

Pakistan homemade liquor death toll climbs to 27

AFP, Karachi

Six more people have died from alcohol poisoning after consuming homemade liquor in Pakistan's Karachi over the Eid public holidays, bringing the total to 27 -- the highest recorded toll in seven years, a hospital official said yesterday.

The toll has jumped since the first deaths were reported on Tuesday, with residents of the low-income Landhi and Korangi neighbourhoods of the southern city mainly affected. The incidents highlight the proliferation of low-grade liquor in the Islamic country, which officially bars Muslims from drinking.

"The death toll from toxic liquor has risen to 27, while 26 others were being treated at the hospital," Seemi Jamali, a senior doctor and spokeswoman for Karachi's Jinnah Hospital, told AFP.

Police have conducted raids at illegal liquor factories, arrested three suspects and seized a quantity of "katchi sharab" (home made liquor), officials said on Wednesday.

Though legal breweries exist in Pakistan, the sale of alcohol and its consumption is prohibited for Muslims and tightly regulated for minorities and foreigners.

Ex-BNP MP

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stating that Anne amassed more than Tk 1.4 crore illegally as he failed to show the sources of income.

The case statement also said the former lawmaker concealed information of more than Tk 13.13 lakh in the wealth statement he submitted to the commission.

If found guilty, the accused could face up to seven years in prison, fines of unspecified amount and confiscation of property.

The commission issued a notice to Anne on March 24 asking him to submit his wealth statement. He carried out the directive next month, the case statement said, adding, in the wealth statement Anne did not show Tk 10 lakh he donated for naming a high school after him in 2004 in Lakshmipur.

Besides, Anne did not show Tk 3.13 lakh, which he spent on land registration purposes.

The commission investigation also found discrepancy between the two wealth statements Anne submitted -- income tax return and the other to the commission.

According to the income tax return submitted on June 30 last year, Anne had property worth Tk 1.76 crore, while according to the wealth statement submitted to ACC on April 15 this year, he had property worth Tk 3.25 crore.

Within a span of only 10 months, Anne amassed Tk 1.48 crore, the case statement said, adding, Anne could not provide necessary documents to substantiate how he amassed the huge amount only in 10 months.

Fugitive

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A team of Rab-7 arrested Sohel in front of Chittagong Medical College Hospital around 3:00pm yesterday, said Shaheda Sultana, assistant director (media) of Rab-7.

The law enforcers also detained two of his accomplices -- Belal Hossain, 20, and Md Asad, 18, she said, adding that the trio had been sent to Feni.

CID given

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"I communicated with Lifschultz in the USA, but he could not produce his so-called eyewitness" Akond said.

If the court gave CID more time, he would try again to communicate with Manzur's wife and Lifschultz, the CID official said in the petition submitted to the court yesterday.

Jatiya Party Chairman HM Ershad, the prime accused in the case, had been exempted from personal appearance before the court. His lawyer Sheikh Mohammad Sirajul Islam represented him yesterday.

The other two accused Maj (ret'd) Kazi Emdadul Haque and Lt Col (ret'd) Mostafa Kamaluddin Bhuiyan were present at the court.

The court proceedings against two other accused -- Maj Gen (ret'd) Abdul Latif and Lt Col (ret'd) Shamsur Rahman Hossain -- were stayed following a High Court order.

Earlier, February 10 had been fixed for delivering the verdict of the case. However, the judge, who had fixed the date, was transferred a few days before the judgment day. The case has so far seen 22 judges since it was filed in August 1995.

North Korea warns of 'catastrophe'

AFP, Seoul

North Korea warned yesterday of a "catastrophic" end in cross-border relations unless South Korea stops the planned launch of anti-Pyongyang leaflets marking a key political event this week in the communist country.

South Korean activists plan to send anti-Pyongyang leaflets into the North from a site near the border today, when Pyongyang celebrates the anniversary of the founding of its ruling Workers' Party.

The exercise comes as hopes have been raised of a constructive reboot in strained inter-Korean relations following the surprise visit of a top-ranking North Korean delegation to the South last week.

The visit on Saturday was led by Hwang Pyong-So, a newly elected vice chairman of the nuclear-armed North's powerful National Defence Commission who is widely seen as Kim Jong-Un's number two.

It resulted in an agreement to resume a high-level dialogue that had

been suspended for seven months as military tensions on the divided peninsula soared.

A North Korean state body handling South Korean affairs slammed Friday's leaflet launch as an "intentional" provocation that could drive cross-border relations into catastrophe.

"(Inter-Korean) relations will be driven into uncontrollable catastrophe again if South Korean authorities tolerate the fuss," the Committee for the Peaceful Reunification of Fatherland said in a statement carried by the North's official Korean Central News Agency.

The committee urged Seoul to prevent such leaflet launches by "human scum" if it intends to improve relations with Pyongyang.

Civic groups in the South regularly float leaflets over the border with messages criticising the Kim dynasty and urging the North Korean people to rise up against repression.

Key accused still at large

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Tangail, granted three days remand for Hanif, court sources said.

Mohammad Ali Hossen, the rickshaw puller who was detained by police for his alleged involvement in carrying the petrol used to set the house ablaze, gave confessional statement to Ferdousee yesterday.

Miscreants burnt alive Hasna Begum, 35, and her daughters Monira Akter, 14, Meem Akter, 10, and Moli, 7, on Tuesday.

Meanwhile, Hasna's expatriate husband Mozibor Rahman, 40, who flew back to Bangladesh from Malaysia after seven years on Wednesday, broke down in tears while talking to this correspondent.

"I lost everything. Who will I live for now?" cried out Mozibor, lying on the ground of his village home at Dakkhin Sohagpara yesterday.

Family members, relatives and villagers demanded immediate arrest and exemplary punishment of the culprits involved in the murders. They also demanded punitive action against Mirzapur police for their negligence in protecting the victims in spite of several complaints that

the victims' family had lodged with the police station.

"The alleged negligence of law enforcers in protecting the victims will be investigated," said Saleh Mohammad Tanvir, superintendent of police in Tangail.

The victims' family members and locals suspect that Mozibor's neighbour Jahangir, a Singapore expatriate and son of farmer Bahar Uddin, committed the crime together with his accomplices following a dispute over his engagement with Monira, the eldest daughter of Mozibor.

"I had not known about Monira's engagement with Jahangir. Later I came to know my father had settled it with the boy's family," Mozibor said.

"After the arbitration, Jahangir went to Singapore again and told me over the phone that he was seriously disappointed over my family's refusal to marry Monira to him. I had told him that I would look into the matter after returning to the country. But he destroyed everything before I could come back", said a wailing Mozibor.

Prevention depends

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developed world while the rest are of the developing countries, according to the France-based International Agency for Research on Cancer.

At global level, breast cancer is the second highest reason for cancer-related deaths after lung cancer. In developed countries, however, breast cancer, among the cancers, is the number one reason for women's deaths, it says.

Bangladesh does not have any national figure on breast cancer but analysis of a registry maintained by the National Institute of Cancer Research and Hospital (NICRH) between 2008 and 2010 found 26 percent of its women patients suffering from breast cancer, followed by 21 percent afflicted by cervical cancer.

Of all types of cancers, the percentage of women patients diagnosed with breast cancer at the NICRH between 2011 and 2013 is 28.9.

"This percentage is not national but it gives an indication of the rising breast cancer prevalence," said Dr Habibullah Talukder, head of cancer epidemiology department and associate professor at the NICRH.

Irrespective of the reason being genetic or not, another important issue is mass education about the issue.

Therefore, women aged 20 years or above should have regular check-ups for breast cancer.

"Its detection at the early stage can cure patients in over 95 percent of the cases," Talukder said.

Women can also look for the symptoms themselves.

According to the American Cancer Society, swelling of all or part of the breast, skin irritation or dimpling, breast pain, nipple pain or the nipple turning inward, redness, thickening of the nipple or breast skin, a nipple discharge other than breast milk and a lump in the underarm area are some symptoms of breast cancer.

"If one finds any of these symptoms, she should consult the doctor immediately," said Dr Talukder, who is also coordinator of Bangladesh Breast Cancer Awareness Forum, a platform of 21 government and non-government organisations.

The forum will organise campaigns on breast cancer, including road shows wearing pink clothes and bearing banners and distributing leaflets containing information on the disease and the means of prevention and cure during the whole month of October in and outside Dhaka.

"Awareness can save millions of lives," he said.

Gas crisis

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mobilised drilling rig from Bibiyana expansion project to Jalalabad where it would drill three new wells from January, each at a cost of \$17 million, to augment gas production by 70 mmcf/d to 90 mmcf/d.

With 1.4 tcf of gas in place, the field is currently producing 235 mmcf/d and a three-dimensional study would update the field's actual reserve next year.

"Jalalabad is producing gas since 1999. Considering its production history and gas production pressure, we can assume that its reserve would be bigger than previously assessed," said a Petrobangla official.

Meanwhile, Bapex is working to add 100 mmcf/d gas from five wells in its small fields in Srikail, Semutang, Begumganj and Mobarakpur. Of them, its Srikail new field is expected to add 50 mmcf/d. Drilling of each of the wells would cost Tk 110 crore.

Besides this, under an unsolicited deal with Russian company Gazprom, Petrobangla would add another paltry

50 mmcf/d gas. Gazprom was awarded an unsolicited contract two years ago for \$200 million to drill 10 wells in the government owned gas fields to add 200 mmcf/d gas. But its drilling efforts proved to be cost ineffective as those did not provide the expected results.

Gazprom is currently drilling the 10th well in Shahbazpur field in Bhola, which is cut off from the national gas grid.

A good part of Bibiyana's new gas will be used in three large power projects being built near the gas field. Therefore, the national gas grid would not get the direct benefit of this increase. However, the new gas from Jalalabad would cover this deficit.

Due to very high gas demand, a new gas compressor station launched in Ashuganj a month ago to stabilise gas pressure failed in its mission.

Gas shortage has been affecting power generation to home users and it is seen as a major hurdle for the country's industrial growth.

Missouri unrest after fatal police shooting

BBC ONLINE

An off-duty police officer in St Louis, Missouri, has fatally shot a black teenager, leading to angry demonstrations on the streets.

The white officer was on patrol for a private security company when he exchanged fire with an 18-year-old after a chase, say police.

He fired 17 shots at the teenager, police added.

Two months ago a fatal shooting in the nearby suburb of Ferguson sparked weeks of unrest and international headlines.

Michael Brown, 18, was unarmed when he was killed by a white officer, who could face criminal charges.

The latest incident began when the officer, dressed in his city police uniform, spotted three men running away from him in Shaw neighbourhood, says St Louis Police Chief Colonel Sam Dotson.

The 32-year-old officer thought one of the men was carrying a weapon so chased him and a confrontation followed.

During the altercation, the man fired at the officer, who returned fire and killed him, said Dotson.

Ballistic evidence suggests the man fired three rounds at the officer before his weapon jammed, and a gun was recovered from the scene, he added.

The officer, who was not injured, fired 17 shots, said Dotson.

"An investigation will decide if the officer's behaviour was appropriate," he said at a news conference in the early hours yesterday.

Neither man has been named.

Hours after the shooting, a crowd gathered at the scene, with some shouting "hands up, don't shoot", in reference to the fatal shooting of Michael Brown by a white policeman on 9 August.

Some police cars were damaged but there were no arrests.

Woman

FROM PAGE 1

on the floor of the same room.

"Suddenly, I woke up to the sound of a bang and saw my wife, two sons burning in a fire caused by the bomb explosion," he said.

He then with the help of local people doused the fire and rushed the victims to Satkhira Sadar Hospital around 2:30am.

Maruf Hasan, a doctor at the hospital, said the victims had suffered 50 to 60 percent burns. He advised Khalilur to take the victims to the capital for better treatment.

Meanwhile, the police detained Tabibur Rahman, brother of Khalil, on suspicion of his involvement in the incident.

"We have detained Tabibur Rahman to quizz him regarding the incident," said Sheikh Abu Saleh Masud Karim, officer-in-charge of Kalaroa Police Station.

However, Khalilur told The Daily Star that he did not suspect his brother.

No case was lodged in this regard until filing of this report.

Local lawmaker Mustafa Lutfullah visited the spot and said the attack had been premeditated as Khalilur was involved with Awami League politics.

Ctg court

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York on September 28 that he deplored Hajj and Tabligh Jamaat (a movement to spread and preach Islamic values) more than he hated Jamaat-e-Islami.

Latif, who was on the delegation of Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina's recent visit to the United States, said, "Hajj is a waste of manpower. Those who perform Hajj do not have any productivity. They deduct from the economy and spend a lot of money abroad."

Speaking about the history of Hajj, he said Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) was worried about the people of Arab as they were robbers. The prophet then made an arrangement that his followers meet at a place every year, which will generate income.

JCD leader

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when a gang of six to seven pounced on him and chopped him to death.

Adil, convener of Mirsarai unit JCD, died on the spot, said Md Shahidullah, additional superintendent of Chittagong (north) police.

The killing could be a sequel to an intra-party feud, the police officer told The Daily Star.

Manjurul Islam, office secretary of Chittagong district (north) JCD, however, alleged the murder was committed by local Awami League men.

He also alleged that the assailants had fired shots at Adil.

Iran blocks Tehran 'rich kids' Instagram page

AFP, Tehran

Iran yesterday blocked access to an Instagram page devoted to the lifestyle of Tehran's young elite that stirred indignation and spawned a rival site on how the majority lived.

"Richkidsoftehran", created in September on the photo-sharing service, attracted almost 90,000 followers, with its contributors saying they wanted to show another image of Iran from the stereotypes in the West.

Its photo gallery was filled with Ferraris, Maseratis, luxury watches, expensive homes in upmarket northern Tehran -- "all the accessories a Persian boy needs".

It also showed drink-fuelled parties and girls in Western dress, despite the ban on alcohol in Iran, where women are obliged to wear headscarves.

Yesterday, the Instagram page was blocked because of its "vulgar" content, according to weblognews.ir, a

news site considered close to Islamic conservatives in the sanctions-hit country.

"These kinds of shows are for the people who are empty inside and now they want to fill that emptiness by showing off," read one negative comment on the Instagram page.

Since earlier this month, "richkidsoftehran" also has a page on Facebook, which like Twitter and YouTube is inaccessible in Iran on the grounds that they undermine Islamic values.

Hafta-Sobh newspaper took aim at "a class of young people who stubbornly and with the backup of their wealth, are having fun and live their own special way of life, and the Iranian system cannot touch them."

Taadol newspaper poured scorn on "a class of nouveau riche who cropped up like mushrooms" during the 2005-2013 presidency of Mahmoud Ahmadinejad.

Indian govt hands over

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decision "suo moto", the Trinamool Congress-led West Bengal government said no opinion has been given from the state government side, says the report quoting a highly-placed official source.

"The BJP and CPI(M) while demanding the Centre hand over the case to NIA has alleged that the Mamata Banerjee government was trying to hush up the matter," says the report.

The Centre took the decision to hand over the case to the NIA considering the blast's international ramifications as media reports claimed that Bangladeshi nationals were allegedly involved in the blast.

A notification was issued under the NIA Act and the premier investigation agency will be registering an FIR on Friday in connection with the blast, the report says.

Two suspected militants -- Shakil Ahmed and Sovan Mandal -- were killed and another man, Hasan Saheb, was injured in the explosion

at a house in Burdwan on October 2.

The state government, which initially showed indifference to accept that the incident may have suspected terror links, had handed over the case to the state CID after materials recovered from the blast site indicated a terror group was hatching a plot to carry out a strike, reports our Delhi correspondent.

Grenades, chemicals used in making explosives, a book on how to trigger explosion, jihadi literature, a video on jihadi training and a map of important locations in Burdwan district were recovered by a CID team from the house.

A large number of watch dials, SIM cards and other tools required to make improvised explosive devices were also found on the spot.

According to the PTI report, the Centre for the first time has taken a suo moto decision to hand over a probe into a bomb blast case in any part of the country to the NIA since this premier agency was created in 2008 after the Mumbai terror attack

Last tributes

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February 21.

As the ambulance adorned with flowers carried his remains, people from all walks of life lined up to pay their tributes.

Aged 88, the leftist leader died on Wednesday morning, bringing an end to an illustrious career that inspired hundreds of thousands in building a right-based society.

Ministers, politicians and cultural activists started rushing there since morning. Even before the body arrived, people started writing notes in the four condolence books kept beside the makeshift stage. Different political and socio-cultural organisations also paid rich tributes to the language hero.

Matin's wife Gulbadan Nesa Monika, their two daughters and other family members were present.

"Matin means Bangla Language...As long as the Bangla language and the Bangalee nation survive, Matin will live on," SM Yunus wrote in his condolence note.

These simple words of Yunus, a schoolteacher, echoed the emotion of hundreds of mourners.

Prof Anisuzzaman said Matin would always be remembered as a key organiser of the All-party State Language Movement Committee that led the Language Movement.

The Dhaka University professor emeritus, however, regretted that Matin's lifelong dream of a discrimination-free society was yet to be realised and that the country failed to ensure the use of Bangla in all spheres of life.

Language Movement veteran Rawshan Ara Bachchu said, "You won't get such a devoted person. He risked his life to establish the right to speak in mother tongue."

"He was like a roof over the head which is no more," Matin's younger daughter Maliha Suvan said.

People were the core interest and the driving force of his life and his straggle will be meaningful if his followers and well-wishers upheld his ideology, she added.

And to bid farewell to their beloved comrade, hundreds of his political colleagues and followers sang "The Internationale," a widely sung left-wing anthem, and chanted slogans.

A minute's silence was observed in respect of her memory.

Gulbadan Nesa then handed Matin's body over to the authorities of Dhaka Medical College for medical research as per his last wish.

Matin donated his body and his eyes through a will in 2006 for the cause of humanity, and Sandhani, a voluntary organisation, collected his corneas immediately after his death.

Around 2:00pm, pallbearers carried his coffin to the ambulance, which took him to Dhaka Medical College.

Eminent educationist Serajul Islam Choudhury, Language Movement veteran Ahmed Rafique, Health Minister Mohammed Nasim, eminent jurists Rafique-ul Haque and M Amirul Islam, Sector Commander Maj Gen (ret'd) KM Safiullah, Communist Party President Mojahidul Islam Selim, Samakal Editor Golam Sarwar, Bangla Academy Director General Prof Shamsuzzaman Khan, former deputy Speaker Shawkat Ali, Education Minister Nurul Islam Nahid, eminent columnist Syed Abul Maksud, Dhaka University Vice-chancellor AAMS Arefin Siddique, former FBCCI president AK Azad, singer Fakir Alamgir, among others, paid their tributes.

STATE HONOUR

Mourners, however, expressed frustration as Matin was not given state honour at his funeral.

The tribute was arranged by Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujib Medical University, where he had undergone treatment for 51 days. Sammilita Sangskritik Jote assisted the programme.

Rawshan Ara Bachchu said, "He was not given due honour....I regret this. We have become an ungrateful nation."

BNP acting secretary general Mirza Fakhruul Islam Alamgir said the nation expected the state would give Matin the honour he deserved.

"But only the government can say why he wasn't [given the state honour]," he said.

Matin's political colleague and Chief Prosecutor of the International Crimes Tribunal Ghulam Arief Tipoo and former DU vice-chancellor Prof Emazuddin Ahmed also expressed disappointments over the matter.

Asked about this, Cultural Affairs Minister Asaduzzaman Noor said, "I have no idea whether there are rules to give state honour to language veterans at funeral."

"But it does not matter...because the entire nation is paying tribute to him [Matin]. Nothing could be more prestigious than this."

Under the rules, only freedom fighters are entitled to state honour. Apart from them, sitting prime ministers and presidents also get this honour at funeral, said former cabinet secretary Ali Imam Majumdar.

"But the government can give this honour to anyone if it wants. And, considering his contribution to the Language Movement, he [Matin] should have been given this honour," he added.