



BGB seized 1.56cr Yaba pills last year

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Members of the Coast Guard in two separate drives in the Bay of Bengal at Cox's Bazar recovered a total of 4,40,000 pieces of contraband Yaba tablets worth approximately Tk 22 crore on Tuesday.

Acting on a tip off, a team of coast guards raided two boats in the Bay of Bengal near the Saint Martin Island around 8:30pm and recovered a total of 3,00,000 pieces of contraband Yaba tablets, says a press release.

In another incident, in another drive, another team of Coast Guard raided a boat near Teknaf upazila around 11:30pm and recovered 1,40,000 pieces of Yaba tablets.

Meanwhile, Border Guard Bangladesh (BGB) seized smuggled goods and contraband drugs worth over Tk 1,217.55 crore in different drives across the country last year, said another press release.

The seized drugs include around 1.56 crore of Yaba pills, 44kg heroin, 3,28,689 bottles of phensidyle, 1,67 crore other sedative tablets, 1.41 lakh bottles of foreign liquor, some 14 thousand litres of local liquor and over 49 thousand cans of beer.

Other smuggled goods comprises of 114 firearms, 61 magazines, 300 bullets, over 42kg gold among other items.

BGB members also detained 2,689 people during the year for crossing the border illegally and handed them over to police. 1,114 Bangladeshi citizens were also arrested during the same period.

Star graphics operator Abidur Rahman passes away

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Md Abidur Rahman, graphics operator in the production department of The Daily Star, passed away yesterday afternoon at his Mirpur residence in the capital. He was 52.

Abidur, who joined the newspaper in 1993, had been suffering from liver cirrhosis. He left behind his wife and only son, and a host of relatives and well-wishers to mourn his death.

He was buried in

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President Abdul Hamid along with former Indian president Pranab Mukherjee after the latter called on the former at Bangabhaban yesterday. Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina was present on the occasion.

ROHINGYA REFUGEE CRISIS

India to help Bangladesh

OUR CORRESPONDENT, New Delhi

India yesterday assured Bangladesh of its continued support to help the neighbouring country deal with the Rohingya refugee crisis.

The assurance came when visiting Bangladesh Foreign Minister AH Mahmood Ali met his Indian counterpart Sushma Swaraj at Jawaharalal Nehru Bhavan on Janpath.

During the meeting that lasted from 12:15pm to 1:00pm, the Indian external affairs minister informed Mahmood that the two countries have agreed on a list of 14 projects under the \$4.5 billion third Line of Credit (LoC), according to a statement issued by the Bangladesh High Commission last evening. The LoC was announced during the visit of Bangladesh Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina in April last year.

Expressing happiness at India's support to Bangladesh during the Rohingya refugee crisis, Mahmood "requested the Indian government to continue with it". In reply,

UN official arrives today

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Swaraj said the support is ensured, the statement said.

She also reiterated India's commitment to supporting the rehabilitation programme to ensure sustainable repatriation of the Rohingya refugees to the Rakhine state.

Mahmood briefed Swaraj on the "arrangement" signed between Bangladesh and Myanmar for "Repatriation of Forcibly Displaced Myanmar Nationals" to Rakhine.

For her part, Swaraj also briefed Mahmood about India's engagement in Northern Rakhine state including construction of pre-fabricated houses for the Rohingya refugees proposed to be repatriated.

Both the ministers discussed the modalities and physical arrangements for early repatriation of the refugees, added the statement.

The Indian minister appreciated the Bangladesh government in managing the Rohingya crisis by saying that it demonstrated "very matured public responses".

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Hold Ducsu election

HC asks university authorities

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The High Court yesterday directed the Dhaka University (DU) authorities to hold Dhaka University Central Students Union (Ducsu) election at a suitable time, preferably within six months.

The court also ordered the home ministry to provide necessary assistance to the authorities to maintain law and order for holding the election.

The HC bench of Justice Syed Muhammad Dastagir Husain and Justice Md Ataur Rahman Khan delivered the directive following a writ petition filed by 25 DU students.

The grounds on which the HC delivered the verdict could not be known instantly as its full text was not released yesterday.

Attorney General (AG) Mahbubey Alam, the lawyer for DU, following the delivery of the HC verdict told reporters at his office that the DU authorities will decide on holding of the Ducsu election.

If instructed by the DU authorities, an appeal will be moved before the Appellate Division of the Supreme Court against the HC verdict, he added.

In March, 2012, 25 DU students filed the writ petition seeking directive from the HC for holding the Ducsu election immediately.

Following the petition, on April 8 the same year, the HC issued a rule upon the government and the DU authorities to explain why they should not be directed to hold the Ducsu election immediately.

The court also asked the DU authorities to explain why their failure to

hold the Ducsu election on time should not be declared illegal.

During hearing on the rule on Tuesday, the writ petitioners' counsel, Advocate Manzill Murshid, told the HC that the senate of DU does not have any elected student representative from the Ducsu since the election to the Ducsu has not been held for many years. Hence, the students of DU have been deprived of their democratic rights.

The DU lawyer, AG Mahbubey Alam, on the other hand opposed the writ petition, saying that the DU authorities will hold the Ducsu election at a time convenient to them.

The last election to the Ducsu took place 27 years ago, on June 6, 1990. Student organisations, especially the left leaning ones, had demanded the holding of the polls numerous times.



Makeshift stores and rickshaw garages have occupied the sidewalk beside the Pantha Kunja park on Sonargaon road in the capital. Moreover, homeless people have turned portions of the footpath into their homes, making it difficult for pedestrians to walk or access the park. The photo was taken yesterday.

Engage children in literary activities

Cultural Affairs Minister Asaduzzaman Noor tells inaugural of writer-artist conference

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Children should be engaged in cultural and literary activities from an early age so that they can remain protected from communalism and bigotry, said Cultural Affairs Minister Asaduzzaman Noor yesterday.

If parents let children get involved in those activities, it would also help spread peace in the Bengal region [Bangladesh and India's West Bengal], he said while inaugurating a conference.

Bengal Council for Literature and Culture organised the three-day conference -- "Sharbobangiyo Lekhok-Shilpi Sammelan 1424" [all Bengal writer-artist conference] -- at Bangladesh Shilpakala Academy in the capital.

Writers, artists, academics and cultural activists from both the countries are participating in the conference, which will end tomorrow.

Cultural programmes such as poetry recitation, dance, stage drama, seminars and discussions will be held in different parts of the capital marking the occasion.

Speaking as the chief guest at the programme, the minister said cultural activists of both Bengal, particularly the ones at the Bengal Council, have to play a vital role in

9th wage board for journalists awaits PM's approval: Tarana

BSS, Dhaka

The file on the ninth wage board for journalists is now awaiting the prime minister's approval, said State Minister for Information Tarana Halim yesterday.

"We have sent the file to the Prime Minister's Office (PMO) with a proposal of forming a 13-member committee for implementing the ninth wage board for journalists," she said at a meeting with journalists at her office in the Secretariat in the capital.

The wage board will be declared soon after getting the approval, said Tarana adding that journalists

Drop charges against Asad Noor: RSF

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

All the charges against Asaduzzaman Noor, a blogger arrested for allegedly making negative comments about Islam, should be dropped, demanded Reporters Without Borders (RSF).

The 25-year-old blogger has been in the lock up for the past three weeks.

On its website, RSF also urged the authorities concerned to provide the young blogger, known as Asad Noor, with protection.

On January 11 last year, a complaint was filed accusing Noor of violating article 57 of the Information and Communication Technology (ICT) Act.

On December 25, 2017, Noor flew in to Dhaka when his Indian visa expired. He was planning to go to Nepal to seek asylum there, but police arrested him at the airport and he has been held ever since, said RSF. Noor is facing up to 14 years in jail.

"We call for the charges against Asad Noor to be dismissed..." said Daniel Bastard, the head of RSF's Asia-Pacific desk.

CREATING SKILLED WORKFORCE

Quality education a must

Bangladesh Development Forum session told

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Quality education needs to be ensured to produce skilled manpower and thereby help the country progress, said participants in a forum yesterday.

They also underscored the need for providing adequate budget for education to ensure quality education.

Economic Relations Division (ERD) organised the two-day forum called Bangladesh Development Forum 2018 at the Pan Pacific Sonargaon hotel in the capital aiming to discuss the implementation progress of the Seventh Five Year Plan and its challenges with national and international organisations.

Education Minister Nurul Islam Nahid said, "Skilled manpower is a must. If a country needs to progress, there is no alternative to skilled manpower."

The minister also said, "I must admit that we have many mistakes, many failures, many limitations and financial constraints."

However, he claimed that the incumbent government is trying to improve the quality of education, and ensuring education for girls in the secondary level is one of their achievements.

Eisuke Tajima, a representative of Asian Development Bank (ADB), said

Bangladesh is moving forward as it has a large number of youths. But, they need to be skilled in different sectors so that they can work for different industries and keep the progress going, he added.

Farah Kabir, country director of ActionAid Bangladesh, said human development is possible if quality education is ensured.

The existing curriculum requires more upgrade, the education system should be more interactive while the ratio between teachers and students needs to be proper, she added.

Tahsinah Ahmed, chief executive officer of Underprivileged Children's Educational Programs (UCEP), said the present education system only focuses on scores, but the students need to grow critical thinking and gain proper skills in related fields.

Appreciating the government's various efforts in education sector, Mario Ronconi, head of Cooperation Unit of European Union to Bangladesh, said the government should continue such initiatives.

Primary and Mass Education Minister Mostafizur Rahman and Secondary and Higher Education Division Secretary Md Soharab Hossain also spoke.

IELTS scholarships launched for studying in Bangladesh

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The British Council for the first time has made the IELTS scholarships available to students enrolling in higher education in Bangladesh.

A total of four eligible students studying in the country will be awarded Tk 1,50,000 each under the scholarship scheme.

The announcement was made at a programme marking "IELTS Rewards 2018" at the council's Fuller Road office in the capital on Tuesday, said a press release.

The British Council also offers a Tk 3,00,000 scholarships to three Bangladeshi students for their studies abroad. Applications for the scholarships can be turned in till March 31.

UGC Chairman Prof Abdul Mannan attended the programme as the chief guest. Heather Forbes, regional exams director of British Council for South Asia; and Andriani Papapericous, director examinations of British Council Bangladesh; were also present.

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