



People travel on top of a goods-laden truck on Buriganga Second Bridge in Keraniganj yesterday while a rickshaw-van, full of commuters including children, plies the wrong side of the bridge, *Inset*. Travelling in such risky way can result in unwanted fatality.

PHOTO: ANISUR RAHMAN

Expat workers' welfare board to hold monthly public hearings

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Wage Earners' Welfare Board, the government body that looks into expatriate workers' interests, has decided to conduct public hearing of migrant workers on the first Wednesday of every month.

The hearing will be held at the office of the director general of the board, located at the Prabashi Kalyan Bhaban at the capital's Old Elephant Road.

The move comes amid widespread reports of fraudulent activities by manpower brokers who charge high recruitment fees, while many of the migrants are deprived of fair wages. In many cases, they don't get jobs, and are forced to return home.

Around 51 percent migrants experienced fraudulence and harassment during the process of migration and in the destination countries, according to a study by the Refugee and Migratory Movements Research Unit (RMMRU).

Many women migrant workers who returned home from Saudi Arabia in recent times have also complained of being victims of physical, sexual and mental abuse.

"This office is always working to settle any complaints of the migrants, considering the economic contribution they make by sending remittance," says an office order issued by the Board on January 27.

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DNCC BY-POLLS
Atiul Islam submits nomination form

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Awami League candidate for Dhaka North City Corporation (DNCC) mayoral by-polls Atiul Islam submitted his nomination form to the returning office yesterday.

"I will wholeheartedly try to complete unfinished works of Annisul Huq [former mayor of DNCC], if elected," said Atiul Islam, a former BGMEA chief, promising to work with honesty and sincerity.

Talking to reporters, he thanked Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina for selecting him as the Awami League candidate.

Atiul was flanked by former Bangladesh Bank governor Mohammed

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Stop private practice of govt-appointed doctors

Legal notice served to health authorities

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A Supreme Court lawyer yesterday sent a legal notice to the authorities concerned to take necessary steps to stop private practice of government-appointed doctors within 24 hours.

Advocate Abdus Sattar Palwan served the legal notice to the health secretary, director general of Directorate General of Health Services, president of Bangladesh Medical and Dental Council and president of Bangladesh Medical Association, saying private practice during office time by government-employed doctors is not only professional misconduct but also an offence in the eye of the law.

Citing a report published in different newspapers and online news portals on January 28 and 29, the lawyer said in the legal notice that one Babul Hossain went to Lakshmpur Sadar Hospital for emergency cardiac treatment at 11:30am on January 28,

Rab detains 5 members of 'int'l drug smuggling gang'

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Rapid Action Battalion (Rab) detained five suspected members of an international drug smuggling gang from the capital's Kaula area on Monday.

The detainees -- allegedly linked to a massive haul of drugs in Sri Lanka recently -- were identified as Fatema Imam Tania, 26; Afsana Mimi, 23; Salma Sultana, 26; Sheik Mohamad Badhon alias Parvez, 28; and Ruhul Amin alias Saimon, 29. Yaba pills, foreign currencies and passports were seized from them.

The gang operated in multiple countries and has networks in Afghanistan, Pakistan, China, Malaysia and Sri Lanka," Mufti Mahmud Khan, Rab's Legal and Media Wing director, told a press briefing yesterday at its Media Centre in Karwan Bazar.

He added that these five people also travelled to those countries several times and used to smuggle drugs in luggage.

Rab claimed one Arif Uddin, owner of Al-Amin Fashion Buying House, is the gang leader in Bangladesh who has at least 15 to 20 people in the drug trade syndicate. Arif is on the run.

Mahmud said Sri Lankan authorities arrested two Bangladeshis -- Jamal Uddin and Rafiul Ihsan -- in December 2018 with 272kg of heroin and 5kg cocaine from Colombo. Several days later, Suryamoni, another Bangladeshi, was arrested with 32kg heroin.

A taskforce was formed in Bangladesh to investigate the arrests of Bangladeshis with drugs, Mahmud said. The taskforce arrested suspected drug dealer Choice Rahman on January 12. A case was later filed at Uttara West Police Station.

Quoting the detainees, Mahmud said

Arif himself recruited members for the syndicate. One Rehana and Saimon helped him with recruitments.

"Under-educated but smart girls were their target," the Rab official said.

At first, they would involve the new recruits with the official business (buying house) but after some time, some employees were selected for collecting and selling drugs in the country, he said.

When those employees became well-acquainted with the business, they would be sent abroad to supply drugs.

"Four houses were rented in Sri Lanka with the documents of Afsana Mimi and others to operate the trade," Mahmud added.

The Rab official said they don't yet have any information that confirms the detainees brought drugs to Bangladesh. "However, they did collect drugs from abroad and supplied them to other countries," he claimed.

BASHUNDHARA CITY MALL 14 eateries fined Tk 31 lakh

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A mobile court of Rapid Action Battalion (Rab) on Monday fined 14 food shops in Dhaka's Bashundhara City shopping mall Tk 31 lakh for using fabric dye as food colouring, and other irregularities.

Executive Magistrate Sarwoer Alam led the drive at the mall's food court (level-8) from Monday afternoon till 1:00am early yesterday. The court also temporarily sealed off five restaurants -- Midnight Sun, Dhakaiya, Indian Hot Masala, LFC Spicy Dosa and Korai Gosht.

"We have sealed off the restaurants for a month as they had been using the dye as food colour at their restaurants," said Sarwoer Alam.

Members of Bangladesh Standards and Testing Institution (BSTI) were also present during the drive.

The mobile court fined Midnight Sun Tk 5 lakh while Indian Darbar, Dhakaiya, Mughal Darbar, Indian Hot Masala, Delhi Spicy,

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A building being demolished as part of Bangladesh Inland Water Transport Authority's daylong drive in Kamrangirchar area yesterday. The BIWTA team demolished around 10 such buildings built illegally on the riverside.

Cops involved with drug dealing will be punished: DMP chief

UNB, Dhaka

Any policeman found involved in drug dealing, patronising or helping narcotics traders will be given exemplary punishment, Dhaka Metropolitan Police (DMP) Commissioner Asaduzzaman Mia said yesterday.

"We have taken a tough stance against drugs. If we find any drug den in the city, we will bulldoze it," Asaduzzaman said after inaugurating a closed-circuit camera control room and 'Police Service Week 2019' in the city's Aftabnagar.

He said drug dens from Karail slum and Karwan Bazar had been rooted out.

About the CC cameras, he said the technology has played a vital role in preventing crimes. "Crime rates in Gulshan, Banani and Baridhara came down to zero after the installation of CC cameras," the DMP commissioner said.

A hundred CC cameras have been installed in Aftabnagar, he said.

The DMP commissioner also urged the people to contact senior officers if they are harassed at police stations or do not get service from police. He asked policemen to serve the people, saying, "If you cannot do your duties, leave it. Others will take care of it."

Journos attacked at Mugda hospital

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Two journalists of private television channel Rtv found themselves on the receiving end of hostility yesterday, when they went to report irregularities at Mugda Medical College and Hospital in Dhaka.

Staff of the hospital, led by one Asif, swooped on Rtv reporter Sohel Rana and cameraman Nazmul Hossain Saimon when they were interviewing some patients outside the hospital gate, the victims stated in a general diary (GD) lodged with Mugda Police Station.

The attackers also damaged the camera and other equipment, and attempted to snatch those away from their possession, they said.

Sohel in the GD said based on information of irregularities, he along with the cameraman went to the hospital around 10am and tried to talk to the director of the hospital, but failed.

The director behaved rudely with the journalist without giving any

comments when the journalists met him at his office, Sohel stated.

"We were talking to some patients and recording video on our way out of the hospital," Sohel mentioned. "The attackers first threatened us and at one stage, swooped on us when we were talking to some people outside the hospital about its irregularities," he said.

Different journalists' organisations, including Dhaka Union of Journalists (DUJ) and Bangladesh Federal Union of Journalists (BFUJ) condemned the attack. Top leaders of the organisations also demanded exemplary punishment of those involved in the attack immediately.

Meanwhile, the health ministry formed a three-member probe body to investigate the incident. The committee was asked to submit a report within seven days.

Proloy Kumar Saha, officer-in-charge of Mugda Police Station, said they have collected video footage of the incident and will take action.