

Dhaka Day by Day

Help for RF Victims

by Tulip Ibrahim

"A disease which kisses the joints but bites the heart." This disease is the Rheumatic Fever (RF) which strikes around 7 per thousand of the population in Bangladesh. Realising the magnitude of the problem a pilot project for its prevention and control has been undertaken by the government of Bangladesh.

This step forward to come to grips with the dangerous disease is supported by technical co-operation from the Government of Japan through the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA). A project office started functioning in a room of the National Institute of Cardiovascular Diseases (NICVD) on November 21, 1988. However, the project's progress remained very slow while at the NICVD. Gearing up the implementation of the project started after it was shifted to its own building in January last year. Soon enough it grew into a regular hospital conducting patient services, epidemiological studies, trainings health education, laboratory services and research. A team of dedicated doctors, including the present director Professor KMHS Serajul Huq form the backbone of this much needed hospital dedicated to control and prevention of rheumatic fevers and rheumatic heart diseases (RHD).



A rheumatic fever patient being treated in a hospital.

Rheumatic Fever is a disease which follows streptococcal infection of the throat. RF may damage the heart valve leading to great morbidity and ultimately mortality. It is responsible for a big part of the heart diseases in Bangladesh. RF is also responsible for many early deaths among the affected. More than six school children suffer from RHD from many a thousand.

RF and RHD is definitely preventable and their prevention has been found to be cost-effective and beneficial for the general people. The key to control and prevention of the RF and RHD is early diagnosis by a doctor and prompt treatment with penicillin and other antibiotics. When a person has had a rheumatic fever once everything possible must be done to prevent him from getting repeated attacks because of the damage it may do to the heart.

The pilot project for prevention and control of Rheumatic Fever and Rheumatic Heart Disease teaches to the people in the remote areas of the country beside its services in Dhaka.

The challenging job is to create awareness of the dangers of RF and RHD among the people. It is a common disease among young adults and children of developing countries like Bangladesh. It is a wonder how many people every year face early death from RF and RHD without ever knowing it.

Functioning under the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare and the JICA the RF and RHD control project offers bright prospects on health awareness. It maintains a hard routine job by its process of working with all the facilities it has.

Patient Services: The project has a well maintained out patient department (OPD) which at present works twice weekly (Monday

and Wednesday). It registers, treats new cases and follows up old cases of RF and RHD. A team of cardiologists, paediatricians, medical officers, nurses and health assistants attend OPD. Satellite centre of the project at Dhamrai and other areas serve patients and refer patients to the OPD of the national centre when necessary. NICVD and the main collaborative hospitals (IPGMR, DMCH, SSMC Mitford hospital, Dhaka Shishu hospital) run their OPD once a week. Indoor facilities are offered in all five collaborative hospitals. Similar services will be available in seven regional centres (Chittagong, Mymensingh, Rajshahi, Rangpur, Osmani and Sher-e-Bangla Medical College Hospitals and the Khulna 250-bed hospital) with their 14 upazila level field areas of study in phases. NGOs are also involved in the project.

Epidemiological studies: School and household surveillance in Dhaka city and Dhamrai has been conducted in order to carry out

epidemiological studies and to collect specimens for laboratory study and research. Case finding is another important aspect of field survey. Questionnaire study has been carried out among general people and doctors.

Training: Training is another important part of the project

activities. The project conducts training programme for doctors, nurses, paramedics, primary health care workers of government and NGOs. All training programmes are conducted by qualified personnel experienced in the different subjects. The unit has audio-visual equipment and other modern modes for the teaching-learning process.

Laboratory services: Laboratory studies are being carried out by qualified and experienced microbiologists and clinical pathologists. Most modern equipment and facilities are available. Uptodate research on different aspects of streptococcal and RF/RHD are going on. The role of laboratory services is vital for proper diagnosis and research.

Health Education: Education and motivation of general mass is the most effective measure for prevention. Educational programmes are being conducted for patients and their attendants waiting in OPD, general people in the community, students at school by health education experts, nurses and health assistants. Audio-visual and other modern materials are used in education.

Research: The unit works as a well-coordinated team of qualified cardiologists, epidemiologists, micro-biologists, clinical pathologists, paediatricians, health education experts, medical officers, statisticians and trained health workers. Dates are computed and analysed by IBM computers. Considerable research has been carried out. Papers have been presented in different scientific sessions at home and abroad. This aspect of work will continue to provide deeper insight into prevention, prophylaxes and treatment of the diseases for future appropriate national strategies.

What's on today

CA Institute meeting

A meeting of the members of the Institute of Chartered Accountants of Bangladesh will be held today (Sunday) at 5 pm at the Chartered Accountant Bhaban, 100, Kazi Nazrul Islam Avenue in the city. Members have been requested to attend the meeting.

Discussion on Col Taher

Rab Mukti Sangram Parishad (release action council) will hold a discussion on Col (Retd) Abu Taher Bir Uttam in observance of his 15th anniversary of death at the parishad's temporary office at Mirpur in the city today (Sunday) at 4 pm. Joint convener of the Parishad Nurul Absar has requested all the members of the organisation to attend the meeting.

. . . . and tomorrow

Rotary literacy project

A concentration language encounter system will be inaugurated tomorrow (Monday) at 5 pm at the Dhaka Sheraton Hotel.

Jointly sponsored by Rotary Club of Dhaka District-3280, Footscray Dist. 980 (Australia), Rotary Foundation of Rotary International, the programme will be inaugurated by the Education and Cultural Affairs Minister Prof AQM Badruddoza Choudhury as chief guest. Rotary leaders will also attend the function.

Moulvibazar Zila Samity

The annual general meeting of Moulvibazar Zila Samity in Dhaka will be held tomorrow (Monday) at Agriculture Research Council auditorium at Farmgate in the city.

Finance and Planning Minister M Saifur Rahman will preside over the meeting.

Islami Bank officers meet

A general meeting of Islami Bank Officers' Welfare Association will be held tomorrow (Monday) at 4.30 pm at the 3rd floor of 75, Motijheel Commercial Area.

The meeting will discuss the proposed pay-scale of the bank and welfare activities of officers.

All officers of the bank have been requested to attend the meeting in time.

RUCSU polls likely on September 15

RAJSHAHI, July 20: Election to Rajshahi University Central Students Union (RUCSU) and hall unions will be held in mid-September, possibly on the 15th, reports UNB.

The decision was taken at a meeting of Deans, Provosts, Proctors, Chairmen, representatives of the Rajshahi University Teachers Association and the Employees Association with Vice-Chancellor Pro. Amanullah Ahmed in the chair.

The VC, after the meeting, announced the 17th RUCSU election had tentatively been scheduled for mid-September. "Officially, the date will be announced soon".

A top official who attended the meeting told UNB September 15 had been set for the elections.

The last polls were held on July 29 in 1990.

Obituary

Acting Chairman of Bangladesh Steel and Engineering Corporation (BSEC) Moazzem Hossain died of cardiac arrest in Dhaka on Saturday.

He was 52, reports UNB. The deceased left behind his wife, father, three sons and a large number of relations, friends and admirers.

Late Moazzem Hossain was a chartered accountant and had worked as Finance Director in BTMO and BSFC before joining BSEC as its Finance Director.

Leaders of different student groups including Jatityatabadi Chhatra Dal (JCD) RU unit President Harunur Rashid, Chhatra League (A-A) Acting President Rabul Alam Budu and Jatity Chhatra League President Khairul Islam Mannan congratulated the announcement.

New executives of Ispahani Girls School

A new executive committee of Ispahani Girls School and College was elected Saturday for three years term, says a press release.

The office-bearers are President — Amena Ispahani, Vice President and Treasurer — AKM Humayun and Secretary — Principal Mobina Khatun.

Members are Khurshid Alam, Mesbahuddin Zangi, Al-Haj KM Shahidullah, Nilufar Mahmood, Zahida Ispahani, Shahida Begum and Najmun Nahar.

Crossword Puzzler

The Crossword Puzzler, our regular item, has been suspended from today (Sunday) temporarily due to unavoidable circumstances. It will, however, be resumed as early as possible. Inconveniences to our readers is regretted.

Local manufacturers allege

PDB under WB pressure to buy Indian electric poles

Power Development Board (PDB) is under World Bank pressure to buy Indian electric poles instead of quality indigenous production for an IDA-financed power project in Bangladesh, local manufacturers alleged, reports UNB.

They said the pro-Indian lobby in the World Bank is forcing the PDB to purchase inferior quality Indian goods despite PDB's recommendation for local product.

"This is a gross violation of all norms of international tender", said Kazi Shahed Ahmed, Managing Director of Gemcon Limited, a local electric poles manufacturing unit, at a press conference in Dhaka on Saturday.

He said the country's three poles manufacturing units will fall into deep crisis if the authorities yield to the World Bank pressure.

The press conference was also attended by Chittagong Steel Works Director Rezaul

Karim, Karim Pipe Mills Director Zaitul Karim and Gemcon Limited Director Khalequzzaman.

Ahmed said an international bidding was made by PDB in three separate lots for poles for the IDA-financed "Sixteen Town Project" and the PDB board and the Energy Ministry recommended for the local units after detailed evaluation.

Three local units — Gemcon Limited, Chittagong Steel Works and Karim Pipe Mills — took part in the international bidding offered by PDB along with some 13 other foreign bidders including from Japan, China, Korea and India.

Ahmed said, the World Bank did not accept the government recommendation and asked the PDB to give the contract to an Indian company JINDAL which was "totally

non-responsive in the bid as its offer was contrary to tender requirement."

Jindal violated tender terms and allegedly cheating PDB of nearly Tk 4 crore, which is 22 per cent of the total cost of poles, he added.

Moreover, he pointed out, ultimate cost to be incurred by PDB for JINDAL poles would amount to Tk 27.85 crore while purchase from the local bidder would be less by Taka 9 crore, he said.

Industrialists said their units remained almost locked as their produce are not getting market. Such manipulation by funding agencies would lead the local industries to extinction, they cautioned.

They urged the government to pursue the World Bank to revise their decision and prefer eligible local products.

The Asiatic Society Halima-Sharafuddin Award 1991

Entries are invited from Bangladeshi Scholars for the Asiatic Society Halima-Sharafuddin Award 1991 valued at Tk 30,000/-. The Award will be given for the best original publication on Science and Technology published during 1989 and 1990. For details please contact the General Secretary, Asiatic Society of Bangladesh, 5 Old Secretariat Road, Nimtali, Dhaka 1000. Telephone 239390. Last date for entry 15 August 1991. D-68

Rotary Foundation Scholarships

Applications are invited for the Rotary Foundation Scholarships as below:

Sl. No	Scholarships	Eligibility
1.	Post-Graduate Scholarships: For one academic year	(a) Masters Degree (b) 18-30 years on 1-8-91
2.	Freedom From Hunger Scholarships (leading to M S for period up to 2 years)	(a) Masters Degree (b) 21-50 years on 1-8-91
3.	Japan Programme Scholarship (21 months) study of Language training and academic study in Japan	Masters Degree and experience/interest in the relevant field
4.	Vocational, Journalism and Teacher of the handicapped Scholarship (1 year)	

For admission in the USA and Canada, a minimum TOEFL grade of 550 is also necessary.

The applicants must not be Rotarians, their relatives, or the employees of the Rotary Entities.

The applications must reach the Rotary Club of Dhaka G P O Box No 3304 Dhaka-1000 on or before 28-7-1991.

Rotary Club of Dhaka

Plea to stop illegal distribution of khasland

By Staff Correspondent

Bangladesh Krishak Federation on Saturday called for the cancellation of all illegally distributed khasland since 1986 and urged the government to stop further illegal distribution of khasland.

and upazila administration distributed government khasland to 234 people, violating government regulations.

Abbas visits Hossaini Dalan Imambara

Mirza Abbas, Mayor of Dhaka City Corporation, visited Hossaini Dalan Imambara in Dhaka Friday evening, reports BSS.

An Imambara press release said Mirza Abbas was the second dignitary after Shaheed President Ziaur Rahman to have visited the Imambara.

Soviet envoy meets Speaker

The new Soviet Ambassador to Bangladesh Yuri Alekseev called on Speaker Abdul Rahman Biswas at his Sangsard Bhaban chamber on Saturday, reports UNB.

They discussed matters of mutual interest, said official sources.

Weather

Heavy rain likely

By Staff Correspondent.

Rain or thundershower with few moderately heavy fall is likely to occur at most places over Chittagong and Rajshahi divisions and many places over Dhaka and Khulna divisions during the next 24 hours commencing 6pm on Saturday, reports Meteorological Department.

The day temperature till Monday morning will remain nearly unchanged.

Heavy rainfall warning: heavy rain is likely to occur at one or two places over Chittagong and Dhaka divisions and at the regions of Khulna, Pabna, Bogra and Rangpur during the next 24 hours.

Outlook for subsequent two days: Little change. Extended outlook for another five days: No marked change.

The sun sets today (Sunday) at 6.47 pm and rises tomorrow (Monday) at 5.23 am.

The temperature and humidity in some cities and towns of the country on Saturday were:

Cities/Towns	Temperature in Celsius	Humidity in percentage
	maxi	min
Dhaka	30.8	25.4
Faridpur	30.3	24.8
Sylhet	33.5	24.8
Khepupara	29.6	25
Khulna	30.6	25.6
Jessore	30	24.7
Rajshahi	32	25
Dinajpur	32	26.2
Barisal	30.5	25.5
Tangail	30.3	25
Comilla	31	24.5
Feni	30.2	23.2

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