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"We will relay the message to India so that they comply with what they've already told us -- no death along the border."

FOREIGN MINISTER AKABDUL MOMEN AT A PRESS CONFERENCE

IN THE CAPITAL. (PAGE 3)



"People involved in casino and narcotics trade want to survive by contesting elections... No one will be spared."

HOME MINISTER ASADUZZAMAN TOLD REPORTERS ON PARTICIPATION

OF CONTROVERSIAL PERSONS IN THE DCC POLLS. (PAGE 3)



"There are things I could have handled on the ground much better."

AUSTRALIA PM SCOTT MORRISON REGRETS

HANDLING OF BUSHFIRE CRISIS (PAGE 8)

ANTIBIOTICS USE, SALE Who needs PRESCRIPTION?

Despite HC directive, over-the-counter sale continues

MOUDUD AHMED SUJAN

Despite a court directive to stop the over-the-counter sale of antibiotics, the health authorities have taken no concrete steps in this regard, raising the spectre of superbugs, which cause some seven lakh deaths globally per year.

Sale of antibiotics without requiring prescription from registered physicians is still high in the country. The Daily Star has found visiting over two hundred drug stores and talking to experts.

Bacteria-fighting drugs known as antibiotics help control and destroy many of the harmful organisms that make people sick. But 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.

There is no data on deaths caused by superbugs in Bangladesh, but professors at Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujib Medical University (BSMMU) say about 70 percent of the deaths at ICUs are caused by AMR [antimicrobial resistance] infections.

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

"Problem is people don't know which drugs are antibiotics. Around 15 lakh people are taking antibiotics daily and most of them don't have prescriptions," Prof Sayedur Rahman, chairman of pharmacology department at the BSMMU, told The Daily Star.

A recent study, carried out jointly by the Directorate General of Drug Administration (DGDA) and the WHO, shows that antibiotics consumption in Bangladesh has increased by 30.81 percent in the last two years. The DGDA and the WHO used data from the pharmaceutical

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- ◆ There are **118,901** licensed retail allopathic pharmacies in the country
- ◆ The number of unlicensed pharmacies is almost the same
- ◆ **68** percent clients visit pharmacies without doctor's advice
- ◆ Around **15** lakh people take antibiotics daily, mostly without prescription
- ◆ Antibiotic consumption increased by **30.81** percent in the last two years
- ◆ In 2018, superbugs and multi-drug resistant bacteria were detected in **14** percent cases of all patients seen



"There are around 200 staffers, including 20 doctors, under the health ministry at every upazila.

They can easily be involved in raising awareness on AMR [anti-microbial resistance]. The DGDA cannot sit idle for the recruitment of manpower."

Prof Sayedur Rahman
Chairman of pharmacology dept, BSMMU

SOURCE: DGDA, WHO

Form bodies to stop ragging on campuses HC directs govt

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The High Court yesterday directed the government to form anti-ragging committees and squads at all educational institutions, especially at universities and their affiliated colleges, within the next three months.

It also issued a rule asking the authorities concerned to explain in four weeks why their failure to formulate a guideline to stop ragging at educational institutions should not be declared illegal.

Secretaries to the ministries of home and education, and University Grants Commission chairman and other officials concerned have been made respondents.

The HC bench of Justice M Enayetur Rahim and Justice Md Mostafizur Rahman came up with the order and rule after Supreme Court lawyer Ishrat Hasan filed a writ petition on January 8.

During yesterday's hearing, Ishrat told the court that ragging at educational institutions became a culture and therefore, first-year and second-year students were living in fear.

Citing an example, she said the Jahangirnagar University authorities suspended 11 students from all academic activities for a year in December last year, as they were found guilty of ragging some freshers.

The suspended are second-year students and they were involved in ragging on their seniors' directives, the lawyer said.

The authorities concerned are not taking

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CITY POLLS DATE

EC waiting for HC ruling on deferral plea

MOHIUDDIN ALAMGIR

The Election Commission would wait for High Court directives on whether to change the election date for the Dhaka city corporations, which is now January 30, an election commissioner said.

A writ petition was filed with the HC seeking a directive to defer the date for a week as Saraswati Puja is on election day.

"A writ petition is pending with the High Court. We would follow the instruction of the court," Election Commissioner Rafiqul Islam told The Daily Star yesterday.

Demands for deferring the date for Dhaka north and south city corporation polls have been getting louder in the last couple of days.

Bangladesh Chhatra Oikya Parishad formed a human chain on the Dhaka University campus, and a group of DU's Jagannath Hall students held a meeting with Election Commissioner Mahbub Talukdar to this end yesterday.

On Saturday, Dhaka University Central

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COUNCILLORS IN DHAKA CITY POLLS

Pro-BNP aspirants face 1,024 cases

Ten against pro-AL candidates

MAHBUBUR RAHMAN KHAN and MOHIUDDIN ALAMGIR

At least 69 BNP-backed councillor candidates in Dhaka city are facing more than a thousand cases while only six Awami League-supported aspirants are facing 10 lawsuits, show their affidavits submitted to the returning officers.

More than half of the 1,024 cases against the BNP-backed contenders in 69 wards of the two city corporations were filed between 2017 and 2018 when the country's politics got heated up over the 11th parliamentary elections.

The charges against them include holding rallies illegally, indulging in violence and preventing government officials from carrying out duties.

Only six AL-supported councillor candidates are facing 10 cases filed over corruption and repression of women.

However, this is not the complete picture as Dhaka North City Corporation was yet to make public the affidavits of the councillor candidates in 36 of its 54 wards. Dhaka South City Corporation published the affidavits of the contenders in all the 75 wards.

Talking to The Daily Star yesterday evening, DNCC Returning Officer Abul Kashem said they would upload the rest of the affidavits soon on their official website.

In the DSCC, 57 BNP-backed contenders are facing 876 criminal cases and only four AL-supported candidates are facing four lawsuits filed over corruption, repression of women and making threats, according to their affidavits.

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Cold wave to linger

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The cold wave sweeping over the country is likely to linger one or two more days.

According to Bangladesh Meteorological Department (BMD), the mild cold wave was sweeping over Ishwardi, Kurigram, Panchagarh, and Kushtia yesterday.

According to BMD records, the lowest temperature in the country was 9.5 degrees Celsius in Rangpur's Rajarhat yesterday while the mercury dropped to 13.6 degrees Celsius in Dhaka.

Chuadanga experienced 9.8 degrees Celsius, Tentulia 9.9 and Ishwardi 9.8.

Parts of the country had been shrouded by mild to dense fog since midnight on Sunday.

Much of the country will be covered in mild to dense fog from late yesterday until early today.

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Questions rise after 'shootout'

1 killed, 2 hurt in city's Malibagh, Rab 'takes away' all CCTV footage of incident

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A suspected drug dealer was killed and two others including a woman, were shot in the legs during what Rab said was a shootout in the capital's Malibagh area yesterday morning.

Syed Iqbal Ahmed, 42, who was shot dead, used to bring yaba pills to the city from Cox's Bazar, claimed Rab-2 Company Commander Mohammed Mohiuddin Faruque.

The incident happened around 7:00am near the ticket sales centre of an intercity bus operator. The area is covered by CCTV cameras of different nearby shops and businesses.

Employees of these shops told this correspondent yesterday afternoon that Rab officials had deleted the footage and didn't let anyone see what had been recorded.

This correspondent visited the place in the afternoon and saw that the spot had been washed with water.

The two others shot are Rafika Jasmin, 29, and her brother Mashru Hasan, 22. They were admitted to Dhaka Medical College Hospital with bullet wounds in their legs.

Rab said Rafika was Iqbal's wife and her brother Hasan was a private university student. They are also suspected drug traffickers.

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BBPL's last four stage begins today

SPORTS REPORTER

The race for the Bangabandhu Bangladesh Premier League (BBPL) title begins today with Dhaka Platoon taking on Chattogram Challengers in the eliminator match in today's first fixture at the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium in Mirpur.

Later in the evening, the tournament's top two sides -- Rajshahi Kings and Khulna Tigers -- will duke it out in the first qualifier to see who goes on to the final.

The ongoing tournament is a special edition of the Bangladesh Premier League

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Just to keep warm, people huddled around a pile of garbage that they lit, ignoring the toxic fumes emanating from it. The photo was taken around 10:00pm Saturday night in Malibagh area of the city.

PHOTO:
SK ENAMUL HAQ

KDS

তোমার জন্মে সার্থক এই জাতি, সার্থক এই দেশ
তুমি ছিলে বলে হে পিতা

জন্মেছে সোনার বাংলাদেশ

হাজার বছরের শুষ্ঠ বাঙালি বঙ্গবন্ধু
শেখ মুজিবুর রহমানের জন্ম শতবর্ষ উদযানে,
কেড়ে এস পরিবারের পক্ষ থেকে শুভাজ্ঞালি

কল-রঞ্জি