



'Sanctions a tool against corruption'

Says US state dept coordinator for global anti-corruption

DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT

Richard Nephew, the US state department coordinator for global anti-corruption, has said they may consider sanctions as a tool against corruption and will look at integrity while funding big projects.

"There was no discussion on any individual, but Nephew said sanction is a tool against corruption. They can also consider this [in future]," said Foreign Secretary Masud Bin Momen when asked if there was any discussion sanctioning 11 Bangladeshi individuals for money laundering as reported by a local media outlet yesterday.

Momen's comments came after a meeting with Nephew and Peter Haas, the US ambassador to Bangladesh, at the Foreign Service Academy.

Nephew led a three-member delegation to Bangladesh on Sunday and met officials of the Anti-Corruption Commission, Bangladesh Bank, Momen and a group of

civil society leaders yesterday.

In future, the US will consider the viability of projects in terms of integrity and environment, especially while funding big projects, Momen said. "So, we should be prepared."

Bangladesh has the National Integrity Strategy, which should be practised by all.

"We also need to be careful of the developments internationally so that our development trajectory is smooth."

The US will share concrete information in the future with the foreign ministry, which will then share it with the planning and other ministries or bodies concerned, Momen said.

Nephew wanted to know how the foreign ministry works on curbing corruption.

In response, Momen said the ministry provides training to its officials and evaluates the performance and financial integrity of the missions.

He also detailed how Bangladesh



Richard Nephew



The Airport-Farmgate section of the Dhaka Elevated Expressway is nearing completion in order to be ready for the September inauguration. The photo taken yesterday in Farmgate shows the expressway's exit ramp at Indira Road. PHOTO: PRABIR DAS

SAGAR-RUNI MURDER

Investigators get time to probe for 102nd time



COURT CORRESPONDENT

A Dhaka court yesterday extended till September 11 the deadline for submitting the probe report on the 2012 murder of journalist couple Sagar Sarwar and Meherun Runi.

This is the 102nd extension of the report submission deadline.

Dhaka Metropolitan Magistrate Md Rashidul Alam passed the order after Rab Additional Superintendent of Police Khondoker Md Shafiqul Alam, also the investigation officer of the murder case, failed to submit the report yesterday, court sources said.

The same court on June 22 had asked Rab to submit the probe report by yesterday.

Earlier, two other courts had expressed dissatisfaction over the probe and the investigators' failure to establish the motive behind the murder and arrest the real culprits.

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DENGUE OUTBREAK

Saline disappearing from store shelves in Dhaka

MOUDDUD AHMED SUJAN

Injectable saline solution, an essential fluid used for treating dengue patients, has become scarce in retail drug stores in Dhaka due to a surge in demand caused by the growing number of patients.

Among the 11 types of injectable saline solutions, normal saline (0.9 percent sodium chloride solution) is the most used.

This correspondent yesterday failed to get a single bag of normal saline after visiting 17 drug stores in Green Road and Mohammadpur College Gate areas in the capital.

Besides, owners and salesmen of around a dozen drug stores in Dhaka Medical College Hospital and Savar areas also reported the similar saline crisis, which has been prevailing over the last one month.

Officials of several private hospitals said they are also struggling to maintain their regular stock as the saline-producing companies have started rationing the product to cope with the overwhelming demand.

There is no sign of improvement of this situation even after the drug

administration requested the six saline producers to increase production at a meeting on June 27.

Health experts blamed the lack of preemptive action by the health and family welfare ministry for this crisis.

Prof Rashid E-Mahbub, president, Health Rights Movement, Bangladesh National Committee, told The Daily Star yesterday, "As there is a crisis, the health ministry should take the lead... It's not that difficult to increase production."

"I don't think the companies are unable to meet the rising demand; there must be something unethical going on in distribution. The government should act."

Hossain Ali Khandaker, additional secretary (Drug Administration and Regulation Unit) at the ministry, said no meeting was held over the issue at the ministry, but the drug administration is working to tackle the situation.

"I have recently learnt about the crisis from newspapers. I would talk to the secretary sir (secretary of the Health Services Division)," he said.

He said, "In fact, only private pharmaceutical companies produce the

saline. If they don't have the capacity to meet the demand, [saline] can be imported."

While this correspondent was talking to Lifecare Pharmacy manager on Green Road yesterday, Md Ali, distribution assistant of Popular Pharmaceuticals Ltd, appeared.

Ali said, "The demand for normal saline is the highest. If a drug store asks for 10 cartons of saline (each carton has 10 bags), we can only deliver one or two cartons and that too late."

He added that supply of saline to around 13 hospitals in Green Road area has been severely disrupted.

"The hospitals in this area now have a demand for about 500-600 cartons of Popular saline a day, but we can only supply 60-70 cartons."

Mamunur Rashid Russel, manager of Central Hospital on Green Road, corroborated Ali's statement.

"We usually maintain a week's stock of normal saline, but we now only have a three-day stock left," he said, adding that they have placed an order for 200 bags of saline to each of the six companies per week.

"But each of them can supply only 15-20 bags," he told this newspaper.

When asked for a bag of normal saline, Khairul Islam, a salesman of Bangladesh Pharma, one of the major drug stores in front of Shaheed Suhrawardy Medical College Hospital in College Gate area, suggested looking for it in the drug

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At least 14 more people died of dengue fever yesterday, as the country faced a record outbreak of the mosquito-borne disease, with hospitals struggling to accommodate patients. The photo was taken at Mugda Medical College Hospital's dengue ward yesterday. Related story on Page 3. PHOTO: COLLECTED

India's Moon mission sends back first images



INDEPENDENT.CO.UK

India's historic Chandrayaan-3 mission to the lunar South pole has sent back first images of the Moon ahead of its anticipated landing later this month.

On Saturday, the spacecraft carrying the mission's rover and lander successfully entered lunar orbit, following which the Indian space agency Isro tweeted the first images of the Moon taken from orbit.

The images reveal craters on the Moon which appear larger as the spacecraft gets closer to the lunar surface.

After about 10 days of orbiting Earth, the spacecraft has begun circling the Moon, and the rover and lander are expected to reach the lunar surface on August 23.

"Today, the Chandrayaan-3 mission achieved a crucial milestone with the successful completion of the Lunar Orbit Insertion (LOI)," Isro tweeted, adding that "the health of Chandrayaan-3 is normal."

Saturday's achievement marks the third time in succession that ISRO has successfully inserted a spacecraft into lunar orbit.

Rahul returns to House after reinstatement

REUTERS, New Delhi



Rahul Gandhi returned to India's parliament yesterday after a Supreme Court ruling, boosting the profile of his Congress party and its opposition allies ahead of a no-confidence vote against Prime Minister Narendra Modi's government.

The vote is not expected to affect the popularity of Modi's ruling Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), which enjoys a strong majority.

However, the return of Gandhi, the scion of one of India's most renowned political dynasties, to parliament is expected to strengthen the voice of the newly formed, 26-party

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CLIMATE CHANGE IN SOUTH ASIA

Three-quarters of children face extreme heat: UN

AFP, New Delhi

Three-quarters of children in South Asia are already facing dangerously high temperatures, the highest level worldwide, as the impact of climate change grows, the United Nations warned yesterday.

About 460 million children are exposed to extreme heat in South Asia, or 76 percent of children, compared to a third of children globally, the United Nations children's agency said.

"With the world at global boiling, the data clearly show that the lives and well-being of millions of children across South Asia are increasingly threatened by heat waves and high temperatures," said Sanjay Wijesekera, Unicef Regional Director for South Asia.

The UN warns children in Afghanistan, Bangladesh, India, Maldives and Pakistan

are at "extremely high risk" of the impacts of climate change, defining extreme high temperatures as 83 or more days in a year over 35 degree Celsius (95 degree Fahrenheit).

Children cannot adapt as quickly to temperature changes, and are not able to remove excess heat from their bodies.

"Young children simply cannot handle the heat," added Wijesekera. "Unless we act now, these children will continue to bear the brunt of more frequent and more severe heatwaves in the coming years."

About 1.2 degrees Celsius of global warming since the late 1800s, driven by the burning of fossil fuels, has made heatwaves hotter, longer and more frequent, as well as intensifying other weather extremes such as storms and floods.

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Children in Afghanistan, Bangladesh, India, the Maldives, and Pakistan are at 'extremely high risk' of the impacts of climate change.