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UNITED MEDICAL COLLEGE No licence, yet hospital running for about a year

Says DGHS after death of 5-yr-old boy due to botched circumcision

AHMED DEEPTO

The United Medical College Hospital in Dhaka's Satarkul, where a five-year-old child was given anaesthetic for a circumcision procedure on December 31, has been operating for about a year without registration.

The child, Ayan Ahmed, was later moved to United Hospital in Gulshan where he died on January 7.

Officials of the Directorate General of Health Services (DGHS) say action will be taken against the medical college hospital for providing medical services without registration.

DGHS Director (hospitals) Abu Hussain Md Moinul Ahsan said the medical college hospital applied for registration in August last year, but the application was not approved as it was faulty.

Asked how the hospital is offering treatment for so long without being registered, Moinul told The Daily Star, "We were not aware of it because the hospital is not on our database. A particular hospital comes under supervision only after it is registered."

He said the hospital authority has to apply again for registration.

Meanwhile, the family members of Ayan formed a human chain in front of the DGHS office in Dhaka's SEE PAGE 6 COL 2



Pro-Palestinian demonstrators protest near the International Court of Justice (ICJ) in The Hague, Netherlands yesterday, as the judges hear a request for emergency measures to order Israel to stop its military actions in Gaza. PHOTO: REUTERS

BUSINESS

Challenges for new finance minister

The economy is losing momentum, while inflation remains stubborn. Bangladesh is also facing deterioration in external buffers, with official reserves falling to \$20.18 billion as of January 10, less than half their historic peak in 2021. The currency shock is also lingering. The new finance minister, Abul Hassan Mahmood Ali, will inherit all these stresses as he takes over from AHM Mustafa Kamal, who is departing after heading the key ministry for five years.

STORY ON BI

Khaleda returns home after 155 days in hospital

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

After five months of treatment, BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia was discharged from Evercare Hospital in Dhaka yesterday evening.



"She was discharged around 5:00pm and returned to her Gulshan residence at 6:50pm, confirmed Shairul Kabir Khan, a member of the party's media cell.

"Under the direction of the medical board, Khaleda Zia will continue receiving medical care at her home."

Since her conditional release in 2020, the former prime minister has been receiving treatment at the hospital under the supervision of a 15-member medical board since August 9.

Khaleda's personal physician, AZM Zahid Hossain, accompanied her as she entered her residence.

He said members of her medical board reviewed her overall condition and decided to discharge her as she is now stable.

"The physical condition of the BNP leader is much more stable now. Besides,

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Israel faces genocide charges at World Court

South Africa asks the UN court to order Israel to end Gaza strikes

REUTERS, The Hague

Israel yesterday faced accusations at the World Court of genocide in its offensive in Gaza, as the first residents returned to scenes of total devastation in northern areas where Israeli forces have begun withdrawing this week.

Three months of Israeli bombardment has laid much of the narrow coastal enclave to waste, killing more than 23,000 people and driving nearly the entire population of 2.3 million Palestinians from their homes.

An Israeli blockade has sharply restricted supplies of food, fuel and medicine, creating what the United Nations describes as a humanitarian catastrophe.

The case, brought by South Africa at the International Court of Justice (ICJ) in The Hague, accuses Israel of violating the 1948 genocide convention, enacted in the wake of the mass murder of Jews in the Holocaust, which mandates all countries to ensure such crimes are never repeated.

The preliminary hearings this week will

consider whether the court should order Israel to stop fighting while it investigates the full merits of the case.

In Rafah, in southern Gaza where the bodies of members of the al-Arjany family killed overnight, including three small children, were laid out in shrouds outside a morgue, neighbours said the court must intervene to halt the war.

"To the ICJ: what is the fault of this baby?" said neighbour Khamis Kelab, cradling the smallest of the shrouded bodies in his arms as women wailed nearby.

South African President Cyril Ramaphosa said his country was driven to bring the case by "the ongoing slaughter of the people of Gaza", and motivated by South Africa's own apartheid history.

"Israel has a genocidal intent against the Palestinians in Gaza," Tembeka Ngcukaitobi, advocate of the High Court of South Africa, told the court in The Hague. "The intent to destroy Gaza has been nurtured at the highest

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No change in desire to see free, fair polls

Says US state dept about Bangladesh

DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT

White House yesterday said it still desires to see that Bangladeshi people's aspirations for free, fair, and transparent elections are met.

"We obviously still believe in the importance of viable, vibrant democratic institutions all over the world. And nothing has changed about our desires to see that the aspirations of the Bangladeshi people are met, and that includes being able to conduct free, fair, and transparent elections," said John Kirby, the US national security council coordinator for strategic communications, at a briefing yesterday.

In May last year, the US announced a policy, saying that those who undermine elections in Bangladesh will be denied US visas. Over the last two years, the US repeatedly called for free, fair and peaceful elections.

Mysterious 'islands' in Saturn's moon are organic matter

INDEPENDENT.CO.UK

Strange disappearing "magic islands" spotted by Nasa's Cassini spacecraft on Saturn's moon Titan are actually blobs of organic molecules floating in seas of liquid methane, scientists say.



When the Cassini spacecraft conducted radar scans of Titan, it found that the moon's surface was covered with dark dunes of organic material and seas of liquid methane.

The Nasa probe also found strange shifting bright spots on the seas' surfaces lasting a few hours to several weeks or more.

These disappearing "magic islands" were first spotted in 2014 and scientists have since been trying to figure out what they are.

Researchers previously theorised these could be phantom islands caused by waves, or real islands made of suspended solids.

The new study, published recently in the journal Geophysical Research Letters, assessed the connection between Titan's atmosphere, its liquid lakes, and the solid materials deposited on the moon's surface.

Will anyone be held responsible for such a death?

Woman dies after concrete block falls on her on city road

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Every evening, 37-year-old Dipu Sana, an official of Bangladesh Bank, would get off the bus and walk home, where her three-year-old son would eagerly wait for her.



Dipu Sana

Like any other day, Dipu, senior assistant director of the central bank, left her workplace in Sadarghat on Wednesday, hoping to return to her child, Rishiraj, on time.

However, on her routine journey back to her Moghbazar home, she met with a tragic accident, robbing her son of any chance to see his mother alive again.

That day, as Dipu reached Siddheswari's Fakhruddin point around 5:30pm, a concrete block

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CRIES OF THE CORALS

Polyps of a star coral showing early signs of bleaching – its death – in the Bay of Bengal. Imperative to the protection of coastlines, coral reefs, one of the largest living structures in the world, provide protection against tropical storms and support 25 percent of the ocean life globally. Bangladesh's only coral-rich island is Saint Martin's Island, with around 66 different types of corals. However, over 67 percent of the reef has already been bleached due to a lack of protective measures. Other reasons include over-exploitation, tourist pressure, uncontrolled pollution in the Bay and the biggest threat of all – global warming. Coral reefs are dominant sources of essential nutrients for marine food chains, which means their deaths can only result in the deaths of many other aquatic creatures. With rampant coral bleaching around the world, the IUCN has categorised the animal as "endangered" in its Red List, urging immediate conservation measures.

PHOTO: SHARIF SARWAR

Repression, abuses discredit election: HRW

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Human Rights Watch in a statement yesterday said the Bangladesh authorities suppressed dissent including by arresting people for criticising the government in social media posts, and undermined pledges of a free and fair vote with widespread repression and violence against opposition members before the national polls.

The HRW in its World Report 2024 said the government of Sheikh Hasina returned to office for a fourth consecutive term after the January 7 elections which were boycotted by the main opposition parties because they had no faith in a free and fair polling process.

"Bangladesh's key trade partners should insist upon an independent inquiry into security force abuses as a condition of their continued business," said Meenakshi Ganguly, deputy Asia director at the HRW.

"The lack of accountability for serious rights violations is fomenting a corrupt culture where Bangladeshis fear being killed or disappeared by law enforcers for their political views, or even because they fail to pay a bribe."

In the 740-page World Report 2024, its 34th edition, the HRW reviews

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