

# Dhaka Day by Day

## Patients going abroad for expensive treatment

by S.Y. Bakht

The scope of proper diagnosis and progress on basic medical research is being hampered due to the absence of collaboration and cooperation among the existing medical laboratories in the country.

"I am surprised that there is no collaboration and cooperation among the local (medical) laboratories," said Dr. Azizul Huq, a visiting immunologist from the National Scientific Research Centre (CNRS) of France. "You cannot do any meaningful work without collaboration and a sense of team-spirit, especially in a country with very limited resources like Bangladesh," he added.

Dr. Huq was recently here under the United Nations Development Programme sponsored Transfer of Knowledge Through Expatriate Nationals (TOKTEN) scheme to help scientists at the Institute of Post Graduate Medicine and Research establish modern immuno-diagnostic tests for common parasitic infections.

He said that because of the lack of basic research and improvement, medical technology is falling behind in Bangladesh. Even the scope of proper diagnosis of common ailments is declining and without proper diagnosis adequate treatment or even prevention of a disease is not possible. "People who can afford it, are already going abroad to Vaillore and Bangkok for medical treatment," he pointed out.

He said the people who are in a position to influence and take initiatives regarding collaboration and cooperation among the medical laboratories in the country are failing to do so. He also cited the lack of incentives and the consequent absence of interest as factors hindering the pace of basic medical research. Poor infrastructure and excessive red-tape is also limiting the possibility for further advancement. "There is no sense of institutionalisation of research work here," he noted.

Even in the area of external research collaboration Bangladesh is lagging far behind, he said. "International collaboration can help us by providing our scientists with good exposure," he pointed out, adding, "but we must be careful about any collaboration from outside so that we are not used as guinea pigs by others." He said that a mechanism should be developed so that the international organisations which are already doing research work here — such as the International Centre for Diarrhoeal Disease and Research, Bangladesh — can also contribute in training local people.

He said that the local scientists needed to be provided with much more incentives to conduct research work, otherwise talents will not stay in the field of research. "I think there are numerous interesting fields of research here and patient cooperation is fantastic in Bangladesh," he noted.

He said he is convinced that the existing problems and bottle-necks in the field of medical research can be removed providing strong political will and sustained concerted efforts are forthcoming.

Dr. Huq, 45, is a staff scientist at CNRS and head of the laboratory of "Cellular Immunology on Protozoan Parasites" at the prestigious Paster Institute in Lille.

Born in Naogaon, Rajshahi, he did his initial schooling in Dhaka and completed his Bachelor of Science degree from Dhaka College in the early sixties.

He went on to finish his masters degree in parasitology from Sindh University — the only institution offering the course in the country at that time — and worked for the Zoological Survey of Pakistan for a short period.

After Liberation, he was awarded a training scholarship from the Czechoslovak Academy of Sciences. From there he went to the Paster Institute to continue his higher studies.

Under an Anglo-French collaboration programme, he completed his PhD degree in Immunology from the National Institute for Medical Research at Millhill, England in 1979. "I acted as a bridge between these two institutions at that time," he noted.

After returning to Paster he started to work in the field of genetic engineering. But to stay in the field of modern biology, he said, he realised that he had to make better contributions with his research work. And as he was a foreigner, he had to make much more significant contribution than the local scientists, he added.

In 1984, he spent a year as a visiting professor of molecular immunology at the University of California at Berkeley in the United States. He also went to Yale University as a visiting professor in 1985 and worked on "something related to the cloning of muscles which can be associated with tumor or cancer."

Upon his return to Paster, he said, he was asked to work on the Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome (AIDS) research programme, as there was national priority in that field. He continues to work on AIDS research since 1987. His particular area of research is the Tumor Necrosis Factor (TNF) and its possible role in physiotherapy of Human Immuno-Virus (HIV) infections.

Having an earlier interest on tropical diseases — he has been a faculty member of Tropical Disease Research (TDR) programme of the World Health Organisation since 1979 — he said he always wanted to do more research on this field.

Very recently he was allowed to develop another project on malaria with the aim to study cellular response and produce anti-bodies which can neutralise the viruses.

Although he confessed to having no collaborative research links with scientists in his homeland due to lack of scope in earlier years, he said that he is now looking forward to setting up some sort of link with scientists here.

"I would like to develop some collaborative research links in Bangladesh in connection with the malaria project," he said, adding, "I am thinking of hiring a medical graduate in Dhaka who will work for six months here and for six months in France."

Dr. Azizul Huq is happily married and his Bangladeshi wife is also a scientist at CNRS. They live in Paris with their two school-aged sons.

Although he was required to stay here for 12 weeks under the TOKTEN programme, he said this time he could only stay for about six weeks only, because of his preoccupations. He said he is extremely busy with his research works in France, where he also runs a private laboratory, but he hopes to be back soon.



Dr. Azizul Huq

## JS proceeding

Following is the remaining part of Jatiya Sangsad proceeding of Thursday published in the Daily Star on Friday.

Sheikh Hasina

Sheikh Hasina said during the rule of Bangabandhu, the number of landless people had stood at 35 per cent. During President Zia's rule the number rose to 65 per cent and during the Ershad regime it went up to 75 per cent.

The Leader of the Opposition said the farmers were losing everything, including land, due to economic pressures like the burden of loans, and aggravating economic situation.

She pleaded that the resolution moved by Nurul Islam Mont was just and genuine and pleaded that the House should adopt it for protecting the peasant community.

Replying to the resolution, the Planning and Finance Minister Saifur Rahman said that the government would give priority to the agriculture sector in the annual development programme.

Rejecting the resolution, he said the government had already taken some steps including exemption of land tax upto 25 bighas and agriculture loan upto Taka 5,000. Exemption of agriculture loan would cost government Taka 1,000 crore, he added.

The Speaker then asked Nurul Islam Mont whether he would withdraw his resolution. When Mont refused to withdraw the resolution, the Speaker put it to vote. The resolution was defeated by voice-vote.

The Speaker adjourned the House at 4.30 mp to meet again at 2 mp on April 21.

## Jumatul Wida observed

Jumatul Wida, the last Friday of the holy month of Ramadan, was observed in Dhaka as elsewhere the country with due solemnity and religious fervour, reports BSS.

Special prayers were offered in all the mosques of the country seeking divine blessings for the peace and progress of the nation and the people.

The biggest Juma congregation was held at the Baitul Mukarram National Mosque where thousands of devotees offered their prayers.

Presence of musallis was so big that many had to offer their prayers sitting on the roads of the northern and southern sides of the mosque.

A waz mahfil was arranged at the national mosque on the occasion which was addressed by Moulana Nur Hussain. The Khatib of the Baitul Mukarram Mosque addressed the musallis after the Juma prayer.

Besides, tafsir mahfil was arranged for women at the women prayer room of the mosque in the morning.

State Minister for Religious Affairs Prof. M.A. Mannan offered his Juma prayer at the Baitul Mukarram National Mosque.

Iranian Ambassador in Bangladesh also offered his prayer at the Baitul Mukarram Mosque.

Later the Iranian envoy called on State Minister for Religious Affairs and discussed matters of mutual interest.

## PROGRAMME

### Swarabithi Theatre

Swarabithi Theatre, on the occasion of Eid-ul-Fitr will hold a show of the drama 'Ekhoona Ora' on April 20 at 6.30 pm at Mahila Samity auditorium, a Press release said.

'Ekhoona Ora' has been written by Matur Rahman Rana. President of the Swarabithi Theatre has directed it.

# Country boat on verge of extinction

By Ahsan Kabir

The country boat sector, one of the largest employers of the rural poor in Bangladesh in now on the verge of extinction due to the expansion of road transports system and large mechanised vessels.

The country boats of Bangladesh comprise a prominent and colorful feature of the country's transport system. No exact statistics exist as to their numbers but it is counted that close to 300,000 country boats journey regularly over the rivers of Bangladesh, carrying jute, rice and other agricultural

products including building materials and passengers to all parts of the world's largest delta.

Country boats are wooden built in the countryside by rural carpenters. They have traditionally been powered by large sails, and by rowing, sculling, or towing. They are of shallow draft, and can go where larger mechanised vessels can not approach. With the present increasing siltation and clogging up of the rivers, the country boats represent a viable and flexible mode of transport.

Apart from intra and inter-regional flows as well as collection and distribution of commerce in the hinterland areas, country boats carry most of the regional flows between the major ports. Analysing regional production and consumption of commodities, which showed country boat annual traffic well above 10 million tonnes, and freight flows at ports, a river network consisting of 25 river sections having all season adequate water depth and 20 ports having considerable annual fleet traffic intercepting

most of the regional flows has been modelled keeping in view the growth of economic centres in future. The network is 1155 miles in total length and covers most of the regions in our country. On the core network of 1155 miles, the countryboat traffic between 20 ports is 3.2 million tonnes and in terms of tonne-mile it is 298 million the transportation task being performed including empty hauls is 487 million tonne-miles with an average haul of 93 miles however boat not moving on main routes for a considerable haul for example boats of less than 5 tonne capacity have been excluded from statistical consideration despite of this the boats which perform the task of ordinary transport comprise of 13,000 boats and has a capacity of 200,000 tonnes, provides employment for about 40,000 unskilled labours.

The people working on the country boat sector are the most part landless people from the countryside. Million of people largely depend on the boats for transport, employment and income. Country boats in the rural areas can easily be attributed as the fundamental source of employment according to a recent governmental statistics the country boat sector capture 60 per cent of the employment that covers the entire transport system and 90 per cent of the employment covering the inland water transport system.

But the situation of the country boat people has steadily worsened with the introduction of other modes of transport, which have enjoyed large subsidies while the country boat sector has been mostly neglected. This resulted a loss of income and employment in the rural areas of the country. A recent statistics on countryboat sector shows that the return on investment in country boat sector was 52 per cent and 18 per cent on an average in 1963 and 1973 respectively which has fallen to 12 per cent now, less than the prevailing commercial interest rate, a country boat crew member was earning 100 per cent and 50% more than agri-labourer in 1963 and 1973 respectively but is earning only marginally more now.

No doubts countryboats have traditionally been the main mode of transport in rural Bangladesh both for goods and passengers. Compared with trains, trucks and buses. They have offered a number of advantages: they are cheaper and more flexible, and serve as the major source of employment in the countryside.

Until a few years ago, the country boat sector was in decline competition from other modes of transport made operating conditions more and more difficult. The greater speed and predictability of railways, road transport and large mechanised vessels made many people prefer them over the countryboats. As a result, the livelihood and main incomes of several million people were threatened.

## Muslim state leaders greet Shahabuddin

Heads of state and government of various Muslim countries and different other organisations have felicitated the Acting President, Justice Shahabuddin Ahmed, on the occasion of holy Eid-ul-Fitr, reports BSS.

## Qirat, Azan competition held

The Inter Service Qirat and Azan Competition-91 concluded at BAF mosque at Tejgaon under the arrangement of Bangladesh Navy after the Jumma prayer Friday, reports BSS.

Navy team with a haul of 649.5 points emerged new champion while Army team with 622 points became the runner-up.

M. M. Rahman EA IV and M. A. B. Sarkar Ren-1 of the Navy team secured first and second positions respectively while corporal Wali Ullah of the Air Force team won the third position in the Qirat competition.

In the Azan competition Hav. Mahmud Hassan of Army team clinched the first prize while M. A. Bari ME-1 (Navy) and L. Nk. Kabir Ahmed (Army) jointly became second and M. A. B. Sarkar Ren-1 of the Navy team won the third prize.

Lt. General Muhammad Noor Uddin Khan, chief of the Army Staff was the chief guest and distributed the prizes. Earlier the chief guest was received by Commodore M. M. Islam, Assistant Chief of the Naval Staff.

Principal Staff Officers of the three services, senior military officials and large number of service personnel were also present.



A partial view of huge Jumatul Wida congregation at Baitul Mukarram mosque on Friday. — Star photo

## Khaleda urged to internationalise issue of stranded Pakistanis

By Staff Correspondent

About 2.5 lakh Pakistanis, who have been stranded in Bangladesh for last two decades, Friday appealed to Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia to immediately raise the issue of their repatriation at different international forums.

M. Nasim Khan, chief patron of Stranded Pakistanis General Repatriation Committee, (SPGRC), said the Prime Minister should initiate talks with SAARC, NAM, OIC and UN to prove her willingness and sincerity towards resolution of the issue.

M. Nasim Khan was speaking at a press conference at the National Press Club.

M. Nasim called upon Begum Zia to fulfil her pro-election commitment that the repatriation issue would be

taken into consideration if her party won the February 27 general elections. If the Pakistan government shows unwillingness the Prime Minister should sever diplomatic relations with the country, he said.

The issue has been ignored to make the Pakistan government happy, the SPGRC leader alleged. He branded the Ershad government as the worst one for not taking up the matter. Rather it resorted to various repressive measures on stranded Pakistanis who are struggling to go back to their homeland, he alleged.

M. Nasim narrated how the stranded Pakistanis were leading sub human lives amid various problems. All the camps in Dhaka and in other cities are in deplorable condition lacking minimum facilities of living as well as safety and security.

The SPGRC leader called upon the Prime Minister to visit their camps to see for herself the suffering of the stranded Pakistanis.

M. Nasim strongly condemned the statement of Mir Hazar Khan Bijrani, the Federal Railway Minister of the Government of Pakistan, during his recent goodwill visit to Bangladesh. He termed the Pakistani minister's statement that the question of repatriation was complicated as 'cynical'. The statement hurt the sentiment of the stranded Pakistanis in Bangladesh, he added.

## SC Bar's plea to appoint more judges

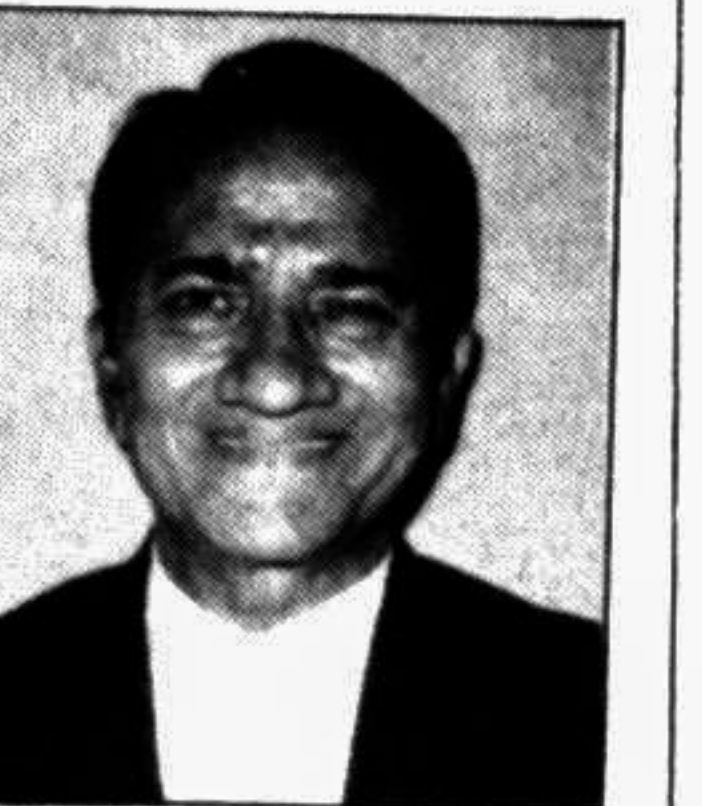
Supreme Court Correspondent

Dr. Rafiqur Rahman, President of the Supreme Court Bar Association has hailed the address of the Acting President Justice Shahabuddin Ahmed to the Jatiya Sangsad on April 5.

The Acting President in his address to the Parliament highlighted various national issues of great public importance including the dependence of the Judiciary on the executives.

Dr. Rafiqur Rahman, while talking to this correspondent, has called upon the legislature to take steps in the light of the speech to ensure separation of judiciary from the executive. He also called upon the Government to increase the number of judges for speedy disposal of cases.

Dr. Rahman was elected as President of the Supreme Court Bar on March 28 for the



Dr. Rafiqur Rahman year 1991-92. He was President of the Association in 1980-81. He was also a judge of the High Court Division in 1979. Subsequently he resigned to return to the Bar. In 1954 he was an attorney-at-law of the Federal Court of Pakistan.

## Editors' council deplors attack on KT Hossain

By Staff Correspondent

Bangladesh Council of Editors has condemned the assault on Acting Editor of the Bangladesh Observer Dr. KT Hossain by some employees of the paper.

The council in a press release on Friday said the incident was an attack on the Editorial Institution. It demanded legal action against the persons involved in the incident.

The council also protested linking the Editor of the Dainik Desh with the incident of assaulting journalists in the Dainik Desh office.

The council termed the statement of the State

Minister for Information in the Jatiya Sangsad on Thursday as one sided and demanded withdrawal of the statement.

## Pak daily's remarks termed as conspiracy

By Staff Correspondent

Col (Rtd) Showkat Ali, MP, belonging to Awami League drew the attention of the House Thursday about an article published in a Pakistani daily which contains some objectionable remarks against the sovereignty of Bangladesh.

He said that the article titled 'Pakistan and Bangladesh — two countries, one nation' was published recently in 'The Nation' of Lahore. The contents of the article can be treated as aspersion to the independence of Bangladesh in 1971. The article suggested some measures like close cooperation between the two countries in defence sector.

Col (Rtd) Showkat termed the publication of the article as a conspiracy against Bangladesh.

## CROSSWORD PUZZLER

**ACROSS**

- Soaks up
- of Man
- of Love
- Exact
- Unit of Chinese currency
- All My Children
- Swiss like a
- Kind of duck
- Sags
- Spanish pot
- Crowns: collars
- J. K. — M
- Native metal
- Rubber tree
- Large, heavy hammer
- Early morn
- Vegas
- Hebrew letter
- Faeroe Islands

**DOWN**

- Pigpen
- Gold Sp
- Bodies of water
- Prophets
- That thing
- Specimen
- Meadows
- Behold!
- Cloth
- Learning
- Lubricated
- Head
- James — Jones
- S-shaped molding
- Fireplace part
- Valley of the —
- Sandarac tree
- Speck
- Hold chair of authority
- Simple
- Sandy waste
- Sat for
- portrait
- indifferent one
- Spoken
- Erase
- printing
- Declare
- Printer's measure
- Greek letter
- Unit of Japanese currency
- Dine
- Equally

**Answer to Previous Puzzle**

SPITE DIVAS  
 REASON IMAGES  
 IR MOTOR TILE  
 AIM TENET ODE  
 TEEM RECUR OD  
 ASSET STREAMS  
 SERE SNAP  
 DAYTIME SPATS  
 AB SOUS SCOT  
 RID STIES ETA  
 EDIT TALKS TI  
 SERENE LISTEN  
 STAID SPEAR

## Weather

### Temperature likely to rise

By Staff Correspondent

Weather forecast valid till 6 pm of Saturday says rain or thundershower accompanied by gusty wind likely to occur at places over Khulna, Comilla, Sylhet regions. Weather likely to remain dry elsewhere. Day temperature likely to rise by one to two degree Celsius.

Day temperature remained nearly unchanged on Friday. Rain or thundershower occurred at one or two places over Khulna divisions. The highest temperature of 37.8 degree Celsius was reported from Rajshahi.

Extended outlook for subsequent two days: Little change. Extended outlook for another five days: Weather likely to deteriorate at the early period.

Temperature and humidity of some cities recorded on Friday:

City	Temperature in Celsius		Humidity
	max	min	
Dhaka	34.6	23	59
Chittagong	33.6	22	71
Rangpur	34.8	21	88
Sylhet	32.6	20.9	63
Khulna	33.5	19	77
Bogra	35.7	22.5	57

The maximum temperature of some regional cities:

	Degree	Celsius
Colombo	33	
Delhi	32	
Calcutta	32	
Bombay	32	
Bangkok	36	
Karachi	30	



Chief of the Army Staff Lt General Muhammad Noor Uddin Khan is seen among others with the Bangladesh Navy team who became champion in the Inter Service Qirat and Azan competition. The three-day meet concluded at the UAF Mosque at Tejgaon in Dhaka on Friday. — ISPR photo