

### DOWN TO EARTH

## Clinics Mushroom in City

By A S M Nurunnabi

Private clinics have lately come to play a vital role in the Metropolitan life. A number of factors have contributed to their emergence, the more important of which is the gradual deterioration in the standard of treatment and facilities in government hospitals. The private clinics are, however, yet to prove as a supplementary to the country's health system.

As we all know, a large segment of the facilities in government hospitals, on account of their public welfare orientation, is committed to the treatment of patients of small means either free or at concessional rates. Such patients normally cannot afford treatment in private clinics except in special circumstances when they are compelled to pay much for the sake of treatment.

Those classes of people who can afford to pay for their treatment initially try to find out if the treatment they seek in government hospitals can be upto the mark. Treatment in the government hospitals is comparatively cheaper than that of private clinics. Despite financial constraints, they choose private clinics in expectation of better treatment. In case of emergencies, it may not always be possible to get admission in government hospitals. So, private clinic remains as the only alternative.

Private clinics started to

appear in the city in the late seventies. Before that a handful of them had isolated existence. Only during the last few years, they have flourished in larger numbers. Their establishments are regulated by the Medical Practice and Private Clinics and Laboratories (Regulation) Ordinance, 1982. At present the total number of registered private clinics in the city is 104. Few more may get registration soon.

It is learnt from the Health Department sources that initially no prior permission is required for setting up of a private clinic. It is also admitted that this is a lacuna in the existing law, which has led to the mushroom growth of clinics in areas where there is a good number of them or in any area where any new clinic is not considered desirable from the planning point of view. It was understood that the health authorities are considering the question of plugging the lacuna in law with necessary amendment.

After a new clinic is established, the Health Department chooses time to conduct an inspection to ensure that the minimum requirement of staff and equipment as laid down in the law is fulfilled. The Health Department sources stated that this inspection for registration is conducted without prior notice so that the clinic authority can show that the required staff and equipment

actually exist in the clinic premises and that they are not borrowed from other sources. Some clinics, however, complain that the Health Department take unusually long time for inspection which prejudice the prospects for further development and investment.

Under the existing arrangement, in most cases the junior doctors run the clinics as regular staff. For specialised treatment, they have to depend mostly on specialists who attend the clinics during fixed hours or on call. In most cases, the clinics do not get any share of the earnings of the outside consultants. The interest of the clinics lie in getting business when the consultants recommend admission in the clinic or pathological, X-ray or other tests.

In a sense, the owners of clinics are dependent on outside consultants.

It is held by and large that there is a necessity for the existence of private clinics as a supplementary to the country's health system. But it is also felt that in a poor country like ours, there is need for their becoming more welfare oriented. Since there is a wide disparity in the fees and other costs charged by different clinics, the health authorities should examine the question of their rationalisation and strictly enforce them.



Businessmen in New Market, Gausia and adjoining areas kept the shops shut and also closed the road to traffic yesterday in protest against a shopkeepers killing Thursday. — Star photo

### New Market clash: shopkeepers call strike in city tomorrow

By Staff Correspondent

The city shopkeepers have called a whole day strike tomorrow (Sunday) protesting the killing of a shopkeeper in the city Thursday.

The strike call was given at a rally of the shopkeepers in front of the Jatiya Press Club yesterday.

Meanwhile, all the shops in the Government New Market and its surrounding areas were closed yesterday protesting the killing of the shopkeeper.

The agitated shopkeepers demonstrated in the streets and closed the Mirpur Road from Nilkhet to Science Laboratory to traffic from morning till afternoon.

Shopkeeper Mohammad Rafiq Mia was killed when gunmen from the Dhaka College compound opened fire on a procession of the shopkeepers near the college Thursday.

The speakers at the rally demanded immediate punishment to the killers of Mohammad Rafiq Mia.

Meanwhile, police handed over the body of Rafiq to his brother-in-law and sent it to his village in Habiganj early yesterday.

The shopkeepers also held 'gayebana janaja' of the deceased at the New Market area after Jumma prayers. None has been arrested.

### Huda's statement on transfer of power untrue: AL

By Staff Correspondent

Bangladesh Awami League yesterday criticised the statement of Information Minister Nazmul Huda that it was not Sheikh Hasina but he who had first given the formula of the transfer of power," reports BSS.

### Khaleda, Hasina

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sovereignty at any cost. In a message on the occasion of the Armed Forces Day, Begum Zia paid tributes to the members of the armed forces who made supreme sacrifices during the liberation war and later in safeguarding the national independence and sovereignty.

The nation will forever remember their sacrifices for the motherland," she said.

The Prime Minister greeted all members of the Armed Forces and played for their welfare and prosperity on the occasion.

Sheikh Hasina recalled the sacrifices of the armed forces during the liberation war and stressed the need for building it up as modern and disciplined one.

In a message on the eve of the Armed Forces Day, Hasina said on this day in 1971, members of the Army, Navy and Air Force had liberated vast areas of the country, fighting unitedly with the freedom fighters against the occupation forces of Pakistan and accelerated the cherished victory.

### Armed Forces Day

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held at the army headquarters. A similar reception to the next of kin of Shaheed Md Ruhul Amin, Era-1, Bir Shrestha, will be held at the naval headquarters while another reception to the next of kin of Shaheed Flight Lieutenant M Matjur Rahman, Bir Shrestha, will be held at the air headquarters.

Chiefs of staff of the three services will pay courtesy call on the President at Bangabhaban. They will also pay courtesy call on the Prime Minister at the Prime Minister's office, armed forces division at the Dhaka Cantonment.

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A ROYAL GIFT: This Royal Bengal tiger, a gift from Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia to the Ameer of Bahrain, was photographed at the Zia International Airport yesterday. The caged feline will be flown directly to Bahrain aboard a Biman flight today. A four-member delegation led by Information Minister Nazmul Huda will hand over the tiger to the Ameer. The delegation left for Bahrain yesterday.



Sheikh Hasina addressing a citizens' meeting condoling the death of Syed Altaf Hossain at the Engineers' Institution in city yesterday. — Star photo

### Cabinet meet

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ments ready and go for immediate action as and when necessary.

The district administrations of concerned areas have also been asked to go for evacuation of the people, if necessary, from the coastal areas which are likely to be hit and arrange for their shelters in safer places.

Ministers, State Ministers in charge of different ministries and divisions were present.

Another report adds: Ministry of Relief yesterday sanctioned two lakh taka and 50 metric tons of rice for each thanas of eight coastal districts likely to be affected by cyclone and tidal surge a forecast by Met Office.

The districts are Chittagong, Cox's Bazar, Noakhali, Feni, Laxmipur, Bhola, Patuakhali and Barguna.

The special sanction was announced following an emergency meeting at the Relief Ministry yesterday with State Minister for Relief Lutfur Rahman Khan in the chair.

The meeting directed the concerned district and thana administration to arrange emergency evacuation of the local people to safe places.

It also directed the local authorities to take primary measures of purchasing dry foods like chira, molasses, biscuit and bread for distribution among the affected people should it become necessary.

The meeting was attended by Bangladesh Red Crescent Society Chairman Syed Shahidul Haque Jamal, MP, Cabinet Secretary Ayubur Rahman, Relief Secretary M A Hakim, Secretary to the Prime Minister Dr Kamal Siddiki, permanent chief delegate of IFRC in Dhaka and senior officials of the concerned ministries.

### Water talks

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The meeting of the JCE was for reviewing and finalising the availability and requirements of the flows of Ganga, Teesta, Brahmaputra and Barak to enable consideration of various options for long term solutions.

The JCE is to evolve an equitable, long term and comprehensive arrangement for sharing of the flows of the Ganga, Teesta and other major rivers to serve the best interests of the people of the two countries.

The Union Minister for Water Resources, Vidya Charan Shukla had suggested to the visiting delegation to explore possibilities of utilisation of water from surplus basins for supplementation of deficit basins.

### Democratic forces

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the citizens' condolence meeting at the Engineers' Institution auditorium in the afternoon.

Chaired by GP president Ahmed Kabir, the meeting was also addressed by AL leader and deputy leader of the opposition Abdus Samad Azad, Democratic Forum convenor Dr Kamal Hossain, Attorney General Aminul Haque, Barrister Syed Ishtaq Ahmed, Khandakar Mahbubuddin Ahmed, president of Supreme Court Bar Association, Prof Zillur Rahman Siddiqui, ex-VC of Jahangirnagar University, Poet Shamsur Rahman, Saifuddin Ahmed Manik of CPB, Khalequzzaman of BSD, Pankaj Bhattacharya of NAP, Haider Akbar Khan Rono of Workers Party, Mohammad Afzal of GP, Ali Akasad of World Peace Council, Shafaet Ahmed Choudhury, managing director

of Green Delta Insurance Company, journalist Fayed Ahmed and late Altaf's only daughter Syeda Afsana Rashid (Shilpee).

The Engineers' Institution auditorium was packed with audience including leaders of different political parties, student and trade union bodies and professional groups.

Dr Kamal Hossain in his speech recollected his memories of Syed Altaf and termed him as one of those few legendary political figures in the fifties and the sixties when politics was based on ideology and honesty.

Syed Altaf was the architect of ideology-based politics that still existed in the country, Kamal remarked.

Attorney General Aminul Haque called Syed Altaf a symbol of honest political leadership and said he had firm belief on his political ideology.

### Benazir starts 'long train-march' Wednesday

KARACHI, Nov 20: Pakistan opposition leader Benazir Bhutto will transform her long march on parliament into a crusade by train along the length of the country to the capital, a spokesman said today, reports Reuter.

The long "train-march" is to begin next Wednesday from Karachi and travel much of the length of Pakistan from South to North to Rawalpindi, 18 km (11 miles) from Islamabad, the starting point of Bhutto's march to remove the government this week.

Army and police took up positions around the Karachi home of the former Prime Minister, deported from Islamabad and exiled for 30 days after she tried march on parliament to topple the government of Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif on Wednesday.

She had wanted to take her march to the North West Frontier Province but dropped the plan after the provincial government served a notice at

her home late on Thursday banning her from the province for 30 days in the interests of public order.

In Peshawar, police surrounded the airport and arrested Afshar Sherpao.

### Rice

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than what was last month while it matches that for the same period of 1989.

The cabinet last week approved the latest procurement prices for paddy and rice, setting it at Taka 562.64 and Taka 866.46 per quintal respectively.

The government Aman procurement prices for November 1991 were Taka 656 for paddy and Taka 1010 for rice per quintal while in 1989 the prices were Taka 563 and Taka 866 per quintal respectively.

Even this year's procurement prices for July, August and September were higher at Taka 656 and Taka 1010 per quintal for paddy and rice respectively. However, the projected procurement prices, included in the WFP forecast, for the month of November were also listed at Taka 656 and Taka 1010 per quintal.

According to the government announcement, two lakh tons of Aman will be procured during the ongoing drive. Of which, 1.25 lakh tonnes of paddy will be purchased directly from the growers at the district LSD and CSD godowns while the remaining 75,000 tons of rice will be procured from the mill owners.

In addition, procurement will also be made through open tenders.

### Two minor boys crushed under wheels in city

By DMCH Correspondent

Two brothers were crushed under a passenger-minibus at Swamibag in the capital Friday.

Both the brothers Amannullah Russel, 10, and Tutul, 6, were immediately brought to the Dhaka Medical College Hospital (DMCH) where doctors on duty declared Tutul dead and Russel succumbed to his injuries just after admission at around 1:45 pm yesterday.

## The Midnight File

### WEU orders full naval blockade against Yslavia

ROME, Nov 20: The Western European Union (WEU) defence grouping today ordered a full naval blockade in the Adriatic to tighten the economic noose around the rump Yugoslavia. In a declaration on the Yugoslav crisis, it committed WEU members to order their aircraft and warships to ensure "strict implementation of the (UN) embargo at sea" against Serbia and Montenegro, reports Reuter.

### Nabiyev resigns

KHOJANT (Tajikistan), Nov 20: Ousted Tajik President Rakhmon Nabiyev, overthrown by a Muslim-democrat coalition in September, formally offered his resignation to a special parliament session in Khojant, northern Tajikistan, today. The resignation was accepted. "If you think my departure will help bring an end to the war in Tajikistan, I am ready to resign," Nabiyev, a Communist, said at the end of a speech to deputies which lasted an hour and a half, reports AFP.

### Rao rejects early polls over Ayodhya dispute

NEW DELHI, Nov 20: Indian Prime Minister PV Narasimha Rao has scotched suggestions he may order early elections on a thorny dispute between Hindus and Muslims over an ancient religious site, reports AFP.

Rao, 71, told the Press Trust of India (PTI) in an interview released here today that an early poll would serve no purpose, calling such speculation unfortunate.

"There should be no politics on such a sensitive issue," he said adding such disputes could only be settled through "love and affection."

"One can come to power through elections but one cannot win hearts," said Rao, who has more than three years of his five-year term still to run.

The remarks followed suggestions by sections of the Hindu-revivalist Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP, Indian People's Party) that Rao may call early elections, making the polls a referendum on the temple-Mosque row.

The BJP has said it is ready to face an election. It supports Hindu militant

### Cyclone

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single spot in the Bay from 5 pm till 9 pm. He said, "it is happening because the cyclone is surrounded by high pressure all around," and commented, "In the last 20 years, I have not noticed such a strange behaviour of a cyclone."

According to messages received at the Bangladesh Red Crescent Society (BRCS) headquarters in Dhaka from the 27 wireless stations, the sky over the coastal belt remained mostly cloudy till 11 Friday night but there was no rainfall or highspeed wind.

Officials of the Cyclone Preparedness Programme (CPP) Control Room of BRCS said that evacuation of people from the remote areas was still continuing by the BRCS volunteers as more and more people were rushing towards the safe refuge.

Many had taken shelter at the schools, community centres and the roof-top of other buildings as all the cyclone shelters were full.

A message received from Teknaf said that the people from distant shoals and sandbars were rushing to the thana headquarters for safety.

Another message received from Kutubdia said that almost all the people in the island had been alerted. Some of them had taken shelter in the high school buildings after failing to get rooms in the cyclone shelters.

CPP officials commented that this time awareness among the people about the severity of the cyclone was high than was in 1991.

### Safety

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people of the one lakh population of the thana had taken refuge in the cyclone shelters till Friday afternoon.

Till evening hundreds of fishing trawlers were also reportedly away in the sea. The sky over Cox's Bazar remained heavily overcast throughout the day. Intermittent drizzle occurred over the area. But there was no traces of gusty wind until evening.

Panicky people have been gathering in front of the Deputy Commissioner's (DC) office to hear reports of the cyclone.

Meanwhile, district administration has made requisition of cars and boats for rescue and relief programme.

The Deputy Commissioner, Enamul Kabir this morning held a meeting with the CPP members to review the situation. The Chittagong Radio is broadcasting cautionary bulletins in local dialect for better understanding of the people.

The cyclone is still 260 km south west of Cox's Bazar.