

Myanmar not cooperating
Says home minister on preventing drug smuggling

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Home Minister Asaduzzaman Khan Kamal has expressed concern over the lack of cooperation from Myanmar in preventing drug smuggling across the border.

Addressing a press conference on the occasion of International Day against Drug Abuse and Illicit Trafficking yesterday, Kamal pointed out that the border between Bangladesh and Myanmar poses significant challenges in terms of control.

"To enhance border surveillance, the government has taken steps to acquire helicopters and is increasing the number of border guards, along with improving their training," he said.

The minister emphasised government's commitment to combat narcotics smuggling and

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Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina at a meeting with Tony Blair, former British primer minister and executive chairman of Tony Blair Institute for Global Change, at her official residence Gono Bhaban in the capital yesterday. Hasina returned home from Italy early yesterday after attending the UN Food Systems Summit+2 Stocktaking Moment.

PHOTO: PID

'We are worried about their safety'
Parents anxious as SSC results coincide with AL, BNP rallies

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

With the country's two top political parties scheduled to hold programmes in the capital today, students and parents are apprehensive about getting results of this year's Secondary School Certificate and equivalent exams at the educational institutions.

The results, which will be published today, will be handed over to Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina around 9:00am and it will be available both online and in schools from 10:30am, said Prof Tapan Kumar Sarker, chief of the Inter-Education Board Coordination Committee.

Both Awami League and BNP are planning to hold rallies in Baitul Mukarram and Nayapaltan areas in the afternoon respectively.

Rokhsana Yesmin, a guardian, said many guardians go to schools to receive results. "Besides, it's also an occasion for celebration," she added.

The political parties should have considered students' safety by avoiding the programmes as the situation may get chaotic, especially on roads, due to the rallies.

Besides, the date for publishing the results was pre-scheduled, she added.

Another guardian Shahinur Islam said, "Although we would get the results online, students usually go to schools to meet their friends to cherish this milestone of their lives. We are worried about their safety..."

Prof Tapan Kumar Sarker, chairman of the Board of Intermediate and Secondary Education, Dhaka, said the students can get the results online by staying at home

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3 die as boat with bridal party capsizes

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Tangail

Three people of a bridal party died when a boat capsized in a beel in Tangail's Mirzapur upazila yesterday.

The deceased are the groom's elder brother Ripon Miah, 40, from Mandirapara village in the upazila; the groom's cousin Sneha, 8, of the same village; and Asif, 20, of Haria village.

Taraipur Union Parishad Chairman Aziz Reza said after lunch at the bride's residence, some bridal party members left for home on a boat.

On the way, several passengers saw a snake in the water and started panicking. As the snake moved towards the boat, they started fidgeting, which led to the boat's capsize. Many were able to swim ashore but the three drowned. Later, locals recovered the bodies.

Belayet Hossain, station officer of Mirzapur Fire Service and Civil Defence, said they came to know about the accident. However, since it was evening, it was not possible to send divers to the spot, he said.

Mirzapur Police Station OC Abu Saleh Mohammad Masood Karim told The Daily Star that a local UP member informed him of the incident. No case has been filed in this regard yet.

Hepatitis a silent killer

TAHIRA SHAMSI UTSA

"I did not know I had hepatitis C, not even during my pregnancy," said Muslima Kader Mili, a 35-year-old mother of two.

The Brahmanbaria resident found out she had the virus in 2013 when doctors did her blood work, as she was one of the potential donors for her daughter, who needed to undergo an operation at Shaheed Suhrawardy Medical College Hospital in the capital.

"That day, the doctors informed me of the virus and how the blood transfusion would also infect my child. I had never heard of any such virus before," she added.

Mili had to take seven units of blood during her first C-section at Dhaka Medical College Hospital in 2002 as she developed eclampsia.

"I must have been infected during that time. However, none of my children have the virus," she said.

According to doctors, hepatitis C can be transferred from mother to child but it is not contagious.

Nevertheless, many in Mili's family and neighbourhood were unaware of the virus. But suggested alternative treatments by village quacks and homoeopathy, as the medicinal treatment for hepatitis C is expensive.

Marzia Begum, another 25-year-old mother of two, shared a similar experience.

"I did not know that I had hepatitis B when my first child, now 11 years old, was born. However, I got to know of my condition when my second child, a girl, was born in 2019," she said.

The virus was passed on to her daughter Lamia, the second born.

Mili, Marzia, and Lamia are currently receiving free treatment at the National Liver Foundation Bangladesh (NLFB) under their Zakat Fund programme.

According to WHO, hepatitis is an inflammation of the liver that is caused by a variety of infectious viruses and noninfectious agents leading to a range of health problems, some of which can be fatal.

The virus has five variants -- A, B, C, D, and E.

The A and E variants can be transmitted through food and drinking water but usually resolve within 4-8 weeks through the body's built-in immune system, informed Dr Mohammad Ali, liver surgeon and founder of NLFB.

WORLD HEPATITIS DAY

Hepatitis B and C are the main causes of liver cirrhosis and cancer -- the third leading cause of human deaths around the world. Over 700 million people are infected with hepatitis every year while around 1.1 million lose their lives to this virus every year.

WHAT IS HEPATITIS?

- Hepatitis is an inflammation of the liver that is caused by a variety of infectious viruses and noninfectious agents leading to a range of health problems, some of which can be fatal
- Virus has five variants -- A, B, C, D, and E
- B and C variants are the deadliest

WAYS OF PREVENTION

- Treatment facilities at all state-run hospitals
- Free test kits, medications
- Compulsory tests for expecting mothers, babies
- Timely inoculation

E variant can cause complications during pregnancy for the mother and her child. Meanwhile, the D and B variants may lead to chronic inflammation. However, the B and C variants are the deadliest, he mentioned.

Over 700 million people are infected with hepatitis every year, while around 1.1 million lose their lives to this virus every year, said the doctor, referring to a WHO study.

"Hepatitis B and C are the main causes of liver

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'Don't repeat the mistake'

HC tells Cox's Bazar judge on granting bail to 9 accused without due process

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The High Court yesterday said judiciary will suffer if a judge does not follow the due process of law.

The HC said this to Cox's Bazar District and Sessions Judge Mohammad Ismail in regard to granting bail to nine accused without due process.

"You are a senior judicial officer. If you had followed the due procedures [in granting bail to nine accused] no question would have been raised. What you have done is not expected of anybody. Don't repeat the mistake," the HC bench of Justice Md Habibul Gani and Justice Ahmed Sohail said.

Earlier in the day, Judge Ismail appeared before the bench while hearing a criminal revision petition in compliance with its previous summons order.

He also offered unconditional apology before it for granting bail to nine accused of a criminal case even before the magistrate court rejected their bail petition.

The bench accepted his apology and exonerated him from its proceedings.

On June 21, the HC

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TARIQUE GRAFT CASE
Verdict on Aug 2

COURT CORRESPONDENT

A Dhaka court yesterday fixed August 2 to deliver judgement in a graft case filed by the Anti-Corruption Commission in 2007 against BNP acting chairman Tarique Rahman and his wife Zubaida Rahman.

After the closing arguments, Judge Md Asaduzzaman of Dhaka Metropolitan Senior Special Judge's Court set the date.

The couple has been shown as fugitives in the charge sheet.

During the closing argument, ACC Public Prosecutor Mosharraf Hossain Kazol told the court that they were able to prove the charges brought against the couple beyond doubt.

So, they should be given the highest punishment for acquiring illegal wealth (10 years) and concealing the information of wealth (three years), the PP added.

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ASSAULTING DOCTOR
Dengue patient's father gets bail

COURT CORRESPONDENT

A Dhaka court yesterday granted bail to Habibur Rahman a day after his arrest on charges of assaulting a doctor of Dhaka's Mugda Medical College Hospital over admitting his seven-year-old daughter, a dengue patient, to the hospital on Wednesday.

Dhaka Metropolitan Magistrate Md Ashekh Imam passed the order after Sub-Inspector Md Abdul Mannan of Mugda Police Station, also the case's investigation officer, produced him before it with a forwarding report.

Dr Boni Amin, the case's complainant, appeared before the court and said he had no objection if the court grants him bail.

In the forwarding report, the IO said the accused assaulted the complainant who gave first aid to his

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Women in the driving seat

11 ready to take the wheels as professional drivers after receiving Brac training

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

"Our training was not just limited to driving, we learned many other things too like how to improve our social skills," said Mousumi Khatun, one of the female drivers who obtained a professional driving license after receiving training from Brac Driving School.

"They prepared us in such a manner that we are now fully prepared for this profession," she said.

Like her, 10 other female drivers are now ready to embark on their careers as professional drivers.

To celebrate their success, a certificate distribution ceremony was held at Bangladesh Road Transport Authority (BRTA) headquarters on Wednesday.

At the event, Mainul Hossain, manager of the Brac Road Safety Programme, provided an overview of the organisation's road safety programmes and activities.

He highlighted that the 11 women had completed an intensive three-month residential training programme at Brac Driving School in the capital.

Additionally, they received basic communication skills training in English,

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as well as gender sensitisation and safeguarding training.

Upon successfully completing the training, the women took part in the licensing tests conducted by BRTA and obtained their professional driver's licenses.



PHOTO: COLLECTED

They were subsequently assigned to Brac's transport division as apprentice drivers, where they will undergo further training for three months under the guidance of senior drivers.

Addressing the event as the chief guest, ABM Amin Ullah Nuri, secretary of Road Transport and Highways Division, emphasised that driving is a respectable profession but unfortunately, it is often

Pilgrims suffer for mismanagement

RASHIDUL HASAN

Layek Ali and his wife Nasima Begum, residents of the capital's Mugda, were supposed to be accommodated within 400-500 metres of Kaaba Sharif as they paid Tk 8.20 lakh each to their agency to perform hajj under category A.

"Upon arriving at the hotel, we came to know that our stay is 1,300-1,400 metres from the Kaaba, which was promised to pilgrims who paid around Tk 6 lakh for category B," said Layek, a retired government official.

He chose category A as his wife was sick and had a knee problem.

Around 68 others in their group had to face a lot of inconveniences as their agency - Salman Hajj Group -- "cheated" them and did not keep up with their promises despite collecting payments.

"We could not even perform the hajj properly as my wife became ill as she had to walk for such a long distance. We were promised a three-star hotel, but the actual condition was worse than our local hotels. The ACs and lifts were not working properly, while the stench from restrooms was unbearable," added Layek.

The couple also alleged that the agency did not provide transport



FILE PHOTO

Every year, thousands of hajj pilgrims endure both physical and emotional suffering due to a number of reasons largely stemming from a subpar management process and corruption by hajj tour operators.

services while visiting different places in Makkah, Mina and Arafah, though it was promised in the package.

"Due to the agency's mismanagement and delays in providing vehicles, it took us around seven hours to reach Mujdalifa from Arafah, located just seven kilometres away," he also said.

Several other pilgrims accused their agencies of such mismanagement.

"We could seldom find any Bangladeshi guide during our needs. The few we found were unable to help us as they did not speak Arabic," shared pilgrim Rejaul Islam, who had to look for a guide for five hours when he was detached from his group in Makkah.

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