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# TB claims 80,000 lives every year

By Staff Correspondent

If the nation is united to fight Tuberculosis (TB) successfully it will not be difficult to fight back AIDS which now exists in the neighbouring countries, said Minister for Health and Family Welfare Salahuddin Yusuf yesterday.

The Minister was speaking as the Chief guest at a press meet prior to World TB Day due to be observed tomorrow. Held at a city hotel, it was jointly organised by the Ministry of Health and the World Health Organisation (WHO).

"I am urging you to help create an awareness in the country so that people can get benefit from the existing facilities for treating Tuberculosis," the Minister said adding that through Direct Observatory Treatment (DOT) it would be possible to control the disease which kills more than 80,000 people in the country annually.

In his speech the WHO representative in Bangladesh, Dr W Hardjotanojo, said that TB was a leading infectious disease in the world and particularly in the poor countries. "In many parts of the world people die of incorrect treatment and the WHO has got frightening reports of drug resistance," he said.

Dr Hardjotanojo added that it was possible to get completely cured from TB in six months through DOTs, which meant that the patient would receive treatment under direct supervision of health care workers.

About World TB Day, he said that it was not a victory day, it was time to mobilise public support. "I am confident that Bangladesh could play a leading role in combating TB in the region," he said.

Others present on the occasion included Prof AKM Nurul Anwar, DG Health, Dr Rosemary Croft, an NGO representative, AK MD Ahsan Ali, Project Director TB/Leprosy Control Services in Bangladesh and Muhammad Ali, Secretary, Ministry of Health and Family Welfare.

After diarrhoea, tuberculosis is the second highest killer disease that kills 60,000 to 80,000 people per year in Bangladesh. One adult death occurs every 7-10 minutes, according to UNB.

It is apprehended that 1,50,000 to 1,80,000 new cases of TB might occur in Bangladesh this year. About 5,70,000 infectious cases currently exist in the country.

The National TB Control Programme has been extended to 309 thanas in 53 districts of the country, of which 43 districts are covered by the government and the rest by NGOs.

Mainly five NGOs are working with the programme: Bangladesh Rural Advancement Committee (BRAC), Damien Foundation, Danish Bangladesh Leprosy Mission (DBLM), Health, Education and Economic Development (HEED), and Rangpur Dinajpur Rural Service (RDERS).

In the global context, about 90 million people are likely to be infected with tuberculosis by the next 10 years. The ancient disease kills nearly 1,70,000 children every year.

## City autorickshaw drivers observe strike

It was almost a smoke-free day in the capital yesterday as autorickshaws stayed off the city streets enforcing a strike to protest the killing of a rickshaw driver, reports UNB.

Autorickshaws are considered mainly responsible for spreading black smoke causing air pollution in the city. The strike was a welcome relief for the city dwellers who could breathe relatively fresh air.

The dawn-to-dusk strike was enforced by Dhaka Autorickshaw Stramik Union protesting the killing of driver Shaiful Islam Shaikh. He was killed by some terrorists at West Agargaon BNP Bazar on February 20, but his killers are yet to be apprehended.

City traffic also seemed to move smoothly in the absence of thousands of autorickshaws which are blamed for serious traffic congestions in the metropolis.

## Hailstorm lashes Barisal town

BARISAL, Mar 22: A hailstorm lashed the Barisal town and adjoining areas this afternoon. At least 25 persons were injured.

Standing crops, including water melon, irri-boro paddy, pulses and 'betel' plants were damaged by the storm. The storm also damaged hundreds of thatched houses.

## Govt looking for ways

From Page 1  
tempt for the economy to pick up. But since then macro indicators like inflation rate, and budgetary balance went on a reversal of the earlier trend.

By 1995-96, a deficit aggregate demand was created in the economy, savings and investment gap and trade deficit became too large, he said.

"And here lies the crux of the present day macro-economic management," said Prof Mahmud. "These gaps are being remedied and there seems to be some stability. But in part, it is a reflection that the economic activities and investment level have not picked up."

He said the major task now is to raise the tax-GDP ratio and maintain budgetary balance.

"There is no single answer to that," said Prof Mahmud. "We have to expand the net of VAT, increase direct tax and reduce deterioration of non-tax revenue collection through improvement of public sector management."

Prof Mahmud lamented that import liberalisation had resulted in the inflow of huge luxury items, straining savings.

Former finance minister M Syeduzzaman said, from a commendable macro-economic stabilisation achieved in the first three years of the 1990s, all indicators sharply deteriorated in the last two years.

He praised the government's

steps including introduction of new savings bond, increase in rates of treasury bills, keeping inflation rate to a low level, and arresting a free fall in foreign exchange reserve as positive moves to stabilise the economy.

However, he was critical of the formation of the pay commission saying that any isolated pay rise delinked from administrative reform will destabilise the economy.

He said pay hike for government employees will not come alone. It will also raise demands from non-government organisations.

Finance Secretary Akbar Ali Khan said the financial sector reform did not yield much as it was based on some "unrealistic assumptions."

He said this programme had a high legal bias and improvement of management of banks was not thought about.

World Bank Resident Mission Chief Pierre Landell-Mission said the government could reduce expenditure by "going easy on development programme."

"ADP needs rigorous review, and junk projects should be removed. Spending the ADP on lousy projects increase expenditures," he said.

Former finance secretary Nasimuddin Ahmed, ERD Secretary Dr Masihul Rahman and Dr Omar Haider Chowdhury of the BIDS also spoke on the occasion.

## D-8 will be launched

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source said.

The Turkish President would also have discussions on the sidelines about the new bloc in Islamabad while attending the extraordinary session of the OIC being held there today. Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina is also likely to have discussions with other OIC leaders concerned about the D-8 during her three-day stay in Pakistan, diplomatic sources said.

Although the OIC comprises of 56 countries, the eight countries launching the D-8 has nearly half the population of the OIC states.

On October 22, State Minister for Foreign Affairs Abul Hasan Chowdhury attended the first ministerial meet in Turkey to discuss the progress regarding the D-8.

The proposed organisation reached a more concrete stage at a high level meeting on March 13 and 14 in Istanbul in preparation for formal launching. Bangladesh was represented in the Istanbul meeting by a senior official of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

The meeting set up a preparatory committee and identified 10 major areas of cooperation in different fields including industry, banking, water management, shipping, culture, education and rural development. The meeting also decided to take up 50 mega projects for giving focused attention for cooperation through

the D-8.

The meeting also set up working groups for each of the 10 major areas and each of the eight nations of the proposed organisation decided to head one or two major working groups.

Bangladesh has taken up the task of heading the working group on rural development with particular emphasis on rural micro-credit while Turkey has taken up the responsibility of heading the group on industry and health.

The working groups have been entrusted with preparing specific recommendations for cooperation in the D-8 by the end of April.

The permanent secretariat of the bloc is likely to be located in Istanbul.

Turkish Prime Minister Necmettin Erbakan, in an interview with the Turkish Daily News, said the proposed organisation would initiate cooperation for global development and would aim at spreading peace throughout the world, rather than war.

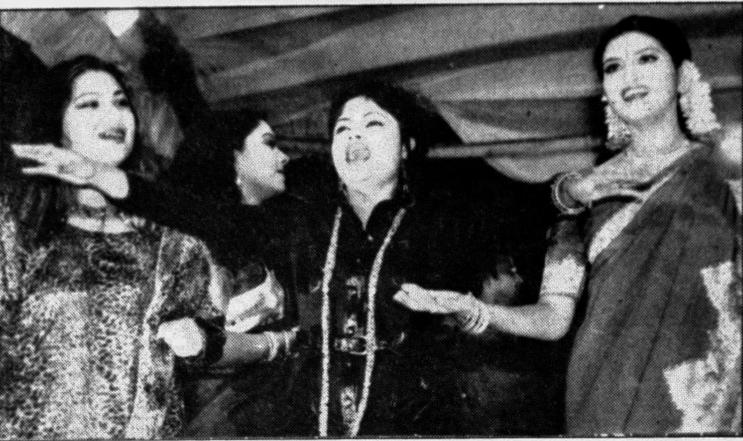
"We expect all countries to join this group. The problem is if this group becomes too crowded, meetings will become difficult. In order to facilitate meetings and decision-making mechanism, we have decided to limit the number of initial participants. But, the door of this group is open to all. This group is not against any country or group," Necmettin Erbakan said.

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Film artistes organised a cultural function at the Dhaka Stadium yesterday in observance of the Silver Jubilee of Independence. — Star photo

## WB-aided JSAC programme Independent panel for comprehensive review

NEW YORK, Mar 22: An independent panel, assigned to examine a complaint made by jute mill owners in Bangladesh about the damaging effects of a World Bank-funded project, has recommended a comprehensive review of the project, reports UNB.

The Jute Sector Adjustment Credit (JSAC), initiated by the World Bank's International Development Association (IDA), is worth over 240 million US dollar (SDR 175 million).

When launched three years ago, its overall objective was to structurally adjust Bangladesh's ailing jute industry.

Last year in December, the Bank's Inspection Panel accepted a request from Bangladesh's jute mill owners for investigating "omissions and failures" in the design and implementation of the project.

The jute mill owners claimed to have suffered direct, adverse and material damages under JSAC that, they said, has obstructed privatisation efforts.

The panel's recommendations have now been made. According to New York-based Inter Press Service (IPS), the panel has given IDA three options: breathe new life into the moribund credit, restructure

JSAC itself before relaunching it, or scrap it and start anew.

An official on the inspection panel was quoted as saying that JSAC was "one of the most delinquent credits on the Bank's books". IDA's executive board will have to decide what to do with the project by April 1.

Jute, which once was Bangladesh's prime export has suffered serious setbacks in recent years due to a variety of reasons, including the country's inability to restructure the industry to cope with new challenges.

Currently the jute sector employs 10-25 per cent of Bangladesh's industrial workforce and generates about 25 per cent of the country's export earnings.

The JSAC was launched to revive jute and jute-related industries.

The Inspection Panel of the World Bank is an independent body, set up to ensure that the Bank follows its own policies and procedures.

IPS reports that this is the first time the panel has taken up a private sector complaint. In the past, the panel examined complaints of environmental groups, indigenous people and landless peasants.

## 20 hurt as police, people clash at Golapganj

From Staff Correspondent SYLHET, Mar 22: At least 20 persons were injured when police fired tear gas shells to disperse the activists of the all-party action committee at Golapganj tonight. Eight of the injured were admitted to the Sylhet MAG Osmany Medical College Hospital.

The police action came when the all-party action committee brought out a procession to press its demands including the setting up of fractionation and LPG plants at Kailashtila and JPS for the local people in the Petrobangla establishments.

Earlier, the committee held a rally in the bus terminal area. The committee includes representatives from BNP, Jatiya Party, Jamaat-e-Islami and Jamaat-e-Ulama-e-Islam.

## '112 mw power increase in next 17 days'

Works for increasing the generation of power is going on in full swing, reports BSS.

Minister of Energy and Mineral Resources Lt Gen (ret'd) Mohammad Nooruddin Khan said this yesterday while visiting the sites for laying Ashuganj-Bakhrabad gas pipe line, Monohordi-Narsingdi gas pipe line, Ghorashal and Ashuganj power stations.

Talking to the engineers, technicians, workers and officials of these power stations, the minister said shortage of electricity will be solved soon with our sincere efforts.

The officials assured the minister that concerted efforts will be taken to increase 112 megawatt power generation within the next 17 days.

In next few months, a substantial quantity of power will be added to the national power grid, the minister said.

## Women's college

From Page 1  
hila College, Chuadanga; Magura Mohila College, Magura; Lakshimpur Mohila College, Lakshimpur; Moulvibazar Mohila College, Moulvibazar; Sunamganj Mohila College, Sunamganj; Rajbari Adarsha Mohila College, Rajbari; Madaripur Sufia Degree College, Madaripur; Norhal Mohila College, Norhal; Barguna Mohila College, Barguna; Habiganj Mohila College, Habiganj.

## Hasina, Rafsanjani

From Page 1  
solidate their bilateral relations during the meeting between Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina and Malaysian Deputy Prime Minister Anwar Ibrahim at the Sindh House in Islamabad.

The Malaysian Deputy Prime Minister showed keen interest for investment in Bangladesh on a large scale. He also assured that his government would try to accommodate Bangladesh workers serving in Malaysia.

Ibrahim, while explaining the success of his government in building 'Tabong Haji National Fund', said that Malaysia could help Bangladesh develop such a fund.

Earlier on her arrival at Chaklala Airport, Sheikh Hasina was accorded a red-carpet reception.

Prime Minister of Pakistan Mohammad Nawaz Sharif received his Bangladesh counterpart Sheikh Hasina at the airport. Two children presented bouquet to Hasina.

Sheikh Hasina was taken to a specially decorated rostrum and given a guard of honour by smartly contingent of three services. As the prime minister along with her Pakistani counterpart stood at the podium, the national anthems of the two countries were played.

From the airport, the Prime Minister drove straight to Sindh House, where she will stay during her three-day visit to Pakistan.

This is the first visit of Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina to Pakistan after the formation of her government.

## On March 23

By Nazmul Ashraf

The 23rd of March, the day the opposition BNP has called an eight-hour countrywide hartal, the first such programme against the Awami League government, witnessed many historic events in the national life.

The day marks completion of exactly nine months of the formation of government by Awami League that returned to power after long 21 years.

On this day last year, the final phase of movement against the BNP government of Begum Khaleda Zia started from a Janata Mancha erected in front of the Jatiya Press Club.

Launching the programme, city Mayor Mohammad Hanif announced an indefinite sit-in till the fall of the BNP government.

AL chief and the then former Leader of the Opposition in Jatiya Sangsad Sheikh Hasina urged the employees of the Republic to disobey all directives of the 'illegal' government.

From the Janata Mancha, the then opposition parties including the AL, various professional groups, trade union bodies, cultural organisations and others took a united stand against the BNP government and it had to resign a week later.

On March 23, 1991, the first-ever women Prime Minister of the country Begum Khaleda Zia assumed office.

On this day in 1971, the Bangladesh flag was hoisted at the Dhanmondi residence of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman.

The AL government has declared the day as Swadhin Banglar Pataka Dibosh and has taken up special programmes highlighting its significance.

## We are ready to face everything politically: Tofael

BHOLA, Mar 22: Commerce Minister Tofael Ahmed today said a party was out to halt the development activities by unleashing acts of terrorism, anarchy and sabotage, reports UNB.

They, he alleged, are now involved in destructive activities realising that if the present government stays in power for next five years and the process of development continues under Sheikh Hasina's leadership, their return to power will be permanently blocked.

The Commerce Minister was addressing the triennial conference of Bhola district unit Awami League, Education Minister ASHK Sadique and Water Resources Minister Abdur Razzak also spoke.

Tofael Ahmed said Awami League does not believe in the politics of anarchy, revenge and obstruction. "We are ready to face everything politically."

## BNP demonstrates in Sirajganj

SIRAJGANJ, Mar 22: District BNP activists gheraoed the Deputy Commissioner's office today protesting power crisis, leakage of question papers and transit to India, reports UNB.

The protesters — BNP and Krishak Dal activists — demonstrated in front of the DC office at 10 am and chanted slogans against the government.

## 5000 policemen

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persons involved in subversive activities will continue," added a senior police official.

During the last few days, police arrested at least eight leaders of BNP in Dhaka and Narayaniganj for activities aimed at destabilising the normal situation in the country.

The houses of more than a dozen other BNP leaders were also raided. The leaders and activist of BNP and its front organisations were arrested in connection with the March 23 hartal, senior police and intelligence officials added.

## Security

From Page 1  
Meanwhile, the security personnel were ordered to keep strong vigilance inside the port's jetty areas and over any unauthorised movements, port sources said.

Talking to this correspondent, a senior official said, "we are on full alert to tackle any threat or attack from outside as we are not taking the threat of NELT lightly."

The threat from NELT was also discussed in the higher level of the government and it was being studied by different agencies, he said.

## 2 young men

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staff of the recruiting agency was found in the vicinity following the incident, they said.

Later police from Motijheel thana rushed to the spot and took the bodies to the spot to the Dhaka Medical College Hospital morgue for autopsy, according to police.

## Evolve ways to give more loans to small borrowers, says BB Governor

Bangladesh Bank Governor Lutfor Rahman Sarkar yesterday asked the bankers to evolve ways to channel more funds to small borrowers whose repayment record is highly satisfactory despite a default culture, reports UNB.

He described the prevailing loan default culture as unbearable and said that an amount of Tk 5000 crore in default loan money was lying with only 156 persons and Tk 9000 crore with another 1800 people.

"But they are not repaying their loans. On the other hand, the repayment rate of the small borrowers are highly satisfactory," the Bangladesh Bank governor said while addressing a day-long conference of general managers of the central bank.

Sarkar pointed out that five per cent of the country's population were in higher income group, 15 per cent in the middle

income group and the rest 8 per cent in the lower income group.

But the country's banks did not make adequate arrangements for the lower income people that resulted in a stagnation in the growth of economy, he said, stressing the need for more support to these people to ensure social justice and balanced distribution of resources.

Referring to the role of Bangladesh Bank, the governor said the central bank should not only have the regulatory role, but also a role supplementary to the overall development of the country.

He urged the general managers to formulate recommendations based on their own views to fix the role of the central bank in a developing country like Bangladesh.

## 2 cops hurt in attack in Tangail

TANGAIL, Mar 22: Two police constables were injured in an attack by some unruly youths as they prevented supply of copies in the SSC examination hall at a centre in Basail today, reports UNB.

The injured cops — Rafiqul Islam and Moazzem Hossain — were immediately rushed to local Thana Health Complex and then shifted to Tangail General Hospital.

Police said the youths attacked the cops returning to police station after their duty at Basail. Government Gobinda High School centre.

Police arrested one Shaiful Islam for his alleged involvement in the incident. A case was filed.

## 12 BNP workers

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ery police station of the city.

Prominent among those arrested according to the press statement, are Hafizur Rahman, Gulshan thana unit leader of the BNP, and Mahabubul Haq, joint secretary of the city unit of the Jatiyatabadi Chhatra Dal.

## Acid thrown

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said. The incident might be a sequel to previous enmity, sources added.

A case has been filed with Ramna thana.

## BNP calls 8-hr hartal

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charge of their involvement in activities affecting law and order. Another four leaders of the party were arrested from the city and Narayaniganj town on Friday while the major opposition party alleged crackdown on its leaders and workers

alover the country. On the last day of its three-day pre-hartal programmes, BNP and its front organisations brought out torch processions in the city and elsewhere in the country. Besides, rallies and processions in support of the hartal was also organised across the country, party sources said.

Meanwhile, a joint meeting of different committees of the party and its front organisations was held at the party central office yesterday to discuss preparations for making the hartal a success.

Chaired by party Secretary General Abdul Mannan Bhuiyan, the meeting strongly condemned what it said, arrests, raids on houses and harassment of BNP leaders and filing of false cases against them by police ahead of the hartal and demanded release of the arrested.

The meeting noted that being frightened by the hartal call, the government had started repression on BNP leaders and workers to hide its failures.

It called upon the people to observe the hartal and not to be misled by government propaganda.

UNB adds: Leaders of Jatiyatabadi Chhatra Dal yesterday alleged that a section of Dhaka University teachers are trying to wipe out JCD's name from the university as directed by the government.

"We will not allow Awami League government to remain in power peacefully as they had done this during BNP period," said JCD President Shahiduddin Chowdhury Annie who presided over the meeting.

বাংলাদেশ পোশাক প্রস্তুতকারক ও রপ্তানিকারক সমিতি  
বিটিএমসি ভবন, ৭-৯, কাওরান বাজার, ঢাকা।

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ভারপ্রাপ্ত সচিব

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