

Keep hospital beds ready for Nipah virus patients: DGHS

UNB, Dhaka

The government yesterday gave directives to the relevant authorities to keep the Dhaka North City Corporation Dedicated Covid-19 Hospital ready in the wake of the spread of the Nipah virus in 28 districts of the country.

The Directorate General of Health Services issued the directives asking the hospital authorities to keep 10 beds in the isolation ward and 10 Intensive Care Unit (ICU) beds prepared, said a press release signed by Dr Sheikh Daud Adnan, director (hospitals and clinics) of the DGHS.

On January 29, Health Minister Zahid Maleque said so far, five people have died of the Nipah virus this year.

People who drink raw date juice and fruits partially eaten by birds, especially bats, have the possibility of being infected with the virus.

AMAR EKUSHEY BOI MELA Fun day for little ones

DIPAN NANDY

Shankha Saha was having too much of a good time to pay heed to his father.

The seven-year-old was busy moving around the book fair at Suhrawardy Udyan yesterday morning.

Meanwhile, his father Shantanu Saha not only had to keep an eye on him, but also buy books for him from Sisimpur stall.

“Shankha kept on forcing me to come to the book fair. He did not want to miss the first Shishu Prahar (special hours dedicated to children),” he told this correspondent.

Like him, hundreds of children surrounded Sisimpur Mancha at Amar Ekushey Grantha Mela yesterday noon, shouting, “We love to read books!” They were accompanied by mascots of the popular characters from Sesame Street’s Bangladeshi adaptation.

Marking the first “Shishu Prahar”, Sisimpur’s Halum, Ikri and Tuktuki recommended the children to read more books and consequently performed skits, much to their excitement. Besides, children were seen walking around holding the hands of their guardians, some were also being carried by the adults accompanying them.



PHOTO: PRABIR DAS

Shishu Chattar on the fair premises at 11:00am.

The Shishu Prahar was inaugurated by Bangla Academy Director General Mohammad Nurul Huda at Sheikh Russel

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US for democracy in Myanmar

Says US State Dept Counselor Derek Chollet

DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT



The US will pressurise the Myanmar junta to support the pro-democracy movement in the civil-war-ridden Southeast Asian nation, hoping to see the return of democracy in a year.

“This is an effort that we will not waver from in the coming months, and we very much hope that a year from now, we will not have to commemorate the grim milestone of the third year after the coup. Rather, we hope to reflect on a moment in which Myanmar has returned to the path of democracy,” said US State Department Counselor Derek Chollet.

Chollet, a senior policy advisor to the Secretary of State, said this during a telephone briefing on the second anniversary of Myanmar’s military coup on Wednesday.

He will visit Bangladesh on February 14-15, visit the Rohingya camps in Cox’s Bazar and is expected to call on Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina, Foreign Minister AK Abdul Momen and Foreign Secretary Masud Bin Momen.

Diplomatic sources said the purpose of his visit is mainly to discuss the Rohingya crisis and humanitarian assistance. Bangladesh has been sheltering more than a million Rohingya refugees, most of who fled a brutal military crackdown in 2017.

The situation in Myanmar was aggravated when the military took control of the country through a coup on February 1, 2021. The elected civilian lawmakers of Aung

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6th edition of Dhaka Art Summit starts



PHOTO: STAR

STAR REPORT

Dhaka Art Summit 2023 officially commenced yesterday at the National Art Gallery of Shilpakala Academy.

In the sixth edition of DAS, a total of 160 artists from across the globe were featured, centring on the theme of “Bonna” (flood).

Lawmaker Salman F Rahman, private industry and investment advisor to the prime minister, was the chief guest at the inaugural ceremony, while State Minister for Cultural Affair KM Khalid was the special guest.

The ceremony was attended by Liaquat Ali Lucky, director general of Bangladesh Shilpakala Academy; Nadia Samdani MBE, director of Dhaka Art Summit and president of Samdani Art Foundation; Rajeeb Samdani, trustee of Dhaka Art Summit and Samdani Art Foundation; Mohammad Shaker Shamim, managing director and CEO of Golden Harvest Agro Industries Limited; and Farooq Sobhan, chairman of DAS organising committee.

KM Khalid thanked Samdani Art Foundation for giving people the opportunity to not only see the work of Bangladeshi artists but also those of international artists.

Salman F Rahman reminisced about his journey as a patron of art and artists. He also praised Bangladesh for leading the way in women’s empowerment, which he remarked was related to the theme of Bonna.

The floors of the National Art Gallery were adorned with diverse paintings, photography, illustrations, videography, installations, architectural drawings and models, fabric and crochet work, leather work, laser works, sculptures, carvings, projections, poetry, performances, and crafts. The summit is open for all and will run at Shilpakala Academy till February 11.

Bangladesh must be ready to make its own vaccines

Says vaccine expert Prof Robin Shattock

MOUDUD AHMED SUJAN

Bangladesh should take measures to reduce reliance on high-income countries for vaccines in the case of a future pandemic, said Prof Robin Shattock, a leading expert in vaccines and researcher at Imperial College London.

Shattock’s team at Imperial is currently working on developing a new technology that will make vaccines cheaper in the near future. As part of their global collaboration to ensure vaccine equity through technology transfer, they’ve partnered with Incepta Vaccines Ltd, the first human-vaccine manufacturer in Bangladesh, to develop new vaccines that can prevent cervical cancer and diarrhoea caused by Shigella bacteria. Visiting Bangladesh for his project with Incepta, Shattock said, “The disparity in vaccine access and infrastructure is a concern. So, it is crucial to ensure that Bangladesh, like any other low-income country, has the technology to produce vaccines for future pandemics.”

For this, he said, the country can either implement the capacity to develop new vaccines or partner with global players like the World Health Organization to support clinical trials as independent investment can be costly.

According to Shattock, Bangladesh’s biotechnology industry is promising, with a high potential for growth.

“To expand the potential of the industry though, it will be important to invest in training and retain skilled workers from seeking careers overseas for higher salaries,” he told The Daily Star.

Terming the government’s Covid-19 vaccination campaign successful, he lauded the “mass participation across the country and the donation of a huge number of vaccines from the COVAX initiative.”

“Bangladesh’s biotechnology industry is promising, with a high potential for growth. To expand the potential of the industry though, it will be important to invest in training and retain skilled workers from seeking careers overseas for higher salaries.”

Shattock’s team at Imperial College London has also been working on developing new RNA-vaccine technology, to be made available in the next few years, which could potentially be much cheaper. “It is more potent, so one can use a lower dose – perhaps tenfold lower than the current mRNA vaccines, which lowers

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PM to open revenue conference tomorrow

STAR REPORT

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina is scheduled to inaugurate a two-day revenue

conference on Sunday which will be held at the Bangabandhu International Conference Centre (BICC) in the capital.

“National Board of Revenue (NBR) is going to organise the revenue conference to develop the country’s revenue management system. It is scheduled to be inaugurated by the prime minister, who will also inaugurate the new building of the NBR on the same day,” said NBR Chairman Abu Hena Md Rahmatul Muneem at a press conference at NBR conference room yesterday.

“Bangladesh has already made a lot of progress in becoming a developed country by 2041. In this context, NBR has been working to increase internal revenue collection through modernisation of revenue management,” said NBR chairman.

Muneem informed that three seminars on value added tax (VAT), income tax and customs

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3 arrested with 5.4kg of heroin

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Rab claimed to have seized 5.4 kilos of heroin and arrested three members of a drug smuggling gang, who employed female carriers to deliver the drug to clients in Dhaka and other districts in the country.

Shakibur Rahman, 35, ring leader of the smuggling gang, his wife Selina Khatun alias Shirina, 38, and their associate Rajia Khatun, 33, were arrested from Gazipur and Naogaon on Thursday.



The gang used to smuggle 4-5 kilos of heroin every month into the country through the Rajshahi’s Godagari border area.

KHANDAKER AL MOIN
Rab’s Legal and Media wing director

The gang used to smuggle 4-5 kilos of heroin every month into the country through the Rajshahi’s Godagari border area, said Khandaker Al Moin, Rab’s Legal and Media wing director, in a press briefing yesterday.

Shakib and his associate used to supply the drugs to Bogura, Sirajganj, Gazipur, Jamalpur, Narayanganj and Dhaka, said the Rab official.

Shakib is the kingpin of the gang, which has 10-12 female members. He used to transport the drugs via these female carriers to dodge the eyes of law enforcers, added Moin.

A team of Rab first seized three kilos of heroin

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UN leprosy expert to visit Bangladesh on Feb 7-15

UNB, Dhaka

The UN Special Rapporteur on discrimination against persons affected by leprosy and their family members, Alice Cruz, will pay an official visit to Bangladesh from February 7 to 15.

“The UN Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, at its most recent review on Bangladesh made several recommendations about leprosy-related discrimination,” the expert said.

“I will explore how Bangladesh endeavours to eliminate discrimination against persons affected by leprosy and their family members,” she said yesterday.

Cruz will assess issues of structural

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Ban all zoos Protestors demand at Shahbagh rally

DU CORRESPONDENT

A group called Save the Nature of Bangladesh yesterday demanded the closure of all zoos in Bangladesh, describing them as a “wildlife torture cell”.

The demand has been raised from a protest rally held in front of the National Museum in Shahbagh yesterday, under the banner of the “Anti-Zoo Movement in Bangladesh”.

As many as 150 activists from several districts and different organisations participated in the rally.

As a symbolic protest, some protestors locked themselves up in enclosures with their hands and legs cuffed to depict the ordeal of wildlife inside zoos.

They have issued around 700 postcards from the rally to Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina for taking the initiative to ban all zoos.

Some of the placards from the protest read, “Zoo is a symbol of modern civilisation’s cruelty to wildlife” and “Ban wildlife torture cells”.

Animals were supposed to live free, according to the speakers at the rally, but they are held in cages across the country for people’s entertainment instead.

“There are around 50 zoos across the country where thousands of wild animals are confined. They are living there in a cruel environment,” said ANM Moazzem Hossain, chairman of Save the Nature of Bangladesh.

“We will issue one lakh postcards to the PM for banning all zoos in the country as part of the ongoing protest. We have already issued around 27,000 of them. Our protest will continue till this torture of wildlife stops,” he added.

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Nazrul Utsav, organised to commemorate the life and work of National Poet Kazi Nazrul Islam, mesmerised the audience with the performance of renowned and promising artists alike. The event will conclude today at Gulshan Society Lake Park in the capital.

PHOTO: SHEIKH MEHEDI MORSHED

Nazrul Utsav concludes today

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The second edition of Nazrul Utsav, organised in the capital’s Gulshan Society Lake Park, is going to end today.

The two-day event was organised by Bangladesh Nazrul Sangeet Sangstha (BNSS), the High Commission of India in Dhaka and Gulshan Society.

HSBC Bank Bangladesh is the title sponsor of the event.

Commemorating the works of National Poet Kazi Nazrul Islam, the festival aims to celebrate the life and work of the poet by collaborating with artists from both sides of the border. This year, over 50 renowned senior and promising artists joined the festival.

Ekushey Padak-winning Nazrul Sangeet exponent Khairul Anam Shakil, also general secretary of BNSS, was the convener of the festival.

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