

DEATH OF FISH AT MADHABKUNDA FALLS

One arrested over ‘poisoning’ fish

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Moulvibazar

Police yesterday arrested one individual after fisheries department found signs of poisonous substance in water at Madhabkunda falls in Barlekha upazila of Moulvibazar.

However, police said the identity of the arrestee could not be disclosed as the investigation was still ongoing.

A large number of fish and aquatic animals at the plunge pool of the Madhabkunda falls started dying on Sunday.

Sultan Mahmud, senior fisheries officer (acting) of the fisheries department in Barlekha upazila, said they found presence of rotenone, an odourless and colourless pesticide that also occurs naturally in seeds and stems of various plants such as local vine plant Bish Lata, in the water sample collected from the plunge pool of the falls on Tuesday.

Bish Lata, containing active chemical component rotenone, is preferred by unscrupulous fishers as fish killed with it can easily be sold in the market and the dead fish is not harmful for human health, he said.



A fisheries department worker applies fumigation mix in the plunge pool of Madhabkunda falls in Barlekha upazila of Moulvibazar on Tuesday.

PHOTO: STAR

The fisheries department started applying a mix of disinfectant and antibacterial agents in the water to fumigate and stabilise water in the plunge pool since yesterday, he said, adding that samples of dead fish were also sent out for tests.

Kabir Ahmed, a local and a member of Porjotak Sahayak Samiti, said the criminals, by poisoning the fish, has now put aquatic life and biodiversity in the Madhabkunda eco park, established in 2001 on 500 acres of land, in danger.

The water in the plunge pool is contaminated by dead fish as well as the poison from Bish Lata and people should refrain from consuming it and avoid contact, said Partho Sarathi Datta Kanungo, superintendent of 250-Bed Moulvibazar District Hospital.

Contact with the water or its consumption might result in skin disease and respiratory problems, he also said.

Marufatuzzahan, chairman of Animal and Fish Biotechnology Department at Sylhet Agricultural University, said rise in acidity of water might also cause the death of fish in the pool of the waterfall. But a thorough examination can only determine the exact cause of the death.



With shrubs and bushes grown on both sides and declared unfit for traffic, Badiakhali bridge on the Alai river in Gaibandha Sadar upazila is still in operation. The photo was taken recently.

PHOTO: KM REZAUL HOQUE

‘Unfit’ bridge in service for decade

OUR CORRESPONDENT, GAIBANDHA

More than a decade ago, Badiakhali bridge on the Alai river in Gaibandha Sadar upazila was declared unfit for vehicular movement. But the bridge, connecting the Sadar with Phulchhari and Saghata upazilas, is still in use.

Ignoring the risk of serious accidents, no visible steps were taken over the years to replace the 65-meter-long ramshackle bridge with a new one either.

Damaged by freedom fighters to stop enemy movement on it during the Liberation War in 1971, a temporary Bailey bridge was built over the top of it after the country's independence.

The narrow metal bridge has been in service

since then and over time, shrubs and bushes grew on its sides. It has tilted at several spots and its concrete structure below is degenerating in many places, leaving scope for a catastrophic disaster.

Long tailbacks on both its sides are a common occurrence as larger vehicles have to take extra caution and cross it at a very slow pace.

Concerned citizens in the area alleged that although they anticipate a fatal incident any time, the authorities concerned did not pay heed to their repeated requests of building a new bridge on the Alai river.

The roads on both sides of the dilapidated bridge, built during the pre-independence era,

remains congested almost all throughout the day due to slow movement of traffic on it, said Abdul Karim from Ramnather Bhita village in Sadar upazila.

Locals said the road between Gaibandha and Saghata was widened to 18 feet, but the state of the Badiakhali bridge remained the same.

After it was declared unfit in 2007, the army made several urgent repairs on the bridge and it has remained open ever since.

While speaking with this correspondent, Roads and Highways Department (RHD) Executive Engineer Asaduzzaman said the RHD has already completed tender process for the bridge with Tk 20 crore fund allocation and the construction work will begin in January.

SPECIAL SUPPLEMENT

Seeing red

Urine that looks bloody should be investigated as it can suggest cancer or infection. Most cases, however, tend not to have a serious cause.

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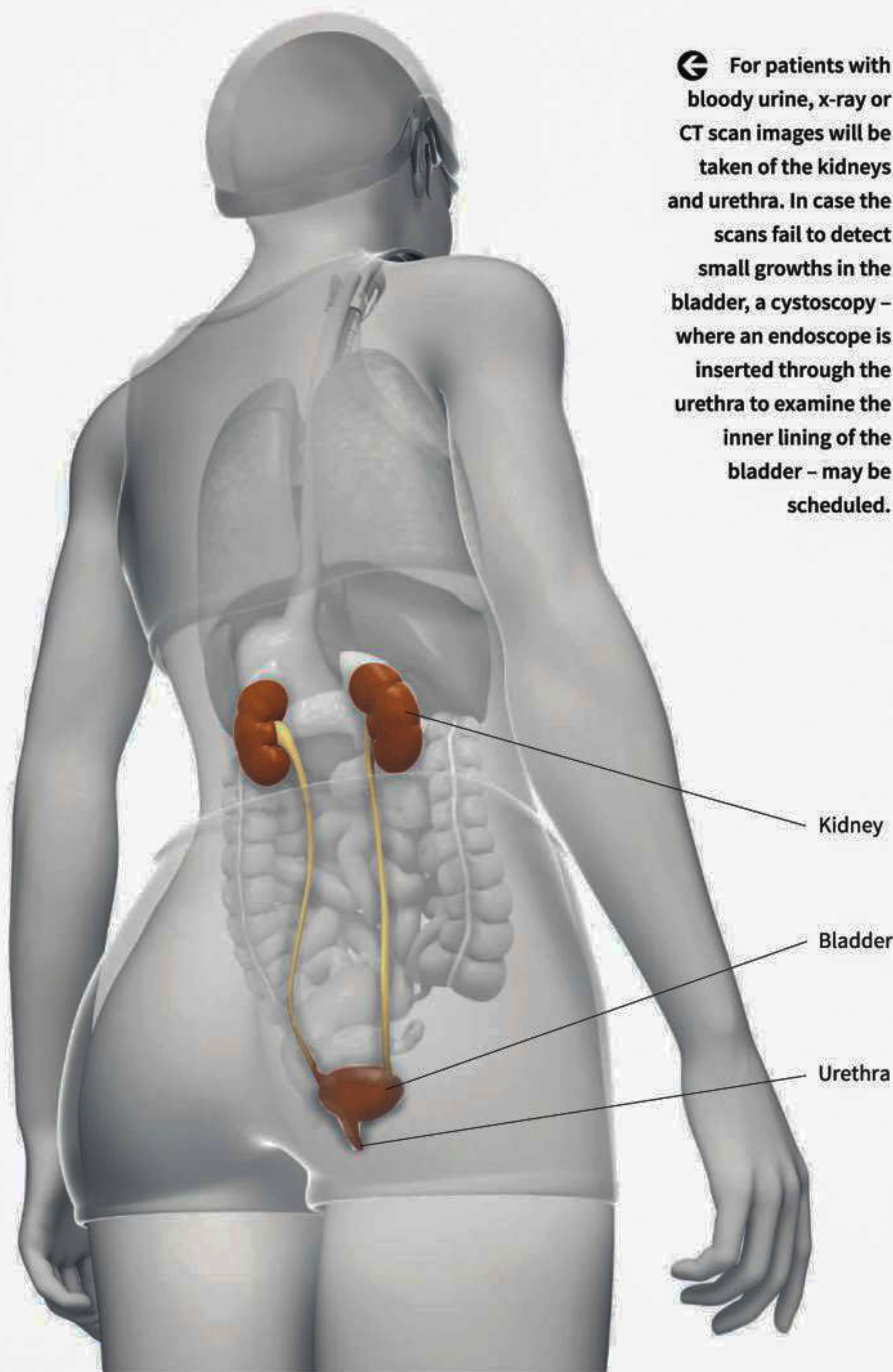
Don't panic if your urine looks bloody. It can suggest a deadly medical condition, although in many instances, bloody urine isn't caused by anything serious. Still, the condition shouldn't be taken lightly and anyone who sees blood in their urine should consult a specialist to rule out a serious cause, said Assoc Prof Chong Tsung Wen, Senior Consultant, Department of Urology, Singapore General Hospital.

"Principally we are worried about things like cancer (of the bladder or kidney), sometimes infection or kidney stones. So anybody who has macroscopic haematuria (when the urine looks bloody) requires a urology consult," said Assoc Prof Chong.

Patients will be asked about their medical background, in particular if they have a family history of kidney stones or

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ASSOC PROF CHONG TSUNG WEN
SENIOR CONSULTANT
DEPARTMENT OF UROLOGY, SGH



For patients with bloody urine, x-ray or CT scan images will be taken of the kidneys and urethra. In case the scans fail to detect small growths in the bladder, a cystoscopy – where an endoscope is inserted through the urethra to examine the inner lining of the bladder – may be scheduled.

Kidney

Bladder

Urethra

cancer. X-ray or CT scan images will be taken of the kidneys and urethra. In case the scans fail to detect small growths in the bladder, a cystoscopy may be scheduled.

In this procedure, an endoscope – a fibre optic scope with a camera attached to the end – is inserted through the urethra to examine the inner lining of the bladder. "It's a very safe procedure, but it's a bit more uncomfortable for men than for women because anatomically, men have long urethras," said Assoc Prof Chong, adding that the 5-10 minute procedure is commonly performed in a clinic.

As the incidence of bladder cancer is much higher among males and smokers, if a man over the age of 40 has a history of smoking and has macroscopic haematuria, "to us, he is deemed to have cancer until proven otherwise".

"That's why we emphasise that anybody with macroscopic haematuria should always be referred to us, no exception," he said. Up to a quarter of people who are seen for the condition will be diagnosed with a serious disease like cancer.

In macroscopic haematuria, the presence of blood clots in the urine would usually set off alarm bells, although a large amount of blood in the urine doesn't always mean the underlying

condition is more severe. Some large cancers don't bleed at all, Assoc Prof Chong said.

Kidney stones and infections of the bladder or kidney are other common causes of the condition. Bloody urine can also be due to rare congenital causes such as disorders in the blood vessels.

When no known cause is found, patients are not discharged but are seen yearly for a couple of years. "There was a study done where a cohort of patients were labelled as idiopathic (no known cause) and then followed up. Within the next one or two years, about 10 per cent of them eventually do turn up to have something," said Assoc Prof Chong.

Joggers sometimes get the condition too, although it's not clear why it happens. "Some people believe the blood is caused by abrasions within the lining of the bladder. If the bladder isn't completely filled, the front and back walls can rub against each other when the person is running. This causes a bruise or bleeding, so when the jogger passes urine, he sees blood," said Assoc Prof Chong.

Drinking more water and resting usually lead to the condition resolving itself. "The human kidney filters up to a million red blood cells a day, so everybody

has traces of red blood cells in the urine. If you are dehydrated and you happen to do a urine test, you will pick up blood in the urine, but it doesn't mean it's anything abnormal," Assoc Prof Chong said.

Just 1 per cent of such cases – known as microscopic haematuria when the blood cannot be seen by the naked eye – will be due to serious causes, he added. The low incidence is due in part to improper collection of urine samples.

"The urine test must be properly conducted, especially for women. If the urine is not collected properly, traces of blood can be picked up from the skin or around the surrounding areas, and that gives what is known as spurious or false haematuria," said Assoc Prof Chong.

"So it's not just a matter of passing urine. You want to collect the urine in the mid-stream (not the first 10-20 millilitres) and that it is collected straight from the urethra and not trickling down."

A rough guide to dehydration

The kidney filters up to a million red blood cells daily. For that reason, traces of red blood cells can often be detected in the urine especially when one is dehydrated.

But drinking at least eight glasses of water a day to ensure one isn't dehydrated is a bit of an urban legend. Too much water can lead to different problems, and a better way of telling if you are not drinking enough is look at the colour of your urine.

"If the colour of your urine is very darkly stained or yellow,

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chances are you are dehydrated and need to drink more water," said Assoc Prof Chong Tsung Wen, Senior Consultant, Department of Urology, Singapore General Hospital.

Another is the number of times you go to the toilet. "If you haven't gone to the toilet for three to four hours, or if you don't feel the urge, you are probably not drinking enough," he said, adding that this rough guide is based on the amount of urine a person produces and the amount the bladder can hold before it sends signals to go to toilet.