

PRAN UP launches campaign to help cold-hit people

STAR REPORT

PRAN UP has launched a campaign to help cold-stricken people of the country. The announcement came at an event held at PRAN Center in the capital's Badda on Wednesday, said a press release.

Under the campaign "Chhorai Bhalobashar Ushnota Season-3", which will continue till February 5, the popular beverage brand will distribute blankets among people in Rajshahi, Dinajpur, Thakurgaon and Panchagarh.

The distribution will start on January 20. Popular actor Fazlur Rahman Babu, Ziaul Haque Polish, Gully boy Rana Mridha and Tabib Mahmud are engaged with the initiative this year.

Eleash Mridha, managing director at PRAN Group; Anisur Rahman, executive director at PRAN Beverage Ltd; Atikur Rahman, its general manager (marketing); and Tanmoy Das, senior brand manager of PRAN UP, were present at the launching event.

Tintin

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a porcelain jar in front of a menacing depiction of a Chinese dragon.

It was judged to be too expensive to reproduce by the Hergé's publisher, which ultimately used a simplified version of the same scene for "The Blue Lotus" cover.

The selling price -- higher than Artcurial's estimate of 2.2-2.8 million euros -- underscores the tremendous appetite for original memorabilia of Tintin, whose adventures have entertained people of all ages since the 1930s.

CID submits supplementary

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Md Kutubuddin, a superintendent of police at CID and also the IO of the case, submitted the charge sheet to the First Additional District and Sessions Judge's Court of Dhaka on Wednesday, a court official told The Daily Star.

The IO named three accused in the supplementary charge sheet. They are: Lt Col Mostafa Kamaluddin Bhuiyan (ret'd), Lt Col Shamsur Rahman Shams (ret'd) and Maj Kazi Emdadul Haque (ret'd).

The trial court will decide on January 25 whether it will accept or refuse the supplementary charge sheet.

Kutubuddin in the charge sheet said he had contacted Manzur's wife and children, who lived abroad, but they refused to give statements to the investigators and before the trial court.

The CID official said he did not find any flaws in the previous investigation.

On February 27, 2014, the trial court ordered further investigation into the murder case after Special Public Prosecutor Asaduzzaman Khan Rochi submitted a petition in this regard during the closing arguments.

"While scrutinising the charge sheet, I found some flaws and incompleteness in the probe.... Although it is a sensational case, names of some key witnesses have been dropped," the prosecutor had told the court.

This newspaper could not reach Asaduzzaman over phone for comments on the supplementary charge sheet.

Abdul Kahar Akand, former CID

special superintendent of police, had launched the further investigation. But he later went into retirement and Kutubuddin completed the probe.

This paper tried to reach Kutubuddin for comments, but in vain.

Maj Gen Manzur was killed at Chattogram Cantonment on June 1, 1981, just two days into the assassination of the then president Ziaur Rahman.

The army official, who was the Sector-8 commander during the Liberation War, was believed to have carried out an abortive Chittagong coup in which Zia was killed.

A total of 26 judges have heard the murder case since it was filed on August 28, 1995. The judges were either promoted or transferred to other districts.

The case filed during the then BNP-led government never got the pace for disposal. The trial had begun in 1999 when the Awami League-led government was in power.

But it suddenly got pace in July 2013 after Ershad had refused to extend support to the AL mayoral candidate in the Gazipur City Corporation election.

At that stage, both the prosecution and the defence placed their arguments before the court.

Hearing of the case resumed in November 2013. Upon completion of the hearing on January 22 the following year, the court fixed February 10 for delivering the verdict.

The Dhaka district judge on January 29 transferred Judge Begum Hosne Ara Aktar of the Manzur murder case to another court.

Strong quake kills 42 in Indonesia

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The meteorological agency warned residents that the area could be hit by strong aftershocks and to avoid the beachfront in case of a tsunami.

"The aftershocks could be as strong, or stronger, than this morning's quake," said Dwikorita Karnawati, chief of the meteorological agency.

The Indonesian Red Cross said it was rushing medical and relief supplies to the scene, with its teams working to help find trapped residents.

The quake's epicentre was 36 kilometres (22 miles) south of Mamuju and it had a relatively shallow depth of 18 kilometres, the United States Geological Survey said.

Indonesia experiences frequent seismic and volcanic activity due to its position on the Pacific "Ring of Fire", where tectonic plates collide.



In 2018, a 7.5-magnitude quake and a subsequent tsunami in Palu on Sulawesi left more than 4,300 people dead or missing. On December 26, 2004, a 9.1-magnitude

earthquake struck off the coast of Sumatra and triggered a tsunami that killed 220,000 throughout the region, including around 170,000 in Indonesia.

2 arrested over human trafficking

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their whereabouts in November.

Senior Superintendent of Police Jisanul Hoque of the Criminal Investigation Department's organised crime unit yesterday said Italy police nabbed Jafer from Cosenza based on Interpol's red notice.

Meanwhile, the CID arrested Shahadat from Dhaka airport upon his arrival from abroad, he said.

The CID official, however, refused to disclose details regarding the arrest.

Mohiul Islam, assistant inspector general of police at National Central Bureau (NCB) in Dhaka, said Bangladesh does not have any treaty with Italy for extraditing prisoners.

However, it will be possible to bring him back home from Italy through mutual cooperation, he said.

On May 28 last year, alleged human traffickers killed 30 migrant workers, including 26 Bangladeshis in Libya.

The incident caused a huge public outcry at home and abroad.

The killing took place at a smuggling warehouse in the city of Mizzadh near Tripoli. Twelve more Bangladeshis were also injured in the attack, nine of whom were repatriated.

CID official Jisanul said 26 cases were filed all over Bangladesh in connection with the killing incident.

The CID is investigating 25 cases, he said.

Some 299 people have been made accused in the first information reports of the cases, while police have so far arrested 171 of them, he added.

So far, 42 arrestees have given confessional statements before the court, he said.

Interpol issued a red notice against six alleged human traffickers following assistance from the Police Headquarters in Dhaka, said the CID official.

Another suspect in the Interpol's

"wanted-list" might have been hiding in Italy, he added.

Interpol put the six human traffickers of Bangladesh in their "wanted list" on charges of deceiving job seekers and "wrongfully confining and killing" people over ransom demands.

The four others are: Minto Mia, 41, Shapan, 28, Tanzirul, 35, all from Kishoreganj, and Molla Nazrul Islam, 43, from Madaripur.

The CID wrote to the NCB, the Bangladesh counterpart of Interpol, in October last year against the six when the process started.

Red notices by Interpol are issued for fugitives wanted either for prosecution or to serve a sentence.

A red notice is a request to law enforcement worldwide to locate and provisionally arrest a person pending extradition, surrender, or similar legal action.

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GULSHAN 2 RD. 79 NEXT ITALIAN NEAR OTHER EMBASSIES, 2600SFT. 4 BED, 4 BATH, LARGE DRAWING/ DINING UPTODATE AMENITIES. Contact # 01712180378 D-08

Turkish flag

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bring Covid-19 negative certificates are conscious and well-educated people. They are not unaware of what's going on in the US regarding the spread of Covid-19. It's surprising that they didn't bring Covid-19 negative certificates while coming to Bangladesh from that country," said the magistrate.

গণপ্রজাতন্ত্রী বাংলাদেশ সরকার
বাংলাদেশ পুলিশ
কমান্ডিং অফিসারের কার্যালয়
২ আর্মড পুলিশ ব্যাটালিয়ন
মুজাগাছা, ময়মনসিংহ
উন্মুক্ত দরপত্র আহ্বান বিজ্ঞপ্তি
স্মারক নং-কিউএম-২৭৩/১৮৮
তারিখঃ ১৪/০১/২০২১খ্রিঃ
এতদ্বারা 'দি পাবলিক প্রকিউরমেন্ট আইন-২০০৬ ও পাবলিক প্রকিউরমেন্ট বিধিমালা-২০০৮, ২০০৯ এবং তদীয় সংশোধনী অনুযায়ী' ২০২০-২০২১ অর্থ বৎসরের ২ আর্মড পুলিশ ব্যাটালিয়ন, মুজাগাছা, ময়মনসিংহের লট ভিত্তিক কাজের ঠিকাদার নিয়োগের লক্ষ্যে প্রকৃত বাংলাদেশী ঠিকাদারগণের নিকট হতে সীলমোহরকৃত 'উন্মুক্ত দরপত্র' আহ্বান করা যাচ্ছে।

Investigators

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Station against Fardin Iftekhar Dihan, 18, under the Women and Children Repression Prevention Act after his 17-year-old daughter, an O-level student, was raped and murdered in the capital's Kalabagan area.

According to the case statement, Dihan tricked the victim into going to his flat when his family members were away from home and raped her. The victim bled profusely and fell unconscious. Dihan then took her to a hospital to deflect blame, the plaintiff alleged.

On January 8, Dihan gave his confessional statement before a Dhaka court. Dihan, who recently passed A-levels, is now behind bars.

A Dhaka court on January 13 allowed police to conduct tests to ascertain whether Dihan, the lone accused in the case, had taken any narcotics or stimulants. Earlier, the same court allowed police to conduct DNA tests on samples collected from Dihan and the victim's bloodstained clothes, following two petitions submitted by the investigation officer.

Police have also collected CCIV footage from all possible sources.

The family of the victim and her schoolmates have been demanding a fair and impartial investigation into the incident.

On Wednesday, the schoolgirl's family placed four demands before the government. The demands are: bringing criminals to justice, transferring the case to a speedy trial tribunal, conducting a transparent DNA test, and making sure that the family is not harassed.

Meanwhile, Bangladesh Chhatra Union brought out a torch rally on Dhaka University campus yesterday evening, protesting the rape and murder of the Kalabagan schoolgirl and another death of a Kalabagan housemaid who died allegedly by suicide after being raped by a security guard of the building where she used to work.

Biden promises

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that nearly overwhelmed Washington last week.

Instead he addressed "the twin crises of a pandemic and this sinking economy," a challenge exceeding even that which faced him as vice president to Barack Obama when they assumed office following the 2008 financial crisis.

The Covid-19 pandemic continues to hit new peaks, the vaccination program is stumbling, and there are fears the economic recovery from the cratering of 2020 could backslide.

His proposal, dubbed the American Rescue Plan, will include a host of measures aimed at revitalising the world's largest economy.

Among those are raising the minimum wage to \$15 an hour, aiding struggling state and local governments, safely reopening schools, rolling out a massive Covid-19 vaccination campaign, extending unemployment benefits and boosting the size of stimulus checks Congress approved last month.

Biden, who will be sworn in January 20, is also promising to get vaccinations off the ground, with an eye-catching slogan of 100 million shots administered in the first 100 days.

The incoming president plans to tackle all of this at the same time, putting one of the darkest periods of American history in the rearview mirror.

Miseries pile up for poor

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pullers, who manage their livelihood hand to mouth.

It is also forcing people to stay indoors, affecting business and other day to day activities.

During a visit in different areas, the low-income group people were seen to warm themselves by lighting fire with straws or other wastes.

Farm and day labourers and rickshaw pullers were struggling hard to continue their jobs.

Farm worker Sirajul Islam, 50, of Sabdalhat village in Thakurgaon Sadar upazila, said due to the cooler wind it is much harder for them to continue their work in the cropland.

As it is peak time for nourishing potato filed they are to stay work despite adverse weather, he said.

Rafiqul Islam, 48, of Yakubpur village in the upazila, working in a vegetable field, said it is very difficult to stay in the field amid in such bone-chilling cold wind.

Though the weather became tolerable few days ago, in last three-four days the severity of cold is much higher after the fog decreased.

Rickshaw puller Mozaffar Ahmed, 45, of Nishchintapur in Thakurgaon municipality, said it is difficult to pull rickshaw because of the cold but he had to continue it amid the adverse weather as he was the only bread earner of his four-member family.

On the other hand, the number of patients, especially elderly people and

children affected with different cold related diseases, has been increasing at different hospitals and clinics.

About 135 children, affected with different cold related diseases, are currently admitted to Thakurgaon Sadar Hospital while another 215 adult patients are staying to other wards of the hospital, said Resident Medical Officer Rakibul Alam Chayan.

Besides, about 800-1000 patients were treated at the hospital outdoor each day. Of which about 50 percent patients came with the complaints of cold related diseases, the RMO said.

Thakurgaon Deputy Commissioner KM Kamruzzaman Selim said the district administration has already distributed 32,319 blankets and 501 quilts in five upazilas of the district.

"We are also requesting the solvent people from the society to help the poor," the DC said.

In Panchagarh, 21,200 blankets had been distributed among the distressed people and Tk 6 lakh were allocated for each upazila for buying blankets through UNOs aiming to distribute among poor cold-hit people, DC Sabina Yasmin said.

Thakurgaon Department of Agriculture Extension (DAE) Deputy Director Aftab Hossain said although it is hard for farmers to work in the crop fields in such chilling weather, the situation is not alarming for the Robi crops yet.

The growers of potato and boro are successfully overcoming the adverse weather, he added.

Worries grow as KL declares

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Muhyiddin took office in March last year with a thin majority, but he was facing threats from coalition allies that they would withdraw support for his government, which would trigger a snap election.

Analysts say pandemic-related slowdown of the economy and signs of political instability are frustrating all.

"This is a worrying situation for the migrant workers. The schools and universities are closed and the restaurant I work for draws very few customers," said Ismail Sagor, a Bangladeshi migrant working in Cyberjaya area of Selangor state.

He said the daily sales of the restaurant used to be 1500 Malaysian Ringgit (Tk 31,500) during normal time, but the figure has now come down to less than RM 300.

Ismail said.

He said undocumented workers are hit the hardest as employers are reluctant to hire them. Also, the Malaysian government is strict in enforcing the law under which employers face penalties for hiring undocumented workers.

Due to the pandemic, many undocumented workers also could not have their status regularised, but they fear arrest if they go out of their home.

Malaysia hosts about 800,000 Bangladeshi workers, including an estimated two lakh undocumented ones.

There is an ongoing regularisation programme called "recalibration" for the undocumented workers. They can get jobs and regularised only if the immigration department is satisfied that their employer really has jobs. Therefore, the rate of regularisation is low now, said Ahmadul Kabir, a Bangladeshi journalist based in Kuala Lumpur.

Traditionally, he said, many employers hire undocumented workers and pay them less than regular

salaries. But this practice is shrinking now as the government has tightened rules against such recruitments.

Kabir said even if one has a work permit, he has to work for the particular company that originally hired him. Otherwise, the employer is fined.

"Closure of many businesses and tightening of laws have made the situation worse for foreign workers," he added.

With the state of emergency in force, there is a real uncertainty over the situation in the coming months, the journalist said.

Sumitha Shaanthinni Kishna, director of migrant rights charity Our Journey, said the situation is not as bad as it was during the first lockdown in Malaysia.

The manufacturing, construction, service, plantation and commodities sectors are open now, but their businesses are yet to be fully operational. The government has banned foreign workers from working in the wet markets for fear of spread of the virus -- a decision which resulted in joblessness of many Bangladeshis, she said.

Abu Hayat, an independent Bangladeshi researcher based in Kuala Lumpur, said economic slowdown has left several lakh Malaysians jobless. They, however, have been brought under various public social safety schemes, but not the foreign workers.

"This is the area where we need to work because migrants are the group of people most badly affected by the pandemic," he said. Jahiul Islam, labour counsellor at Bangladesh High Commission in Malaysia, however, said he didn't see Bangladeshis being affected by the state of emergency.

"We don't have reports that the state of emergency has created problems for the migrants. This is just for controlling the spread of novel coronavirus," he told this correspondent over the phone.