

Mohsin Ali's condition 'improving' in Singapore

Says his ministry's PRO
STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The condition of Social Welfare Minister Syed Mohsin Ali, now undergoing treatment at Mount Elizabeth Hospital in Singapore, is gradually improving, said Maidul Islam, public relations officer (PRO) of the ministry. The minister was taken to Singapore in an air ambulance as his condition deteriorated yesterday, added the PRO. He was diagnosed with pneumonia on Thursday morning and was put on life support at the Birdem Hospital. The 67-year-old minister also has diabetes and heart issues. Earlier, he had undergone a bypass surgery. His wife and daughter are with him.

Drop hike

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Tk 200 more on gas. The consumer rights organisation will apply to BERC for holding a public hearing on the latest decision. If the regulator does not pay heed to the plea, the rights group will seek justice from the court, said Alam.

Oil prices have been falling in the international market for long, said Alam, also an energy sector analyst, but that has not had any impact on the prices here. "We see adjustments to prices whenever there is a spiral but we do not see that in case of a decrease in the prices," he said, adding such thing did not happen in any other part of the world.

BERC is an independent body, but it did not make the decision on its own, he alleged, adding it was influenced by the power and energy ministry.

The regulatory body made the announcement a day after a meeting of officials of the energy and power divisions at the Prime Minister's Office.

"Consumers are surprised by the decision of price hike," Alam said. The hike will have a chain effect on the prices of essentials as their production depends on energy and power, meaning the hike will squeeze the purchasing power of people, he said.

Regarding the gas price hike, CAB said the price of CNG (compressed natural gas) should not be increased for public transport such as bus and that private vehicles should be charged more for gas. Besides, Alam said, the use of meters must be ensured at residences for gas supply.

13kg gold

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"We seized the car from Vitaballah area on Jessore-Narail road on Wednesday but did not find anything during primary search," he added. "On information, we searched the car again around 2:30am today in presence of upazila administration officials and found the gold bars in the gear box," the OC said.

Sub-inspector Samedul Haque said members of Vitaballah police outpost noticed a hue and cry near their camp. As they approached the scene, one Tauhdir Rahman, a resident of Customs Ghat area in Khulna city, alleged that some six muggers snatched his money and valuables and were trying to take away his car, Samedul added.

The police arrested alleged mugger Mizanur Rahman of Narail on the spot and brought Tauhdir and his car to the police station where he filed a case, Samedul said. The SI said they had kept the car as evidence and later recovered the gold from it.

A case was filed against seven including Tauhdir, who is absconding, and his driver Abdul Maleq.

SQ Chy's son

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passed the order rejecting his bail plea after Dhanmondi police produced him before it in the afternoon. A team of Dhanmondi police arrested Hummam at his Dhanmondi home, showing a warrant of arrest issued against him by a court recently in connection with an attempt murder case filed with Gulshan Police Station in July 2008. "We received an arrest warrant against Hummam several days ago. He was arrested at his residence at 10:30am, today [yesterday]," Dhanmondi Police Station Officer-in-Charge Nur-e-Azam told The Daily Star.

Our Court Correspondent reported that the hearing on the bail petition of Hummam would be held today. Family members of Hummam could not be contacted for comments.

Youths 'assault' college girl in Demra

Habiganj 'assaulter' sent to juvenile centre
STAR REPORT

A group of youths allegedly punched and kicked a college girl and hit her in the head with a brick chunk in the city's Demra area yesterday. Police arrested Rakib, 25, and Babu, 24, in connection with the incident, Demra Police Station Officer-in-Charge Sirajul Islam told The Daily Star.

The girl, 22, a BA second-year student, was attacked as she had refused one Max Babu's "proposal for love", the OC said. She has lodged a case against the four youths. Besides the arrestees, the other accused are Max Babu, 25, and Imran Hossain, 24. Barely 10 days ago, a teenage boy slapped a schoolgirl in broad daylight in Habiganj. One of the assaulter's friends shot a video of the incident and uploaded the footage on Facebook, which triggered a huge public outcry.

Yesterday, the assaulted college girl's brother claimed that four youths intercepted his sister in Kanapara area on her way home from a tutor's house around 1:30pm.

Following an altercation, they roughed her up, he added. Later, the victim received treatment at the Dhaka Medical College Hospital. **HABIGANJ BOY SENT TO JUVENILE CENTRE**

A Habiganj court yesterday sent Ruhul Amin, the teenage boy who beat up a schoolgirl in public on August 26, to the Juvenile Correction Centre in Tongi of Gazipur.

Ruhul, a class-IX student of

Rab arrests

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Tk 16 lakh in an account of Moniruzzaman Masud Don, a key person of the militant outfit. The arrestee was being taken to Chittagong when this report was filed at midnight. He would be produced before a court with a prayer for remand, the Rab sources said.

On August 18, Rab arrested three lawyers at the capital for allegedly financing the brigade and later the lawyers gave confessional statements before a court in Chittagong.

Patients' horror

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The following day, however, doctors conducted a colostomy surgery on her. It's a surgery that brings one end of the large intestine out through an opening made in the abdominal wall. Stools moving through the intestine then drain through the stoma into a bag attached to the abdomen.

She went home. Within two months, however, her intestines started to come out through the opening of her abdomen. Then on July 11, Dr Mozammel operated on her again so her intestines would not come out. After this operation, she did not regain consciousness. In efforts to recover her from anesthesia-induced unconsciousness, doctors tried to heat her up with "warm cloths," inflicting deep burns in her hands and buttocks in the process.

Musrat's mother told The Daily Star last week that the hospital authorities discharged her baby several days later, saying there would be no problem this time. But the baby's condition worsened within days -- the burns turned frightening. Nervous, the parents rushed from hospital to hospital where doctors gave conflicting advice. At Rajshahi Medical College Hospital, doctors said the baby's physical condition did not permit another surgery. But still, they said, they might be able to conduct one after a few months but could not promise success.

This frightened the parents. They took her to another private hospital where doctors first said the girl needed to be operated in a week. And when the parents took her as advised, the doctors declined to operate on her because she was "not fit".

"We were left with no other choice but to take her home and wait we did not know for what," said Joynab Abedin Munni, the mother. Following media coverage in early August, the Islami Bank hospital authorities took responsibility of the girl's treatment and the girl has been put under the care of a team of specialists.

Musrat's is just one of the thousands of cases that happen every day in Bangladesh and elsewhere. Data from upper income countries show that one in every 10 patients experience adverse events in hospitals and about 20 to 40 percent of total health spending is wasted due to poor quality care, according to the World Health Organisation.

In some countries, additional hospitalisation, litigation cost, infections or disabilities from complications, and lost productivity costs go up to \$19 billion a year, it says.

Countries in Southeast Asia Region, including Bangladesh, currently do not have adequate data to make region- and country-specific estimates, but the picture from the developed countries suggests things would be pretty grim here.

Dr Iqbal Arslan, general secretary of Bangladesh Medical Association, said about half of the patients in Bangladesh are wrongly treated. There are many reasons for this including wrong judgement by doctors and a lack of equipment and technology for diagnosis. At any given moment, 1.4 million people worldwide suffer from healthcare-related infections, at least half of them preventable, says the WHO.

The issue of patient safety is so vital that, among other things, it will top the agenda when the global health body sits for its 68th Southeast Asia Regional Committee Meeting from tomorrow till Friday in Dili, the capital of Timor-Leste. Global health experts, health ministers or their deputies, government officials and journalists of the 11 member states of the region are now in Dili to attend the meeting.

Safety of healthcare, now termed "patient safety," is a fundamental of healthcare and has long been on the global agenda. In 2004, the WHO created World Alliance for Patient Safety to advance the goal of "first do no harm" and then reduce the adverse health and social consequences of unsafe healthcare -- something that has evidently been ignored in Musrat's case.

Asked if Musrat's safety was ignored or overlooked, Dr Mozammel said they tried to do everything within their capacity to ensure her safety before, during and after the operation. "But I cannot and will not say we've done everything 100 percent right," he said.

Spain arrests woman for 'ISIS links'

AFP, Valencia

Spanish police Saturday arrested an 18-year-old Moroccan woman accused of preparing to travel to Syria to join the jihadist group Islamic State (ISIS). She was the latest in a series of suspected IS sympathisers detained in Spain since last year over security concerns.

Police led the woman from her home in the town of Gandia near Valencia, her face and body covered in a black Islamic veil and full-length robe with just her bound hands showing.

Cut internet

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inaugurating the weeklong Upazila Digital Fair and Internet Week-2015 through a videoconferencing from the Gono Bhaban.

She also said that if the mobile phone operators reduced the internet service fee it would increase the number of users which would ultimately help up their income.

Hasina put emphasis on stopping illegal VoIP business that causes financial losses to the national exchequer.

State Minister for ICT Division Zunaid Ahmed Palak, Bangladesh Association of Software and Information Services (BASIS) President Shameem Ahsan and Grameenphone CEO Rajeev Sethi also spoke on the occasion.

IRI survey

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while addressing a press briefing at the party's Nayapaltan central office.

Ripon called upon the government to test its popularity by holding a fresh election "if it accepted the results of the IRI survey".

Asked whether the results of the survey would put any negative impact on his party leaders and activists, Ripon replied in the negative.

Nielsen-Bangladesh conducted the survey on Bangladesh's politics and democracy between May 23 and June 10 this year for the US-based research organisation IRI. The survey results were published in different media on Thursday.

According to the findings of the survey, 67 percent people think the caretaker government should be restored before holding the next parliamentary election. Forty-three percent respondents like to see the next general election to be held as soon as possible, while 40 percent think the current parliament should complete its tenure.

As per the survey, the Awami League enjoys more popularity than the other parties with 60 percent respondents liking and 29 percent disliking it. Forty-two percent like the BNP while 46 percent dislike it.

War criminal

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The Shanghai-based Iceason chain wants 10,000 people to scoff the head-shaped snacks as a way of remembering China's war against Japan, the China Daily website reports.

The 3D-printed ice creams aren't cheap though, costing 30 yuan (\$4.70; £3) each. Tojo was Japan's prime minister between 1941 and 1944. He was later convicted of war crimes and executed by hanging in December 1948.

While a few Chinese social media users think the ice cream is funny, most are not impressed with the company. "Such vulgar marketing," says one person on the Sina Weibo social network, while another thinks it's "an extremely low idea".

"Doesn't the thought of putting an evil man's head in your mouth make you feel sick?" asks another. Some users also take issue with the artistry, pointing out that adverts for the ice cream use a face that could be mistaken for Mahatma Gandhi.

979 new Indians

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to Bangladesh, at 10:00am tomorrow, says a press release of the Indian mission.

According to an Indo-Bangla joint survey report disclosed on July 20, the 979 residents of the 111 enclaves inside Bangladesh chose India, while none from the 51 enclaves in India wanted to come to Bangladesh.

Ending decades of wait, 51 Bangladeshi enclaves inside India and 111 Indian enclaves inside Bangladesh were attached to their respective countries at midnight on July 31. With this, 51,584 inhabitants of 162 enclaves inside Bangladesh and India got the taste of freedom for the first time in 68 years, officially becoming citizens of either of the two countries.

The historic Land Boundary Agreement between Bangladesh and India was signed by Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman and Indira Gandhi in 1974.

As it was finally implemented on July 31 midnight, some 17,160 acres of land within Bangladesh became the part of it, while nearly 7,110 acres of land of 52 Bangladeshi enclaves within India became the part of that country.

'Criminal' killed

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Arman was shot in his right leg during the "gunfight" and was rushed to Chittagong Medical College Hospital around 5:00am. He died there around an hour later, said CMCH police camp ASI Pankaj Barua.

Police arrested three of Arman's associates -- Nur Uddin alias Tufan, 24, Raihan Uddin, 23 and Dipu Barua, 25, and recovered three locally made guns and six cartridges from the spot.

Four policemen were also injured in the incident. They took first aid at the CMCH, said police sources. On May 10 this year, Arman's father Hafez Ahmed, being fed up with his son's activities, filed a general diary with the court of Chief Metropolitan Magistrate (CMM) against Arman, said court sources.

Arman's younger brother Noman said Arman was shown the door five years ago for his activities. "Seeing the news on the TV, I came to the hospital to receive the body", his brother said.

Al Shabaab militants seize two towns in southern Somalia

REUTERS, Mogadishu

Islamist militants al Shabaab seized control of two towns over two days in southwestern Somalia, a spokesman for the group and local officials said yesterday, less than a week after its fighters attacked an African Union base in the same area.

Al Shabaab said it had seized two small towns in the Lower Shabelle region - El Saliindi, 65 km (40 miles) south of Mogadishu en route to the port town of Marka, and Kuntuwarey, on the road between the capital and the port of Barawe.

The militant group, which is seeking to overthrow the Western-backed government in Somalia and impose its strict version of Islamic law, stages regular attacks on the AU-led peace-keeping force and on Somali officials

as the country struggles to rebuild after more than two decades of chaos. Ali Nur, the acting governor of Lower Shabelle, confirmed the towns had been captured.

"It is sad to say al Shabaab has taken El Saliindi. AU forces withdrew and al Shabaab now controls it," said Nur, adding that Kuntuwarey had been seized on Friday. Also on Saturday, the militant attacked an African Union convoy outside Marka, claiming they killed several soldiers in the attack. But a local official said the death toll had not been determined.

"A roadside bomb targeted an AU vehicle as the AU convoy passed in the outskirts of Marka today. We do not know details about casualties," said Nur.

A friend of Bangladesh

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movement and thinking. He wrote many books on Bangladesh, including "Proceedings of the European Conference on the Flood Action Plan in Bangladesh" in 1993, "Food Security, FAP and Bangladesh" in 1997, "The Peasant Movement and the Future of Bangladesh" in 1998, and "Democracy and Human Rights in Bangladesh" in 2006 and "Moulana Bhashani, Leader of the Toiling Masses" in 2012.

But he was best known to Bengalees for his involvement in 1970s grass-roots' peasant organising. While working as a leading Dutch journalist in Bangladesh, Custers wrote for both Dutch and international newspapers and magazines. During the 1980s, he actively participated in the Dutch peace movement against the threat of nuclear war.

Custers had an MA in International Law from Leiden University, the

Netherlands, in 1970. He subsequently followed a three-year course in International Relations of the Johns Hopkins University in Washington DC. In 1995, he obtained his PhD in Sociology from the Catholic University, Nijmegen in the Netherlands.

In 2007/2008, Custers was an affiliated fellow, researching on religious tolerance and the history of Bangladesh, at the International Institute for Asian Studies, Leiden. In 2010, he was awarded as Human Rights' Defender and Friend of Bangladesh. Custers was working as special European correspondent of daily Prothom Alo and a columnist of The Daily Star, Bangladesh.

He left behind his wife Sumati Nair and his son Sukanto Custers. In a press release yesterday, Ekattorer Ghatak Dalal Nirmul Committee expressed deep shock at the death of Custers.

8 burnt, fight for lives

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The four other victims at the hospital were Al Amin, 27; Nadim 26; Kokhon, 34, and Shahjahan, 23. They were unconscious.

Abdur Rauf, 24; Abdul Mannan, 23; and Pasha Sheikh, 36, were being treated at Al Amin Hospital each with over 20 percent burns. Mezbah Uddin Tuhin, medical officer of the hospital, said their conditions were critical. This correspondent saw no one from Shital Enterprise at the hospitals. Officials of the ship-breaking yard could not be reached for comments.

QUESTION OVER SAFETY GEARS
Senior ASP Saiful said the Shital Enterprise authorities told him that there could have been a leak gas cylinder and the explosion took place probably because someone had gone there with a lit cigarette. Contacted, Syeda Rizwana Hasan,

chief executive of Bangladesh Environmental Lawyers' Association said even if someone was smoking there, the authorities as per a High Court verdict were not supposed to allow anyone to go inside the shipyard with a lit cigarette.

If anyone indeed went there with a cigarette, it would be due to poor monitoring by the authorities and raise questions over the safety of workers in the industry, said Rizwana, who has been working on workers' safety for a long time. Senior ASP Saiful said they were investigating the matter.

Zakir Hossain, deputy inspector general of the Department of Inspection for Factories and Establishment, Chittagong, said they always urged the ship-breaking yard owners to ensure adequate measures to avoid such accidents, but the owners, in most cases, did not pay heed to them.

Waking up

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Last year the International Centre for Diarrhoeal Disease Research, Bangladesh (ICDDR,B) estimated 12,000 Bangladeshi women are diagnosed with cervical cancer per annum, and each year 6,500 women die of the disease. Worldwide it is the fourth most common cause of cancer deaths among women, with most cases occurring in developing nations.

Yet the Papincolaou or pap smear test if completed every three to five years can identify changes early, which has enabled developed countries to dramatically reduce the incidence of cervical cancer. In addition two vaccines against HPV are available, one of which can reduce the risk of cancerous and precancerous changes in the cervix by about 93%.

"I wouldn't dare to tell my family about the cancer," says Nurjahan Begum. Social stigma and lack of awareness make it hard for many women of Lalmonirhat's river islands to seek timely and effective prevention, detection and treatment.

Khandaker Reaz Ahmed, technical officer of the Char Integrated Project of NGO Own Village Advancement identifies child marriage as an important contributing factor locally. "Girls are often married at a young age," he says, "and they often suffer from malnutrition and cervical cancer. The incidence of cancer in turn gives rise to a prevalence of men marrying multiple wives."

Day labourer of Sholmari village on Teesta Char in Kaliganj upazila Akhlah Uddin, 30, says on the islands the men have little distraction from difficult lives. "If wives deny us intimate relations," he says, "obviously we become