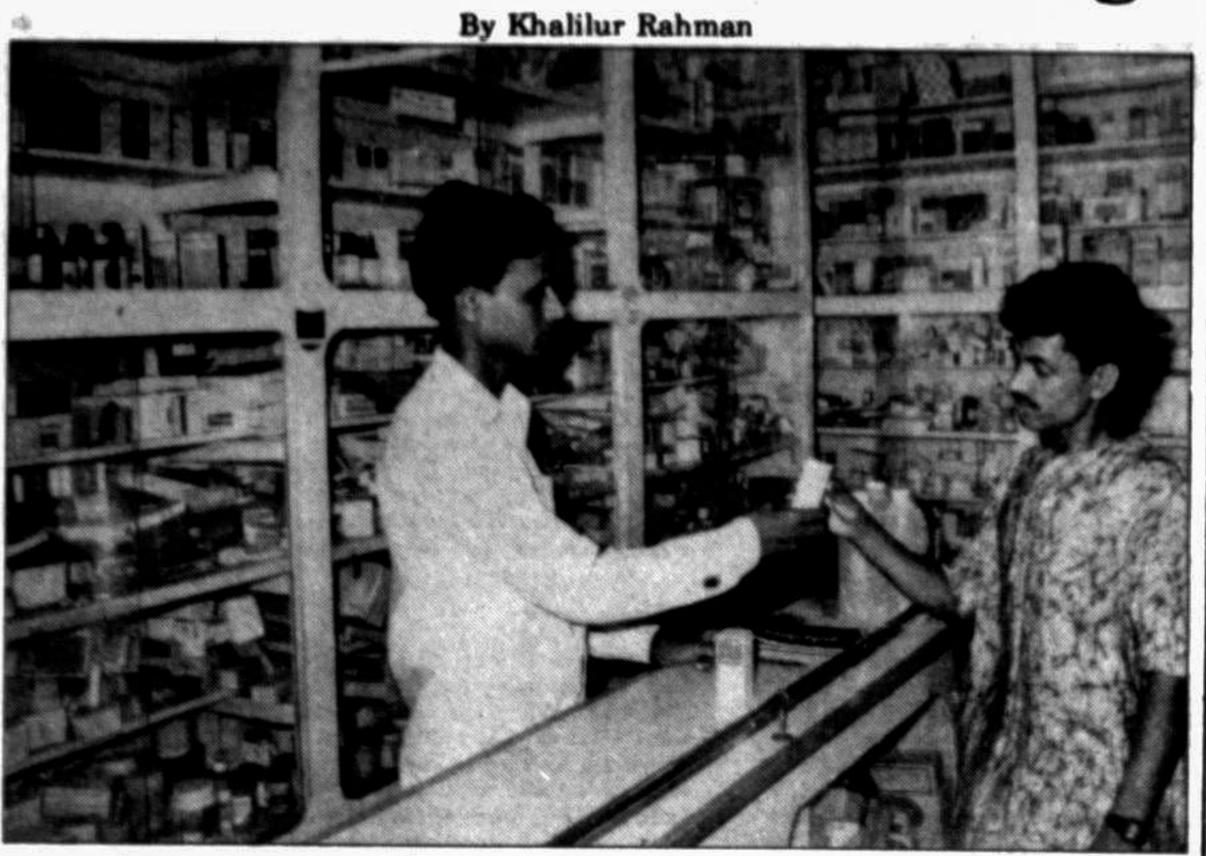
# Epidemic of counterfeit drugs



An epidemic of counterfeit medicines, now sweeping the country, has exposed hundreds of thousands of users to serious health hazards. Tons of fake pharmaceuticals have flooded drug markets across the country and the innocent buyers are taking those home quite unaware of the danger involved

Citing an example of drugrelated fatality a famous physician of the country told The Daily Star that 109 children. belonging to age groups from six months to six years, died of kidney failure in Nigeria in September last year after they were administered paracetamol in two hospitals. This most common drug, similar to aspirin was spurious containing industrial solvent. The tragic death of the Nigerian children drew attention of the medical profession throughout the world. But it was too late.

The physician said the effect of fake drugs is hardly known as most cases go unrecorded. In Bangladesh no monitoring on the ill effects of medicines is carried out systematically by any competent authorities, he added. He, however, said even in the most advanced countries of the world ultimate result of using a fake medicine is not always fully known to the medical profession.

A Health Ministry source pointed out that fake drugs were previously confined to the rural areas and these were available mostly in over one lakh drug shops spread over the rural areas of the country. But for the last one year, a substantial quantity of counterfeit drugs has found its way into the capital and in other big towns outside Dhaka. The fake drugs bearing labels of big pharmaceutical firms enter Bangladesh from across the border (India), the source said. In some cases the members of the law enforcing agencies have found out small factories producing the fake drugs within the country. But their number is too small, the source added

The counterfeit medicines include many life-saving recipes, eye drops and tonics. It is interesting that many drugs which were banned by the government of deposed President HM Ershad seven years ago now enter Bangladesh from India and those have high demand.

Narrating his experience, a pharmacist told me that the cough syrups produced previously by the multinational

DU student

dead

University died on Thursday

soon after being shifted to

hospital. The student identi-

fied as AMM Mostafa Kamal

Haider, student of Political

Science department, Ist year

MSS, suddenly fell sick at his

room No 442 at Surya Sen Hall

Wednesday night, reports

Child disease

From Page 1 Col. 6

the form of diarrhoea accom-

panied by chicken-pox and

fever makes the victims lose

their teeth before death which

occurs within about three days

gacha, Pirganj and Badargonj

upazilas are the worst-hit

ing to fresh areas causing

that some medical teams have

been rushed to the affected ar-

eas but that the medical aid

was not sufficient to combat

panic among the people.

Kaunia, Gangachara, Pir-

The disease is also spread-

The Civil Surgeon claimed

The disease which comes in

children.

of being attacked.

the situation.

A student of Dhaka

firms in Bangladesh were banned in 1984. The cough syrups produced locally were used largely throughout the country. The price of a particular brand of cough syrup, manufactured by a multi-national company, was only Taka 8 per phial. The same product but much inferior in quality coming from across the border now sells at Taka 70 each. In many places people buy several bottles and take at a time to get the intoxicating effect that the cough syrup provides. One of the main ingredients of this syrup is opium, a pharmacist

Faking of drugs is carried out so perfectly that even in expert eyes these can hardly be detected, one drug shop owner in the city said. Hand machines at a comparatively cheap rate are largely available along the border zones for producing tablets, sealing bottled medicines and making

Normally, names of big firms are used in counterfeiting the drugs, he added. The firms are very much reluctant to put up strong resistance against faking for the fear of publicity. These firms appear to be afraid of linking their with the spurious drugs, a health official said. Their stience has largely encouraged the counterfeiters,

he viewed. The health official opined that banning of most popular drugs was also responsible for large scale production and sale of fake medicines in the country. A physician told me that the identification of a spurious and sub-standard medicine becomes possible, at times, when a patient complain about no visible cure even after taking much of the prescribed drugs. The doctor then changes the brand and asked the patient to buy the same from a most reliable pharmacy, the physician added.

But to chose a right type of pharmacy is again a difficult task. The number of licensed drug shops in the country is 20,000 including 7,000 in the metropolis. But the number of shops may be one and a half lakh to two lakhs, the rest obviously is run without licence. a health official said. The Drugs Administration under the Ministry of Health is assigned to inspect the pharmacies and pharmaceutical plants in the country to ensure qualify control and sale of standard drugs. But the department is hard put to do its job properly in the

absence of required number of staff and other facilities, it is

alleged. Another health official said in some cases a section of unscrupulous traders collect empty bottles and phials from hospitals and different other sources and fill those with spurious medicines and sell in the market. Health staff collect samples of 'doubtful' drugs and send those to the government testing laboratory at Mahakhali for chemical analysis. It takes a long time to get the results of a test as the laboratory is heavily under staffed and runs short of chemicals, the health official state. In the absence of laboratory test results action cannot be taken against an offender, he added.

The sub-standard drugs which are also available in abundance invariably lack the most essential but costly ingredient and as such instead of acting as healer the drug causes adverse effect on the users, the health officia pointed out.

Narrating his experience with a sub-standard drug a patient told me that an anti-allergic tablet slipped from his hand and fell into a glass full of water. The tablet did not dissolve except its thin coating which was eroded. The patient, who himself is a chemist kept the tablet produced under the name of a multi-national firm in the water of the glass for the whole day. The tablet was like a solid piece of rock and showed no sign of melting. The chemist tried to dissolve it by pouring spirit but to no effect. He concluded that gum acacia was used in massive dose to bind inferior impharmaceutical raw ported materials used to produce the tablet in the name of a world reputed company.

Import of low-grade raw materials for producing drugs is another problem now facing us, the chemist regretted. Fixing of price limit of all types of imported pharmaceuticals by the government is one of the most important reasons for bringing low grade materials by importers in the country, one company manager stated.

The situation arising out of the use of fake and substandard drugs is simply alarming. This calls for effective measures including constant vigilance by the health squads in adequate number in the drug shops and factories. This view was expressed by an executive of a big pharmaceutical firm.

From Page 1 Col. 8 left Bangladesh for the USA immediately after his taking over the charge.

Three other members of the DUCSU were ousted from the campus in November last for their alleged involvement with Obhi-Niru group.

Besides a number of leaders of hall students unions including two vice- presidents were ousted from the campus for the same reason.

Meanwhile, the components of the now defunct Central Students Action Committee(CSAC) are preparing to reorganise the CSAC to defeat the Jatiyatabadi Chhatra Dal (JCD), the student wing of the BNP in the forth coming DUCSU election as they defeated it in the DUCSU election of 1989.

The Jatiyatabadi Chhatra Dal achieved an overwhelming victory over its three major contenders in the 1990 DUCSU election.

Its three major contenders

were the Awami Leaguebacked Chhatra League, CPBbacked Chhatra Union and five party alliance- backed combine of nine student organisations.

## Editor : S. M. Ali

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# Hasina

From Page 1 Col. 7

Abdus Samad Azad. Meanwhile, the members of the Scrutiny Committee, who have been inducted from BNP said they had already requested Awami League not to table the bill in this session. They said there was still time to bring such a bill which has national importance.

When asked, chairman of the Scrutiny Committee Abdur Rab Chowdhury said the committee would see the technicalities of the bill. But he said he would like to bring a bill on the basis of an all-party consensus. He however said the committee would sit to discuss the matter.

According to Awami League sources, the future of the bill, whether it will be tabled during the current session or not, will be decided on Saturday next.

When contacted, CPB leader Shamsuddoha said they were trying to convince all parties to bring a bill on the form of government on the basis of concensus. He said CPB would always remain in favour of making the parliament sovereign.

When asked, BNP Secretary General Abdus Salam Talukder said his party had not yet decided anything in principle about the form of government. He said when the party would take decision about the form of government it would bring a bill in consultation with other

## Radio, television tion because none was against it in principle.

From Page 1 Col. 3

government oranisation by the Awami League government in 1972. Now it has become the responsibility of BNP to make it autonomous, he said.

Nurul Huda was interrupted on a number of occasions, the Speaker expunged a word used by him and asked him to conclude his statement. He said, within one month of coming to power the BNP Government had already made the print media free by repealing some laws. It has also withdrawn control exercised during the last nine years on dissemination of news, he said.

He said the Government would soon constitute a committee with members of parliament and representatives of different sections of people for suggesting measures to turn the electronic media into autonomous and responsible organisations.

Deputy Leader of the House Prof. Badruddoza Chowdhury said Radio and Television should project the ideals. hopes and aspirations of the majority of the people. They cannot be made captive in the hands of a group of people. Freedom granted to these bodies should not be misused, he

He said even though the government was not opposed to the resolution the question of turning Radio and Television into autonomous bodies needed thorough examination since many corporations and autonomous bodies had failed to live upto the people's expectations.

The Leader of Opposition Shetkh Hasina said the three major political alliances had made commitment through the November 19 Joint Declaration to turn Radio and Television into autonomous organisations. Failure to fulfil that commitment would be a betrayal to the nation, she said.

She complained that even though the autocratic regime was overthrown in December. Radio and Television give one the impression that there has been no change at all. Radio and Television are not projecting Bangalee culture and tradition on which our national identity is based. Radio and Television should uphold the spirit of the War of Liberation, she added

Abdus Samad Azad, the Deputy Leader of Opposition. urged the Treasury Bench to unanimously adopt the resolu-

From Page 1 Col. 5

the Deputy Speaker clarified

that it was required to furnish

such bills both in Bengali and

English and that it was not

correct that in the past a

member could go ahead with it

by submitting such bill only in

ter, the Deputy Speaker said

bills for amendments to the

Constitution, from the first to

the tenth, had all been placed

both in Bengali and English

dance with Article 153 (2) in

which it was sought to pre-

serve the bills in two authen-

ticated languages proposed or

that "a text certified in accor-

dance with Clause (2) shall be

conclusive evidence of the

provisions of this constitution,"

provided that in the event of

conflict between the Bengali

and the English texts, the

ther, stressed that one must

not lose sight of the fact that

an amendment to a certain

clause or article becomes part

and parcel of the Constitution

as soon as it is adopted. For

this reason and in the interest

of maintenance of consistency

it is required that authenti-

cated version of the resolu-

tions should be kept both in

The Deputy Speaker main-

tained that for this reason also

the Sangsad Secretariat made

the requests to the members

to furnish their amendment

resolutions both in Bengali

and English and the members

can do it any time, the Deputy

further stated that the amen-

dment bills to the Constitution

tabled as private members'

bills, could be introduced

before the House following

scrutiny by "the committee for

private members bill and

private members resolution" as

laid down in Rule 223 (1) (A)

was formed only Wednesday

(April 24) and the amendment

resolutions, as moved, could

not be scrutinised within the

period and could not be incor-

porated in Thursday's order of

pressed regret for that.

The Deputy Speaker ex-

The Deputy Speaker said

honourable members Rashed

Khan Menon, Nurul Islam

Moni, Suranjit Sengupta, Shu-

dangshu Shekhar Haldar, Mou-

dud Ahmed and Salahuddin

The committee, however,

of the Rules of Procedure.

However, Sheikh Razzak Ali

Bengali and English.

Speaker said.

the day.

The Deputy Speaker fur-

Bengali text shall prevail.

Article 153 (2) provides

adopted in the House.

This was done in accor-

Giving his ruling in the mat-

Bengali.

languages.

Jattya Party leader Moudud Ahmed said the problems of Radio and Television could not be solved by mere granting them autonomy, but by creating competition allowing private television channels and radio stations. Radio and Television in Bangladesh have two inherent weaknesses:

a) they are owned by the government and b) they enjoy monopoly, he said.

Matiur Rahman Nizami. leader of the Jamaat-e-Islami group in the House, supported the demand for autonomy for Radio and Television but said they should also be made responsible otherwise, autonomy would be misused. A healthy democratic atmosphere is the precondition to make the institutions democratic, he said.

Nizami said the Sammilita Sangskritik Jote did not play a neutral role during the election. After election they created obstacles to dissemination of news of certain parties. He urged the JS members to keep in mind the people's mandate expressed through the election before taking any

Rashed Khan Menon said, in the Joint Declaration, the three alliances had made a commitment to turn Radio and Television into autonomous organisations. With the elections over and a democratic government established, it is time to implement that decision, he

He said that autocratic control on Radio and Television during the last nine years had made people rely on foreign media for news. There has also developed a group of conspirators in these organisations who are threatening to take action against these Radio and TV workers who is participated in the mass movement. These elements are again gaining control now, he cau-

The resolution was however rejected by a voice vote.

Others who took part in the discussion on the resolution are Begum Sajeda Chowdhury, Asaduzzaman, Tofael Ahmed of AL, Shahjahan Omar and Dr. Abdul Latif of BNP, Salahuddin Quader Chowdhury of National Democratic Party and Shahjahan Siraj of JSD (Siraj).

The parliament is adjourned till 3 p.m. tomorrow (Satur-

Speaker's ruling

articles of the Constitution and

Rules of Procedure and stated

that there was no legal binding

for submitting English version

tutional amendments. Barrister

The Deputy Speaker said

Zamiruddin Sircar had op-

Rashed Khan Menon stated

that he had moved a bill seek-

ing constitutional amendment

in the second Jatiya Sangsad

and he had submitted only the

Bangla version of the bill. The

question of submitting the

English version of that bill did

not arise at that time, Menon

was not possible to scrutinise

within short time whether

such a bill as stated by Menon

was incorporated in the order

of the day and whether that

bill was discussed in the House

concerned record that any

bills submitted by private

members were approved by

Deputy Speaker said six pri-

vate members — Sudhangshu

Shekhar Haldar, Mohammad

Asaduzzaman, Nurul Islam

Moni, Rashed Khan Menon,

Major (retd) Hafizuddin Ah-

med and Abdus Samad Azad

had submitted notices to the

Sangsad Secretariat seeking

amendments to different arti-

and Rashed Khan Menon had

submitted four notices each

while the rest one notice each,

He said all the 12 bills ex-

cepting the last one were

submitted to the Sangsad

Secretary with 15 days' writ-

ten notice under Rule 72 (1) of

ted only in Bangla. Since

English version of these bills

were not submitted, the mem-

bers were requested by the

Sangsad Secretariat to submit

Menon and some other mem-

bers drew his (Deputy

Speaker's) attention as to

whether the bills would be

the process under which the

Constitution could be amended

was clearly stated in Article

142 of the Constitution. Article

3 of the Constitution state that

The state language of the re-

public is Bangla". As per Article

153 (2) of the Constitution,

there shall be an authentic text

The Deputy Speaker said

tabled in the House Thursday.

As a result, Rashed Khan

But these bills were submit-

the Rules of Procedure.

English version also.

Of them, Nurul Islam Moni

cles of the Constitution.

he said.

Giving his ruling, the

the second Jatiya Sangsad.

But it was not found in the

The Deputy Speaker said it

maintained.

posed their statement.

of any bill seeking consti-

Kader Chowdhury had drawn of the Constitution in Bengali

his attention to different and an authentic text of an au-

# SKOP

25 bighas of land.

from all.

Minister.

solvent. The leaders who attended

Alt. Nazrul Islam Khan and AKM Nazrul Islam of Jatiyatabadi Sramik Dal. Belayet Hossain Mujumdar and Nurul Anwar of Jatiya Sramik Federation, Abdus Salam Khan and Nurul Islam of Trade Union Kendra, Safigur Rahman Majumdar of Jatiya Sramik Federation, Mujibur Rahman Bhuiyan of Bangladesh Jatiya Sramik League, Tipu Biswas and Nasim Ali of Ganotantrik Federation, Khaltlur Rahman and Pratap Uddin Ahmed of Bangladesh Trade Union Sangha, Abdullah Sarkar and A Razzak of Smajtantrik Sramik Front, Nur Ahmed and Habibur Rahman Siraj of Jatiya Sramik League, Bangladesh, Golam Mohiuddin of Bangladesh Sramik Federation, A Kader and Shirin Akhtar of Jativa Sramik Jote Bangladesh Mokhlesur Rahman and Sariatullah of Sangjukta Sramik Federation, Mesbahuddin and A Wahed of Jatiya Sramik Jote and Fazlul Hug Montu and Akhtaruzzaman Tara of Jatiya Sramik League.

From Page 1 Col. 5 special care for the patients. Besides, all the ICDDR,B physicians have been deputed to emergency hospital duty. The centre has also sent medical teams to affected areas.

thorised translation in English.

both of which shall be certified

as such by the Speaker of the

Assembly should be specially

noted, the Deputy Speaker

said. The Constitution was

adopted unanimously on

November 4.1972 after it was

framed and codified and it was

given effect from December

16, 1972. Immediately after

the introduction of the

Constitution, the Constituent

Assembly was dissolved from

was stated in Article 1 (one) of

the transitional and temporary

provisions of the fourth

schedule of the Constitution

that "upon the commencement

of this Constitution, the

Constituent Assembly, having

discharged its responsibility of

framing a Constitution for the

republic, shall stand dissolved"

above situation and in the light

of the over-all situation, the

Deputy Speaker said, "We shall

have to explain Article 153 (2)

of the Constitution. Now there

is no existence of any assembly

in the name of Constituent

Assembly. As a result, the natu-

ral explanation of Article 153

(2) be like this, that the mem-

bers of the Constituent

Assembly wanted that one cer-

tifled copy of the Bengali ver-

sion of the Constitution and

one certified copy of the

English version of the Cons-

titution would be preserved by

the Speaker of the Constituent

Assembly. In short, the framers

of the Constitution wanted the

preservation of the original

article or their amended artic-

Classes of JU

resume tomorrow

of Jahangirnagar University re-

sume tomorrow (Saturday)

after a 25-day Ramzan and Eid-

The university was closed

Jamuna devours

more areas

of Sirajganj

areas including homesteads in

three upazilas of the district

have eroded into river Jamuna

Thursday, reports UNB.

the wake of erosion.

SIRAJGANJ, Apr 25 : Vast

ul-Fitr vacation, reports BSS.

on March 31.

SAVAR, Apr 25: The classes

les in both the languages.

In the backdrop of the

The Deputy Speaker said it

that date.

Here the word Constituent

Constituent Assembly.

would be put into operation

She said her government had already exempted agricultural loan and interest upto a certain limit and revenue from

The Prime Minister expressed the confidence that her government would be able to remove mismanagement from all sectors of national life. created by the autocratic regime, but, she said, it would need time and cooperation

While exchanging views with the Prime Minister, the SKOP leaders congratulated Begum Zia on her assumption of the office of the Prime

They hoped that as a people's government it would take all measure to increase production by protecting the interests of the labourers. They assured the Prime Minister of their allout cooperation to the present democratically elected government in its efforts to make the country's economy

the meeting included Iskander

## Diarrhoea

Minister Khaleda Zia, who is also in charge of the Ministry of Home Affairs.

bill, Minister for Law and Justice Mirza Golam Hafiz rerepeal it.

pressed for a specific date for the annulment of the act. The Leader of the House then gave him the specific assurance on the issue and he withdrew the

# The Midnight File

# Tareq Aziz in Morocco

RABAT (Morocco). Apr 25: Iraqi Deputy Prime Minister Tariq Aziz arrived Thursday in Morocco for an unannounced visit, the latest stop on a diplomatic mission that has taken him to Jordan, Tunisia and Libya. Aziz was greeted at the airport for Morocco's capital by Foreign Minister Abdellatif Filali. There was no word about what they discussed, reports AP.

# Kurds open fire on UN team

BAGHDAD, Apr 25: Iraqi Kurdish rebels opened fire today on a UN delegation but later apologised when they discovered the group's identity. A UN officer and a journalist for the British newspaper The Independent were slightly hurt by broken glass when the five-car convoy came under fire near the Iranian border, Times of London journalist Adam Kalliher said, reports AFP.

## Soviet FM hopeful of ties with Israel

MOSCOW, Apr 25: Foreign Minister Alexander A Bessmertnykh said Thursday he will travel to Israel next month, and expressed optimism that diplomatic ties with the Jewish state could be restored after a 24-year lapse. The Soviet Union broke off diplomatic relations with Israel during the 1967 Middle East War, and no Soviet foreign minister has visited the country since, reports AP.

Yslavs warned against civil war BELGRADE, Apr 25: Yugoslav President Borisav Jovic warned today against the danger of civil war, saying that the situation in the country had "dramatically" deteriorated. Jovic said that the political situation was so tense that he feared "a general collapse of the state and society and even civil war." I speech before parliament broadcast on Yugoslav television,

# Voluntary bodies urged to supplement govt efforts

Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia Thursday called upon the voluntary organisations to supplement the present government's efforts of ensuring healthcare to all, reports BSS.

Begum Zia underlined the role of welfare oriented organisations in making the unaware masses conclous of healthcare aspects to enable them to lead an improved and healthy life.

The Prime Minister was addressing the inaugural session of the fourth annual convention of Lions Clubs International of District 315-A at a hotel in Dhaka. The Clubs District Governor in Tauhidur Rahman, Lieutenant Governor Humayun Zahir and Convention Chairman Azizul Alam spoke on the occasion, among others.

## **SPA**

From Page 1 Col. 4 after the assurance from Prime

Earlier, when the Independent member sought permission to introduce his quested him to withdraw the bill since the necessary steps were already being taken to

But, Nurul Islam Moni

rhoea affected people of southern regions of the country to bring succor to them. She said that necessary medicare and other related work at government level were going on in full-swing in the affected areas. She hoped that the members of Lions Clubs would join the Army Medical Corps and other non-governmental organisations in the diarrhoea affected areas. The Prime Minister stressed the need for estab-

The Prime Minister called

upon the Lions Clubs members

to stand by the side of diar-

lishing a research centre on diarrhoeal diseases in the southern region prone to the diseases. She called upon the welfare oriented organisation to extend their support to the government in setting up a centre in the region.

Later, the Clubs District Governor announced that the Lions Clubs of Districts 315- A will donate Taka 1.50 lakh for setting up of the diarrhoea research centre in the southern region.

## New health, drug From Page 1 Col. 8

Prof Badruddoza Chowdhury informed the House that a medical college would be set up at Khulna and the construction work would begin during the fourth five year plan.

He was replying to a question from Sheikh Haroon-ur-Rashid of Awami League.

# Seen from the gallery

From Page 1 Col. 7 The noted physician Prof

Chowdhury felt free answering questions relating to medicare and development of the health sector. He was a proxy for the

Health Minister Chowdhury Kamal Ibne Yusuf who was not in the House. Prof Chowdhury while replying to the questions and

supplementaries enlightened the House about the causes of diseases, their dangers, and His performance also reminded one of the popular TV

series, 'Your Doctor" by Prof Chowdhury some time in the Many of the members asked him questions about various

diseases as if they were suffering from those diseases. It is very difficult to get an appointment with Prof Chowdhury who is a busy

physician turned politician. Many members also wanted to know the causes of incurable diseases like cancer and

Anwarul Islam of the Awami League sought the protection of the Speaker against the mosquito menace in the MP hostel

The member told the House what would happen if malaria broke out.

The Speaker pointed his finger at Badruddoza Chowdhury, the Deputy Leader of the House.

It was a private members' day on Thursday. Everyone expected that the Constitution amendment bill would be moved. But the Deputy Speaker Sheikh Razzak Ali in his ruling told the House that as the bill was submitted in Bangla without an English version the bill could not be in-

cluded in the agenda. Besides, every Constitution amendment bill must be scrutinised by a committee which however was formed only on test. The gesture was really encouraging. The House has sat for 10

days and the performance of

its members is improving gradually. Members on both sides follow the rules of Procedure as far as possible and this is done even more meticulously when Sheikh Razzak Ali, Deputy

Speaker is in the chair. He

seems to have established his

command over the House. The performance of the Leader of the House and the Leader of the Opposition is

impressing the members. Particularly the Leader of House Khaleda Zia, with only ten days of experience, had really created hope of emerging as a good parliamentarian. She, however, talks too lit-

tle and lacks a sense of hu-

The Leader of the Opposition who was in this chair in 1986 responds quickly to government failure. Sheikh Hasina who talked much in the 1986 parliament and also in a few sittings in this session has developed the

tolerance to listen to opponents. The performances in recent days have probably raised the expectation that the Fifth

Parliament may be a good one. But the number of vocal members is small and the new comers are not showing any

interest to pick up. The Jatiya Party members are now more disciplined under the leadership of Maudud Ahmed who seems to have tightened his grip on his party

members. After his release from jail he initially seemed a little

He is now also taking an increasingly greater role in the proceedings. With the gaining of his posi-

tion in the House, Maudud Ahmed also seems to be attracting old friends.

Suranjit Sen Gupta walked to Maudud's seat and discussed some serious matters.

Wednesday. About 1,025 houses have The members accepted the been shifted till this evening in Speaker's ruling without pro-