

## Doctors forget oath

From Page 1 Col 4  
enough to keep the hospitals' emergency wards open. But from experience, we can all say that the less said about the services available at such places, the better.

Our venerable doctors have said that the government could have taken a different action, other than suspension. We would like to say the same to BMA; it could also have chosen a different path than holding the sick to ransom. If the suspension is all that wrong, why not go to court and sue the government for illegal action? Why not hold a few demonstrations in front of the health ministry? Why not go to the minister and explain the un-

### PM's intervention sought to salvage agri sector

The Prokrishi-BCS Central Action Committee yesterday accused the bureaucracy of conspiring to jeopardise the success achieved in agriculture sector for rendering the country aid-dependent, reports UNB.

A meeting of the committee held at the Krishibid Institution sought Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia's intervention in salvaging the sector from the clutches of bureaucrats.

Referring to a report that agricultural research came to a standstill due to the conspiracy hatched by the bureaucracy, the meeting alleged that a section of bureaucrats was involved in deep-rooted conspiracy to cripple the research activities.

### WASA regrets

From Page 1 Col 6  
rushed to the spot on Sunday and started repair work.

They checked the entire area for probable leakages and completed the cleaning and repair work by Tuesday, the press release said.

The supply of water in the areas by WASA is at present free from any contamination," it added.

The press release said, only a few families were affected, not 50 families as reported in the newspaper.

The WASA press release said "Sewer lines in some of the places in the old areas of the city have become dilapidated. The WASA is taking necessary steps to clean and replace the old pipes."

This newspaper published a report on Tuesday narrating the miseries of the people of Baidyanagar.

## Cardio-vascular hospital

From Page 1 Col 4  
to start surgery in 1981. But only a decade later, it is now far behind other heart hospitals.

The biggest disturbing fact is that the NICVD emergency unit is not a coronary emergency unit in the true sense. The doctors of the hospital admitted that the emergency unit does not have all the necessary equipment to treat critical patients.

The institute has no post of emergency medical officer at the emergency unit and doctors are deputed to it from the Suhrawardy Hospital. Only one emergency doctor for the emergency shift is often too overburdened.

Some doctors said that since 50 per cent of heart casualties occur within the first hour of attack, this way of handling critical patients is dangerous. "If you want to save the life of your patient, do bring him straight to the CCU instead of wasting time in the emergency," was the comment of a doctor on duty at the CCU.

Although the patients generally do not get proper nursing at the NICVD, the hospital does not have any shortage of doctors, nurses or other employees, sources concerned said.

For the 175-bed hospital, there are 75 doctors, eight professors, 13 associate professors, eight assistant professors and 50 assistant surgeons along with 132 nurses. On top of this, 74 Class III and 123 Class IV employees are supposed to serve round-the-clock. Given the standard doctor-patient ratio of 1:4 for the CCU and 1:6 for the general wards, the existing number of doctors is supposed to be adequate.

Experts feel that more heart hospitals are now needed to combat the upward trend of heart diseases.

In 1975, according to a government study, the heart attack rate was only three persons per 1000 people. In 1985, another follow-up study by the Heart Foundation revealed that the attack rate was as high as 14 per 1000 people.

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## Hospitals to get

From Page 1 Col 5

fairness of the action of the vigilance team? If that does not work, then go to the Prime Minister. If everything fails, then you can think of a drastic step like strike.

Here again, the BMA could have gone step by step, maybe by starting with a token strike, and following it with gradually increasing hours. Yet, with all the above options available, the BMA decided to start off with a 24-hour strike. Thus we are forced to conclude that the intention was to punish the people, in order to force the government to change its decision.

It is definitely not for me to point out the moral, ethical and the humanitarian aspect of a doctor's profession. If any other group goes on strike — teachers, engineers, civil servants, journalists, etc. — society is no doubt disrupted, and people suffer. But none of them can be compared to what happens to the sick and the diseased when the doctors turn away from their duties. Death or permanent physical or mental damage does not result from work stoppage of any other professional group.

Are doctors, then, never to go for strike action? Yes, only after all other avenues have been exhausted. And such action has to be taken with the concern of the patients uppermost in mind. Here, we not only have a 24-hour strike already enforced, but the threat of a 48-hour strike is just around the corner.

Nobody forced our doctors to choose this profession. They came into it on their own, and we the people paid for their highly expensive education. Once having chosen this vocation, every doctor must play by the rules of the profession, especially because he/she deals with human lives.

The central leaders of the BMA organised rally at the PG Hospital premises. They criticised the government for its 'reluctance' to implement the 21-point demand and criticised the bureaucrats for devising 'plots' to undermine the image of the doctors'.

The meeting was addressed by BMA President Dr M A Majed, Secretary General Dr Gazzi Abdul Haq, Dr Rafiq Chowdhury, Dr A B Bhuyan, Dr Azizul Haq, Dr Ruhul Amin, Prof Mannan Mia and others.

They termed the suspension of the 12 doctors a conspiracy to humiliate the doctors' community.

Regarding the 21-point demand, Dr Gazzi Abdul Haq told The Daily Star that although the Health Minister had agreed to implement the demands on January 20, no progress had been made in this regard.

Dr Majed expressed his concern at the absence of any doctor at the Tongi and Gazipur hospitals since the suspension of the 12 doctors.

"We will continue to appeal to the authorities for the withdrawal of the suspension," he told The Daily Star.

### Old woman dies in road accident

RAJBARI, Aug 10: A septuagenarian woman was killed and three people were injured in two road mishaps on Rajbari-Faridpur highway in Sadar thana today, reports UNB.

Witnesses said Matizan Bibi, 70, died instantly when a Rajbari-bound bus from Faridpur knocked her down near Kalanpur bridge at about 9.15 in the morning.

According to National Heart Foundation sources, about one crore people are currently suffering from different kinds of heart disease.

On the other hand, the country's existing facilities for the treatment of heart patients look frustrating when compared with that of other countries.

"Japan, with a population of about 120 million, has 300 hospitals where heart operations are done, in Britain and India, the number of hospitals is over 100. In Bangladesh, there is only one, and that too, in a bad shape," Dr Amanullah said.

The international standard for required cardiologists in a country is five cardiologists and three cardiac surgeons for every three million people," says another associate professor of the NICVD. "But in Bangladesh, there are only a handful of cardiologists serving the whole nation."

Doctors at the NICVD also resented the system of selection of doctors for different sections of the institute. "It is the ministry which decides which doctor should go to which department, not the senior professors who know their junior colleagues and can judge their ability correctly," said a doctor. "It is for this reason that good doctors are often sent to unimportant sections."

Despite all these disheartening estimates and stories, there is at least one solace for the heart patients — the number of coronary deaths has dropped over the years at the NICVD.

In 1981, when the institute started surgery, the death rate was as high as 21 per cent. Today, it stands at around 16 per cent, a little higher than the worldwide death rate of 13 per cent.

He said the Privatisation Board has to depend largely on the corporations or the concerned ministries for prioritising the units for privatisation. This is a lengthy affair and naturally the whole process becomes slow, he added.

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Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia yesterday inaugurated the microwave link between the Storm Warning Centre at the Bangladesh Meteorological Department in Dhaka and radar stations at Cox's Bazar and Khepupara in the city yesterday.

—PID photo

## Microwave link opens

From Page 1 Col 8

Addressing the inaugural function, the Prime Minister said the government has laid importance on strengthening disaster management and modernising the forecasting system which will help minimise the loss of life and property.

She stressed the need for introducing advanced technology at the Meteorological Department and its expansion and making its programmes effective.

"Proper disaster management system will have long-term effect on the country's socio-economic development," she said.

Defence Secretary Mohammad Hasinur Rahman, Japanese Ambassador in Dhaka Shigeo Takenaka and BMD director M H Khan Chowdhury also addressed the function attended by ministers and meteorologists.

Shigeo Takenaka said, various obstacles, including approval of tender documents and contracts by the government, delay implementation of projects.

Takenaka said enormous time and efforts were spent to get clearance of various procedures for implementation of the microwave link project.

He said the Japanese government considered Bangladesh's request for supporting the microwave link project and decided to extend grant assistance in 1992 as "the people of Japan feel deep sympathy for the people of Bangladesh."

Defence Secretary Hasinur Rahman said, cyclones have claimed seven lakh lives and caused economic loss to the tune of four billion US dollars in Bangladesh since 1960.

The catastrophe of April 1991 killed about 140,000 lives and affected 10 million

people, he said.

He said that out of eight catastrophic cyclones that occurred in the region in last 170 years, five made landfall at Bangladesh coast.

The worst cyclones and tidal surges in Bangladesh were of 1822, the devastating Bakerganj cyclone of 1876, the deadly cyclone of 1897, the disastrous killer cyclone of November 1970 and the recent ravaging one of April 1991.

The spokesman declined to specify other possible sources for fighter jets, but said: "We have several options."

## Call to declare Sylhet Division by Sept 15

From Our Correspondent

SYLHET, Aug 10: Speakers at a rally demanded a new administrative division comprising the four districts of greater Sylhet.

They said, if a new division is not declared by September 15, a fresh action programme would be launched to realise the demand.

Presided over by BNP leader Fateh Yunus Khan, the rally was addressed by Rafiqul Islam Shishu, Advocate Khondaker Mubashir Ali, Advocate Abdul Matin Chowdhury, Abdul Mannan Rana, Nazmul Haque Khan Tara Miah and Hafiz Mansurul Hasan Raipuri.

### Pakistan

From Page 1 Col 6

that it cannot deliver the aircraft...because of its own legislative impediments, it should take forthwith action to return the money which Pakistan — a poor developing country — has paid for these aircraft," the Pakistani spokesman said.

"Pakistan will make alternative arrangements for its air defence," he said, echoing a similar statement by President Farooq Leghari on August 1.

The spokesman declined to specify other possible sources for fighter jets, but said: "We have several options."

### Hasina

From Page 1 Col 8

Recalling the eventful struggle of Bangabandhu for the cause of democracy and the country's economic freedom, Hasina said: "Chaos, coups, killings, corruption and unemployment have been dominating the country's political and economic scenario since August 15, 1975."

The Opposition leader accused the BNP government of resorting to corruption, terrorism and vote 'dacoity' to cling to power.

She said the Awami League is fighting for ensuring the people's democratic right to work, food and voting and economic development of the nation.

Later, accompanied by Awami League central leaders, Hasina placed wreaths at Bangabandhu's mazar here and offered 'fateha'. A 'milad' was held at the mazar premises.

The Hizbul Mujahideen said it had asked other militant organisations to drop plans to sabotage the pilgrimage to the Amarnath Cave in the Himalayas, which this year has been accompanied by unprecedented security.

Earlier today, Muslim guerrillas hurled a grenade at Hindu devotees who arrived here in defiance of threats of violence, killing two police constables and injuring seven other people, including four civilians, the police said.

The grenade attack was staged in Srinagar's fortified police reception centre where 25 Hindu pilgrims have been lodged since their arrival a day earlier, witnesses said.

The "ban" was imposed on July 6 by the Harkat-ul-Ansar, another guerrilla group with many Islamic mercenaries in its ranks to protest the presence of troops outside the Hazratbal mosque in Srinagar.

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The discussion meeting was presided over by Amir Hossain Amu, Abdur Razzak MP, Zillur Rahman, Shamsur Rahman Khan Shahjahan, Sheikh Fazul Karim Selim MP, Moazzaf Hossain Paltu, Abdul Kader Siddiqui and Obaidul Kader addressed it.

Tomorrow Hasina will inaugurate another week-long programme organised by the committee for observance of the death anniversary of the Father of the Nation and preservation of his memories" headed by Kader Siddiqui.

By DU Correspondent

The publication of a poster by the pro-Awami League Chhatri League (M-I) has created an adverse reaction among the Jatiyatabadi Chhatri Dal (JCD), which may affect efforts to restore peace on the Dhaka University campus.

Student leaders and campus insiders said yesterday.

The poster, which was stuck on some campus walls yesterday, contains the photograph of an armed cadre and reads: "The teachers and employees are not yet free from terrorism and attacks of the JCD".

If convicted, she could face a maximum 2-year jail term or fine or both.

On August 4, the CMM called the arrest warrant issued against her after her lawyer filed a petition. She was reportedly staying with her relatives at her Shantinagar apartment, which was heavily guarded by police.

The High Court issued the pre-arrest bail of Tk 10,000 with two sureties of like amount each to the satisfaction of the Deputy Commissioner, Dhaka for a period of 15 days and asked her to seek bail from the CMM's court during the period, either personally or through her lawyer.

The High Court ruling also noted that the CMM would record her present and permanent addresses, and the petitioner would keep her advocates Dr Kamal Hossain and Amirul Islam informed about her whereabouts.

However, none of her lawyers were available last night. A niece of Dr Hossain said that he had left for New York to attend a conference.

Last month, several European countries offered her refuge after threats to her life and she remained in hiding, apparently scared even to seek bail.

German foreign minister Klaus Kinkel, in his capacity as EC chairman, offered to provide her asylum in Germany and said that other European Union countries were also willing to do the same.

AP from Stockholm adds: Taslima Nasreen, the beleaguered Bangladeshi feminist author, arrived here Wednesday after fleeing her homeland.

"I've come to Sweden ... to rest and work," she said in a statement issued by Sweden's PEN club, branch of the international writers' group.

"I want to thank everyone who has given me support at home and abroad," the brief

she applied.

Meanwhile, seven of the striking teachers were admitted to the Dhaka Medical College Hospital after they fell sick. They are Sadeka Begum, 35, Ershadul Haq, 35, Moazzaf Haq, 40, Shahjahan, 40, Md Shahidul, 55, Bazir Rahman, 30 and Asgar Ali, 30. However, the school teachers' association said, 26 were hospitalised.

Others who visited the

fasting teachers yesterday

included Monirul Haq

Choudhury, MP of the JP and

Hasanul Haq in JSD.