.
 The parliamentary standing committee on public administrations said the MCQ system was an improper system.
 "The committee members in the meeting said that the multiple choice question system in the BCS [Bangladesh Civil Service] examination should be dropped," committee member Mustafa Lutfullah told reporters

'Enforcement to take long'

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 additives and excessive pesticides being used in crops, fish, vegetable and fruit over the years.
 Recent studies also found chromium in poultry and livestock feed, which can enter the food chain and cause cancerous diseases to people. Researchers also found antibiotics in poultry meat at a higher level than what is permissible.
 Acknowledging the facts, the food minister said the formation of Food Safety Authority was underway.
 "The government has taken a zero-tolerance policy against food contamination. No one will be spared if found mixing harmful elements in food," Qamrul said.
 However, the country has witnessed sporadic actions, basically operations of mobile courts against food contamination. The government has drawn criticism for not even fixing the levels of additives or ripening agents, which could be permitted in food items.
 Besides, the accuracy of formalin detector, Formaldehyde Meter Z-300, widely used by Dhaka Metropolitan Police (DMP) in recent drives, has been questioned.
 At the discussion, Deen Mohammad Noorul Huq, director general of the Directorate General of

after a meeting at the Jatiya Sangsad Bhaban.
 Examinees now have to sit for an hour-long, 100-mark, MCQ style preliminary test. The job seekers who secure certain numbers in this test sit for a written exam and if they pass they are called for interviews.
 The committee is supposed to discuss further on this in its meeting some time next month.
 The PSC in May sent a proposal to the public administration ministry to have the number of preliminary test questions raised to 300 from the existing 100 and the test duration to three hours from an hour to reduce the overwhelming number of qualifiers.

100 genes play role

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 and upbringing that can result in some people being at high risk of developing schizophrenia, which usually strikes in late adolescence or early adulthood.
 Schizophrenia affects about one in every 100 people and is marked by hallucinations and delusions where patients hear voices or believe that other people are trying to control or read their minds, causing fearfulness, withdrawal and extreme agitation.
 The identification of the precise locations in the human genome that are involved with the illness could lead to both a fundamental understanding of its causes as well as the development of new treatments or drugs, the researchers said.
 The huge international study by the Schizophrenia Working Group of the Psychiatric Genomics Consortium analysed the DNA of about 37,000 schizophrenia patients and compared the smallest mutations to those found in about 113,000 healthy people.
 The scientists identified about 128 independent genetic variants at 108 locations on the human chromosomes that contribute significantly to susceptibility to schizophrenia - 83 of these sites have never before been linked to the illness, the scientists said.

"By studying the genome, we are getting a better handle on the genetic variations that are making people vulnerable to psychiatric disease," said Tom Insel, director of the US National Institute of Mental Health, which co-funded the study.
 READ MORE: Is schizophrenia the most misunderstood mental illness?
 It is estimated that schizophrenia costs the UK taxpayer about £2bn a year in care and treatment, with further unquantified personal costs for patients and family members. The global drugs bill alone is estimated to be £12.5bn a year, not including hospital stays.
 Michael O'Donovan, professor of psychiatric genetics at the Medical Research Council's neurogenetics centre at Cardiff University said after years of resistance by some medical professionals to the idea of a genetic basis for schizophrenia, the latest study proves it beyond doubt.
 "It is absolutely crystal clear now that genetics is involved in schizophrenia and although the biological implications of the genetics are not yet clear, we're beginning to see patterns emerging from the data," Professor O'Donovan said.
 "The big picture is that large collab-

orations like this into schizophrenia has the capacity to crack the illness open in the same way that similar studies have done to other diseases with a genetic basis," he said.
 Some of the genes identified by the study, which is published in the journal Nature, are known to be involved with controlling the production of dopamine, a neurotransmitter in the brain that was long suspected of playing a role in the illness.
 Other genes are involved with glutamate, another important neurotransmitter, while a few of the newly identified genes play a role in acquiring immunity to infections, which fits with the idea that exposure to viruses in early life may increase a person's susceptibility to the illness.
 Professor O'Donovan said that genes contribute to between about a third and one half of the risk of developing schizophrenia and he would not be surprised if further research involving genome-wide studies reveals up to 1,000 genes that are linked to disease susceptibility.
 "The wealth of new findings has the potential to kick-start the development of new treatments in schizophrenia, a process which has stalled for the last 60 years," he said.

New guidelines to limit fees

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 On April 23, the court had asked the government to explain why it should not be directed to formulate a guideline on charging of monthly tuition and readmission fees by the schools.
 Four secretaries, directors general of two directorates and heads of 24 English medium schools in Dhaka had been made respondents to the rule.
 In response to a writ petition filed by Javed Farruque, father of an English medium student, the HC had also directed the government to take effective steps to prevent the schools from charging readmission fees from the students for the next three months.
 Admission and tuition fees have been proposed by dividing the schools and colleges into three categories -- A, B and C in the draft.
 Schools with more than 700 students, standard teachers and infrastructures, supply of pure water, hygienic sanitation, sports apparatus and facilities, safe environment and uninterrupted power supply will fall under the A category.
 The schools which will fall under B and C categories will have to have similar features except the number of students. The schools with 400-700 students will be put in the B category and with less than 400 students in the C category.
 According to the draft policy, the A category schools inside metropolitan areas can charge highest Tk 30,000 in admission and session fees and Tk 3,000 in monthly tuition fee while the amounts will be not more than Tk

Fees	Category	Metropolitan Area	Outside Metropolitan area
Admission and session fees	A	Tk 30,000 (Maximum)	Tk 15,000 (Maximum)
	B	Tk 18,000 (Maximum)	Tk 7,000 (Maximum)
	C	Tk 8,000 (Maximum)	Tk 4,000 (Maximum)
Monthly tuition Fee	A	Tk 3,000 (Maximum)	Tk 1,500 (Maximum)
	B	Tk 2,000 (Maximum)	Tk 1,000 (Maximum)
	C	Tk 1,500 (Maximum)	Tk 800 (Maximum)

15,000 and Tk 1,500 respectively for the ones outside the metro areas.
 The admission and session fees of the B category institutions inside metropolitan areas cannot be more than Tk 18,000 and up to Tk 7,000 for the rest. The monthly tuition fee of the schools in and outside the metropolitan area will be maximum Tk 2,000 and Tk 1,000 respectively.
 The maximum amount of admission and session fees of C category schools in the metro areas will be Tk 8,000 and the monthly fee must not exceed Tk 1,500. For the schools outside the metropolitan areas, highest Tk 4,000 can be charged as the admission fees and Tk 800 for the monthly tuition fee.
 The draft policy fixed the price of admission forms as well. Schools in and outside the metro areas can take maximum Tk 500 and Tk 300 respectively for each form.
 "No institution can take additional fees for admission forms and enrolment other than the ones fixed by the government. If any institution charges additional fees, the government will take legal actions, including cancelling registration of the institution," reads

the policy draft.
 The admission circulars must mention numbers of vacant seats and the schools have to send in a prescribed format the number of forms submitted and sold to the education boards concerned, it says.
 Birth certificates of the admission seekers will have to be submitted with the admission forms while the schools will arrange the admission activities under their own management.
 The policy keeps a five percent quota for freedom fighters subject to competency, and 2 percent quota for children with special needs.
 The English medium schools are being run under a law enacted in 1962.
 Contacted, Prof Fahima Khatun, director general of the DSHE, said the policy would be finalised after bringing some changes in the rules of that law prepared in 2007.
 English medium school authorities did not agree with the policy, saying some sections of the policy contradicts with rules, she added.
 "We'll change the rules first and hope to finalise the policy soon," the DG told The Daily Star yesterday.

Delayed repair

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 drainage system led to road damage and eventually traffic chaos on regular basis.
 The RHD finally started emergency repair work this Friday.
 While visiting the repair works at the highway the same day, Communications Minister Obaidul Quader temporarily dismissed Ashan Ullah, an RHD executive engineer, for his negligence in duty and appointed Manikganj executive engineer Sabuj Uddin Ahmed for the job.

Sabuj blamed Ashan's lack of work experience and carelessness for the current tattered condition of the highway.
 The emergency repair of the roads would be completed within a few days and ahead of the Eid, said Sabuj.
 Meanwhile, several businessmen claimed they were facing financial losses due to the battered condition of the highway.
 "We incurred a loss of Tk 3 lakh in the last two months as we could not deliver our shipments to Chittagong

port on time due to the poor condition of the roads," said Akhtarul Haque, general manager of a local garment factory named Aristocrat Sweater and Dying Industries Ltd.
 It now takes 30 minutes for what used to be a 5-minute drive, he added.
 Md Razu Sarkar, driver of a bus operating on the Abdullahpur-Nabinagar route, said his company, Sikkdar Enterprise, had spent Tk 21,000 for repairing the bus, which was badly damaged after hitting potholes last month.

UK to work with Bangladesh

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 Cameron made the assurance when Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina had a meeting with him at 10 Downing Street in the morning.
 The British government's confidence in the current Bangladesh government has been expressed strongly during the talks, PM's Press Secretary AKM Shamim Chowdhury and Foreign Secretary Shahidul Haque told reporters after the meeting.
 Hasina is now in the UK on a three-day visit at the invitation of her British counterpart and Unicef Executive Director Anthony Lake. This is her first trip to Europe after the January-5 parliamentary polls.
 The press secretary said the 45-minute meeting was held in a very cordial manner as both leaders discussed bilateral issues.
 Cameron, said the foreign secretary, highly praised the achievements and successes of Bangladesh, especially the

attainment of MDGs under the able leadership of Sheikh Hasina.
 The British premier mentioned that Hasina has been invited to attend the Girl Summit due to her leadership role both in the fields of women empowerment, girls' education and social move-

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