



Return of diphtheria rings alarm

Outbreak kills 27 Rohingyas so far; 2,700 more infected

- 5 Bangladeshis also infected by the highly infectious disease
- 76% of reported diphtheria cases are children below 15 years
- 81% Rohingya children aged below 7 years and 91% aged between 7-15 years already vaccinated
- Fresh vaccination programme began yesterday targeting 1.5 lakh Bangladeshi children aged 7-15 years

MOHAMMAD AL-MASUM MOLLA

There has been no reported diphtheria case in Bangladesh for the last 35 years. But the highly contagious disease, long forgotten in most part of the world due to increased vaccination, has made a sudden comeback.

The first case of the latest outbreak was reported in November in a Rohingya refugee camp in Ukhia, Cox's Bazar.

Since then, 27 Rohingya children have died after contracting the bacterial disease. Another 2,700 living in camps in Ukhia and Teknaf have been infected, district Civil Surgeon Abdus Salam told The Daily Star yesterday.

Five Bangladeshi children have also contracted the disease, but are recovering. Aged seven and below, the victims are from Ukhia and they all visited nearby Rohingya camps, he added.

Alarmed, the Bangladesh government and international organisations have started a mass vaccination programme in and around the camps.

Diphtheria transmission occurs from person to person through droplets such as coughing and sneezing and close physical contact. It can be treated by drugs and prevented by

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COUNCIL OF MINISTERS
At least 3 new faces likely to be inducted

RASHIDUL HASAN and MUHAMMAD ZAHIDUL ISLAM

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina is likely to induct at least three new faces into her council of ministers this evening.

On her advice, President Abdul Hamid would make the appointments and administer the oath of office at the Bangabhaban, according to sources at the Cabinet Division, the ruling Awami League, and the Bangabhaban.

The number of new ministers could be four. The Daily Star yesterday talked with three of them over phone and they acknowledged the developments.

AKM Shahgahan Kamal, lawmaker from Laxmipur-3, and State Minister Fisheries and Livestock Narayon Chandra Chanda might be made full ministers, sources said.

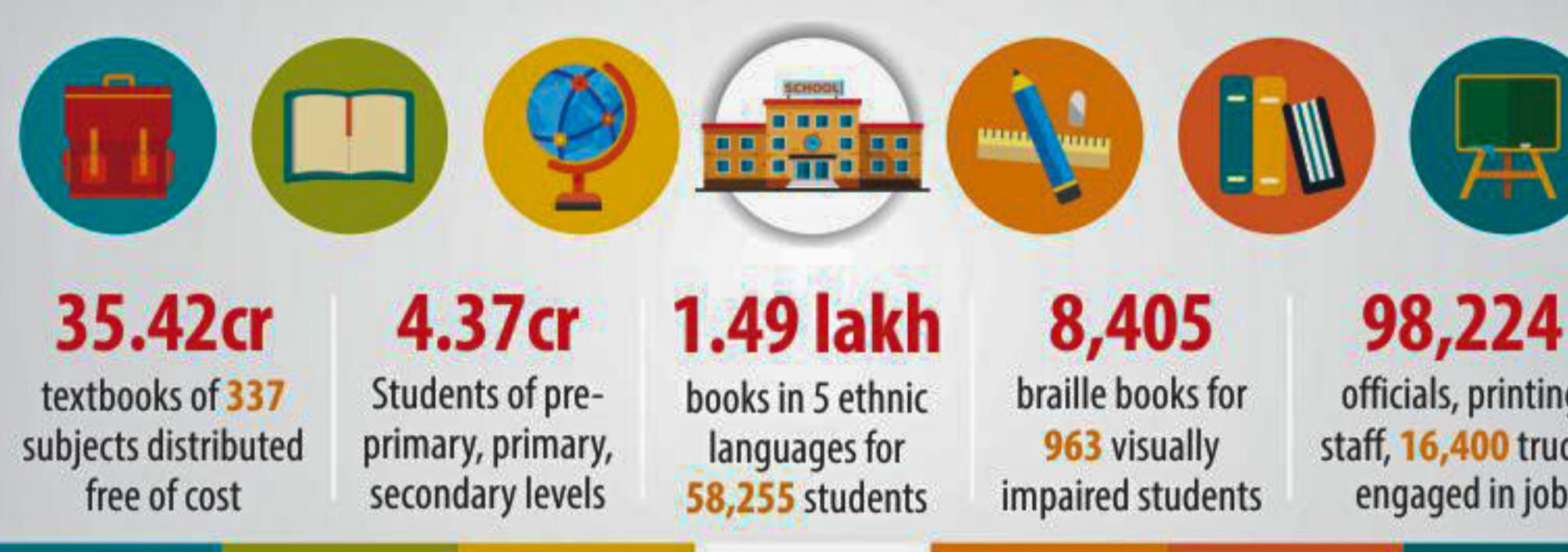
Shahgahan, who became a lawmaker in 1973 and 2014, told The Daily Star last night that he got a phone call from the Cabinet Division and was requested to be present at the Bangabhaban around 6:30pm today.

Asked, he said it was Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina's call in which

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Education Minister Nurul Islam Nahid along with officials from his ministry and the National Curriculum and Textbook Board (NCTB) releases balloons during the inauguration of "Textbook Festival Day" at the capital's Azimpur Government Girls High School yesterday. PHOTO: ANISUR RAHMAN



Lower courts' freedom undermined by 3 rules

They have been made subordinate to the executive, say six eminent jurists

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The lower courts have been made subordinate to the executive by three "cardinal" rules, Dr Kamal Hossain and five other leading jurists of the country said yesterday.

The protection of the independence of the judiciary has been undermined and the

separation of power has been violated by the rules, they said in a joint statement, without naming the rules.

The other five jurists are Rafique-ul Huq, M Amir-Ul Islam, Mainul Hosein, Fida M Kamal and AF Hasan Arif. The statement was issued on the occasion of Supreme

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Shakib the runaway leader

SPORTS REPORTER



The International Cricket Council (ICC) has declared Shakib Al Hasan as the "runaway leader" in all-rounder rankings across all three formats in 2017.

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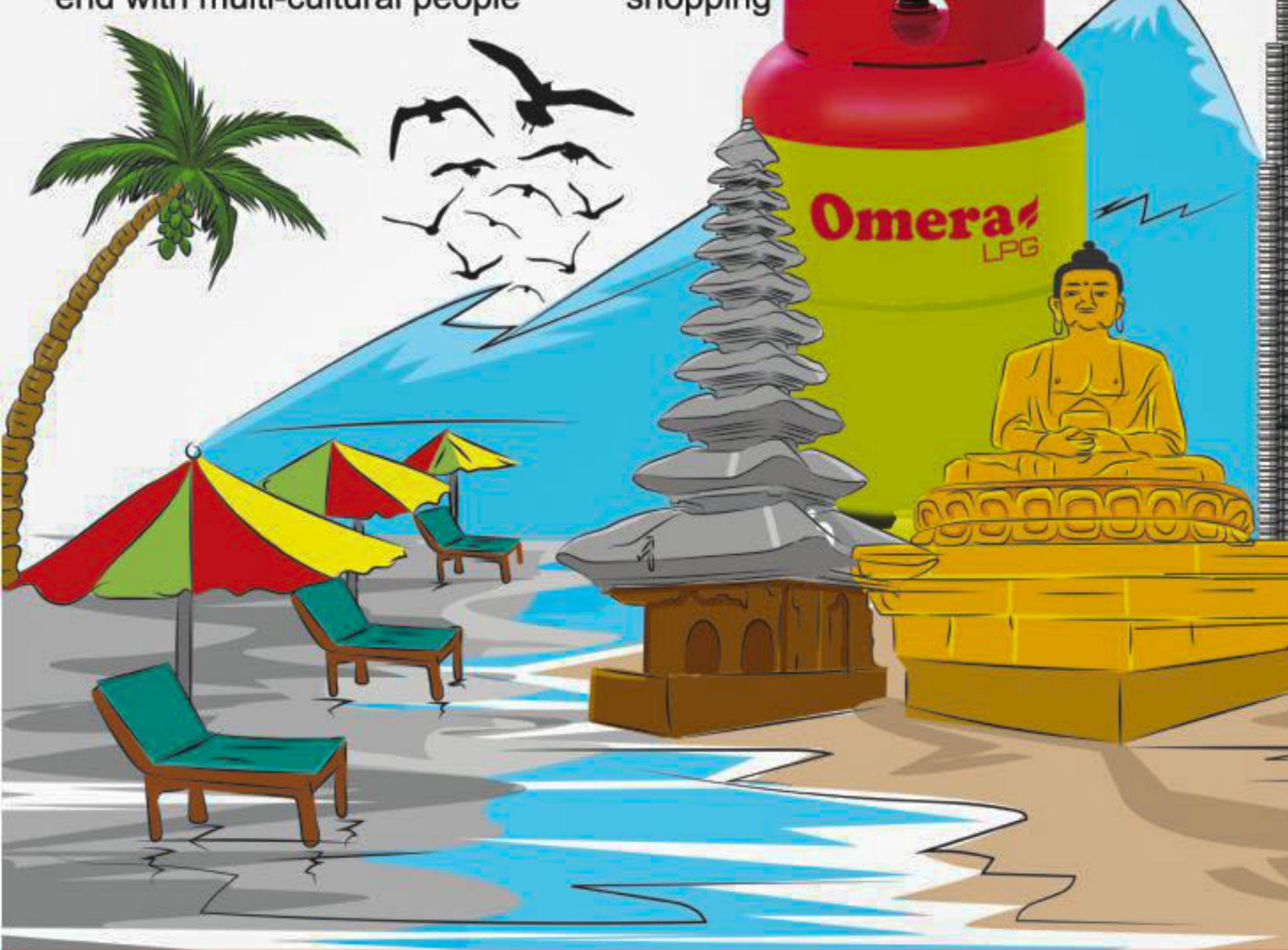
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so much more but it is the people that truly capture the beauty of Thailand. The ever friendly and interactive local people engaging with the tourists makes this city very vibrant.

So, this winter may be special.



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