

## They have undermined

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The two metropolitan magistrates told The Daily Star that metropolitan magistrates Debrata Biswas and Atikul Islam will have to offer unconditional apology to the HC for granting remand prayers against Pori Moni for second and third time in the same case.

On September 15, the HC bench expressed discontent at the explanations of the two judges saying that they had "undermined" this court. "The metropolitan magistrates [lower court judges] in their explanations said they granted the prayers for remands [of Pori Moni], considering the whole situation. They requested for pardon if they have made any unintended mistakes or faults in passing the remand orders," the HC said.

The HC said it seems, from their explanations, that they don't believe that they have done anything wrong. "They have undermined us by giving such explanations," the HC bench of Justice Mustafa Zaman and Justice Zahid Sarwar said during hearing a petition relating to this issue.

The bench then fixed yesterday for passing order on this petition. Investigation officer of the case, Golam Mostafa, yesterday appeared before the HC bench in line with its September 15 order.

Yesterday, the HC bench delivered the order during hearing of the petition filed by rights organisation Ain o Salish Kendra (ASK) challenging the orders of metropolitan magistrates Debrata and Atikul granting the IO's prayers for taking Pori Moni on remands.

The two metropolitan magistrates have apologised to the HC for their "unintended mistakes and faults" in placing Pori Moni on remands for the second and third time in a narcotics case, saying that they have done it in "good faith".

They offered apology in separate written explanations which were earlier submitted to the HC through the Supreme Court registrar general's office.

They said in the explanations that they have ordered the police to execute the remand of Pori Moni in the presence of a female police officer under the SC directives.

The metropolitan magistrates also prayed to the HC bench to exonerate them from any further proceedings, saying that they will remain more cautious during passing remand orders in future.

In his explanation, Judge Debrata said accused Pori Moni alias Shamsun Nahar Smrity has been arrested with narcotics, including foreign liquor, Lysergic acid diethylamide (LSD), which are awful for the society.

He said he granted prayer for two days' remand of her as he thought it was reasonable to find out the source of LSD narcotics and the masterminds.

Judge Atikul in his explanation said his court allowed one day's remand of Pori Moni to extract concrete and exact information on how the terrible narcotics like LSD have entered the country and how they have spread and who are involved with them, HC sources said.

## Stop probe into 11 journo's bank accounts

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In addition, the Bangladesh Financial Intelligence Unit on September 16 ordered banks to provide such information for 11 other journalist leaders.

The authorities have not disclosed any reason for the order targeting those journalists and the reason behind the probe remains unclear, noted CPJ in its statement.

"The Bangladesh Financial Intelligence Unit's investigation of the bank accounts belonging to a dozen prominent journalists looks suspiciously like selective law enforcement aimed at intimidating the independent press," said Steven Butler, CPJ's Asia programme coordinator. "Authorities should immediately

drop these investigations, cease harassing journalists and commit to allowing the media to operate openly and freely."

Furthermore, CPJ also wrote to the Health Minister Zahid Malek for comments regarding Rozina's case via email, but did not get any response, said the organisation.

It also emailed Md Masud Biswas, executive director of the Bangladesh Financial Intelligence Unit; Md Shafiqul Islam, commissioner of the Dhaka Metropolitan Police; and Ferdousi Shahriar, the deputy chief of mission at the Embassy of Bangladesh in Washington DC, for comments on the 12 investigations, but did not receive any replies, the CPJ statement said.

The 11 journalist leaders being investigated include president and general secretary of the National Press Club Farida Yasmin and Elias Khan; president and general secretary of Dhaka Reporters Unity Mursalin Noman and Mostiur Rahman Khan; Kader Gani Chowdhury and Sajjad Alam Khan Tapu, both of whom lead two different factions within the Dhaka Union of Journalists, and a general secretary Mohammad Shahidul Islam, Molla Jalal, president of a group within the Bangladesh Federal Union of Journalists (BFUJ) and Muhammad Abdullah, who is the president of another faction in BFUJ, and secretary-generals of these two groups Nurul Amin Rokan and Abdul Majid.

## Court denies

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The petition filed by Anvir and Sabrina on September 16.

The couple appeared before the HC and their lawyer Muhammad Yusuf Hossain Humayun placed arguments on their behalf during hearing of the petition yesterday.

Humayun could not be reached for comments on the issue despite repeated attempts.

After police recovered the body of the 21-year-old college student in a Gulshan flat on April 26, her elder sister had filed a case with Gulshan Police Station against Anvir on charge of suicide abetment.

On July 19, Abul Hasan, investigation officer of the case and also Gulshan Police Station's office-in-charge, submitted the final report to the Dhaka Chief Metropolitan Magistrate's Court. On August 18, a Dhaka court accepted the final report and relieved Anvir.

However, victim's elder sister on September 6 filed another case with Dhaka's Women and Children Repression Prevention Tribunal-8 against Anvir over the rape and murder of the victim.

Ahmed Akbar Sobhan alias Shah Alam, chairman of Bashundhara Group, and six others were also made accused in the case for abetment.

## Non-aligned plea for world

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its internal problems, but to send back East Pakistan refugees to their homeland. Mahmood Ali, leader of the Pakistan delegation to the UN General Assembly, told the assembly, "My government has given proof of its desire to find settlement with India not of Pakistan's internal problems but the refugee problem."

Mahmoud Ali's remarks were part of a series of exchanges that began on September 27, 1971 in the general debate between the India and the Pakistan delegations.

Referring to the call for political solution in East Pakistan, Mahmood Ali said, "The president of Pakistan is moving toward a political solution and is attaining it." He alleged that India was helping East Pakistan

insurgents. ROGERS AND GROMYKO DISCUSS BANGLADESH

The US Secretary of State William Rogers and the Soviet Foreign Minister Gromyko in their annual round of talks held today in Washington agreed on the need to prevent the escalation of tension created by the massive flow of refugees from East Pakistan to India. They felt the need to counsel India and Pakistan to have discussion to see if some solutions to the Bangladesh problem could be worked out.

BANGLADESH DAY OBSERVED  
The chancellor of the University of Saskatchewan declared September 30 as Bangladesh Day. Bangladesh Association of Saskatchewan organised an elaborate daylong programme for the observance of the day. The

campus community demonstrated its support for the Bangladesh cause by participating in all the programmes.

On the same day, Bangladesh Crisis Committee organised a public meeting to educate the people about the situation in Bangladesh. The committee was formed at the University of Minnesota, and it was sponsored by the faculty members of the university.

ON THE WAR FRONT  
Mukti Bahini today engaged Pakistani troops who were indulging in looting Jafflong market of Sylhet district, and killed eight enemy soldiers.

Four Pakistani soldiers were killed in Jambari area of Cumilla district. Shamsuddoza Sajen is a journalist and researcher. He can be contacted at sajen1986@gmail.com

## UAE approves RT-PCR labs

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He said they informed the other authorities concerned regarding the approval.

In the letter, the UAE embassy requested Caab to grant permission to start operation of regular flights between Bangladesh and the UAE.

The approval came after Caab submitted to the UAE authorities standard operating procedure (SOP) of six healthcare facilities that set up RT-PCR labs at HSIA.

The UAE last month made it mandatory for foreign passengers to have a rapid PCR test for Covid-19 maximum six hours before departure.

On September 15, the expatriates welfare ministry announced that based on recommendations made by the health directorate, they permitted seven healthcare facilities to set up labs at the Dhaka airport.

However, one of them later withdrew from the initiative.

Despite promises made by government high-ups and the prime minister's instruction in this regard weeks ago, service of RT-PCR labs at the airport was still not available.

The authorities were finally able to install the labs on Saturday after missing several dates promised by ministers.

Earlier, the laboratories conducted experimental Covid-19 tests after collecting samples from health officials. Several thousand UAE-bound expatriates were unable to return to work in the Gulf country due to absence of such testing facilities at the country's international airports.

Expatriates, including migrant workers and professionals, came home from the UAE on vacation and subsequently got stranded.

The stranded expatriates had been demanding speedy set up of the testing facilities at international airports, saying such facilities were imperative for their survival financially.

Many expatriate workers feared that failure to join work in the UAE on time might cost them their jobs.

According to sources, the six RT-PCR labs have been set up inside Terminal-1 of the airport. Later, those will be shifted to the designated space on the roof of the multi-storied car parking building of the airport.

## New lizard species

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of a new species of lizard," the statement said.

The lizard's head is dark gray, and females have pale yellow eyelids.

The discovery was registered a few weeks ago in cooperation with scientists from Argentina, Chile and Bolivia.

The Cotahuasi Subbasin Landscape Reserve, where the lizard was found, is a protected area in the Arequipa region in southwestern Peru, with an area of 490,550 hectares (1,900 square miles).

There are more than 280 species of Liolaemus lizards living in a huge area ranging from the Central Andes in Peru to Patagonia, at the southern tip of South America.

They have adapted to a wide range of habitats.

## Form next EC with political

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BNP opposed the search committee.

Replying to a question, Huda said, "The next election commission should be on the basis of political consensus. I support this. There needs to be a commission that gets support from everyone."

"The election commission does not have any opinion on the formation of a new commission. Usually, no opinion is sought from the commission. If the opinion is sought, we'll hold a meeting in this regard."

Regarding the formulation of an act, he said the parliament enacts a law.

Replying to a question as to how political consensus can be reached, he said it could be reached through dialogue by the President with the political parties.

"It is up to the President," he said, adding that the EC does not have any role in this matter.

About his recent visit to Russia, he said it was not possible to hold elections like Russia. There is no concept of a door-to-door election campaign in Russia.

"They brought all polling centres under CCTV surveillance. They can observe the situation and casting percentage from home," he said.

A total of 245 observers from 49 countries went there. There was no incident of chaos in the polling centre. "There were no allegations. No scope to snatch away ballot box," he said.

In Russia, one can vote by using their passports and check their casting instantly on the monitor, he said.

### WEBINAR

# The importance of pharmacovigilance in healthcare

In celebration of World Patient Safety Day 2021, Beacon Pharmaceuticals Limited and The Daily Star jointly organised a three-part webinar series from September 16 to 18, 2021. The theme for this year's World Patient Safety Day is "Safe maternal and newborn care", where the World Health Organization (WHO) urged all stakeholders worldwide to "Act now for safe and respectful childbirth!"

Episode 1 of the special webinar series, titled "We are responsible for the safe storage and distribution of medicines", brought in specialists from the field of pharmacy to share their expertise.

Dr Sitesh C Bachar, Professor, Department of Pharmacy, University of Dhaka, explained the meanings of adverse drug reactions and pharmacovigilance: "An adverse drug reaction is a pathological condition created by a drug, regardless of its nature, for circumstances of its occurrence. Such reactions can be evaluated and prevented using pharmacovigilance."

Mohammad Abdur Rahman, Deputy General Manager, Pharmacy, Evercare Hospital Dhaka, shared the proper steps to ensure the drug safety of new patients: "The first step is medication reconciliation, i.e., gaining information about the patient's drug history and whether they should continue taking the drugs. Then, we check whether they have signs and symptoms of any adverse drug reaction. If hypersensitivity is found, the patient is provided with a drug allergy card to simplify future treatment plans."

Constant communication between nurses and pharmacists can prevent adverse drug reactions, as described by Md Jahidul Hasan, Coordinator, IPD Pharmacy, Department of Clinical Pharmacy, Square Hospital. "Nurses should be continually given updated information about drugs from the pharmacy department so that the drugs are administered and stored properly. Sometimes, adverse reactions

### PARTICIPANTS

 <b>Dr Sitesh C Bachar</b>	 <b>Mohammad Abdur Rahman</b>	 <b>Md Jahidul Hasan</b>	 <b>Mahmudul Hoque</b>
 <b>Prof Mamun Al Mahtab</b>	 <b>Major General Prof Dr Md Azizul Islam</b>	 <b>Prof Dr Sajjad Mohammad Yusuff</b>	 <b>Prof Dr S M Abdur Rahman</b>
 <b>Prof Dr Farhana Dewan</b>	 <b>Prof Dr Sabera Khatun</b>	 <b>Dr Akter Hossain</b>	 <b>Prof Dr Ferdousi Begum</b>

Hepatology, Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujib Medical University (BSMMU), shared, "A drug goes through multiple clinical trials before hitting the market, but that still does not ensure its safety. The drug has to be monitored even when it is in the market and used by the mass population. Many drugs are removed from the market if new adverse side effects are found."

When asked about the importance of drug safety in cancer treatment, Major General Prof Dr Md Azizul Islam, Consultant Physician General, Bangladesh Armed Forces, Ministry of Defence, Dhaka Cantonment, said, "Ensuring drug safety in cancer treatment is crucial because cytotoxic

*Ensuring drug safety in cancer treatment is crucial because cytotoxic drugs can cause both immediate and late side effects, some of which are life-threatening.*

drugs can cause both immediate and late side effects, some of which are life-threatening."

Dr Sajjad Mohammad Yusuff, Professor, Radiotherapy Department, Chittagong Medical College Hospital, mentioned, "If drug safety is not maintained, distrust is created within the healthcare industry. Pharmaceutical companies should therefore make great investments in the research and development of drugs. Each company should also have a pharmacovigilance team with experts of global standard."

Describing the state of pharmacovigilance activities in the country, Prof Dr S M Abdur

Rahman, Dean, Faculty of Pharmacy, University of Dhaka, shared, "Through the Directorate General of Drug Administration (DGDA), an adverse drug reaction monitoring (ADRM) cell has been established that deals with pharmacovigilance teams of different companies. The Adverse Drug Reaction Advisory Committee (ADRAC) analyses and reports cases of adverse drug reactions."

Episode 3 of the webinar series was titled "Taking safe medicine during pregnancy", where specialists in obstetrics and gynaecology shared their insights.

Dr Farhana Dewan, Professor and Head, Gynaecology & Obstetrics Department, Ibn Sina Medical College Hospital, & President Elected, OGSB, explained how hospitals could carry out pharmacovigilance activities: "Hospitals should have written policies clarifying the effects of each drug on different types of patients. This information can also be in a checklist or module that all medical personnel can follow."

Prof Dr Sabera Khatun, Founder Chairman & Head, Department of Gynaecology, BSMMU, shared an example of adverse drug reaction in obstetrics: "The drug thalidomide was used to treat morning sickness in pregnant patients. Later it was found that it caused babies to be born with limb deformations. Pregnant women should save themselves from such adverse drug reactions by avoiding over-the-counter medicine."

Sharing his vision for a country with enhanced drug safety, Dr Akter Hossain, Deputy Director, DGDA, and Focal Point of ADR said, "All actors responsible for pharmacovigilance are those who register drugs, DGDA, marketing authorisation holders or companies, and healthcare professionals. If they all work together, Bangladesh will be on track for creating an environment where patients feel comfortable sharing their issues with drug use, and pharmacovigilance is ensured."