

DOWN TO EARTH

Ambulance service needs fast aid

By A S M Nurunnabi

Ambulance service is counted as a basic civic facility of a modern city. In the Dhaka city, there is such a service, though not in the form as needed. It is operated by the Fire Service and Civil Defence Department.

The service had its origin in the early post-independence period. In 1979-80 to be exact. Before that time the city's hospitals used to operate a very limited number of ambulances. The ambulance service got a big boost in 1983, with the receipt of a Japanese grant of 49 ambulances. From that time, the Fire Service

4500 patients per month, with an earning of Tk 5500/= as charges per vehicle.

A high-level source of the Department pointed out a characteristic feature of the ambulance service here; it is available from 'anywhere' to 'anywhere' within the country. It means if an ambulance is requisitioned from the furthest corner of the country for coming to Dhaka or to any other place, it is available. It is also available for moving a patient from hospital or clinic to the patient's home. The source further mentioned that the ambulance service is welfare-

Observers believe that for a city with rising population where other sources of availability are limited, a dozen of ambulances is not enough in view of the manifold functions the ambulance service has taken on itself. Most of the private clinics in the city have their own ambulances, but their availability is restricted to the patients of those clinics only. The Anjuman-e-Mafidul Islam has also some ambulances. Their availability, however, does not seem to be as certain — because of their other functions — as in the case of Fire Service Depart-



Department was able to extend the ambulance service all over the country through its network of fire stations

From 1983 till this year, the Department could acquire 16 additional ambulances. In the meantime, some of the older ones went out of commission. The present picture of total availability is 86 ambulances, out of which 31 are operational, 33 repairable and 22 unfit for repairs. The available ambulances have been distributed according to needs among other fire stations of the country. To Dhaka city's share has come 13 of which 7 are operational. This number may not be considered adequate for a city of over 60 lakh people.

From the Fire Service Department sources, it is learnt that the monthly calls for ambulances average 350 to 450. Within the city area, the ambulances carry an average of

oriented which is mainly reflected in the rates of charges for their use. Within the metropolitan area of the Dhaka city the rate per call from one mile/one km to five miles/eight km is Tk 50/= and the rate from five miles/eight km to ten miles/eleven km is Tk 100/= For long-distance use, the rate is Tk10/= per mile and Tk 6/= per km. The ambulance carries free of charge victims of accidents or fire incidents.

When asked whether it is possible for the Department, with the limited fleet strength of ambulances, to attend promptly to every call received, it was stated that attempt is made to attend to the caller instantly, but when no stand-by ambulance is available at the control room, there may be delay in some cases.

However, authorities admitted that fleet strength of the service is inadequate.

ment ambulances. It was learnt that there is at present under examination a scheme for acquisition of 80 additional ambulances for the country. This scheme, when implemented, will ensure greater ambulance facility for the city as well as for the rest of the country.

In some developed countries, ambulance service is operated in the private sector. Some observers think that the over-all service system can be made more efficient if private operation is tried initially on an experimental basis.

Nowadays, an ambulance plays an important role in saving life with various first aid equipments. It is felt that the concerned Department should try to procure ambulances equipped with these modern gadgets in order to render more useful service.

Kidney disease grips babies

From Page 1 Col 4
According to Prof Moazzem Hossain of the paediatric department of the PG Hospital, they have been observing an upward trend in the prevalence of the ARF since 1979-80.

Prof Hossain said they were not yet sure about the cause of the disease and could not even relate it to any viral or bacterial attack.

Usually the patients suffer from high fever for about a week with symptoms of vomiting, loose motion and loss of appetite. In about a week the patient suffers from oliguria, or passing of scanty urine, and ultimately stops passing urine, a state known as anuria.

During this stage the patient suffers from hypervolaemia that diminishes blood circulation to the kidney causing renal ischaemia. The renal ischaemia damages the renal tubules, a symptom known as necrosis.

Prof Hossain said that earlier detection and intervention could substantially lower the mortality rate among the patients. Quoting a survey among 390 patients during a period stretching from July 88 to June '91, Prof Hossain said that all the 65 patients who reported to the hospital within 24 hours of anuria survived. While 90 per cent of the patients who came to the hospital after 48 hours died. Another 19 per cent of the patients who reported in between 24 and 48 hours of anuria also died.

According to the study 86 per cent of the patients are between the age of 1 and 5 years and the mortality rate is as high as 94 per cent among the children under the age of two years. The study says the prevalence of the ARF is high

among the poorer section of the people. About 85 per cent of the patients of the study came from the families whose monthly income was below Tk 4000. Relating illiteracy and level of education the study found that 65 per cent of the mothers of the patients were illiterate and 87 per cent of them were below SSC and 97 per cent were below HSC level.

Prof Hossain stressed the need of creating widespread awareness about the disease. He said none of the patients under his survey knew that children should take adequate quantity of water during fever, measles and other diseases, and 98.7 per cent of the parents did not know that sudden stop in the flow of urine was harmful.

Stinging out the ignorance as the number 1 factor for the spread of the disease, Prof Hossain called for utilising the mass media including radio and television for creating awareness among the people. He also put emphasis on the training of the doctors and health workers. In some cases administering of wrong drugs could lead to dangerous consequences, he added.

Meanwhile, a miserable state is prevailing in the renal dialysis unit of the PG Hospital. Prof Hossain in a paper has suggested setting up dialysis unit in all the district-level hospitals of the country. He said, the PD does not need any special facilities. The technology is simple but needs constant care, attention and proper reading of the quantity of the inflow and outflow of the PD fluid. Neither the PG nor the Shishu hospitals have that skilled nurses or technicians. The renal dialysis unit of the PG Hospital is not even recognised by the government and is being run mostly by the trainee volun-

teers, he added. Outbreak of the ARF is still being reported from different parts of the country. In most of the cases the patients take a long time to reach the PG Hospital from the far-flung areas like Rangpur, Dinajpur, Kushtia and the like. By that time substantial damage is done to the kidneys and when they are told that there are no more room in the dialysis ward they are left with no option but to go back or to wait for the death of some of the patients.

Sadhan Kumar Saha of Mangalbaria, Kushtia, said he came to Dhaka with his only son Swarup (5) about three days back. Unable to get his son admitted, he said he would try to cross over to India to make a last effort to save the boy's life.

Shamsul Haq of Laksham was waiting for five days with his son Habib. He does not know what he would do. Waiting for a bed would be of no use if he did not get a bed within a day or two. Already it was too late, doctors told him.

Abul Kashem came from Kurigram. He was leaving the PG Hospital. His voice was heavy with emotion. Everyday patients were rushing in, one of the attending doctors said. But they were coming only to be refused. "We don't have any option," he added.

JS okays 3 more bills

The Treasury bench yesterday (Friday) passed three more bills without much discussion in the absence of major opposition Awami League and Jatiya Party, reports UNB.

The bills are the Pourashava (Third Amendment) Bill, the Prawn Cultivation Levy Bill and the Bangladesh House Building Finance Corporation (Amendment) Bill, 1992.

LGRD Minister Abdus Salam Takulder, environment and Fisheries Minister Abdullah-al-Noman and State Minister for Finance Mujibur Rahman piloted the bills.

All the bills were passed by voice vote.



The women branch of Nirmul Body brought out a procession in city yesterday in support of tomorrow's hartal. —Star photo

Sharif issue

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about the religion of Islam.

The discussion was participated by Jamaat-e-Islami members — A M Riasat Ali, Moulana Abdus Shobhan, Moulana Motiur Rahman Nizami; BNP members — Moulana Ataur Rahman, Dr Abdur Latif Bhuiyan, Whip of the Sangsad Professor Mohammad Shahjahan and Deputy Leader of the House Professor Badruddoza Chowdhury and CPB member Mozhar Hossain.

Winding up the discussion, Deputy Leader of the House Prof. Badruddoza Chowdhury said that the people of the country did never accept attack on their religious faith. Our society also did not sanction any body to speak against Islam, he said.

He welcomed the decision of the Chair to refer the matter to the Privilege Committee and said that when it was sent to the committee, we should wait for a decision from there for follow-up action.

Earlier, participating in the discussion, Jamaat-e-Islami members said that reports on Dr Sharif's remarks about Islam were almost same in two newspapers, namely, the Inquilab and the Shakaier Khabor. Dr Sharif did not give any rejoinder on the reports to these newspapers though he spoke to reporters of two other newspapers — the Ittefaq and the Rupali whereby he said that most of the people who follow religious faith were illiterate and that educated persons were less religious minded.

The Jamaat members observed that so-called intellectuals like Badruddin Omar and Kabir Chowdhury were of the habit of speaking dishonourable words about Islam.

The CPB member, participating in the discussion, said a known political force which opposed the national Liberation War in 1971 saying that it was against Islam, had in fact come into the field to assassinate the characters of the progressive forces.

The CPB member said that it was a deep-rooted conspiracy to belittle the pro-liberation forces if we consider the fact that Prof. Sharif was one of the 24 intellectuals against whom false cases were instituted for being associated with the Gono-Adalat.

He was critical of the Daily

Inqilab and said the Inqilab was of the habit of creating problem in the society. In this context, he mentioned an observation by the Deputy Leader of the House on a report on the speech he made during the by-elections of Gouripur published in the Inqilab. In his observation Prof. Chowdhury condemned the misrepresentation of his statement.

The CPB member said that whereas the Jamaat members were trying to create an issue of Prof. Sharif, they were silent about burning to ashes of Holy Qurans at a Quadiani Mosque.

The BNP members in their speeches sought an enquiry into the matter and demanded that Prof Sharif be declared an undesirable element.

Two die

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his bed room.

A source close to the family said that Mahmud committed suicide following a family feud.

Thirty years old Mahmud, owner of Jhinuk Garments, lived alone at the Tallabagh residence while his wife and two children in another house at Kalabagan, the source said.

The body was sent to the Dhaka Medical College Hospital (DMCH) morgue for autopsy. Mahmud's younger brother S K Mahmud lodged an unnatural death (UD) case with Mohammadpur police.

In another incident, an unidentified boy aged 15 was run over by a train near Banani rail crossing at around 6 am yesterday.

A UD case was registered with railway police and the body was sent to the DMCH morgue, said police.

Indemnity

From Page 1 Col 5

Dr Badruddoza Chowdhury, Deputy Leader of the Opposition Abdus Samad Azad, Agriculture Minister M Majidul Huq, Chief Whip Khandaker Delwar Hossain, Information Minister Bannister Nazmul Huda, Opposition Chief Whip Mohammad Nasim and Sheikh Ansar Ali, MP.

The deadline earlier set for submitting the report expires on November 11.

The bill seeking repeal of the indemnity Ordinance was submitted to Parliament on August 8, 1991 by Opposition Chief Whip Mohammad Nasim.

Return to House

From Page 1 Col 5

cess followed in other democracies around the world. "You have to agree to disagree and not boycott parliament."

Noting the autocratic period of the Jatiya Party rule, the Treasury bench stalwart expressed his inability to properly grasp the compromise between Awami League and JP.

"I appeal to those who are not present here today that to keep democracy working the Opposition has as much responsibility as the ruling party."

He called on all members to make the parliament active, lively and people-oriented in which major national problems are identified and specific solutions are provided.

Summing up the proceedings of the session, the Deputy Leader of the House noted that some important bills were passed and a number of important issues of national interest were also discussed.

On the issue of 'push in' by India, he said that although both the Treasury and Opposition benches agreed on the main point, but unfortunately differences over some minor points did not allow the passage of a unanimous resolution.

However, he recalled that the House did pass a unanimous resolution over the atrocities on the Muslims of Bosnia-Herzegovina.

Terminating the anti-terrorism bill as an important one, B Chowdhury said, "We could not agree with the objections

Half-day hartal

From Page 1 Col 5

and Resistance to the Killers and Collaborators of 1971 called the hartal from 6 am to 12 noon also to force the government to materialise the accord signed between the government and the opposition in Parliament on June 29 last.

According to the hartal callers, 80 strategic points across the city have been selected for staging demonstrations.

The hartal, they said, would be followed by a public meeting at Bangabandhu Avenue at 3 pm. Committee chief Jahanara Imam and other leaders would also address the meeting.

Besides, public rallies would be arranged in Azampur and Jigatola areas of the city at 4 pm. The day's programme would conclude with the bringing out of a torch procession from in front of the Col. Taher Auditorium at Bangabandhu Avenue at 6 pm.

Meantime, different political parties, student bodies and socio-cultural organisations extended their support to the half-day hartal. These include Awami League, the Communist Party of Bangladesh (CPB), components of the PDF and Five-Party combine, Gonatantri Party, Sammilito Sangskritik Jote and the combine of 14 students organisations.

The Coordination Committee carried out various programmes over the past week in the city calling for the observance of the hartal peacefully.

It organised public rallies, wayside gatherings and torch processions at different parts of the city yesterday too. Besides, campaign for the hartal was carried out by the members of Chhatra Command of Muktiyoddha Sangsad on mobile trucks.

The women branch of the Coordination Committee held a rally near the General Post Office (GPO) while the Joy Bangla Sangskritik Oikya Jote's rally was held in front of the Jatiya Press Club in the afternoon in support of tomorrow's hartal. Both the rallies were followed by processions which marched the main city thoroughfares.

Chhatra Command brought out a torch procession from the premises of Teacher-Student Centre, Dhaka University, in the evening.

Meanwhile, different political parties, student and socio-cultural organisations yesterday issued statements calling the city dwellers for making the hartal a success.

PM: Democracy

From Page 1 Col 8

and special in the history of Bangladesh. She said on this day of 1975 the people and sepy together established a unique example of patriotism by foiling all conspiracies against the national independence and sovereignty.

Begum Zia said 7th November was glorious day of building the invincible resistance by the ever vigilant people and day of new consciousness for them. She said, on this day they took to the streets with the patriotic members of the Armed Forces unitedly in support of the freedom fighter shaheed President Ziaur Rahman. All the conspiracies hatched at home and abroad were foiled at the face of the unity of the people and sepy.

She said adding the deep patriotic and Bangladesh nationalistic feeling of the people upheld the flag of our national entity, national solidarity and prestige.

"I extend my deep respect to these brave sons of the soil," the Prime Minister said adding the 7th November would remain as a permanent source of inspiration for the nation to protect the national independence and sovereignty.

The Prime Minister said: "I wish National Revolution and Solidarity Day will inspire us anew to work unitedly for the progress and prosperity of the nation and to remain ever vigilant in protecting the independence and sovereignty of the nation."

The Midnight File

Clinton, Amato have 'cordial' phone talk

WASHINGTON, Nov 6: US President-elect Clinton and Italian Prime Minister Giuliano Amato reviewed major international issues in a long, cordial telephone conversation even as the two government's bickered on the brink of a threatening US-European trade war, the Italian Embassy said Friday. Both Clinton and Amato "expressed hopes that the positive cooperation between Italy and the United States will continue, and that they may meet soon," said an embassy press release, reports AP.

Red Square closed to public

MOSCOW, Nov 6: Red Square has been closed to the public for "repairs" in what communist hardliners say is a "political" play to head off demonstrations on the anniversary of the Bolshevik revolution which falls on November 7. Pravda raised the issue last week when it accused the city authorities of timing the work to coincide with what was traditionally a key date in the Soviet calendar, reports AFP.

PM tells BAU students

Go to villages, work with peasants

Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia yesterday asked the agricultural students to prepare themselves for going to villages and work unitedly with the peasants to build up a prosperous nation, reports UNB.

"You have to guide the rural masses towards development", she said addressing teachers, students and the newly elected student union members of Bangladesh Agricultural University Central Students Union (BAUCSU) at Sugandha yesterday evening.

Begum Zia asked them to help increase production in the fields, saying that progress in other sectors largely depended on development of agriculture.

"We will have to make the nation self-reliant", she said calling for concerted efforts to build Bangladesh as an exporting and industrialised country.

BNP

From Page 1 Col 7

voted for BNP to implement BNP's programmes. He said Awami League was now engaged in the conspiracy to foil democracy by boycotting parliament together with the Jatiya Party.

The Information Minister said Begum Khaleda Zia had relentlessly fought against the autocratic regime. He said due to the leniency of Begum Zia the quarter which was isolated from the people in 1974 got a chance to join the anti-autocracy movement and was rehabilitated in the country's politics.

Huda said the autocratic regime was forced to dissolve parliament in 1987 in the face of democratic movement launched by Begum Zia. He said during the long nine-year movement against the autocratic regime, Awami League was with the movement for three years only. They passed the rest of the time with autocrat Ershad, he said.

The minister said they wanted to create indiscipline in the society and spread terrorism in the name of opposing the anti-terrorism bill uniting with the Jatiya Party of Ershad.

He said the anti-people mask of the three alliances namely, eight-party, five-party and Ershad-party had been unveiled.

Criticising the remark made by the leader of the Opposition that she would not allow BNP to run the country properly for even a minute, the minister wanted to know what kind of conspiracy was this against the elected BNP government.

Road mishaps

From Page 1 Col 7

Driver of the bus managed to flee the scene immediately after the accident. Police seized the bus and the two trucks.

Our Manikganj Correspondent reports: Two unidentified persons were killed and 41 others injured when a Dhaka-bound truck collided with a Barisal-bound bus today at 7.15 pm about half kilometre away from the Manikganj bus stand.

Of them, one person died on the spot and the other, while being taken to the hospital. Twenty-two persons were admitted to the Manikganj Sadar Hospital and the rest were released from the hospital after giving first aid.

Among the injured, the condition of Anwarul Haq, Abul Quasem, Shahidul Islam, Rafiqul Islam and an unidentified man and a woman were stated to be critical.

The drivers of the two vehicles, however, managed to escape. A case has been filed with the local thana in this connection.

Solidarity Day

From Page 1 Col 8

Special prayer will be offered in all mosques, temples and churches for continued peace, progress and prosperity of the country.

The day has been declared a public holiday. The national flag will fly atop public and private buildings.

Radio Bangladesh and Bangladesh Television will put up special programmes highlighting the significance of the day.

National dailies will bring out special supplements on the occasion.

Improved diet will be supplied to hospitals, jails, orphanages and vagrants homes. Army, BDR, police and ansars will play bands at some specific places in the capital.

Various political, social and cultural organisations will visit the mazar of Shaheed Ziaur Rahman, place wreath and offer fatcha.

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