

Doctors forget oath

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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 Prokrihi-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

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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 Baddanagar.

Cardio-vascular hospital

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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

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demand. The 12 doctors were suspended for their absence from duty, detected by a vigilance team of the Health Ministry late last month.

Yesterday's strike was the beginning of a fortnight-long programme of the BMA to press home its demands.

In the city hospitals, including the Dhaka Medical College Hospital (DMCH) and the PG Hospital, no scheduled operations were performed. At the DMCH, a few emergency operations were carried out.

A number of patients were seen leaving the hospitals because they could not get any treatment.

According to witnesses, the situation was a little better at the PG Hospital. Doctors there observed the strike but some of them voluntarily visited patients, specially in the children's ward.

BMA Secretary General Gazi Abdul Haq told The Daily Star over telephone last night that the strike was observed successfully by all the 66 branches of the BMA at the district-level.

The doctors staged demonstrations and held rallies in different districts demanding withdrawal of the suspension of the 12 doctors, he said.

The central leaders of the BMA organised a 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 Gazi Abdul Haq, Dr Rafiq Chowdhury, Dr A B Bhuiyan, 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 Gazi 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.

Another accident occurred

at about 10.30 when a truck carrying a large quantity of

rice overturned on the highway, causing several injuries.

The injured were taken to the nearest hospitals for treatment.

The police are investigating the causes of the accidents.

The road is known for its poor condition and frequent accidents.

The authorities are planning to improve the road conditions.

The accident has caused a major disruption in the local transport.

The injured are being treated in the hospitals.

The police are conducting a thorough investigation.

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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

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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.

Kashmir rebels lift ban on Hindu pilgrimage

SRINAGAR, Aug 10: Kashmir's most powerful Muslim militant group today lifted the "ban" on an annual pilgrimage, hours after the first guerrilla attack on devotees left two policemen dead, reports AFP.

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.

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 Mubaswir Ali, Advocate Abdul Matin Chowdhury, Abdul Mannan Rana, Nazmul Haque Khan Tara Miah and Hafiz Mansurul Hasan Raipuri.

Pakistan

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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

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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 mahfil* and a discussion meeting were held at the mazar premises.

The discussion meeting was presided over by Amir Hossain Amu, Abdur Razzak MP, Zillur Rahman, Shamsur Rahman Khan Shahjahan, Sheikh Fazlul Karim Selim MP, Mozaffar 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.

BCL poster may affect peace moves at DU

By DU Correspondent

The publication of a poster by the pro-Awami League Chhatra League (M-L) has created an "adverse reaction" among the Jatayatadhi Chhatra 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."

Witnesses said some JCD activists tore up some of the posters at Madhu's canteen yesterday morning.

Besides, the Ganatantrik Chhatra Oikya (GCO) leaders said, any misunderstanding between the JCD and the BCL over the poster issue would further complicate the situation.

The GCO leaders hoped student bodies including the JCD and BCL would resume their normal organisational activities on the campus from next week.

Climatic changes

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and eroded, salt water may intrude on fresh water supplies, coastal fish production may drop and storm damage may increase, the study found.

In at least five of these countries — other than Malaysia and Sri Lanka — "these coastal sector changes seem likely to result in large population dislocations, perhaps producing millions of environmental refugees," the Institute said.

In the eighth country in the study, Pakistan, the largest adverse impacts likely would be monsoon season flooding and damage to crops and livestock from heat stress.

The combined populations of the eight countries comprise about one-fourth of the world's population.

The Midnight File

US-DPRK talks adjourned abruptly

GENEVA, Aug 10: US and North Korean delegation chiefs abruptly adjourned a third day of talks Wednesday aimed at resolving the row over the Communist country's controversial nuclear programme. A spokesman for the US diplomatic mission said technical experts from the two sides would meet as necessary later in the day. But he said there were no plans for Robert L. Gallucci, head of the US delegation and his North Korean counterpart Kang Sok Ju, to have evening negotiations as originally scheduled, reports AP.

Korean plane crashes

SEOUL, Aug 10: A domestic aircraft carrying 160 people crashed and burst into flames on a South Korean island today when it tried to land in rainstorms but all on board escaped from the plane, an airline spokesman said. The Korean air lines Airbus 300-600R was unbalanced by sudden strong gusts sweeping Cheju island as it was touching down and skidded off the wet runway, hit an airport fence and caught fire, he said, reports Reuter.

Taslima in Sweden

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drawn to foreign news reports. Information Minister Barister Nazmul Huda said that he was not aware of her departure.

However, he added: "If she has left the country, she has done so legally because she was holding a valid passport and there were no restrictions on her movements."

It is believed that Nasreen left for Bangkok on a Thai flight TG-514 that took off from the Zia International Airport at 4 am Tuesday.

An Associated Press report from Stockholm quoted Foreign Minister Margaretha af Ugglas as confirming her arrival in the Swedish capital.

"It is very satisfying that she (Nasreen) now has been able to travel out of her country legally," the Swedish minister said in a statement yesterday while acknowledging her arrival.

The Swedish government, in the same way as other governments, has been engaged in her case for a long time.

However, the Swedish foreign ministry did not provide details about where she was staying, how she had arrived or exactly when, the agency said.

The physician-turned writer remained in hiding for two months after an arrest warrant was issued by the Chief Metropolitan Magistrate (CMM) on June 4, when a complaint was lodged by the OC, Motiheel thana.

She later sought and was granted anticipatory bail by a division bench of the High Court on August 3. She was charged under Section 295 (a) of the Criminal Procedure Code for telling an Indian daily, The Statesman, in an interview last May, that the holy Quran should be 'thoroughly revised'. But she subsequently denied having made the statement and claimed she was misquoted.

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

On August 4, the CMM recalled 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, a branch of the international writers' group.

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

Rohingya

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respective sides at the talks scheduled to begin at the new Circuit House in Cox's Bazar at 10 in the morning. Both the teams would include eight members each.

The meeting is expected to discuss the repatriation of the remaining Rohingya refugees and other unresolved bilateral issues.

statement said, adding that she had arrived on the Swedish PEN club's invitation.

Travelling on a tourist visa, Nasreen arrived around midday.

The Swedish foreign minister, Margaretha af Ugglas, told reporters later Wednesday that she welcomes Nasreen to Sweden but refused to say how the writer had arrived.

Af Ugglas said the writer was staying at a 'secret place' but would give no other information.

Sweden's culture minister, Birgit Friggebo, said in a statement that Nasreen was "forced to leave her country for using her natural rights to write and say whatever she wants."

It was uncertain how long Nasreen would remain in Sweden or her ultimate destination. Norway has said it would consider offering her asylum. Norwegian writers also have invited her to attend a writers' conference next month.

Asked whether Sweden also might offer Nasreen asylum, af Ugglas said "It's up to Nasreen to decide."

"She has gotten invitations from many other countries," af Ugglas said. "What she needs now is rest... She was free to leave Bangladesh and she is free to go back at any time."

The Swedish PEN club and invited Nasreen to visit Sweden last spring, said the group's chairman, Gabi Gleichmann, according to the Swedish news agency TT.

"We as the Swedish PEN club are hosting her stay here. We don't know how long it will be," said Gleichmann, who added that he had met Nasreen at Stockholm's Arlanda airport around midday. He gave no other details.

Nasreen's parents and brother refused to open the door at the family apartment or comment Wednesday.

Nasreen has often been compared to Rushdie, the Indian-born author who has been in hiding since 1989 when Iran declared his novel "The Satanic Verses" blasphemous to Islam and put a bounty on his head.

Rushdie recently spoke out on behalf of Nasreen while in Oslo to visit William Nygaard, who was shot and seriously wounded last October after publishing "The Satanic Verses."

A spokesman for the Norwegian Foreign Ministry in Oslo, Ingvald Havnen, refuted reports that a Norwegian diplomat was involved in Nasreen's flight. "That information that there was a Norwegian diplomat involved is wrong."

Havnen said his government had not offered Nasreen asylum, but said it would look favourably on her application if she applied.

Pry teachers

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drinks to several striking teachers at 5:30 in the afternoon.

Earlier, Menon assured the teachers that the Left parties would agitate for realisation of their legitimate demands.

He called upon the teachers to prepare for a greater action programme to compel the government accept the demands. He said, the hunger strike would not solve their problems.

Addressing the teachers, Jatiya Party leader Kazi Zafar Ahmed, MP, claimed that the JP government had a plan to nationalise all non-government primary schools and as part of the plan, it had introduced a Tk 500 grant for every teacher. The JP would fully implement the plan, if it returned to power, he pledged.

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, Mofazzal Haq, 40, Shahjahan, 40, Md Shahidul, 55, Bazul Rahman, 30 and Asgar Ali, 30. However, the school teachers association said, 26 were hospitalised.

Others who visited the fasting teachers yesterday included Motiul Haq Choudhury, MP of the JP and Hasanul Haq Imu of JSD.