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Ensuring safe food a far cry

Law, regulations in place; Food Safety Authority formed but it cannot go into action due to shortage of manpower

REAZ AHMAD

A nationwide outcry against widespread food adulteration had prompted the government to replace the archaic Pure Food Ordinance of 1959 with a stringent Safe Food Act in 2013.

The promises were high-sounding - there would be a single entity instead of 15 agencies in charge of curbing food adulteration and chemical contamination; there would be dedicated courts dealing with food offenders; and plaintiffs would get 25 percent of the proceeds gained from penalties to be slapped on adulterators.

Three years on, consumers in Bangladesh have very little to cheer about. It took the government over 15 months to form the Bangladesh Food Safety Authority (BFSA) as mandated by the new law. The idea was that the BFSA would be consumers' one-stop answer to concerns over safe food.

Twenty months have passed since the inception of the BFSA, but the government has not yet sanctioned its required manpower.

It has been eight months since the BFSA sought a 1,004-strong organogram but the body, which has been expected to address the nation's food safety worries, is still limping with just an 11-man workforce.

A chairman, four members, a secretary and five directors -- that is the workforce the BFSA now has under its disposal.

With such a poor strength what the BFSA could pull off are: drafting seven rules required for making the Safe Food Act 2013 operational,

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MANPOWER FOR FOOD SAFETY AUTHORITY

REQUIRED **1,004**

APPROVED **422**

GIVEN ONLY **11**



Encroachment chokes off the DND canal in the capital's Jatrabari area. Businesses have occupied a major part of it to set up shops, kitchen markets and other illegal erections obstructing the flow in the canal. Perennial water-logging during the rainy season makes life in the area miserable. The photo was taken yesterday.

PHOTO: ANISUR RAHMAN



Taskin, Sunny cleared by ICC

Their bowling actions declared legal

SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh fast-bowler Taskin Ahmed and left-arm spinner Arafat Sunny have had their remodelled actions cleared by the International Cricket Council (ICC) and may resume bowling in international cricket immediately, with Taskin set to be announced as the yet unnamed 14th member in Bangladesh's ODI squad for their three-match One-Day International series against Afghanistan starting tomorrow in Mirpur.

After working closely with the

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BANGLADESHI DEPORTED FROM KL Now in jail in 2 arms cases

Malaysian daily says he had met a 'Gulshan attack suspect', but no confirmation from Bangladesh police

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Bangladeshi businessman deported by the Malaysian authorities early this month was accused in two arms cases around 11 years back.

Piyar Ahmed Akash was made an accused in the cases filed with Feni Sadar Police Station and Sudharam Police Station in Noakhali in 2005 for stealing two AK-47 rifles from 10 truckloads of sophisticated weapons seized in Chittagong on April 2, 2004.

Akash from Nayanpur village of Dagon Bhuiyan upazila in Feni was arrested by law enforcers with an AK-47 rifle on September 18, 2005. Later, he came out of prison on bail and fled to Malaysia in 2007.

Aslam Uddin, officer-in-charge of Dagon Bhuiyan Police Station, said Malaysian law enforcers detained Akash on August 19, and he was deported to Bangladesh on September 2.

"We arrested him with the help of law enforcers at Hazrat Shahjalal International Airport and brought him to the police station the following day," Aslam told The Daily Star.

On September 4, Akash was produced before a Feni Special Tribunal,

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'IS releases' new video of Gulshan attackers

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The SITE Intelligence Group, a US-based organisation that monitors terrorist activities, last night said the Islamic State released a video from Bangladesh for the first time about the Holey Artisan attackers.

"IS Releases First Video of Bangladesh, Focuses on Dhaka Attackers," read a tweet posted minutes before midnight.

About five hours before that post, the Group in another tweet said: "#ISIS promoted forthcoming vid from #Bangladesh, marking 1st production from the group's division there. Appears to focus on #Dhaka attack."

The five attackers -- Nibras Islam, Rohan Imtiaz, Meer Mubasheer,

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Outsider meddles with drug; DMCH patient dies

SHAHEEN MOLLAH

A patient died in Dhaka Medical College Hospital yesterday, after a non-professional person allegedly administered a drug into the nebulizer of the victim.

Biplob Mondal, 24, from Keraniganj was undergoing treatment at the neurosurgery department of the hospital for his head injuries caused by a motorbike accident in Keraniganj on September 18.

He suddenly started complaining breathing problem around 3:00pm yesterday and his relatives sought help from a nurse to put him on a nebulizer but no one attended him, said his cousin Subash Mandal.

Instead of the nurse, a youth came in and said the nurse had sent him. "We did not know who he was. We thought he might be somebody from the hospital," said Subash.

The youth named Sumon administered a drug in the nebulizer machine and as Biplob started inhaling, his condition began to deteriorate, claimed Subash.

Biplob died a few minutes later, he added. Soon after his death, Biplob's relatives caught Suman and beat him up before handing him over to the DMCH



Biplob Mondal

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BSF kills two Bangladeshis

STAR REPORT

Two Bangladeshi nationals were shot dead by the Indian Border Security Force in Kurigram and Jhenidah early yesterday.

The dead are Lal Mia, 25, of Roumari upazila in Kurigram and Jashim Mondol, 38, of Begumpur village in Chuadanga.

In Jhenidah, BSF men gunned down cattle trader Jashim when he along with some other men went to Baghadanga border area to bring in cattle from India, reports our correspondent.

Lt Col Tajul Islam of BGB 58 battalion said they heard some traders went to the border area in Maheshpur upazila around 3:30am yesterday to fetch Indian cattle.

"As the traders reached Hazrakhal area in India, BSF soldiers from Ramnagar camp fired shots at them, leaving Jashim dead on the

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Ranu Begum, mother of Robiul, grieves next to the morgue at the Dhaka Medical College yesterday, hours after the 9-year-old madrasa student, inset, was killed by a bus while crossing Kazi Nazrul Islam Avenue in the city's Karwan Bazar area. Right, pedestrians dash across the road through a gap in its median ignoring the looming danger of speeding vehicles. Even bikers risk their lives to cross one of the city's busiest roads. PHOTO: ANISUR RAHMAN



9-year-old killed in city road crash

He was hit, run over by bus while jaywalking

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

His mother was waiting at home to have lunch together on his return from Juma prayers. But what returned instead was his body wrapped in a shroud.

Nine-year-old Robiul Awal, a madrasa student, was killed as a speeding bus ran him over at Karwan Bazar in the capital yesterday. He was a student of Amorbsha Hafizia Madrasa in the same area.

The accident happened around 2:00pm when Robiul and two other boys were trying to cross the Kazi Nazrul Islam Avenue near the Dhaka Wasa building at Karwan Bazar, said a witness.

Tea vendor Mohammad Imon said a speeding bus of a private company hit and dragged Robiul yards towards the Bangla Motor intersection. The other two boys were unhurt.

The bus fled. Locals rushed critically injured Robiul to Dhaka Medical College Hospital where doctors declared him dead.

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