

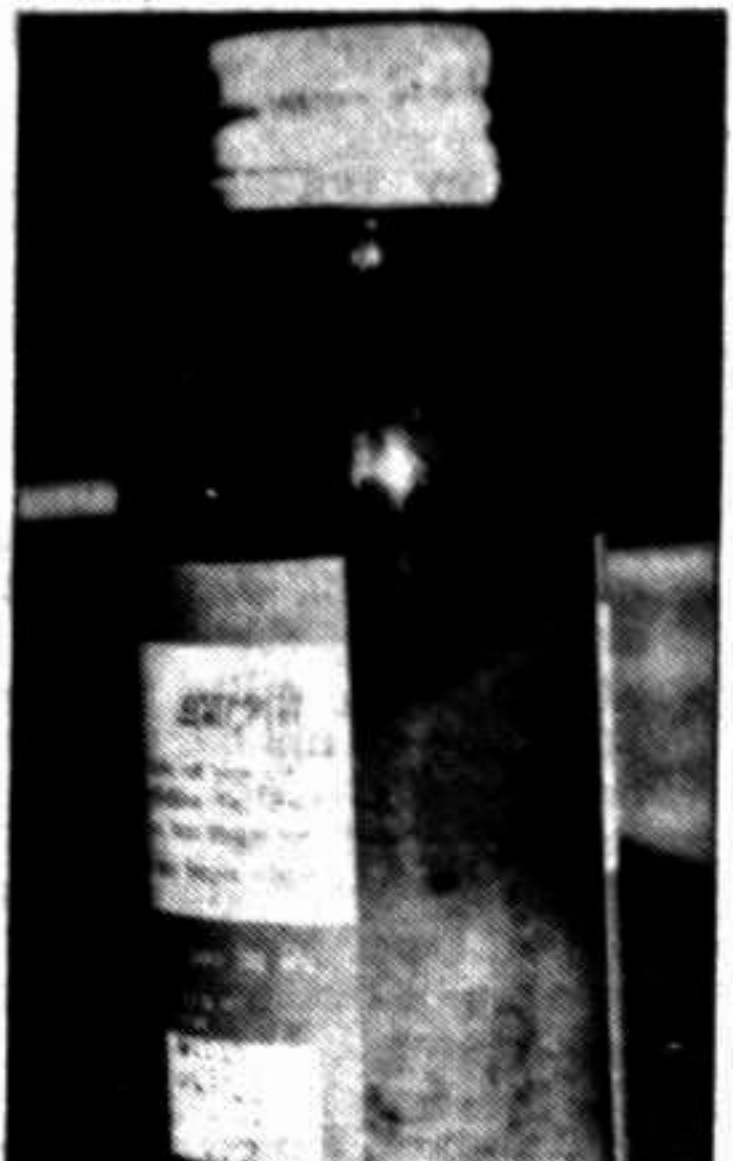
DOWN TO EARTH

Killer medicines on sale

By Khalilur Rahman

A physician bought a phial of ampicillin, an anti-biotic drug from a pharmacy at Rampura in the city recently. It was powder for paediatric use. The manufacturer of this essential medicine is a local pharmaceutical firm.

To his utter shock and surprise, the physician saw the ampicillin powder packed in a small amber glass bottle contains chips of blackish stones. The crystal powder of so-called ampicillin was securely packed in the sealed bottle within a carton. All the necessary details about weight, price, manufacturing and expiry dates of the drug are clearly printed both on the label of the bottle and on the carton. The preparation of the syrup with the powder is also stated. But the batch number of the medicine is quite illegible.



Sealed bottle of ampicillin with blackish chips of stones. — Star photo



Glucose injection with fungus deposit. — Star photo

The impure ampicillin powder was produced in July, 1989 and its expiry time was July 1992. The medicine is most commonly used for a variety of ailments. There is no doubt a village quack would have administered this contaminated medicine to a child without hesitation. It could not be gathered as to how many phials of this ampicillin powder have been sold in the market. The pharmacist at Rampura procured the item from Mitford drug market.

Another 500 ml glucose injection bought from wholesale drug market at Mitford by a compounding is full of white fungus. The compounding who bought the dextrose injection recently discovered the fungus while preparing to push it into a patient. The injection was produced by the Institute of Public Health in Dhaka last year.

The Public Health Institute is a government organisation and the glucose injection produced here is primarily meant for use in the country's hospitals and health complexes run by the government, an official source told The Daily Star. With regard to the presence of fungus in the injection the official viewed that long period of storage in an improper situation might be the reason for such 'deposit'. This preparation is injected to a patient intravenously. If administered,

ries throughout the country. Names of reputed pharmaceutical companies are used to sell the spurious drugs by the unscrupulous traders.

The medicines which were banned under drug policy by the government of ousted President Ershad eight years ago have good market. The banned medicines once produced locally by the multinational and some big firms had maintained high standard. But the same items now entering the country from across the border or manufactured by clandestine factories have very poor quality. Because of their popularity these items are being sold on a largescale, some drug dealers told The Daily Star. Thus the consumers are deceived, they added.

The health authorities are hard put to control the sale of fake and sub-standard drugs in the absence of adequate staff and required facilities. At present about 25 thousand drug stores are operating in the country with licences. Of these about 8000 are located in Dhaka. But the number of unlicensed pharmacies will be well over one lakh. In addition, thousands of quacks are engaged in selling all types of medicines in country's hats and bazars. The health department has only 20 drug inspectors to collect samples of drugs from the shops and also inspect 195 registered pharmaceutical plants spread over the country. Thus this is an almost impossible task for them to survey all the shops and factories to determine the quality of the drugs and control sale of imported ones. As a result most of the drugs are sold without detection.

In the event of a sample collection, the task is not easy to determine its quality and efficacy. The sample is sent to the Drug Testing Laboratory at Mohakhali, the lone of its kind in Bangladesh. There the sample awaits testing for months as the laboratory has multifarious other important jobs to perform with the limited staff, inadequate equipment and lack of necessary chemicals.

We shall write about the difficulties faced by the testing laboratory in one of our subsequent issues.



Norma Major, wife of the British Prime Minister John Major (L) welcomes her lunch guest Raisa Gorbachev, wife of the Soviet President Mikhail Gorbachev, outside 10 Downing Street on Thursday.

DU Proctor resigns

From Page 1 Col. 6
hurul Haq Hall had beaten his son, an SSC candidate, in front of Udayan School Wednesday afternoon.

Prof Kamrul Ahsan Choudhury also said that unruly students had gone to the residence of Prof Shaif Choudhury on Tuesday and threatened him. Prof Shaif Choudhury submitted his resignation letter to the Vice-Chancellor on same day, he said.

The house tutor of Sgt Zahurul Haq Hall, Dr Shahed Hossain, also submitted his resignation letter to the Vice-Chancellor, Prof Kamrul Ahsan Choudhury said.

Our Staff Correspondent adds: Jatityabadi Chhatra Dal (JCD) alleged on Thursday that the Pro-Awami League Bangladesh Chhatra League (BCL) was trying to foil the forthcoming DUCSU election through terrorist acts.

In a press conference at the National Press Club, leaders of the ruling BNP backed organisation, alleged that the BCL (S-A) had unleashed a reign of terror on the campus to foil the July 31 polls apprehending defeat in the polls.

They demanded arrest of the alleged terrorists to ensure peaceful election. DUCSU GS Khairul Kabir Khokon, AGS Nazimuddin Alam, Common Room Secretary Habibur Islam Haji, Transport Secretary Khondaker Jahangir Alam, member Rafiqul Islam Jaglu, Joint Convener of JCD Fazlul Huq Milon, its central leaders Kamruzzaman and Ilias Ali and Rokeya Hall VP Shirin Sultana were present at the press conference.

They said that the BCL (S-A) gave sanctuary to Dr Milon's murderer and other armed outsiders on the campus to do vandalism. During the past several days the armed outsiders and the BCL (S-A) activists attacked JCD activists and drove them out of S M Hall, Zahurul Huq Hall and Jagannath Hall. They also ransacked several rooms of those halls, the JCD and DUCSU leaders alleged.

The BCL workers burnt several vehicles and created panic on the campus threatened the S M Hall Provost and ransacked his office on July 16 protesting police search of the hall for suspected killers of Dr.

Several injured as BCL factions clash in DU

By Staff Correspondent

Several persons including a canteen boy were injured when two groups of the Awami League-backed Chhatra League (S-A) activists clashed inside Madhu's Canteen on the Dhaka University campus Thursday morning.

The canteen boy, Nital was rushed to the Dhaka Medical College Hospital (DMCH) with head injuries.

Others including some leaders of the BCL (S-A) received minor injuries on different parts of their bodies.

DU Syndicate

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conduct with the Jahurul Haq Hall Provost and assault of the Proctor's son by some unruly students which happened in the last few days.

The meeting also requested the VC to take steps for necessary amendments to the rules and regulations of the university so that quick steps against any act, threat to the law and order and misconduct by any student could be taken.

Earlier, the VC informed the Syndicate members of the latest law and order situation on the campus and all the untoward incident occurring in past seven days.

Milon, they said. They also threatened the Provost of Zahurul Haq Hall the JCD leaders alleged and said both the provosts have resigned to protest the incidents. Their intra-party conflict also terrorised the campus on Thursday, they said.

The JCD leaders expressed their dissatisfaction over police inaction and said that armed hooligans moved freely before them.

The JCD along with the 28,000 students of the university will resist all attempts of foiling the election, they said.

JCD leader stabbed

Joint convener of the Dhaka University SM Hall unit of Jatityabadi Chhatra Dal Mohammad Anwar Hossain Khokon was stabbed by some unknown miscreants on the campus last night, reports UNB.

Campus sources said Khokon, a 3rd year student of International Relations Department, was stabbed while returning to hall from a nearby laundry.

Soon after the incident, Khokon was taken to Dhaka Medical College Hospital (DMCH). After first aid, his family members took him back to residence.

Tension mounted on the campus following the attack.

CU classes not held for third day

From Our Staff Correspondent

CHITTAGONG, July 18 : The classes of the Chittagong University were not held for the third consecutive day today with the campus tense with processions.

The All-Party Students Unity brought out processions demanding cancellation of enquiry commission report and formation of another enquiry commission while processions of Shibir and Shibir-backed Sangrami Chhatra Oikya demanded immediate implementation of the report.

Rally, procession by newspaper employees

Leaders of Federal Union of Journalists, Dhaka Union of Journalists, Press Workers Federation and Newspaper Employees Federation Thursday called for immediate solution to the existing crisis in the newspaper industry by fulfilling the demand for increased salary and allowances in all newspapers and news agencies, reports BSS.

They sought cooperation of all quarters towards the just struggle of the journalists, employees and press workers and urged the government to take necessary steps in this regard.

The leaders were addressing a joint rally of the three federations and Dhaka Union of Journalists at the National Press Club in the morning to press home their demand for increased salary and allowances of the journalists, employees and press workers.

Presided over by BFUJ President Reazuddin Ahmed, the rally was addressed by BFUJ Secretary General Amanullah Kabir, DUJ President Zahurul Haq, General Secretary Ruhul Amin Gazi, President of Press Workers Federation Mosharruf Hossain Vice President Fazle Iman and General Secretary Baziur Rahman Milon, President of Newspaper Employees Federation Jahangir Kabir, and General Secretary Mir Mozammel Hossain.

A token strike for three hours from 11 am to 2 pm was observed in all newspapers and news agencies.

In the resolutions taken at the rally, the leaders reiterated their pledge for continuing an indefinite strike in the five newspapers who, they alleged, were conspiring against the Wage Board and called upon the managements of other newspapers and news agencies to fulfil the demand for increased salary and allowances by July 22.

The resolutions demanded of the authorities to re-publish the Dainik Desh, reinstate the retrenched journalists and pay their arrear salary for four months. The leaders also demanded immediate arrest of Mayeedul Islam, Anwarul Islam and Taheruddin Thakur of the Dainik Desh for their involvement in an attack on the journalists.

Solidarity was also expressed with the 11-point demand of the Dainik Ittefaq and the Dainik Sangbad at the rally and their early implementation, was demanded.

Full support was also extended to the struggling journalists, employees and workers of the Bangladesh Observer and the local demands of the Dainik Khabar and the Dainik Azad.

After the rally, a big procession of the journalists employees and workers were brought out, which paraded the city roads touching Dainik Sangbad, Dainik Bangla, Kashem Publication office, Banglar Bani, Dainik Inqilab and Dainik Ittefaq.

The local action committees will hold rallies and protests at 11 am today in their respective offices of the five newspapers.

Meanwhile, Chittagong Union of Journalists (CUJ) in an extended meeting expressed its solidarity with the demands of the three federations of the newspaper industry. The CUJ leaders decided that indefinite strike would be observed there from July 24 unless the newspaper authorities signed agreement by July 22 for increased salary and allowances.

In support of the demands, the CUJ meeting held with its President Akhterunnabi decided to hold protest rally and procession at the Chittagong Press Club on July 20. It will also hand over a memorandum to the administration.

Flood

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taken shelter on the embankment.

Onrush of flood water have submerged huge crop lands of Daulatpur, Ghior, Shubhalaya and Harirampur upazilas under Manikganj district.

The flood water also inundated the low-lying areas of Manikganj district town.

Bogra district control room said, the Jamuna and the Bangali river were still flowing above their danger levels.

The worst affected upazilas of the district are Dhanur, Shebari, Sariakandi, Sonatola, Gaptali and Bogra Sadar.

Flood water inundated some roads in Sirajganj town as tributaries of the Jamuna kept swelling.

With the rise of Jamuna tributaries, the municipal areas including Natupara, Malshapara and Natun Vhangabari.

Four upazilas of Gaibandha went under water affecting more than 30 thousand people of char areas.

In Pabna more seven unions went under water.

The Midnight File

I'm still Prime Minister : Rathore

ISLAMABAD, July 18 : Former Prime Minister of Pakistan-controlled Kashmir Mumtaz Hussain Rathore today vowed to wage a political and legal campaign against his removal, following his release from detention. "I am still constitutional and legal prime minister," the 51-year-old ally of national opposition leader Benazir Bhutto said at a press conference following his release late Wednesday, reports AFP.

Bush optimistic of Cyprus solution

ATHENS, July 18 : US President Bush said Thursday he sees a "historic opportunity" to solve the Cyprus problem this year, and will "simply try my best" to help. Bush, speaking at a news conference with Prime Minister Constantine Mitsotakis, said the United States would act as a catalyst, reports AFP.

Baker meets Assad in Damascus

DAMASCUS, July 18 : US Secretary of State James A Baker III met with Syrian President Hafez Assad on Thursday to nail down Syria's acceptance of a US formula for Mideast peace talks. The session was the first step on Baker's latest and most promising venture, designed to set up an Arab-Israeli peace conference. The trip to five countries in four days was prompted by a letter from Assad to US President Bush accepting US proposals for the talks, reports AP.

VAT : Confrontation

From Page 1 Col. 7

Industry circles reasoned that the VAT would discriminate against the use of local raw materials and inputs for domestic manufacturing. There is no VAT on such locally procured inputs and this will not facilitate any tax cuts or refund at manufacturers level on earlier paid VAT which would apply only to imported inputs and raw materials, they observed.

They further said that most of the small scale manufacturers, and all and sundry industries procured their inputs imported or domestic, locally and such suppliers are not all VAT-registered units.

They said that sales dropped by about 30 per cent in most cases after the introduction of VAT.

The meeting at the FBCCI was presided over by FIM Mohsin Bulbul, member, Executive Committee of the Federation and President, Bangladesh Contractors' Association. The representatives of Bangladesh Chamber of Industries, leather goods, tanneries, melamine, re-rolling mills, electrical goods, tyres and tubes, rubber, biscuits, nuts and bolts, wirenail manufacturing industries, Narayanjan Chamber of Commerce and Industries and Tongi Industrial Units Association were present at the meeting. Traders associations were also represented in it.

The FBCCI President Al-haj Mohammad Akram Hossain also spoke briefly at the meeting announcing that the federation, as the country's apex trade promotion body (TPO), would review the whole situation on July 25 and go for its course of action to press for withdrawal or scrapping of VAT. The tax revenues can be mobilised in ways other than VAT, he said.

The FBCCI came earlier under strong criticism from its affiliated member bodies for its "passive" stand on the VAT-induced problems.

In another development concerning the VAT, Bangladesh Awami League has extended its total support to the Anti-VAT movement by the restive trade and industry. The leaders of the party's city unit exchanged views Thursday with the business representatives at their party office. The Awami League announced its programme to hold a protest rally on July 20 at 4 pm at Bangabandhu Avenue for a total withdrawal of what it alleged 'anti-people' VAT.

Trade and industry circles have meanwhile given detailed accounts of how the VAT would lead to price-hikes and facilitate entry of more smuggled goods. They cited cases of locally produced paper, cellophane paper, electrical goods,

footwear, leather goods, rubber products and a wide array of items covered under it. They strongly refuted the claims of National Board of Revenue (NBR) about minimal price impact of the VAT, terming the 'government propaganda' as 'one-sided'.

Meanwhile, the NBR is preparing a new the lists of VAT registered units, keeping in view the exemptions of about 20 items and services announced by Finance and Planning Minister Saifur Rahman on July 10 before the approval of the VAT bill by the Jatitya Sangsad amid walk-out by the opposition. Earlier, over ten thousand units were registered under VAT rules by the NBR.

The VAT has been introduced by the government as the key element of its tax reform aimed at widening the tax base without raising the tax rates, plug tax evasion and enforce a uniform tax rate by replacing the hitherto existing multiple rates for sales tax at import stage and excise duty on manufacturing and in services sectors.

Over 80 countries in the world, including those in the third world and the least developed, have already introduced VAT. The VAT rates at introduction stage in most developing countries varied between five per cent and 12 per cent, according to knowledgeable circles.

The same circles pointed out that the successful implementation of VAT as a modern taxation system for avoiding tax cascading (tax on taxes) effects depends mainly on effective preparations. Though VAT has been under consideration in Bangladesh for the last three years, no serious efforts have so far been made to let the potential VAT-payers as well as the VAT-collectors know its operational aspects and benefits, they pointed out.

A former chief of a chamber body said that the NBR should have consulted the representatives of trade and industry in details to win the confidence of the business community before the final decision for its introduction. No dialogue was held during the last six months because of the political turmoil, the Gulf crisis, the elections and the cyclone, he added.

Asked about whether the leading trade promotion bodies had earlier recommended for introduction of VAT, he said that nobody expected that the VAT would be implemented so hastily with such a blanket coverage at its beginning. "VAT is a good taxation system but needs adequate preparations and training before its implementation", he noted.

Raushan's bail petition hearing begins

The hearing of the bail petition of Raushan Ershad began Thursday before a Division Bench of the High Court Division, reports BSS.

Foreign investment

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149.36 crore from Hong Kong tops the list. It is followed by investments in textile spinning where three countries have put in Taka 76 crore.

Ershad

From Page 1 Col. 5
private-owned hotel and allow payment of the price in instalments without interest by violating the existing rules, an official handout said last night, reports BSS.

Others, who have been charged, are former Vice-President Moudud Ahmed, former works minister Shaiful Gani, former chairman of DIT SHM Abul Basher and businessman Abul Khair.

Dhanmondi boys ransack school in Lalmatia

By Staff Correspondent
Students of the Lalmatia Boys High School were beaten and the school campus ransacked allegedly by a group of students from the nearby Dhanmondi Government Boys High School on Thursday.

Police said a group of student from the Dhanmondi school allegedly entered the Lalmatia School by force during class hours, around 1 pm, and beat up students of the school and ransacked the classrooms. The intruders were armed with knives, hockey sticks and other weapons, police said.

The Headmaster of the Lalmatia School registered a case in this connection with Mohammodpur police. Police arrested five persons in this connection. They were identified as Kazi Nasim Sarkar, Sumon Sikdar, Khandakar Miraz, Aminul Islam and Muhammad Kamal.

BKSAL, AL merger

From Page 1 Col. 4
Parliament election. Many of the Awami League leaders including Dr Kamal Hussain exerted pressure within the party to negotiate with the BKSAL.

Dr Kamal Hussain in a letter addressed to the party chief opined that the BKSAL still remained a potential threat to the Awami League and the very existence of the BKSAL had split the 'soldiers' of Bangabandhu into two separate camps.

He said that the Awami League should take the initiative in bringing back the BKSAL to the Awami League fold.

The matter was discussed in the working committee meeting of the Awami League. But the process of merging accelerated after a meeting between Sheikh Hasina, Dr Kamal Hussain and Abdur Razzak in New Delhi when they went there to attend the cremation of Indian leader Rajiv Gandhi.

According to insiders, if Abdur Razzak joins the Awami League he will be inducted as member of the presidium while Mohiuddin Ahmed will be taken as member of the executive committee.

When asked, some of the Awami League leaders said that the question of inducting the BKSAL leader as General Secretary of the party must be decided by the council session. But that there was no immediate possibility of holding the AL council session and that it would be too difficult for the party to induct the BKSAL leader even as member of the presidium unless there was a change in the party constitution.

The party constitution bars the induction of any member to the presidium or the national executive committee unless he or she remains a general member for two years.

Citing an example the Awami League leaders told The Daily Star that for this reason Matiya Chowdhury could also not be inducted in the central Executive Committee for two years after her joining the

Awami League from the CPB. On the other hand, another group of the party told The Daily Star that the working committee of the Awami League might take decision on the constitutional provision and could amend the provision subject to the approval of the council session.

As such the Awami League executive committee may take any decision on this issue. But in this case it would not be possible to make Abdur Razzak General Secretary of the party before the council session.

JS warns newspapers against misreporting

By Staff Correspondent

A number of newspapers came under fire in the Jatitya Sangsad (Parliament) on Thursday for allegedly publishing exaggerated reports on Wednesday's incident in the House.

Members of Parliament raised the matter on points of privilege, and some of them demanded that the concerned newspapers be asked to publish 'correct versions' of the incident.

Deputy Speaker Sheikh Razzak Ali chairing the sitting urged reporters of the newspapers concerned to report the proceedings of the House correctly. Otherwise Parliament would be compelled to take necessary legal steps, he cautioned.

JS defers taking up Pay Commission report

By Staff Correspondent

The Jatitya Sangsad (Parliament) on Thursday deferred the consideration of a resolution for immediate announcement of new pay scales for government employees.

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