

FAKE COVID-19 CERTIFICATES
Legal notice seeks
Tk 10 lakh for each
person duped by
Regent Hospital

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A rights organisation yesterday served a legal notice on the authorities concerned asking them to give Tk 10 lakh as compensation to each of the victims of fake Covid-19 certificates issued by Regent Hospital.

Children Charity Bangladesh Foundation (CCBF) represented by its director Ishrat Hasan sent the legal notice through emails to health and home secretaries, director general of Directorate of Health Services (DGHS) and chairman and managing director of Regent Hospital, requesting them to make a list of the persons, who got fake certificates from the hospital and provide them with the compensation in 48 hours.

Barrister Md Abdul Halim, who served the legal notice on behalf of the organisation, urged the government respondents concerned to publish a list of the names of the hospitals and diagnostic centres that have legal licences to conduct Covid-19 tests.

In the legal notice, the organisation

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The aeroplane on one end of Bijoy Sarani is not just an iconic landmark of the city -- its hollow spaces are now being used as temporary storage for everyday items such as a mattress, cooking equipment etc. With no space of their own, homeless people in the area found a way to utilise the decorative aircraft.

PHOTO: AMRAN HOSSAIN

Plans underway for
bike lanes in DNCC

HELEMUŁ ALAM

Fuad Ahasan Chowdhury, a resident of Azimpur, rides to his office on a bicycle. Rather than renting a vehicle or traveling on public transportation, he prefers this mode of transport as it is less stressful and time saving. When public transportation became a big factor during the Covid-19 pandemic, what made life easy for Fuad is his bicycle, always at hand and easy to maintain social distancing with.

But it's not all positives. A lack of separate lanes in main roads and the uncompromising attitude of motorised vehicle-drivers make cycle journeys in the city risky and uncomfortable -- not just for Fuad, but for cyclists in general.

"Cycling saves two-thirds of my journey time. If we (bicyclists) could get separate lanes, our lives would be much easier," he said.

Experts and cycling activists attribute the problem to lack of proper planning and separate networking of non-motorised two-wheelers.

In light of this, climate action activists and city planners took the initiative to prepare a strategy paper for Dhaka North City Corporation. Work on the paper started this month and is expected to be completed by October.

The paper -- a voluntary effort by Bangladesh Poribesh Andolon (Bapa), VITTI Sthapati Brindo Ltd, WBBTrust, Institute of Architects and Institute of Planners and more, aided by platforms like Jobike and BDcyclists -- has already received DNCC Mayor Atiqul Islam's nod.

It is expected to be submitted in November. After receiving it, DNCC will go for its implementation following approval from the city corporation's council, said Iqbal Habib, joint secretary of Bapa.

"Non-motorised transport should become an important mode of transportation in the Dhaka Integrated Transport Plan. We hope to get it expanded to Dhaka South City Corporation, Savar and Narayanganj areas. The DNCC mayor will take initiatives in this regard," he added.

Iqbal said they will prepare the guideline voluntarily and will involve

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Two accused of assaulting
woman at CPB office

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The wife of a Bangladesh Khet Major Samity leader alleged that she was assaulted by her husband and another leader of the party at Communist Party of Bangladesh (CPB) office at Paltan in late June. The woman and her husband, had gone to the party office on the night of June 21.

In a case filed against S M Abdus Sattar, also known as S M Shuvo (34) and Ariful Islam Nadim (35) under Women and Children Repression Prevention Act at Kalabagan police station on July 16, the woman said that she and Shuvo were married on June 13, 2019. However, their married life was not going well.

"On May 17 morning, he beat me mercilessly, of which I told my father. After two days, he left the house," she wrote in the statement. Shuvo had since been sharing a room with Nadim at CPB office.

"On the night of June 21, my husband told me over phone that he would terminate our relationship," she told this newspaper.

The woman then rushed to the CPB office around 10:45pm to take her husband home.

698 children held
on criminal charges
bailed in 45 days

Says Supreme Court statement

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A total of 698 children accused of criminal cases have secured bail, and among them 685 were handed over to their guardians after they got released from custody in 45 working days between May 12 and July 16.

Around 840 children detained in criminal charges were staying in three juvenile development centres till July 16, Supreme Court Spokesman Md Saifur Rahman said in a statement.

According to the statement, the lower courts across the country have heard and disposed of total of 1,20,904 bail petitions and granted bail to 60,047 people including the 698 children.

The courts have granted bail to 5,730 people after disposing of total 13,867 bail petitions in last week (from July 12 to July 16).

The SC statement also said the subordinate courts concerned have disposed of surrender related petitions of the accused in 5,319 criminal cases and granted bail to 17,590 accused from July 12 to July 16 and sent 1,174 accused to jails.

No end to Sylhet city's
flash flooding problem

Experts say loss of water retention, vegetation
areas key reasons behind such incidents



This photo of a group of women wading through knee-deep water was taken from the city's Machhimpur area recently.

PHOTO: SHEIKH NASIR

DWOHA CHOWDHURY, Sylhet

Sylhet city, situated on the bank of Surma river, has been facing severe instances of waterlogging and flash floods for a long time, although such incidents in the hilly region were alien even some two decades ago.

Authorities keep pointing to the river's swelling as the reason, while citizens blame the city corporation for unplanned drainage systems and Bangladesh Water Development Board (BWDB) for not keeping the river navigable.

Experts, however, say the issue is multifaceted, and resolving these problems is only part of the solution.

Prof Zarina Hossain -- president of Institute of Architects Bangladesh (IAB), Sylhet chapter -- said, "The situation the city is facing is not just common waterlogging but something called urban flash flood or urban storm flood."

During this rainy season, around 50 areas of the city experienced flash floods on July 1 and 12, which continued till Tuesday.

To improve the situation, Sylhet City Corporation (SCC) spent more than Tk 300 crore since 2013; it even got special allocation.

Tk 1,228 crore was allocated last December by the executive committee of

National Economic Council (Ecnee) for the project "Eradication of Waterlogging, Freshwater Supply and Infrastructure Construction".

Another nationwide project for restoring navigability of 53 riverways is being implemented by Bangladesh Inland Water Transport Authority (BIWTA), which includes the whole of Surma.

Meanwhile, BWDB dredged only 600 metres of Surma beside the city's Kanishal area, at an expenditure of Tk 9.27 crore last year.

But despite all the development projects, citizens continue to suffer.

Jafor Siddik Chowdhury, a resident of the city's Lamapara area, said, "We see the city corporation working on projects to eradicate waterlogging, but we face the same situation every rainy season."

Abdul Karim Kim -- general secretary of Bangladesh Paribesh Andolon (Bapa), Sylhet chapter -- said, "Authorities must admit their faults in managing waterways. What's the point of spending that much money for this issue if citizens don't see any benefit?"

"Surma lost its navigability and needs dredging. Otherwise, the city will keep being flooded every year," said Kim, also Surma's waterkeeper.

Prof Zarina said other factors must also

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MJF condemns
torture of
house help

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Rights group Manusher Jonno Foundation (MJF) has condemned torture on 10-year old domestic help in the capital.

On Saturday, police arrested a couple for abusing the girl on a regular basis. She was recruited about a year ago and the couple had been treating her in an inhumane way, according to police.

In a statement, MJF urged the government to formulate the Domestic Help Safety and Welfare Police 2015 into an act immediately, to ensure well-being of domestic help workers.

According to a recent report by MJF, it is said that a total of 14 underage domestic helps were tortured in 2019.

Besides, 22 domestic workers have so far been victim of torture in this year, and 10 of them were killed by torture.

Most of them were aged between 13 years and 18 years.

Quoting Ain o Salish Kendra, the statement said some were killed after rape and torture while some died by suicide.

Golden opportunity to export food

Shykh Seraj tells webinar about post-pandemic world

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

While food scarcity is looming large at local level, opportunity to export food in the post Covid-19 pandemic era beckons the country's agriculture sector, said noted media personality and agriculture development activist Shykh Seraj suggesting to highlight the sector more in the media.

He opined that in the coming days, the country will face severe challenge to ensure food and nutrition security due to the pandemic.

"We've already started feeling the impact... It'll be intensified in the future," Shykh said yesterday, while giving a special online lecture organised for students of the Department of Communication and Journalism of Chittagong University.

German media development organisation DW Akademie organised the event titled "Covid-19: Journalism for Food Security and Nutrition", which was attended by students and teachers of the department at CU.

He observed that in want of organisational strength farmers could not draw attention to their problems and sufferings and fail to get enough support. The media too do not get enough importance, he added.

Seraj, however, opined that there is a golden opportunity ahead of Bangladesh for exporting food during the post-pandemic situation when the

whole world will look for food supply.

Many countries depend on imported food and to capture the international hypermarkets and warehouses, the native foods are needed to get international certification, he said, adding that currently Bangladesh exports food to meet demands of expatriates.

In his hour-long lecture and subsequent Q&A, he discussed the history and trends of agricultural journalism, role of media and journalists in agricultural development and expansion and how it could play a vital role in policymaking. He also highlighted the potentiality of online haats for sacrificial animals for upcoming Eid-ul-Azha.

Priya Esselborn, Bangladesh country manager of DW Akademie, and Shahidul Haque, chairman of journalism department at CU, spoke at the event.

Germany's leading government-funded media development organisation DW Akademie has been working for the development of media and journalism education in Bangladesh since 2015.

In addition to the journalism departments at Rajshahi University and Chittagong University, they have been working with Channel-i, Radio Today and The Daily Star for the past few years.

Earlier, renowned photographer and human rights activist Shahidul Alam gave lectures at Rajshahi University and Chittagong University.

She taught at
three madrasas

Says CTTC on woman held over
Neo-JMB links

MOHAMMAD JAMIL KHAN

Before marrying a Bangladeshi man last year, Indian national Aysha Jannat Mohona had visited Bangladesh three times since 2016.

Mohona, also known as Jannatut Tasnim alias Progga Debnath, was 21 when she first travelled to Bangladesh, getting an invitation from Neo-JMB members on a messenger group.

Upon instruction, she came to the capital where a man managed a job for her at a madrasa in Jatrabari.

In the last four years, she taught at three madrasas in Dhaka and Narayanganj. Her main task, however, was to motivate people to join the militant outfit.

The Counter Terrorism and Transnational Crime (CTTC) unit claimed to have learned about the above-mentioned activities by interrogating Mohona during remand.

A CTTC team arrested Mohona from Sadarghat area on Friday. She is now on a four-day remand. Yesterday was the second day.

Sk Imran Hossain, assistant commissioner of CTTC unit, told The Daily Star yesterday, "We have got some information on Neo-JMB's activities from her and we are now analysing it."

Mohona used to receive funding on her mobile

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On a relatively empty Kazi Nazrul Islam Avenue, a car rammed into a CNG-run auto-rickshaw yesterday, toppling it over. The driver, fortunately, only received minor injuries, while the car was pulled over by traffic police. Such incidents are frequent on empty roads, as drivers violate traffic rules and speed.

PHOTO: PALASH KHAN

MEDICAL WASTE MANAGEMENT

HC seeks report
on steps taken

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The High Court yesterday wanted to know what measures have been taken for the management of medical waste across the country.

The court asked the forest and environment secretary to submit a report on this issue by July 10.

The secretary has been ordered to describe in the report what steps have been taken to implement the section 3 of the Medical Waste (Management and Processing) Act, 2008 in order to ensure proper management of the medical wastage, Deputy Attorney General Debashish Battacharyya told The Daily Star.

The HC bench of Justice JBM Hassan came up with order after virtually hearing a writ petition jointly filed by environment expert Dr Anneka Ali and rights organisation Law and Life Foundation, seeking necessary directives to this effect.

During hearing on the petition, petitioners' lawyer Barrister Humayun Kabir Pallob told the HC that a large quantity of medical wastage is produced in the country every day but they are not being disposed of properly.

Therefore, public health and environment are being damaged, he argued.

The lawyer prayed to the HC to pass an order on the authorities concerned of the government to take necessary measures to ensure proper management and disposal of the medical wastage in line with the Medical Waste Act.