

REACTION TO DRUGS AMONG RMCH PATIENTS

Directorate of drug administration steps in

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Rajshahi

Most of the 18 patients who suffered unusual drug reactions at Rajshahi Medical College Hospital on Saturday, were released yesterday as their conditions improved.

Meanwhile, the Directorate General of Drug Administration has been called in to scientifically investigate into the incidents of drug reaction.

The DGDA officials visited RMCH yesterday and collected samples of five drugs that reacted abnormally.

Among the drugs, two injections -- Hyoscine Butylbromide and Ranitidine -- were prepared and provided to the hospital by state-owned Essential Drugs Company Limited (EDCL), according to DGDA and RMCH officials.

Two others -- Ceftriaxone and Ciprofloxacin lactate infusion -- were prepared by Popular Pharmaceuticals Limited for EDCL and provided to the hospital by EDCL. Flucloxacillin was prepared by Oponin Pharma Ltd and RMCH authority procured it.

Talking to The Daily Star, Prof Abul Kalam Azad, Director General of Health Services said DGDA was called in to investigate as it has well-equipped laboratory facilities in Dhaka to test the drugs properly.

"Their (DGDA) local officials were asked to send the samples by today [yesterday]," he said.

DGDA would identify the drugs that were administered to the affected patients before they reacted badly, and test those drugs for identifying the responsible element for the reactions, Prof Azad said, adding that the hospital authority was asked to stop using the identified drugs until the drug analysis report is available.

When contacted, Mirza Md Anwarul Bashed, assistant director of DGDA in Rajshahi said he visited the hospital, talked to the hospital's investigation team, identified the drugs, and collected samples.

"We have sent the samples to Dhaka," he told this correspondent yesterday evening.

Mirza Bashed said, he talked to RMCH's investigation committee's chief, Prof Mohammad Hasan Tarik of medicine department, and collected names and batch numbers of the drugs used on the children.

Then he visited the RMCH store and collected samples of the drugs in accordance with the same batch numbers.

"I saw the drugs were stored in normal temperature as per rules," he said.

He collected 800 millilitres of each of the drugs and divided each into four groups.

One group of the drugs was kept at the RMCH store, one group was sent to concerned manufacturers, one group would be kept at DGDA office and another group would be sent for laboratory tests.

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"Rice is priced at Tk 12 per kg, while half a litre of mineral [bottled] water costs Tk 15?," reads a placard as Barishal University students form a human chain in front of the institution yesterday, demanding farmers get due prices of rice.

PHOTO: STAR

Poet Henry Swapan arrested under ICT act

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Barishal

Poet-journalist Henry Swapan, who was sued for hurting religious sentiment under the Information and Communication Technology (ICT) Act, was arrested from his residence in Barishal city yesterday.

He was sent to jail after arrest at 2:30pm.

Commissioner of Barishal Metropolitan Police Md Shahabuddin Khan said the priest of a local Catholic church filed a case against Swapan for "hurting religious sentiments of both Christians and Muslims" on social media.

The allegations were primarily found true, he added.

Before his arrest, Swapan told local journalists that he posted a status on Facebook, criticising

a cultural programme on Easter Sunday (April 21) at a local Catholic church because dozens of people were killed in a terrorist attack on the same day in Sri Lanka.

Some Christians got angry due to the post, he said. "Some miscreants even gave me death threats... I went to Kotwali Police Station to file a general diary but they refused to register my GD."

Meanwhile, local journalists brought out a procession in Barishal city yesterday, demanding Swapan's release. Barishal Reporters Unity, Barishal Sangabadi Union, and Barishal Sanskritik Sangathan Samannaya Parishad organised the programme.

The journalist organisations, including Barishal Press Club, also declared to boycott their scheduled meeting with police today.

BCL man who threatened to rape doctor gets bail

Sylhet physicians stage protest, submit memorandum for justice

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Sylhet

Doctors and interns of all medical colleges, hospitals, and clinics in Sylhet abstained from work for two hours yesterday, demanding punishment of a Bangladesh Chhatra League (BCL) leader who threatened to kill and rape one of their female colleagues on Thursday.

The work stoppage was observed from 11am to 1pm, at Sylhet Women's Medical College and Hospital, MAG Osmani Medical College and Hospital, Jalalabad Ragib Rabeya Medical College and Hospital, North-East Medical College and Hospital, and Park View Medical College

and Hospital.

However, emergency services remained open.

The protestors also held a human chain at Sylhet Central Shaheed Minar, suspended private practice from 4-6pm, and submitted a memorandum to the Bangladesh Medical Association (BMA), civil surgeon, deputy director of Directorate General of Health Services (DGHS), police commissioner, and deputy commissioner.

Meanwhile, the BCL man, Sarwar Hossain Chowdhury, who was sued for intimidating the doctor, got out of police custody three hours after his

arrest yesterday. Sarwar is vice-president of Sylhet's Dakshin Surma upazila unit of BCL.

On Thursday evening, he took a patient to Sylhet Women's Medical College and Hospital with some 15 followers and asked the female doctor to treat the patient in their presence. When the doctor requested them to wait outside and facilitate the treatment, he flew into a rage and started shouting.

In a video, Sarwar was seen threatening to kill and rape the female doctor. He also identified himself as president of Sylhet district unit of BCL.

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Road crashes kill 3

STAR REPORT

Three people were killed and another was injured in road accidents in three districts during the last two days.

An elderly man was killed on spot as a pickup ran him over in Kalampur area of Dhaka's Dhamrai upazila yesterday, reports our Savar correspondent.

The identity of the deceased could not be known, said police, adding that the vehicle was seized but its driver fled. A motorcyclist was killed as his bike hit a tree beside Patuakhali-Kuakata road in Doulatpur of Kalapara upazila yesterday, our Patuakhali correspondent reports.

Hasibur Rahman, 25, died on the spot, said Md Monirul Islam, officer-in-charge of Kalapara Police Station.

The body was sent to Patuakhali General Hospital morgue for autopsy.

Meanwhile, a man was killed and another injured as a car they were travelling in hit an electric pillar beside Dhaka-Khulna highway in Puba Sodordi area of Bhanga upazila on Monday, our Faridpur correspondent adds.

The deceased -- identified as Ahasan-Al-Asif, 32, from Parangpur village in Kashiani upazila of Gopalganj -- was a principal officer of Pubali Bank in Faridpur.

He was declared dead at Faridpur Medical College Hospital where the injured was undergoing treatment, said police.



Fruit sellers occupy most of a footpath on Satmasjid Road, near Dhanmondi road 9/A. Despite initiatives by Dhaka city corporations to free up footpaths, such malpractices continue to deprive pedestrians their right of way across the capital. The photo was taken yesterday.

PHOTO: PALASH KHAN

Power outage amid heat wave multiplies Ctg residents' woes

ARUN BIKASH DEY, Ctg

Chattogram has been experiencing frequent power outages for a week, causing immense suffering to the city dwellers.

The sufferings have multiplied due to sharp rise in temperature across the country.

In the port city, the highest temperature was recorded at 34.7 degree Celsius on Saturday and Sunday and it was 34.8 degree Celsius on Monday, said Bishwajit Chowdhury, forecast officer of Chattogram Met Office.

The official said humidity was recorded at 68 percent on Monday.

"If the level of humidity remains between 45 percent and 50 percent, people will not feel intensity of the heat," he said.

Sharmin Akter, a resident of the city's Bakalia area, said, "We are facing power outage for five to six times a

day." "My one-year-old daughter could not sleep at all last night [Sunday] due to severe heat coupled with frequent load-shedding," she said.

Like Sharmin, many residents from different areas -- including Halishahar, Bahaddarhat, Oxygen, Agrabad, Chawkbazar, Battery Goli, Askar Dighir Par, Anderkilla, Shulakbahar, Panchlaish, Muradpur and Bibirhat -- have suffered in the last one week due to frequent power outage.

However, Power Development Board (PDB) officials claimed that there is no load-shedding in the city.

But, Dr Murad Hasan, state minister for Health and Family Welfare, expressed his dissatisfaction at the situation. He attended an iftar and doa mahfil at a community centre in Panchlaish area on Friday. While he was speaking, electricity went out three times in 20 minutes.

Rajib Ahmed, a resident of Baro

Quarter area, said they have faced load-shedding four to five times a day.

"Amid scorching heat, we cannot stay inside house without switching on a fan. Our suffering knows no bound during load-shedding," he said.

Prabir Kumar Sen, chief engineer of PDB, Chattogram, explained the situation differently. He said the total demand of power in Chattogram is 1,600 megawatt (MW) during peak hours and 1,200 MW in off-peak hours.

Claiming that they are able to meet the demand, he said, "We receive adequate quantity of electricity from national grid."

When asked why those areas have experienced power outage, Prabir said, "In cases, we have to interrupt power supply for repair works," he said, adding that same situation prevails during maintenance work in certain areas.

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