

## DOWN TO EARTH

### Victims of wrong diagnosis

By Khalilur Rahman

The extent of emotional shock of a man whose blood test shows that he is a carrier of deadly hepatitis-B virus can hardly be measured. Most of those carrying this type of virus in the country are detected during the process of their screening for employment abroad. Hepatitis-B virus infection disqualifies a recruit to get a job in a Middle-East country.

During the last few years most Middle-East countries have imposed restrictions on recruitment of persons suffering from hepatitis-B virus infection. Hepatitis is an ailment of the liver which is known to all as jaundice. An individual can be afflicted with this disease for a variety of reasons. But when the illness results from B virus infection it is pretty serious, doctors say.

The most incredible aspect of the episode does not relate to making the diagnosis of a case, but the wrong diagnosis in some cases. That means the blood test of a man without B virus infection can show him to be a carrier while the actual carrier is certified as non-carrier. This is the result of a wrong diagnostic method adopted by some pathological laboratories assigned to screen the recruits for overseas jobs. Seven to eight persons out of 100 are found to have B virus infection after laboratory test of their blood, sources told The Daily Star. Of them, some do not have at all any B virus infection while a few others certified by the laboratories as 'clean cases' are, in fact, the carriers of B virus, the sources added.

There are persons among the recruits, who were re-

jected for employment, ultimately got jobs abroad as subsequent tests of their blood carried out in more sophisticated laboratories by the renowned pathologists showed that they had no such B virus infection.

Talking to The Daily Star, Prof. Mohammad Nazrul Islam, head of the Department of Virology of the Institute of Post-Graduate Medicine and Research (IPGMR), said that diagnosis of hepatitis-B virus infection could be accurately made by clinical and laboratory diagnostic methods. A number of techniques are available to detect hepatitis-B virus infection in an individual, he added. Of these methods, ELISA (Enzyme Linked Immunosorbent Assay) is the most sensitive and dependable technique used for diagnosis of B virus carriers. In some of the modern laboratories in the city ELISA is applied to detect B virus infection.

Prof. Islam said that two other methods, RPHA (Reverse Passive Haemagglutination) and Latex were also used in our laboratories both for diagnosis and screening of B virus carriers. In terms of effectiveness RPHA comes next to ELISA. The Latex technique which is used by the laboratories where the recruits for the Arab countries are sent for screening lacks provision for confirmatory test. The technique is used because of its swiftness to perform a test. But the method does not give full accuracy in the diagnosis of a case which is available in two other methods, ELISA and RPHA, Prof. Islam stated.

In this connection Prof. Islam mentioned the result of

a survey conducted at the IPGMR to detect B virus infection. A study on 1200 blood donors at the IPGMR revealed that about four per cent of the donors were found to be 'false positive' and five per cent of the actually positive donors were missed by the Latex method. So, just for a rapid test one must not depend on the Latex method for determining a serious ailment like hepatitis-B virus infection, Prof. Islam added.

Elaborating Prof. Islam said that ELISA and RPHA were also very simple types of techniques. These take a little more time for testing than Latex but the cost for examination is almost the same in all the three systems, he added. The Latex method should be discarded as has been done in the advanced countries, Prof. Islam stated.

Referring to the seriousness of the problem Prof. Islam, who is also general secretary of the National Aids Committee said that a number of studies, earlier conducted, revealed that about seven per cent of our population were carriers of hepatitis-B virus. These carriers are serving as the source of infection for the susceptible persons. A survey conducted in 1984 revealed that about 18 per cent of the professional blood donors in the metropolises were the carriers of B-virus.

Prof. Islam said that there was no effective and specific treatment for chronic active hepatitis-B virus infection. Often it develops into cirrhosis and cancer of the liver. But the disease which spreads from man to man is preventable, he added.

## Body to find solution of Tanbazar problem

From Our Correspondent

NARAYANGANJ, Oct 24 : A five-member standing committee was formed in a meeting of town leaders today to find a solution to the problem of the red-light district in Tanbazar.

District Commissioner Habibur Rahman and Abul Kalam, a local MP, also called on the Unislamic Activities Resistance Committee to desist from taking their planned protest rally to the brothel area Friday.

The standing committee was formed in a meeting convened by the district administration, at the DC's office in the afternoon, of law enforcement officials and town leaders including members of the resistance committee.

The five-member standing committee will comprise of a first-class magistrate, a police officer, a journalist and two members of the resistance committee.

The meeting which lasted for about three hours was attended by the DC, Superintendent of Police Habibur Rahman, Member of Parliament Abul Kalam, former MP Afzal Hossain, former chairman of the Municipality, Nazimuddin Mahmud, President of the Press Club Bangshir Shah, Secretary of the Press Club Fazlul Huq, Convener of the resistance committee Jahangir Alam, and members of the committee Baduzzaman and Rafiqul Islam.

It was decided at the meeting that the immediate task of the standing committee will be to locate all the under-aged prostitutes in Tanbazar and arrange for their rehabilitation.

The meeting also decided to initiate a drive to eradicate alcohol and drug abuse from Narayanganj.

Earlier in the day, a protest rally bought out by the prostitutes were blocked by a heavy contingent of police at around 9 am. The DC and SP came to the brothel area around noon.

The inhabitants of the Tanbazar red-light district expressed their helplessness at the existing situation. They also conveyed their feeling of insecurity because of threats made by the Resistance Committee.

The district administration assured them protection against any attacks.

Meanwhile, the Resistance Committee continued to distribute leaflets around the town advocating participation in the protest rally Friday. They also called on people, through loud speakers to gather at the Phalpati area after Juma prayers to take part in the protest rally.

## BSC ship

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detained at a port in Belgium on charge of non-payment of dues amounting to Taka four crores.

BSC sources said, the ship 'Banglar Kakoli' was detained on October 18 following a case filed by a container marketing organization of Belgium demanding immediate payment of the outstanding dues. Efforts were being made to get the ship released immediately, the sources added. BSC is suffering a per day loss of Taka two lakh fifty thousand as port charges and operating costs.

Several other ships of BSC were detained at Singapore earlier for non-payment of outstanding dues. Consequently BSC had to bear the brunt of heavy financial loss for the release of those ships.

## BCL (S-A) memo to Home Ministry

By DU Correspondent

Chhatra League (S-A), the student wing of Awami League submitted a memorandum to the Ministry of Home Affairs Thursday noon demanding immediate release of all its arrested leaders and workers.

It also demanded withdrawal of false cases filed against its leaders and workers.

BCL (S-A) at a rally held near the Secretariat alleged that the law enforcing agencies were harassing its activists throughout the country by indiscriminate arrests.

The rally was addressed by Ashim Kumar Ukil, General Secretary of BCL central committee, Golam Mostafa Suzan and Quamruzzaman Ansari, President and General Secretary respectively of its DU unit.

Speakers blamed BNP's student front Jatiyatabadi Chhatra Dal (JCD) for the deterioration of the situation at the educational institution and alleged that the law enforcing agencies were taking no measures to arrest the armed hoodlums of JCD.

They, however, reiterated their call to gear up united movement for realising ten-point demands of the student community.

**Time to end war, Sharif tells Mujahideen**

ISLAMABAD, Oct 24 : Pakistani Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif told Afghan guerrilla leaders at a meeting today the time was right to end the Afghan war and urged them to back a United Nations peace plan, reports Reuter.

The four-hour meeting agreed to send a Mujahideen delegation to Moscow in the first week of November for talks on Soviet suggestions that include a transitional coalition in Kabul

## The Midnight File

### Ukraine accepts Soviet control of N'arms

KIEV, Oct 24 : The Ukrainian parliament today accepted central Soviet control over nuclear arms on its territory but demanded a veto right over their use. A statement adopted by the legislature also said the republic aimed to become a nuclear-free zone and was ready to start talks with all sides concerned, reports Reuter.

### Rioting erupts in Zaire

KINSHASA, Oct 24 : Violent protests against Zaire's President Mobutu Sese Seko erupted today as loyal troops battled against crowds of demonstrators. By midday several casualties, but no deaths, were confirmed in the capital Kinshasa. Furious crowds threw up roadblocks and burned buses and private cars, reports Reuter.

### Gas leak : 99 hospitalised in India

NEW DELHI, Oct 24 : Ninety-nine people were taken to hospitals in western India after a truck carrying ammonia gas overturned, triggering a leak, the Press Trust of India (PTI) reported today. The accident, late Wednesday, took place near Thane city. No further details were available, reports AFP.

## Jamuna Bridge

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Dwelling on the wages and salaries of the workers and employees, Karaske said the World Bank felt that these should be fixed in line with the growth of productivity. There are enough examples of sick industries in the public sector which demonstrate inefficiency and mismanagement by the authorities.

Answering a question whether the World Bank was opposed to the wage-hike of the workers, Karaske said the World Bank believes in optimum utilisation of the public sector resources. It is important to keep in mind what is viable and what is not viable.

Karaske said it was unfortunate that there is poverty in the country and the people's income level is low. There should not be ambitious programmes taken up by the government, Karaske added.

Talking about the country's economy, Karaske said Bangladesh's growth rate was 3.5 to 4 per cent this year and the trend suggested that it will continue to rise at the same rate in future.

Economic performances of the last fiscal year were successful because of the good harvest. He said this year's economic performances might suffer a setback because of the after-effects of the cyclone which hit Chittagong and other coastal districts.

Karaske said that the government should take a number of steps to confront the problems of relatively low private and public sector investments, bureaucratic snags and administrative bottlenecks. There is a need to simplify the process of reimbursement of the duties of the exporters hit by administrative bottlenecks.

He said that privatisation of the 'non-viable' public sector enterprises was a key element to the successful implementation of the government policies. He strongly advocated for disinvestment of the enterprises running at huge losses.

Dwelling on the World Bank's lending programmes, Karaske said that the Bank's lending programmes in the developing countries, especially in Bangladesh, continue to be strong. We will certainly go for wide level OD assistance to Bangladesh along with our commitments, Karaske said.

He said that the Bank's lending gave priorities to the country's poverty alleviation programmes, education, health and population programmes.

Pointing to the vast potentials, Karaske said Bangladesh demonstrated enough potentials in exports and manufacturing sectors. Liberalisation of trade has led to the entry of 'unlimited market' export. For

successful growth of the sectors in question, manufacture and exports need to be competitive, Karaske told newsmen.

He said that high tariff barriers and inefficient management tended to distort proper allocation of resources. In this regard, liberalisation was necessary, he added.

On the question of withdrawal of subsidy on agricultural inputs, Karaske said it was not true that the World Bank was opposed to all subsidies. We are opposed to subsidies which have no specific utilities, Karaske said.

He said, we are in full agreement with the (Bangladesh) government to reduce subsidy on fertiliser. It was a universally recognised fact that the more efficient the management, the better result you expect, Karaske said.

Denying a newsman's suggestion that Bangladesh's economy was going down despite massive doses of foreign aid, the World Bank resident mission chief Christopher Willoughby said that the country's growth rate of four per cent was quite modest compared to many African countries where growth rate did not come to a reasonable level over the years. He said quite a lot of accomplishments have been made in the country's efforts for economic development.

Willoughby said, that the country's food situation was better than before and the female literacy rate had doubled to 25 per cent now from a meagre 13 per cent after the liberation of the country.

He said that the country's growth was very much curtailed by the high population growth, the number one problem for Bangladesh.

He said that the country needed to find a new strategy for development to achieve a higher economic return.

### Garments workers demand implementation of labour laws

By Staff Correspondent

Bangladesh Garments Strikers Federation on Thursday morning submitted a six-point memorandum to Director, Labour and Chief Inspector of the Labour Directorate demanding strict implementation of labour and factory laws, ensuring free functioning of minimum wage scale and action against garment units breaking the law.

The federation demanded that the laid-off garment factories be put into operation immediately.

## Govt suppressing truth on N'region, say 4 parties

By Staff Correspondent

Leaders of four left political parties yesterday blamed the government for suppressing facts on the 'famine like' situation in the northern districts.

The leaders who returned from a visit to the flood stricken northern region made the remarks at a press conference in the Jatiya Press Club yesterday afternoon.

The leaders of the CPB, NAP, Samyabadi Dal and Ganu Azadi League also demanded of the government to immediately launch a united relief operation and take up short and long-term rehabilitation programmes for the affected people.

The leaders who visited affected areas of Kurigram, Rangpur, and Dinajpur alleged that a famine-like situation was prevailing there. People were dying every day of starvation. In this connection they cited a number of cases of death due to starvation. They also quoted Abdul Kader, Chairman of Nohali Union of Gangachara upazila confirming 33 deaths in his union alone.

Besides, they also claimed to have received reports of 30 deaths in Kotwali Thana of Dinajpur district.

They mentioned that 31

### Hijackers enter hospital, snatch ornaments

Hijackers entering the Shishu Hospital in the guise of patients snatched away ornaments valued at Tk 20,000 from Lubna Ahmed, a TV drama artist Thursday morning, reports UNB.

According to an FIR lodged with the Tejgaon police the hijackers scaled the walls from the Pangu Hospital in the guise of crippled patients and took away a diamond ring and a gold wrist watch set on a gold bangle.

Lubna was attending her sick child in the hospital and was paying the ward boy for bringing biscuits in front of the ward when the hijackers threatened her with a ramdano and a rusted dagger.

Other attendants of child patients, the ward boy, gate keeper and some others identified one of the hijackers to be a known criminal who had been released from detention recently and lived in the vicinity for quite long time.

Lubna's father Mohsenuddin Ahmed, Director of News, Radio Bangladesh, who filed the complaint said his daughter and the child had to leave the hospital for lack of security. Other guardians attending their sick children were also feeling insecure and thinking of leaving the hospital, he said.

The Director of the hospital also expressed concern at the incident inside the hospital and requested police to find the criminal.

nurses of the Nurses Training Center in Dinajpur were attacked with diarrhoea and said this showed the magnitude of the situation.

The leaders termed the government relief operation as scanty compared to demand.

While reading out a written statement of the four parties, CPB General Secretary Nurul Islam Nahid recommended a 11-point step by the government to resolve the crisis. The points included : Supply of adequate relief goods to the affected areas, continuation of relief operations till new crops are harvested, provision of multiple employment for the affected, starting immediate planning, ensuring food and medicine for the children, preventing diarrhoea, and malnutrition, taking up agricultural rehabilitation programmes, supplying of seeds of rabi crops free of cost, sanction of agricultural loans, supply of house building materials and steps to check erosion.

Replying to a question, NAP General Secretary Pankaj Bhattacharjee accused the government of denying the disaster in the northern districts due to which the miseries of the affected people were multiplying.

He also blamed the government of hiding the truth that people were dying of starvation.

Commenting on the debate over the 'famine-like' situation Pankaj said that the image of the Awami League did not go down for admitting the 1974 famine and similarly the BNP would not be removed from power if it admitted the truth.

Pankaj blamed the ruling BNP as well as some other opposition parties for a lack of democratic spirit and practices.

### Ershad money

From Page 1 Col. 5

Meanwhile, the Fairfax investigation agency, known for its probe into the Bofors scandal in India, is nearing end of its investigation into Ershad's foreign accounts. But it is facing difficulties in getting full picture of his wealth lying with foreign banks. "Some banks are reluctant to divulge any information in this regard," a competent source told this correspondent in New York.

The Fairfax had earlier made a probe into Ershad's foreign accounts in connection with a case filed by his paramour Marium Mumtaz. The deposed president was alleged by her to have deposited an estimated 200 million US dollars in foreign banks.

Momtaz is living in the United States.

Related story on Page 6



As anti-brothel campaigners plan an eviction drive today, prostitutes of Tanbazar, known to be the biggest red-light district of the country, brought out a procession in Narayanganj town yesterday. They said they would resist today's eviction drive.

## Hasina : Govt, opposition

From Page 1 Col. 2

of 12th Amendment Bill, though, according to her, some provisions in the bill were undemocratic.

She said that all concerned had the responsibility to sustain the democratic changes brought in recently. She maintained that the ruling party would have to practice tolerance if it had any intention to serve people's interest.

Dwelling on the past anti-autocratic movement, the AL chief said that her party always stood for change of power through a constitutional way.

Hasina said that she had advised law enforcing authorities to raid all the halls at a time, but it was ignored.

In reply to a question, the AL chief said that her party would fulfil its commitment to ensure freedom of press. During the discussion, the Editors apprised the Leader of the Opposition of the problems arising out of government control on the advertisements and said this was an obstacle to the freedom of the press.

Sanaullah Noori, President of the Council of Editors presided over the discussion meeting attended by 28 Editors representing Daily newspapers and news agencies. Amir Hussain Amu, joint secretary of the AL was also present.

She maintained that it was not difficult for government to plug the sources of arms supply to the campuses.

She alleged that the ruling party wanted to reign over all the educational institutions which resulted in widespread violence on the campuses. She mentioned that a number of Chhatra League workers were killed by the BNP-backed student organisation in the recent past.

Hasina held the government responsible for the use of arms on the campuses and said, "Without government patronage, none can carry arms in the campus."

The AL chief also alleged that Jagannath Hall, Zahurul Haque Hall, and SM Hall of the Dhaka University came under several police raids for the recovery of arms. But police did never raid Mohsin Hall, Surja Sen Hall, Zia Hall and Bangabandhu Hall where the ruling party's student wing had strongholds.

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## Northern situation

From Page 1 Col. 5

sion to join the session on October 27 with the assurance of the Speaker to open a discussion on the situation in the northern districts.

Briefing newsmen the Chief Whip of the Awami League Mohammad Nasim said that the government could realise its mistakes and took a positive decision by accepting the demand of the Opposition to allow discussion on the situation.

He also said that the Awami League and other opposition parties might join the session on October 27 with the assurance of the Speaker. He said that the Speaker and the Chief Whip of the Treasury bench came to them in the afternoon yesterday to discuss the issue.

Mohammad Nasim however said that the Treasury bench members should also practice democratic norms for institutionalizing democracy.

He also hoped that the Treasury bench members would always try to keep the prestige of the Leader of the Opposition and the opposition members in Parliament to allow democracy to function without any hindrance.

The session resumed yesterday with Deputy Speaker Humayun Khan Panni in the chair at around 4.45 p.m.

The Speaker, immediately after resumption of the House entered the order of the day with question-answer session. Except one question from Sardar Shakhawat Hossain Bakul (BNP), all the questions of the day were to be asked by the opposition members, most of whom were found absent. The opposition members except those from the Jatiya Party and the Jamaat-e-Islami boycotted the session.

The leader of Jamaat-e-

Islami Parliamentary Party Moulana Matiur Rahman Nizami was also absent, while Barrister Moudud Ahmed of the Jatiya Party was in his seat only for a while. Attendance of Treasury bench members was also thin.

In the absence of the Opposition bench members some Treasury bench members moved their questions with permission of the Chair. The House was adjourned at 5.35 p.m for Magreb prayers to resume at 6.30 p.m with Speaker Sheikh Razzak Ali in the chair.

The Speaker informed the House that a former member of erstwhile East Pakistan Assembly, Shafiqul Islam Ahmed, died on October 17 at his Dhaka residence and the House would condole his death to show respect to the parliamentarian.

The obituary resolution read out by the Speaker described late Ahmed as an able parliamentarian. A copy of the resolution would be sent to the family members of Ahmed.

Maulana Ataur Rahman of the BNP led the prayer for the peace of the departed soul. The House observed one-minute silence to condole the death.

### Armed rally at Jhenidah

JHENIDAH, Oct 24 : About 25 people with firearms brought out a procession at Madhupur old bazar in Sadar upazila, five kilometres off here Wednesday evening. The processionists are suspected to be linked with underground political parties. When contacted, police acknowledged the incident, reports UNB.

### CHANGE OF TELEPHONE NUMBERS

All concerned are requested to note the following changes, effective Saturday the 26th of October, 1991:

Old Numbers:	New Numbers:
50 00 90	86 10 56
to	to
50 00 99	86 10 69

The World Bank  
Resident Mission in Bangladesh  
3A Paribagh, Dhaka 1000

Editor : S. M. Ali

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