

DINAJPUR DIABETES HOSPITAL

Patients suffer as docs on strike for pay hike

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Dinajpur

Demand salary hike, 13 doctors of Dinajpur Diabetes Hospital yesterday started an indefinite strike, badly hampering the treatment there.

Around 500 diabetes patients from different districts daily receive treatment at the hospital located at Dinajpur Satellite town, hospital sources said.

During a visit to the 30-bed hospital in the afternoon, this correspondent found many patients from far and near areas waiting for long in the hospital complex. Some were returning, as there was no hope of early resumption of medical service.

Accompanying a diabetes patient from Thakurgaon, Md Kazal came to the hospital in the morning but he was frustrated to hear about the indefinite strike.

"Tired of waiting since morning, I am going back home without any treatment as there is no sign of ending the doctors' indefinite strike," Bulbul Chowdhury, a patient from Chirirbandar upazila of Dinajpur, said at around 3:00pm.

Afsar Ali, a senior doctor of the hospital, said they



PHOTO: STAR

An elderly diabetic patient and her attendant get on a three-wheeler for return journey to home yesterday, after failing to get treatment due to indefinite strike by doctors at Dinajpur Diabetes Hospital.

had been demanding that the hospital authorities raise their salary for the last three and a half months.

"I have joined the hospital in 2006 for a monthly salary of Tk 18,000. After 10 years, now I am getting Tk 35,000," said another doctor seeking anonymity.

The doctors joined the hospital with the condition of not doing private prac-

tice, said hospital sources.

On Thursday and Friday, meetings were held between the agitating doctors and hospital authorities to solve the crisis but to no end result, said the doctors.

Shafiqul Haque Chhutu, general secretary of Dinajpur Diabetes Hospital, said, "Demanding pay rise, the doctors of the hospital started an indefinite strike

today [Saturday], causing sufferings to the patients.

Termining the strike as illegal, he said, "As per the contract, the doctors can't do any kind of agitation and private practice."

"We offered a proposed salary plan for them, but they rejected it. The hospital is currently spending Tk 7.73 lakh 951 as salary for the 13 doctors," he added.

3 picnickers die after taking liquor in Naogaon

UNB, Naogaon

Three picnickers died and four others fell sick after taking excessive quantity of liquor at Enayetpur village in Badalgachhi upazilla yesterday.

The deceased could not be identified as of 5:00pm.

Rafiqul Islam, officer-in-charge of Badalgachhi Police Station, said seven people fell sick after taking liquor while on a picnic at night.

They hailed from Sadar upazila and Badalgachhi upazila of the district.

They were rushed to Sadar hospital.

The doctors of the hospital referred three of them to Rajshahi Medical College Hospital as their condition deteriorated. They died on way to Rajshahi, said the OC.

17 sued for killing AL man in Bogra

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Bogra

Seventeen people have been sued on charge of killing an Awami League man in Dhunat upazila of the district.

The deceased was identified as Momtazur Rahman, 65, a member of Bhandarbari union unit of AL.

Momtazur's son Rabiul Islam filed the case with Dhunat Police Station on Friday.

Locals said Momtazur was killed by one Imam Ali and his men over a land dispute at Dattapara village in the upazila on Thursday. Five members of his family were also injured in the attack. The accused went into hiding soon after the incident.

Contacted, Mizanur Rahman, officer-in-charge (OC) of the police station, said law enforcers are raiding different areas to arrest the accused.

KURIGRAM, LALMONIRHAT

Cold snap, dense fog disrupt normal life

STAR COUNTRY DESK

Dense fog and bone-chilling cold weather have disrupted normal life in all nine upazilas of Kurigram district and five upazilas of Lalmonirhat district, report our correspondents.

Day-temperature was recorded at 10 degree Celsius in Kurigram yesterday, said Prodig Kanti Roy, Rajarhat (Kurigram) meteorological official.

Most low-income people of char areas of the district could not come out to work and vehicles were plying with headlights on till noon.

Members of some organisations, including the district administration, Border Guard Bangladesh (BGB) and police department, distributed warm clothes in some char areas, but it was not sufficient to meet the people's needs.

Afzal Hossain, a pushcart driver of Kurigram town said, "I have not found work yet (at noon), even though I

left home early this morning. It feels like my hands and legs have been refrigerated."

Saidul Islam, 57, a potato farmer of Kaley village of Belgachha union under Kurigram sadar upazila, said, "I cultivated potato on about one acre of land this year. I am worried that my crop might be attacked with late-blight disease due to the cold weather and dense fog. The disease has attacked a few places of the potato field, even though I used anti-virus medicine."

In Lalmonirhat, low temperatures and dense fog have paralysed normal life in five upazilas of Lalmonirhat.

According to Rangpur Met Office, the lowest temperature recorded was 9.5 degrees Celsius yesterday morning.

Poor people, particularly farmers and day labourers, are the worst affected as they cannot work in the fields due to the cold wind. They are buying second-hand

warm clothes at high prices as the shop owners have increased prices due to heavy demand.

Many of the destitute are trying to combat this bone-chilling cold by burning rubbish, straw and old rubber tires. Animals in sheds are covered with old sacks. Residents of sandy char areas in the Teesta and Dharla River basins are particularly suffering.

Farmer Ramanath Roy, 50, of Roypara village in Lalmonirhat sadar, said he has not been able to work outdoors due to the cold and fog since Friday morning.

"We have been keeping warm by burning straw as we have no warm clothes," said Bachcha Rani, 42, of the village.

Many affected people hope the government and socio-cultural organisations, including the well-off section of society, can distribute warm clothes to mitigate their suffering.



PHOTO: STAR

People sit by a fire of burning straws to warm themselves at Roypara village in Lalmonirhat Sadar upazila yesterday morning as biting cold sweeping the northern districts has added to the sufferings of people, especially poor ones. Inset, a goat gets wrapped with a warm cloth at a Kurigram village as owner of the domestic animal is concerned about its protection.

KHAGRACHHARI, COX'S BAZAR

Abducted boy, schoolgirl rescued: 6 arrested

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Chittagong

A 12-year-old boy was rescued from Guimara area in Khagrachhari district yesterday, nine days after his abduction, from Hathazari upazila of Chittagong district.

Police also arrested six alleged abductors. The arrestees are Nur Uddin of Hathazari, Md Nuruddin of Raozan, Shiplu Nath of Chandgaon, Apu Das of Rangamati, and Md Osman and Md Sohel of Rangunia.

AKM Hafiz Akhter, superintendent of police (SP), said masked criminals stormed into the house of Md Kabir Ahmed, an expa-

triate in the United Arab Emirates (UAE), at Hathazari on January 13. They tied up his wife and abducted 12-year-old Shoaib Akhter Apon.

The abductors took the boy to Guimara of Khagrachhari and kept him confined to a room.

Apon's mother Jesmin Akhter lodged a case with Hathazari Police Station the same day.

Acting on a tip-off, police conducted drives in different areas in Hathazari, Rangunia and Rangamati and arrested Nuruddin, Shiplu, Apu, Osman and Sohel, suspecting their involvement in the kidnapping.

After gleaning information from the five, police arrested Nur Uddin from Guimara and rescued the boy from the house of one Ali Hossain. Nur Uddin is an accused in 10 cases filed with different police stations in the district, the SP added.

During interrogation, police came to know that a UAE expatriate Mostafa had hired the gang to kidnap the boy because of a business related rivalry with Apon's father Kabir, the SP said.

In another drive, police rescued a Class V girl from Ramu area in Cox's Bazar district early yesterday and arrested two people for their

alleged involvement in abducting the girl.

According to police, the girl was abducted from Dakkhin Ghatcheck area of Rangunia upazila on January 17 while she was returning to her house from school. Later, the abductors demanded Tk 5 lakh as ransom from the family.

A case was filed with Rangunia Police Station on the day.

The arrestees are Ronukul Islam alias Babu and Kohinur Akhter. Ronukul was arrested from Ramu Tea Garden while Kohinur from Naikhayangchhari in Bandarban, police sources said.

2 Rab men hurt by robbers

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Nilphamari

Two Rapid Action Battalion (Rab) members were injured in an attack by robbers when a Rab team went to arrest a fugitive accused at Kalikapur village in Kishoreganj upazila on Friday.

Rab also arrested two injured robbers-- Mohammad Ali, 55, an accused in 11 cases, and his brother Azad Mia, 40, of the village--from the spot.

Nilphamari Camp Commander Asaduzzaman of Rab-13 said sub-inspectors Rustam Ali and Sohan Hossain went to the robbers' den in the guise of arms buyers on Friday night, keeping a Rab team as backup.

At one stage, the robbers' gang, led by the two siblings, came to know about the real identity of the two policemen and attacked the duo with machetes, leaving them injured.

Hearing screams of their fellows, the backup team of Rab-13 went to the spot and fired three gunshots that left Ali and Azad bullet injured while their cohorts managed to flee.

Rab later arrested the two and sent all the four injured to Kishoreganj Upazila Health Complex.

Rab filed a case with Kishoreganj Police Station and handed the arrestees over to the police.

Missing woman's body found floating on river

OUR CORRESPONDENT

The body of a housewife was found floating on the Narod River in Halsha area under Natore Sadar upazila of the district yesterday, three days after she went missing, said Mizanur Rahman, officer-in-charge (OC) of Natore Police Station.

The deceased was identified as Monowara Begum,

25, wife of Amirul Islam Ali of Jhinapara village in the upazila.

Nawzer Ali, father of the victim, said he asked his son-in-law Amirul Islam yesterday morning about his daughter and Amirul told him that Monowara had been missing for two days.

Locals found Monowara's body floating on the river in the morning

and informed the police.

Police went to the spot, recovered the body and sent it to Natore Sadar Hospital morgue for autopsy.

Police later arrested Amirul Islam for his alleged involvement in the murder.

The body bore stab injury marks, the OC said, adding that Monowara might have been killed due to family feud.



PHOTO: STAR

Shop owners and employees of Gaibandha New Market in the district town start an indefinite closure yesterday demanding arrangement of water supply and toilet facilities at the busy shopping centre. The two essential services have remained suspended there for the last three years, said the stakeholders.

Three more held over B'baria violence

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Moulvibazar

Three more people, including a Jubo Dal leader, were arrested on Friday night in connection with the January 12 violence over the death of a madrasa student in Brahmanbaria town.

With the Friday's arrest, at least 21 people have so far been arrested in connection with the violence in the last five days, said Officer-in-Charge Mainur Rahman of Sadar Police Station.

The arrestees are Kamrul Islam Sohel, 23, joint convener of Jubo Dal Sadar upazila unit, Titon Mia, 26, and Rubel Mia, 32.

Week-long Madhu Mela kicks off at Sagardari

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Benapole, Jessore

A weeklong Madhu Mela (fair), marking the 192nd birth anniversary of poet Michael Mathrusudan Dutta kicked off at Sagardari on the bank of the Kobadak River on Friday night.

The fair will continue through January 28.

Dr Mashiur Rahman, economic affairs adviser to the prime minister, inaugurated the fair as the chief guest.

Chaired by Dr Humayun Kabir, deputy commissioner, Jessore, the opening session was addressed, among others, by Ismat Ara Sadeq, state minister for public administration,

Local lawmakers, Akhtari Momtaz, secretary, ministry of cultural affairs, Anisur Rahman, superin-

Protesting the death of fellow student Masudur Rahman of Jamia Islamia Yunusia Madrasa, students of the madrasa went on the rampage in the district town on January 12.

They vandalised several establishments, including Brahmanbaria railway station.

At least 30 people, including Masudur, sustained injuries in an overnight triangular clash involving the madrasa students, local traders and Bangladesh Chhatra League activists in Zilla Parishad Market area.

Masudur died at a hospital the following day.

SNIPPETS

Kid drowns in pond

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Comilla (Daudkandi)

A two-year-old girl drowned in a pond at Sholakandi village in Titas upazila of the district yesterday. The victim is Nusrat, daughter of Nuruzzaman of the village. Family sources said Nusrat accidentally fell into the pond near their house while playing on its bank and drowned. Locals rescued her and took her to Daudkandi Upazila Health Complex, where the doctors declared her dead.

Yaba seized in Teknaf

UNB, Dhaka

Border Guard Bangladesh (BGB) members seized 40,000 pieces of Yaba tablet from Jadimora area in Teknaf upazila of Cox's Bazar yesterday. Lt Col Abu Jar Al Zahid, commanding officer of BGB 2 Battalion, said acting on a tip-off, a team of the border guards raided the area adjacent to the Naf River around 6:00am. But, sensing the presence of the BGB team, the smugglers fled the scene leaving their boat on the bank of the river. Later, BGB recovered the Yaba tablet in an abandoned state from the boat.

2 held with pistol, bullets

UNB, Benapole

Police in a drive on Friday night arrested two youths along with a pistol and two bullets from Puthkali village under Benapole Port Police Station. The arrestees are Kamal Hossain, 25, son of Rowshan Ali, and Abdul Karim, 30, son of Siddique Ali of the village. Officer-in-Charge Apurba Hasan of Benapole Port Police Station said on secret information, a police team raided the area around 10:30pm and arrested the duo. They also recovered a pistol and two bullets from them.

Section 144 in Nandail

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Mymensingh

The district administration imposed Section 144 in Merenga Bazar area under Mosulli union of Nandail upazila yesterday afternoon due to announcement of rallies by two factions of Awami League at the same venue and time. Following the imposition, both factions blocked the Mymensingh-Kishoreganj road at upazila headquarters and Nandail Bazar area around 3:00pm, disrupting road communication for over four hours. After a meeting with local AL leaders, administration and police, the agitating activists lifted the blockade around 7:15pm, said Ataur Rahman, officer-in-charge of Nandail Police Station. Two factions of AL, one allegedly led by Anwarul Abedin Khan Tuhin, MP, and the other by Major Gen (Retd) Abdus Salam, ex-AL lawmaker, also president of Nandail upazila AL, called separate rallies at Merenga Bazar at the same time. A tense situation had been prevailing in the area since yesterday morning. Additional police and Rapid Action Battalion (Rab) personnel have been patrolling the area.