

# Vitamin A plus campaign likely next week

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A previously postponed vitamin A capsules distribution campaign is likely to be held next week, health ministry officials said.

The campaign, originally slated for today, was postponed after reports of defects in the vitamin capsules.

"After postponement, we initially decided to hold the campaign on January 26. However, we will finalise the decision next Sunday if we can distribute the capsules across the country," Prof Dr Abul Kalam Azad, director general of the Directorate General of Health Services (DGHS), told The Daily Star yesterday.

The government has a large stockpile of vitamin A capsules for another campaign scheduled for June. Those capsules will be used in next campaign instead, he added.

The health ministry on Wednesday postponed the campaign after receiving reports of the capsules being stuck together.

Children of six to 11 months get a dose of the blue and those aged between 12 and 59 months get a dose of the red vitamin A capsules. The campaign is conducted twice a month.

In some areas, the red capsules were found stuck together, officials said.

The National Drug Control Laboratory examined the capsules, imported from India two months ago, and found them okay.

"We think some capsules got stuck together because of moisture," said Prof Azad, adding that the decision on whether to use them would be taken after investigation.

A seven-member committee, led by Prof Enayet Hussain, additional DG of the DGHS, has been formed for to investigate the matter. Another committee from the health ministry was also formed.

Prof Azad said the capsules were imported through an international tendering process as per the condition of the World Bank, which funded its

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A three-day horse race has begun in Bogura's Gabtoli upazila, participated by 40 jockeys. The only female participant is Taslima, an eighth grader, who takes part in 70 to 80 such competitions every year. The photo was taken yesterday afternoon.

PHOTO: STAR

## No one will be spared

Dr Kamal says about 'hijackers' of people's voting rights

UNB, Dhaka

Accusing the ruling party of "hijacking" people's voting rights, Gano Forum President and Jatiya Oikyafront leader Dr Kamal Hossain yesterday warned that those involved in it would not be spared.

"Not only a farce in the name of election took place but also a grand robbery of the vote took place across the county. No one said the election was held in a fair manner," he said.

Dr Kamal further said those involved in such activities were not truly elected. "People's voting rights have been hijacked after hijacking of the state. I want to warn them no one will be spared."

He came up with the remarks while exchanging views with the party leaders and activists who worked in favour of the Oikyafront candidate for Dhaka-6 in the December-30 polls at the party's central office in Dhaka's Arambagh.

Those who rigged votes in the national election, in fact, disrespected Bangabandhu and his colleagues who sacrificed their lives for the country's independence.

Dr Kamal urged the country's people to get united and raise their voice against the national election "forgery".

He also accused the ruling party men of plundering thousands of crores of public money.

"We've seen many autocrats but no one of them could survive. People repeatedly taught the autocrats and exploiters," he said.

Dr Kamal urged the ruling party men to refrain from plundering public wealth and quit power immediately.

He also alleged that the people of an independent country were left in a helpless condition.

"This is absolutely temporary. People are getting organised," he added.

## Rape accused

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Jhenidah's Kaliganj, and three other co-workers for raping her.

Later, the girl's father filed another case with Ashulia Police Station accusing Ripon and the three others of murdering her.

The victim's father alleged that his daughter was returning home from work around 9:00pm on January 5 when Ripon and the other accused picked her up. Later, they forcibly took her to an unknown place and raped her.

Talking to The Daily Star yesterday, the OC said they had no clue about Ripon's killers.

Ripon's family members claimed plainclothes men had picked him up five days ago.

Asked about it, Inspector (investigation) Javed Masud of Ashulia police said, "We haven't received any complaint from his family members".

The body was sent to Shaheed Suhrawardy Medical College and Hospital for an autopsy, he added.



Ripon

## What's the colour of your eatery?

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"The restaurants awarded with yellow stickers will get three months to upgrade their quality, while those given the orange sticker will get one month to do the same. If they fail to do so, their registrations will be scrapped," BFSA Chairman Mohammad Mahfuzul Hoque told The Daily Star.

Additionally, soon a smartphone is all one would need to pick the most hygienic restaurant around them.

The BFSA is developing a mobile app through which people would be able to track a particular restaurant's grade.

The BFSA authorities are currently running a pilot project on the system in Motijheel and its adjacent areas; it will gradually be expanded across the capital.

There are more than 10,000 registered restaurants in Dhaka while many more are operating without any registration. All these will eventually be brought under the system, added Hoque.

In developed countries, including the US and the UK, such restaurant grading systems are already in place.

"It is a positive initiative. But it should be monitored strictly so that the initiative is not misused. Usually, we fine restaurants if we find any irregularities, but we rarely suggest what to do to rectify those," Ghulam Rahman, president of the Consumers Association of Bangladesh, told The Daily Star.

For example, if a restaurant gets a green sticker and it is not monitored later, its quality may falter, he added. "But overall, the initiative will help ensure safe food for consumers."

Between January 13 and 16, a mobile court of Dhaka South City Corporation sent 29 people to jail and fined several restaurants over Tk 11.5 lakh for various reasons, including preparing food in unhygienic conditions. One restaurant was also sealed during the drive.

On Wednesday, the Dhaka North City Corporation fined three restaurants in Gulshan and Banani areas Tk 5.5 lakh.

Early last year, the BFSA surveyed 200 hotels for over two months. The hotel staffers were then given directives and training to ensure safety and

hygiene.

### THE GRADING SYSTEM

The BFSA has set a 53-point check list of compliance standards under 10 headlines that include: necessary proof/certification documents, individual hygiene, approved source, relative contamination, cleanliness, processing procedures and temperature control, equipment/ machinery, chemical substance, pests and insects control, and drainage and pipe management.

Restaurants with a score of 90 and over will get A+, 80 points and up will get Grade A, between 55 and 79 points will get Grade B and between 45 and 54 points will get Grade C.

They grading comes at a time when there has been a boom in the restaurant business in Dhaka. From small restaurants to large foreign chains, there are restaurants at every nook and corner.

Visiting some restaurants in Motijheel, Paltan and Segunbagicha areas, these correspondents saw that many of the restaurants had their kitchens behind glass walls so that customers could see the food handling and cleanliness for themselves.

Some also set up CCTV cameras inside their kitchens with live footage at the food serving section.

When told about the grading system, a diner Mozammel Hossain, who often has lunch at restaurants because of his work, said, "It's a good initiative. It will empower us [the customers] to choose restaurants that serve quality food."

"We've brought many changes to our restaurant. We've replaced our containers with stainless steel ones, as they can be sterilised easily," said Abdul Aziz, manager of Kinnori Restaurant in Segunbagicha.

Kawsar Ahmed, managing director of Kasturi, a more than three decade old restaurant, welcomed the BFSA initiative.

Food handling awareness and training is a must to maintain standards, he said.

BROA President Khandaker Ruhul Amin said they had visited different restaurants on several occasions to motivate the owners to ensure hygiene.

He suggested bringing all hotels and restaurants under the grading system gradually.

## Mass promotion for cops sought

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The headquarters later prepared another proposal with a list of 265 officials, who didn't get promotion in November. Fifteen more officials were included in the list as they became eligible for promotion in the meantime.

According to the proposal, the government agreed in principal to create in-situ posts for the 265 officials in consultation with the secretary and the minister concerned.

It also mentioned that the promotion in November boosted the morale of field-level officers.

The proposal recommended that SPs in 29 districts be made additional deputy inspectors general (DIG) in situ.

There is a severe shortage of posts in top tiers compared to lower tiers of police cadre. This is a big obstacle to ensuring work spirit, morale and discipline, and bringing dynamism in leadership positions of the force, it said.

There are only 15 posts of additional IG and 62 posts of DIG in the police force that has 2.12 lakh mem-

SERIAL NO	BCS BATCH (JOINING DATE)	SERVICE PERIOD (YEAR)	OFFICIALS SERVING IN FEEDER POST			OFFICIALS ELIGIBLE FOR PROMOTION		
			DIG Grade 3	Add DIG Grade 4	SP Grade 5	Add IG Grade 2	DIG Grade 3	Add DIG Grade 4
1	6th (21.1.1986)	31	1	0	0	1	0	0
2	7th (15.2.1988)	30	4	3	0	4	3	0
3	8th (20.12.1989)	29	12	8	3	12	8	3
4	12th (20.1.1991)	28	20	9	5	20	9	5
5	15th (15.11.1995)	23	18	17	22	1	17	22
6	17th (22.2.1998)	21	12	18	12	0	18	12
7	18th (25.1.1999)	20	0	29	23	0	29	23
8	20th (31.5.2001)	18	0	0	93	0	0	93
TOTAL			67	84	158	38	84	158

bers.

Though manpower in the force has increased significantly in the last two tenures of the AL-led government, 37 DIGs, who have been serving in the force for 28 to 31 years, are still waiting to be promoted to grade-II. Similar scenario prevails at other levels, it added.

SM Aktaruzzaman, additional DIG (organisation and management) at the

police headquarters, said, "There is a serious dearth of posts from grade-V to grade-I in the department. A bottleneck has been created..."

In-situ promotion is needed because some police officials superseded others, who are performers and have a clean image, he pointed out.

"We work hard and take risks ... I hope the government will give us promotion," he added.

Preferring anonymity, a senior police official said that if the latest proposal is approved, it would quell disappointment among many officials, who have been holding the same rank for years.

Talking to this newspaper, a number of recently promoted SPs said the police officials, who will be promoted to additional DIGs in situ, will not see any changes in their responsibilities.

"A police officer's dream is to serve as an SP. If the would-be additional DIGs continue to serve as SPs even after promotion, we will be deprived," said an official promoted in November, requesting anonymity.

The latest police proposal follows a series of promotion in the administration cadre service, which has long been struggling with a huge number of in-situ officials and officers on special duty (OSD).

As of September last year, there were 616 additional secretaries against 121 posts, 761 joint secretaries against 384 posts and 1,604 deputy secretaries against 1,234 posts. And most of them are in-situ officials.

## US shutdown row escalates

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security and intelligence briefings from those on the front lines," Hammill said.

A House Democratic aide, speaking on condition of anonymity, told Reuters that details of the trip were not supposed to be revealed for security reasons, as is customary. The White House, however, made the letter to Pelosi detailing the itinerary public.

A US defense official, speaking on condition of anonymity, said Pelosi had requested and been granted Defense Department support for overseas travel, although the president has the authority to cancel Pelosi's travel.

At the Capitol, members of the delegation had already boarded a bus bound for Joint Base Andrews just outside Washington, from which the plane was set to depart, when news of Trump's decision broke.

It appeared to be a response to a letter Pelosi sent to Trump on Tuesday, suggesting he delay the annual State of the Union address to Congress, scheduled for January 29, to some point after the government reopens.

Pelosi cited concerns over the capac-

ity of the Department of Homeland Security and the Secret Service to safeguard the Capitol during the event. The agency later said it was capable of securing the venue.

Trump's action drew criticism from one of his Republican allies in the Senate. "One sophomoric response does not deserve another," Republican Senator Lindsey Graham wrote on Twitter.

He criticised Pelosi's move on the State of the Union as "blatantly political" but said, "President Trump denying Speaker Pelosi military travel to visit our troops in Afghanistan, our allies in Egypt and Nato is also inappropriate."

Democratic Representative Elaine Luria, a first-year lawmaker and a 20-year Navy veteran, had harsh words for Trump.

"The president's comment that lawmakers visiting Afghanistan is a 'public relations event' is an insult to the brave men and women serving in harm's way," Luria said.

Also on Thursday, the State

Department said it would recall its employees and take steps to pay them salaries - a departure from other agencies.

"As a national security agency, it is imperative that the Department of State carries out its mission," Deputy Under Secretary of State Bill Todd said in a statement. "We are best positioned to do so with fully staffed embassies, consulates and domestic offices."

Todd said the department's employees would be paid on Feb. 14 for work performed beginning on or after this coming Sunday. The department would review its available funds and "legal authorities" beyond the upcoming pay period to try to cover future payments, he said.

About one quarter of federal agencies have been shuttered since December 22, with Democratic lawmakers refusing to accede to Trump's demands to pay for a wall along the US border with Mexico.

## GM Quader to act as JP chief in Ershad's absence

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Jatiya Party Co-Chair GM Quader will act as the party chief in absence of HM Ershad.

The appointment was made by party Chairman Ershad in line with section 20/1/Ka of the JP constitution, said a press release yesterday.

The appointment already came into effect, it added.

The press release, signed by Ershad's Deputy Press Secretary Khandaker Delwar Jalali, read Quader would perform the duties of the party chief when Ershad would go abroad for treatment.

Ershad, the main opposition leader, has been suffering from multiple illness over the last few months and may leave the country for Singapore on January 20, Jalali told The Daily Star.

Quader, also younger brother Ershad, previously discharged the responsibility, especially ahead of the December 30 polls.

## Why different

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"They are Muslims and they are our neighbours and they certainly deserve the same kind of sympathy as non-Muslims minorities who get into difficulties in the neighboring countries. So I think there is a systematic bias in governmental thinking," he said.

He made the remarks after around 1,300 Rohingyas left India for Bangladesh fearing deportation to Myanmar. Indian authorities deported seven Rohingyas to Myanmar in October.

Since August 2017, around 750,000 Rohingyas entered Bangladesh fleeing a military crackdown in Myanmar. Another estimated 40,000 Rohingyas currently live in camps across India. Of them, only 16,500 have UNHCR identity cards that can "prevent harassment, arbitrary arrests, detention and deportation", according to the agency.

The Indian government regards the Rohingyas as "illegal aliens" and a security risk, and has ordered that tens of thousands of them who live in scattered settlements and slums be identified and be sent back, the Indian English-language news television channel said.

The Indian government does not recognise the cards and rejects a UN position that deporting the Rohingya violates the principle of refoulement -- sending refugees back to a place where they face danger, reported Channel News Asia.

On January 8 this year, Indian Lok Sabha passed the Contentious Citizenship Bill, 2019 that seeks to provide citizenship to the non-Muslims from Bangladesh, Pakistan and Afghanistan who fled their countries.

"I think the citizenship should have nothing to do with your religion. That's the main thing. And that's a constitutional principle. It's a principle on which the constitution is based. There were a lot of discussions on that in the constituent assembly when India was becoming independent.

"And therefore, to begin something which privileges non-Muslims over Muslims is, I think, a real violation of the constitutional principle of neutrality over religious differences," said Prof Sen.

The Nobel Laureate and renowned economist feared intolerance would find its way in the policies of the government.

"I am worried about the cultivation of an atmosphere of intolerance that has been a part of policies that's been pursued over the last few years," said Sen.