

MISSING HEALTH MINISTRY FILES  
6 staffers picked up  
for interrogation

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Criminal Investigation Department of police yesterday picked up six staffers of the health ministry for interrogation over 17 files missing from the ministry's medical education division.

The six were taken to CID headquarters by a microbus, an additional superintendent of CID told The Daily Star.

CID officials also collected evidence from the room of the secretariat, from where the files went missing.

"As part of the shadow investigation, we came here (the ministry) to interrogate (the staffers). We will interrogate them and let you know the details later on," Md Kamruzzaman, a special superintendent of CID, told reporters on the spot.

A CID source said those who used to look after the files at the branch are being quizzed. They were still at the CID HQ till the filing of this report at 7pm.

Earlier, the health ministry on Thursday filed a general diary after the 17 files, deemed 'important', went missing.

On Saturday, it formed a three-member committee to probe into how the files went missing from its premises.

Meanwhile, Ali Noor, secretary to the Medical Education and Family Welfare Division, yesterday told reporters that there is nothing confidential in the missing files.

"The information in the files is in our other departments, in our computers, in our DG offices," he said at the secretariat while replying to query from journalists. He said though this back-up is not a problem, but the fact that the files went missing is.

Asked whether he suspected anyone in the ministry, he said, "It's difficult to say now. Because we don't really know who did it..."

"However, we have told police that they can interrogate

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PHOTO: PRABIR DAS

With its snowy white petals adorned in vivid orange, the night jasmine, better known as sheuli, has graced the capital's scenery over the last week. Local flower sellers in the Dhaka University area collect them in the first light and turn them into garlands, selling each for Tk 10-20. Their auspicious presence signals the coming of a new season, acting as a harbinger of hope. The photo was taken yesterday.



PM reaches  
Scotland to  
attend COP26

UNB, Scotland

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina reached Scotland yesterday as she embarked on a two-week visit to the United Kingdom and France to attend the 26th UN Climate Change Conference of the Parties (COP26) and other events.

A VVIP flight of Biman Bangladesh Airlines, carrying the prime minister and her entourage, landed at Glasgow International Airport in Scotland at 2:55pm (local time).

Bangladesh High Commissioner to the UK Saida Muna Tasneem received her at the airport.

Earlier, the aircraft took

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'DANCE CLUB' RACKET  
2 traffickers  
arrested

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Rapid Action Battalion arrested two members of a trafficking racket from the capital's Karail slum area early yesterday.

The arrestees are – Sujon Shikder (21), and Ramzan Mollah (26). Another suspect – Hossain from Narail – is on the run.

Their targets were usually young women, mostly from families belonging to lower-income groups.

"The traffickers faked love affairs with the girls to lure them into the trafficking trap. They would also marry them by verbal agreements without proper paperwork, capture their intimate photos and then traffic them to India," said ASP (Operations Officer) Noman Ahmed of Rab-1.

One of the arrestees,

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THE SPACE CONUNDRUM

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

If the proposed building construction rules-2021 is approved, it will reduce 33 to 53 percent floor areas of a building, the Real Estate and Housing Association of Bangladesh (REHAB) said yesterday.

Leaders of the organisation made the comment at a press conference held at a city hotel.

"According to the existing building construction rules-2008, if a building owner constructs an eight-storey building adjoining a 20-feet road on a five-katha land, it leaves them with 13,500 square feet floor area," said REHAB president Alamgir Shamsul Alamin (Kajal).

"But if the draft building construction rules-2021 is approved, an owner will get 9,000 square feet of floor area."

Alamgir said this reduced space will increase flat prices by around 50 percent and reduce the purchasing capacity of a buyer, and also increase rent over time.

According to the draft Detailed Area Plan (DAP) of 2016 to 2035, the total number of structures in Rajuk areas is around 21 lakh. Of them, 84 percent



REHAB'S TAKE

- Under proposed building construction rules, floor space will reduce up to 53pc
- This will drive up price by 50pc, rent and reduce buyer's purchasing capacity

CHANGE IN PLANS

- Earlier, Rajuk took initiative to limit building height to control population density
- However, it was discarded, with new plan for per acre-based solution

EXPERTS' VERSION

- Former plan was better route for density control, sustainability
- Rajuk bowed down to real estate sector's pressure

are one-storey buildings, 93 percent from one to three-storey, 0.67 percent are over six-storey, while 0.16 percent are above eight-storeys, said Alamgir.

Contacted, DAP project director MD Ashraf Islam raised questions over how REHAB got to know about the draft of the proposed building construction rules-2021, as it is neither published nor finalised yet.

"We have just updated it after a mass trial and we will take a decision on it after holding a national seminar," said Ashraf. He added REHAB will be notified prior to the seminar, where they will be able to state their opinions as well.

"We will not take any decision to harm anyone, but we will take every decision to make the city liveable," said Ashraf.

Earlier, Rajuk took an initiative to limit building height in order to control population density.

However, the plan was later discarded, with Rajuk instead going for a horizontal solution, proposing density control measures based on per acre of area a building takes up.

Officials of Rajuk said though they initially planned to limit the

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146 more  
hospitalised  
with dengue

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

At least 146 more patients were hospitalised with dengue in the last 24 hours till 8am yesterday, of whom 42 are from outside Dhaka, according to the Directorate General of Health Services (DGHS).

With the new cases, a total of 5,458 were diagnosed during the current month out of a total 23,655 infected. Of the total infected, 3,414 are from outside Dhaka.

According to DGHS, 91 people have died of dengue infection in the country this year. Twelve people died in July, 34 in August, 23 in September and 22 in October.

Among the deaths, 84 have died in Dhaka, five each in Chattogram, Khulna, Rajshahi, Mymensingh and Barishal.

'We have to carry  
his mantle forward'

Abul Hasnat's invaluable  
contribution to Bangladeshi  
culture remembered

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Choosing substance over publicity, poet, essayist, and editor Abul Hasnat devoted his life to improve the culture of the country. For this, the vacuum created by the Kali O Kalam magazine editor's demise is irreparable.

His fellows and admirers made these observations at a remembrance programme yesterday, organised by Bengal Foundation to mark his first death anniversary.

Abul Hasnat died on November 1 last year, at the age of 75.

At the programme, friends and followers remembered Hasnat through emotional reminiscences, evaluation of his work, exhibition of documentaries, and publication of a memorabilia book on him.

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A group of students of Chattogram Medical College demonstrated in front of the campus yesterday, protesting the attack on Mahadi J Akib, an MBBS student of the institution. Akib was seriously injured in a clash between two factions of Chhatra League on the campus Saturday. He is now on life support at Chattogram Medical College Hospital's intensive care unit.

PHOTO: COLLECTED



COURT CHRONICLES

CONDEMNED CELLS  
HC seeks report  
on facilities  
for death row  
convicts

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The High Court yesterday sought a report from the government on the facilities provided to 1,987 death row convicts in the condemned cells at prisons across the country.

The court ordered the government to submit the report to it in detail by November 14.

The HC bench of Justice M Enayetur Rahim and Justice Md Mostafizur Rahman passed the order during hearing a writ petition challenging the legality of keeping death

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Can't direct  
parliament to  
formulate law

Says HC; rejects petition  
on formation of EC

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The High Court yesterday summarily rejected a writ petition that sought its directive on the authorities concerned to formulate a law for formation of the Election Commission.

The HC bench of Justice Md Mozibur Rahman Miah and Justice Md Kamrul Hossain Mollah rejected the petition saying that this court cannot direct the parliament to formulate any law.

Supreme Court lawyer and secretary general of Bangladesh Congress, a political party,

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GRAFT CASE  
Charge framed  
against Salim  
Prodhan

COURT CORRESPONDENT

A Dhaka court yesterday framed charges against online casino "kingpin" Salim Prodhan in a case filed over amassing Tk 57.79 crore illegally and laundering about Tk 22 crore.

Salim, now in jail, pleaded not guilty and demanded justice after Judge Al Asad Md Asifuzzaman of the Special Judge's Court-6 of Dhaka read out the charges to him, Mohammad Mostofa, bench assistant of the court, told The Daily Star.

The judge fixed November 25 to start the

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DEATH OF SALMAN SHAH  
Dhaka court  
accepts PBI  
probe report

COURT CORRESPONDENT

A Dhaka court yesterday accepted the probe report of a case filed over the death of actor Salman Shah.

Dhaka Metropolitan Magistrate Md Mamunur Rashid passed the order after rejecting a no-confidence petition filed by the defence.

Investigation Officer Sirajul Islam, an inspector of Police Bureau of Investigation (PBI), on February 25 last year submitted a 600-page probe report to the Chief Metropolitan Magistrate Court of Dhaka, stating

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Govt to procure  
9.5 lakh tonnes  
of food grains

UNB, Dhaka

The government will procure a total of 9.5 tonnes of food grains from the farmers across the country in the current fiscal year to ensure fair prices to them and increase food stock.

Under the programme, three lakh tonnes of paddy, five lakh tonnes of boiled rice and 1.5 lakh tonnes of wheat will be procured.

The decision was taken at an online meeting of the Food Planning and Monitoring Unit chaired by Food Minister Sadhan Chandra Majumder yesterday.

The government has fixed the paddy procurement price at Tk 27 per kg, boiled rice at Tk 40 per kg and wheat at Tk 28 per kg, said the minister.

The paddy procurement drive will begin on November 7 while the wheat procurement on April 1 in 2022, he added.

Last year, the government had procured two lakh tonnes of paddy at Tk 26 per kg, 6 lakh tonnes of boiled rice at Tk 37 per kg and 50,000 tonnes of wheat at Tk 36 per kg.

4 journos attacked for  
protesting extortion

Fellows take to the street, cops arrest three

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Rajshahi

An attack on four journalists in front of police sparked a six-hour street protest by their fellows at Rajshahi city's Martyred Qamaruzzaman Square yesterday.

The incident began at 11am, when the four journalists -- led by Rafiqul Islam, president of Rajshahi Union of Journalists --, under the banner of press club, went to the spot to protest extortion using false identities of journalists.

Angry at this, miscreants stormed the spot and started beating them up.

Rafiqul Islam, and three other journalists -- Razu Ahmed, Selim Jahangir and Kabil Hossain -- sustained mild injuries from the attack. The injured said although police were present, the miscreants still managed to flee.

Soon after this, more journalists thronged the spot and held a sit-in on the street. They demanded arrest of attackers and withdrawal of Boalia Police Station OC Nibaran Chandra Burman.

Meanwhile, some journalist leaders met Abu Kalam Siddique, commissioner of Rajshahi Metropolitan Police, at his conference room with their demands. The commissioner assured them of justice, they said.

At 5pm, police arrested three attackers -- Liakat Hossain, Faruk Hossain and Rezaul Islam -- following which, the protest was withdrawn.

However, they said if no action is taken against the OC within 72 hours, they will hold a sit-in in front of the police station.

OC Burman could not be contacted for comments.



PHOTO: RASHED SHUMON

As physical classes are starting in full swing at Dhaka University, Associate Professor Rebeka Sultana of the philosophy department decided to share a different experience with students yesterday. Instead of holding the class in a regular classroom, she took third-year students out in the open air, under a tree in front of the arts building.