

Man sent to jail for drilling holes into youth's legs

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Cg

A Chattogram court yesterday sent a man to jail on charges of drilling holes into a youth's legs in the port city.

The accused Md Jalal, son of Ismail Hossain, allegedly drilled holes into both the legs of 28-year-old Amzad Hossain on Thursday night as Amzad failed to extort money from his father, said police.

Chattogram Metropolitan Police arrested Jalal in Shamsheer Para area of the port city and placed him before Metropolitan Magistrate Abu Salem Md Noman yesterday. The court later passed an order to imprison Jalal.

Earlier on Friday night, the victim's father Md Azim, who was also injured during the attack while trying to save his son, filed a case against eight named and 15 unnamed accused with Chandgaon Police Station.

Abdur Rahim, inspector (investigation) of the police station, suspected the attack was carried out over previous enmity.

Speaking to The Daily Star yesterday, Amzad said, "I was returning home on a CNG-run auto-rickshaw from a wedding ceremony at a relative's house when a group of 20 to 30 men, led by Jalal, Didar, Nishan and others, stopped my vehicle.

SEE PAGE 11 COL 3



The UK minister of state for Asia and the Pacific at the Foreign and Commonwealth Office, Mark Field, calls on Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina at the Prime Minister's Office yesterday.

PHOTO: BSS

Hasina warns

FROM PAGE 18

sectors in the country she said that the present government has boosted up the private sector in the country and opened every sector for them.

Minister of State for Asia and the Pacific at the Foreign and Commonwealth Office of the United Kingdom Mark Field MP congratulated Sheikh Hasina for her reelection last year.

He said that Bangladesh has very good potential and the relations between Bangladesh and the UK is growing fast.

Mark Field said that the UK government would work with Bangladesh on climate change issue. He also mentioned that his country would cooperate with Bangladesh in education sector.

Regarding the Rohingya issue he said that over one million Rohingyas are a big burden for Bangladesh.

Principal Secretary M Nojibur Rahman and British High Commissioner to Bangladesh Robert Chatterton Dickson were present during the call on.

Rajuk

FROM PAGE 1

features of a building, the member said.

Contacted, former Rajuk chairman Md Nurul Huda said, "Once new rules are in place, the BC committee does not have the authority to approve a building plan under old rules."

Citing some relevant documents, the committee member said the then BC committee authorised officer Mokbul Ahmed had expressed reservation in approving the plan made under rules that no longer applied, he said.

Following instructions of the then Rajuk chairman Humayun Khadem, Mokbul gave in and approved the plan under the old rules, the committee member said citing documents.

Humayun Khadem went into retirement more than 20 years ago.

Contacted for a response, Raiyan Khadem, son of Humayun Khadem, said his father was more than 80 years old, terminally ill and bed-ridden.

"He is suffering from dementia and Parkinson's disease," said Raiyan, adding, "He cannot speak, nor recognise people."

Meanwhile, landowner Faruque in 2003 struck a deal with private real estate developer Rupayan Housing Estate Ltd to develop the property.

Eight years after the approval of the building, Rupayan built the 23-storey commercial Faruque-Rupayan Tower on plot no-32 claiming to have obtained a new approval on 23 February 2005 with a Rajuk memo no R3C/1524/04/271.

The public works ministry's probe committee member, however, said they had not yet received any official documents from Rajuk in this regard but they would scrutinise the approval document circulated by the developer in a day or two.

Md Yakub Ali Patwary, additional secretary to the public works ministry and head of the probe committee, said, "We are working. Wait for two or three days [and] you will then know whether the claimed 23-storey building approval is authentic or not."

Public works minister SM Rezaul Karim, at a meet-the-press in the capital on Saturday, said Rajuk knew that FR Tower was constructed having illegal floors and in deviations from the approved plan back in 2007, but they turned a blind eye to it and remained silent.

It was the unbridled greed of the building owners, developer and Rajuk officials that led to the devastating March 28 fire in FR Tower where at least 26 people died, the minister said.

IT WAS TO BE A MOSTLY RESIDENTIAL BUILDING
The 18-storey building that Rajuk approved in December 1996 had only first two floors for commercial use with the rest being residential, said the probe committee member.

But the builder made the tower in total deviation from the original approval and put a new building in place.

He said the FR Tower's original file, that was assumed to be missing, had been found and it would help prove the actual legal status of the building.

He said they were looking into other claimed Rajuk memo numbers in this regard.

Meanwhile, some documents obtained by this paper show that the landowner SMHI Faruque in January and May 2009 wrote to the Rajuk chairman complaining that Rupayan had built four illegal floors beyond the approved plan as seen in the Rajuk memo no-estate/Mohakhali/3330 dated 22 September 2007.

Some other documents provided by Sameed Quasem, son of Tasvir Ul Islam, who purchased the top three floors of the building, show that the then Rajuk Authorised Officer Syed Nazmul Huda signed the approval for the 23-storey citing a decision made by the BC committee in its 44th meeting on 15 February, 2005.

"We fail to understand why my father would be arrested and placed on remand in relation to the fire incident, while Rajuk officials and the developer are at large," said Sameed.

Police arrested Tasvir and Faruque following a case filed in connection with the devastating FR Tower fire.

The case also mentions the chairman of Rupayan Group, the builder company.

Her fight

FROM PAGE 1

Doctors will go for a surgery if her condition improves, Dr Samanta Lal Sen, co-ordinator of the burn unit, told this newspaper yesterday evening.

Education Minister Dipu Moni visited her at night. After talking to doctors, she told journalists that her condition was very critical, and assured her family members of justice.

The student came under attack allegedly for refusing to withdraw a case filed against madrasa principal Maulana Siraj Ud Doula for sexually harassing her late last month.

Some four unidentified people allegedly took her to the roof of the three-storey administrative building of Sonagazi Islamia Senior Fazil Madrasa Saturday morning, saying a friend of hers was being assaulted there.

The girl was an Alim (equivalent to HSC) examinee and a few minutes were left before the start of Arabic first paper test at 10:00am.

"They asked her to withdraw the case against principal Maulana Siraj Ud Doula. As she would not budge, one of them poured kerosene on her from a glass and set her ablaze," the victim's brother told The Daily Star, quoting her.

The madrasa's governing body yesterday suspended Siraj over the alleged sexual assault on the student on March 27. He is now behind bars.

Its other decisions include paying Tk 2 lakh for the treatment of the victim, installing CCTV cameras on the madrasa premises and strengthening its security system.

Abul Foyez, additional DIG of Chattogram range, visited the spot and promised proper investigation into the incident.

People from all walks of life, including former woman lawmaker from reserved seat Jahan Ara Begum, demanded punishment of the culprits.

2 students die

FROM PAGE 18

suspecting "alcohol poisoning" might have caused the deaths.

"Such a poisoning may occur either due to excessive drinking or having unauthorised liquors," he said, adding that a number of tests were required to confirm the actual reason behind the deaths.

They sourced the bottle from a person in the city's Shaheb Bazar Zero Point, police added.

Meanwhile, police detained six people, including a pharmacy owner and his two staff, yesterday morning in connection with the deaths and their alleged involvement in illegal liquor trade.

Of them, owner of Star Medical Hall Mustafizur Rahman Shahin and its two staffers Md Wasim and Md Shahin were released around 1:30pm following a city-wide strike of the pharmacy owners protesting their detention.

However, Amir Zafar, deputy commissioner of Rajshahi Metropolitan Police, denied the claim and said they had released the three as they found them to be "innocent".

Identities of the three other detainees, who were still in police custody, were not revealed by the law enforcers.

Earlier on Saturday, three Russian engineers working at the Rooppur Nuclear Power Plant were taken to RMCH as they fell sick allegedly after drinking unauthorised liquor.

Of them, Belyy Dmitry, 42, was pronounced dead by the doctors while the two others -- Logachev Lev, 40, and Mikael Dima, 40 -- were admitted to the hospital.

A big cause for health concern

FROM PAGE 1

sick. But in recent decades, overuse and misuse of antibiotics prompt some strains of bacteria to make a small change in their DNA and become antibiotic-resistant "superbugs", experts say.

The World Health Organisation and researchers in developed world have long warned that "superbugs" are spreading rapidly due to the particularly high use of antibiotics in intensive care units, where patients are sickest and strong drugs are prescribed as routine.

And the latest data and analysis of Department of Microbiology and Immunology (DMI) at Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujib Medical University have reaffirmed that "superbugs", like elsewhere in the world, are quietly becoming a big cause for concern in Bangladesh.

The largest data producer of bacterial and other infections in the country, DMI fears Bangladesh may experience a "disastrous situation" unless the "political leadership" takes bold steps immediately.

"Situation wasn't like this about 10 years back," Prof Ahmed Abu Saleh, chairman of DMI, told The Daily Star. "About 70 percent of the deaths in ICUs are caused by AMR [antimicrobial resistance] infections."

AMR is a situation when microorganisms like bacteria, virus and some parasites resist medicinal interventions.

"Basically, there is no new antibiotic in the pipeline for future use. At the same time, the available antibiotic drugs are losing their effectiveness -- which has made the scenario more dangerous," he added.

Globally, some seven lakh people die each year due to AMR infections. The number of such deaths has been predicted to rise to 10 million by 2050 if things go unchecked, according to WHO.

There is no exact data about the number of deaths caused by AMR infections in Bangladesh.

However, a DMI laboratory analysis based on infections on patients' body from 2010 to 2018 depicted a sharp rise in the number of superbugs in Bangladesh.

In 2010, superbugs and multi-drug resistant (MDR) bacteria were detected in 6.5 percent cases. But it increased to 11-14 percent in 2018, according to the

HOW SUPERBUGS BORN & SPREAD

➤ Superbugs are those microorganisms (like bacteria, viruses, and some parasites) which acquire resistant gene against almost all antimicrobials (such as antibiotics, antivirals and antimalarials).

➤ Resistance can be transferred to animals and human in both directions.

➤ The resistance can be transferred through human contact with animals, livestock, companion animals, through congestion of contaminated food and water, contact with effluent waste from animals, human or industrial sources, where there is evidence of poor waste and water treatment.

➤ The impact of increasing health tourism is also now considered as a route for acquisition of these resistant bacteria in humans.

SOURCE: BSMMU

study.

"It is alarming because the percentage is increasing faster during the last one year than in the previous years," said Ahmed Abu Saleh.

The microbiology department at Shishu Hospital analysed its own data of the same period (2010-2018). This data also showed existence of superbugs in around 11.3 percent of the tested microorganisms.

Besides, a Global Antibiotic

Mamata losing political ground

FROM PAGE 1

"I have seen many prime ministers. But I have never seen a man of such low taste as we see now. Today you (Modi) referred to Narada and Saradha scams and you said this with one of the main accused in both scams sitting on the same dais," Mamata said in an obvious reference to former Trinamool Congress general secretary Mukul Roy who is now convener of BJP's West Bengal election cell. Roy addressed the rally before Modi in the morning.

Without naming Mamata's nephew and political heir Abhisek Banerjee, the Prime Minister said, "People of Bengal had put their faith in Didi. But she shattered it. The aunt-nephew duo has handed over Bengal to extortionists. She has blocked all development. Centre allotted huge funds for central schemes such as Ayusmaan Bharat but Didi has blocked everything." Modi had dubbed Banerjee "speed breaker Didi" at his rallies in Bengal on April 3. He repeated it yesterday.

The Trinamool Congress chief, in turn, accused Modi of weakening all government institutions.

"You cannot get away by telling lies. All government institutions, starting from Reserve Bank of India to Central Bureau of Investigation are failing. In 2014 people were told that the chawala (tea seller) had arrived. The tea seller has disappeared and we now have the chowkidar. People can see

through these tricks," said Mamata.

"In Tripura, the erstwhile communist government resorted to misrule. People were disgusted. But while people of Bengal put their faith in Didi, voters in Tripura selected us. We changed Tripura. But in Bengal Didi adopted a shortcut and followed the same path shown by the Marxists she defeated. She has set up a dangerous model. Nobody in India thought that after the communists misrule would continue in Bengal," Modi said.

"I went to Assam a few days ago. People told me that they don't enjoy any benefit. They said they have to come to Bengal for medical treatment. Same is the picture in Tripura," alleged Mamata.

Claiming that north Bengal districts had a huge potential as far as tourism industry was concerned, Modi said, "Infiltration is one of the biggest problems in this region. We want to amend citizenship laws and introduce strict laws against human trafficking but Didi is opposed to both. We will rescue Bengal from TMC terror. Your vote will make me strong."

"It is necessary to expose Didi. Did she ever tell you why recommendations of the 7th pay commission for government employees have not been implemented in Bengal, why millions of educated youths don't have jobs or why tea garden workers don't get their benefits?" Modi asked.

Resistance Partnership (GARP) report titled "Antibiotic Use and Resistance in Bangladesh 2018" also stated that the rate of antibiotic resistance is growing in Bangladesh. But it didn't provide any quantitative data.

WHY AMR IN BANGLADESH

Use of counterfeit or poor quality of antimicrobial medicines, weak laboratory capacity, and inadequate drug monitoring and surveillance are among the main reasons behind the rise of AMR bacteria, the GARP report said.

Besides, the report said that poor treatment adherence, non-therapeutic use of antibiotics for growth promotion in farm animals, self-medication and over-the-counter access to antibiotics are to be blamed for AMR growth.

In Bangladesh, the size of the pharmaceutical market is worth Tk 22,000 crore. Of which, 18 percent is occupied by antibiotic drugs which indicates "indiscriminate use of antibiotic drugs", Prof Sayedur Rahman, chairman of the Department of Pharmacology at BSMMU, told The Daily Star.

Also the lead researcher of the ongoing Antimicrobial Consumption Study under WHO, Rahman said, "We are gathering information. We will be able to say the actual consumption of antibiotic drugs within a few months."

A 2015 study conducted by four Bangladeshi researchers on 1,500 patients showed that on average, 61.13 percent of the patients were prescribed antibiotics. Among them, around 33.80 percent were prescribed by unauthorised doctors. The European Journal of Scientific Research published the findings.

Inappropriate use of antimicrobials in livestock is also developing AMR bacteria which can be transferred through human contact with animals, Prof Saleh said, adding, "The biggest problem is that some 19 kinds of

antibiotics are massively used in poultry and fisheries."

A recent study conducted in Chattogram showed that some 54.55 percent of broiler birds (poultry chicken) were infected with multi-drug resistant bacteria.

The total number of livestock in the country is 393.14 million, according to department of livestock's data 2017-18.

WAY-OUT

Experts have urged the government to take short- and long-term initiatives to control AMR. The measures include infection prevention and control, vaccination, antimicrobial stewardship, public and private practitioner education and a unified approach, namely one health approach across human and animal health.

Prof Sayedur said, "Firstly, over-the-counter sale of antibiotic drugs should be stopped immediately. Secondly, use of antibiotics in livestock sector, particularly poultry and fishery, should be controlled. Hand wash facilities should be initiated in all hospitals.

"There are no arrangements to test antimicrobial sensitivity in over 50 districts. For this, doctors start from comparatively high antibiotics based on their assumption. But they should not do this."

The government should focus on the issue as the entire health system, including modern facilities and hygiene maintenance of the hospitals, is linked to it.

Pharmaceutical companies have also responsibilities in this regard. Many of them pressurise their representatives to boost sale of high antibiotics, which is wrong, he added.

Prof Saleh said, "Stopping the misuse of antibiotics is a matter of the government. We, the doctors, have very little to do in this regard, unless the government formulates a national policy and implements it ... But it must be controlled."

Dutchman

FROM PAGE 18

environments including Turkey, Iran, India, Myanmar, Malaysia and Indonesia, with the route determined by the offers he received on his website.

"I wanted to change people's opinions and inspire people to start driving electric by showing the advantages of sustainable mobility," Wakker said.

"If one man can drive to the other side of the world in an electric car, then EVs (electric vehicles) should definitely be viable for daily use."

Wakker said before the car was modified, it would have used 6,785 litres (1,800 US gallons) of petrol to complete the journey.

The modified vehicle can travel 200 kilometres on a single charge, with Wakker saying he spent just \$300 on electricity, much of it in the remote desert Outback of Australia.