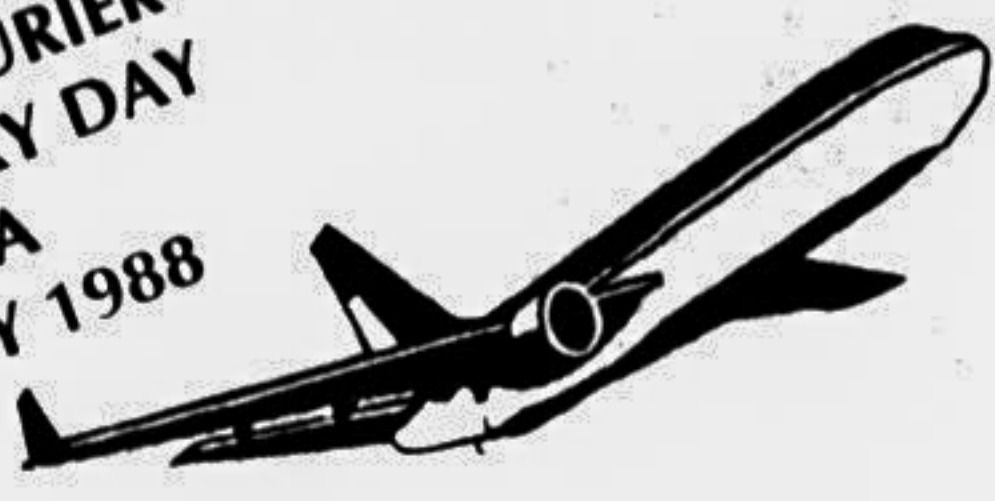


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Down to Earth

Ensuring Quality Control of Drugs

By A S M Nurunnabi

The question of maintaining a proper standard of drugs and medicines has been an important issue since the adoption of the Drug Control Ordinance of 1982. The law laid down specific lines for elimination of certain drugs and medicines considered unnecessary in the changed circumstances in the medical world. The aims of the new law were quite laudable in the context of the then existing multiplicity of similar pharmaceutical products for the same medical remedies, leading to unorganised medical practices.

At the initial stage, however, the new law spawned an undesirable development. It led to the proliferation of new pharmaceutical units which paid little or no attention to the quality control aspect of their products. The situation took such an ominous turn that the government had to intervene in a bold way to stop the unfortunate drift. Many units which began to produce sub-standard medicines and market them in the outlying areas beyond the reach of the public health authorities had to be weeded out. The drug control authority is still said to be playing that helpful role, for which constant alertness and monitoring of the quality of drugs and medicines by pharmaceutical units are logical imperatives. Evidently, this is an on-going process which does not allow the quality control authority to rest on its oars.

Still there are complaints that health and medicare services are facing a setback due to the lack of adequate quality control. According to expert opinion, many drugs available in the market are not useful as they are produced without maintaining standard and quality. It has been pointed out that safety, efficacy and usefulness are the three major criteria of quality medicine.

To achieve this objective, it has been stressed by experts that the need has become paramount to involve disciplines like Biochemistry, Microbiology, Pharmacy, Chemistry, Chemical Engineering and Pharmacology in the drug industry from the levels of manufacturing to marketing. It is said that biochemists can play an important role from the very preliminary stage in medicine preparation through isolation, purification, clinical trial of raw materials up to the finished products.

In this context, the question of suitably amending the Drug Control Ordinance has been raised so that other disciplines including Biochemistry may be recognised under that law, which at present gives top priority to pharmacists. It is held by concerned quarters that, in order to provide modern health services to the people, it is desirable that appointment of biochemists be made mandatory in pathological laboratories, and a central drug research laboratory and a biotechnology research institute be set

up in future for better health service.

The discrimination being made in favour of the pharmacists against other disciplines has lately become a hot issue. The WHO defines the "key personnel" in drug manufacturing thus: "Their education should include the study of an appropriate combination of (a) Chemistry (analytical or organic) or biochemistry (b) chemical engineering (c) pharmacology and toxicology (d) physiology or other related sciences."

It is felt by keen observers that the crux of the on-going agitation may be resolved if it is recognised that the pharmaceutical industry all over the world operates on the basis of well-defined coordination and cooperation among all the functioning segments.

In this light, the discrimination as said to be existing in the industry needs to be addressed for solution as per practices followed all over the world in pharmaceutical sectors.

Leaving aside the agitation that has been raging among the concerned quarters for obtaining recognition of their place in the pharmaceutical industry, there is, however, no escape from the cruel reality that in the medicine market of the country, there is a good amount of spurious and adulterated drugs and medicines, in spite of the best efforts of the drug control authority to hunt down the perpetrators of these malpractices and corruptions.

Magurchhara fire Damaged well sealed, but gas leakage continues

From Iqbal Siddiquee

SYLHET, Jan 16: Sealing of the damaged drilling well at Magurchhara has been completed.

However, gas leakage through many points around the well is still continuing, sources in the area said today.

A Petrobangla official who visited the site also confirmed leakage of gas.

Meanwhile, the Occidental is transporting its equipment and machinery including the drilling rig from the Magurchhara site to Sylhet. The transportation began three days back.

The Occidental has also withdrawn most of the security men it had hired from a private company and deployed there.

The "restricted area" which was earlier earmarked by netted fence has also been reduced, the source added.

An official of the Occidental told this correspondent on condition of anonymity that it

was transporting the major equipment and machinery from Magurchhara and that the "restricted area" and security men were reduced.

Sources in the area also said that local people were seen collecting huge scraps from around the damaged well, some taking among those on rickshaws and pushcarts.

When contacted, Deputy Commissioner of Moulvibazar Nurul Amin told this correspondent over telephone this afternoon what, he was not aware of the latest situation at Magurchhara. He said, the Occidental had stopped giving him written statement on Magurchhara since the beginning of this month.

When contacted, an official of Occidental's Sylhet office said, "We have reduced jobs at Magurchhara and for the time being, it will be stopped." He declined to give details.

Let's learn from past

From page 1

to be identified while ongoing projects have to be successfully completed as the "possibilities are enormous."

"Our affinities, our common faith and heritage, and our shared perceptions of the major issues of the present day world provide the impetus for close cooperation for promoting regional peace and harmony, progress and prosperity."

The Pakistan Prime Minister congratulated his Bangladesh counterpart Sheikh Hasina for her initiative in convening the first ever trilateral Business Summit. This was well conceived, timely and ably executed."

The Pakistan Prime Minister said regional economic cooperation can only flourish in a secure and peaceful atmosphere, devoid of tension and mistrust and that is why he had taken the initiative to resume dialogue with India.

The purpose was to discuss all outstanding matters between Pakistan and India including the core issues of Jammu and Kashmir. India must now reciprocate our sincerity by agreeing to seriously address the root cause of tension."

He said Pakistan is committed to peace and has taken the first bold step towards peace. "Unless the Kashmir issue is resolved, South Asia will remain locked in a cold war of its own making," he added.

Referring to two-decade-old Afghanistan issue, he said no

country has suffered more from the continuation of the conflict than Pakistan. "We, therefore, have a vital interest in the restoration of durable peace in Afghanistan."

The Pak Prime Minister said democracy flourished in both Pakistan and Bangladesh. "It is for us to nurture this precious flower. Freedom cannot exist in isolation. It has to be strengthened by growth and development."

He mentioned some structural political and economic reforms in his country and his party Pakistan Muslim League's victory in the 1997 elections. "We are now in the process of fulfilling the people's mandate."

Sharif said the investment incentives offered by his country are among the most liberal in the world. The macro-economic adjustments we have made are beginning to show results. We are now entering a phase of economic stabilisation."

He also mentioned his country's offer to host a South Asian Economic Summit with the assistance of the World Economic Forum this year focusing on the tremendous economic potentials of the region and the vast opportunities for foreign investors.

"We believe that the Summit would further the cause of development through regional co-operation."

Rift between SP, Janata Dal in Uttar Pradesh

NEW DELHI, Jan 16: The rift between United Front partners Samajwadi Party (SP) and Janata Dal on the issue of seat adjustment in the crucial state of Uttar Pradesh today widened with Mulayam Singh Yadav ruling out any change in the first list of 25 candidates of his party, reports PTI.

Khagrachhari

From page 1

Police resorted to baton charge on the Parishad activists who hurled stones at the car. Police also fired three rounds of blank shots to bring the situation under control.

The unruly people also set ablaze a jeep of Red Crescent Society, which was returning to Dhaka.

Meanwhile, leaders of the Parishad at a rally here today condemned Thursday's police action.

CPD: Preferential treatment

From page 1

three-nation summit.

The Pakistan finance minister earlier said, "The government should make policies, and dynamic business institutions should act under these policies. But political impetus for development will not happen unless the people want it."

Mentioning that the relation between Pakistan and India is under strain, he said there is a general willingness in Pakistan to improve ties with India.

The Pakistan finance minister said compared to other regional blocs, progress made by SAARC is disappointing.

"We do not have much time. The world is moving faster than us," he said and added that the South Asia region was already late in reforming its economies.

South Asia has great prospects for development, he said. "It has 1.2 billion people representing a huge market. It has good human and natural resources," Aziz said.

Mentioning the economic turmoil in South-East Asia, he said the growth of the region was brought about by Japanese investment.

"Japan always relocates its industries. It had gone to South-East Asia. Now it is not going to

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Let's make things better.

PHILIPS

Pakistan's sweet revenge

From page 1
to early morning fog. For Pakistan everything went right. Skipper Rashid Latif, who twice won the toss earlier but lost the matches, appeared a bit lucky this time by not calling the coin correctly. India captain Mohammad Azharuddin opted to set a target for Pakistan.

But India's success for the day ended at a point when Pakistan captured the prized scalp of Sachin Tendulkar in the very second over. Tendulkar, who tormented Pakistan with a blazing 95 in the previous match, was on only one when he dragged an incoming delivery from Azhar Mahmood on to the stumps.

After dismissing Bombay-born master batsman at the nascent stage of the innings,

Pakistani bowlers found no trouble to restrict Indian batsmen from scoring freely.

Although Azhar played a captain's knock of 66, Saurav Ganguly scored a sedate 26 and vice-captain Ajay Jadeja chipped in with a defiant 34. Indian batting looked fragile since the departure of Tendulkar.

In-form Azhar and Ganguly however tried to mend the early damage producing 77 runs for the second wicket. But once left-arm spinner Mohammad Hussain had Ganguly and Azharuddin within the span of six overs, India's hope to throw up a challenging total was well and truly over.

Playing for the first time in the tournament, the burly spinner, who was also ac-

counted for Navjot Sidhu and Robin Singh, eventually finished with career-best haul of 4 for 33 in 10 overs. A familiar face in Dhaka cricket, Hussain, who replaced leg-spinner Mush-taq Ahmed for the day, had also displayed some brilliant piece of fielding to justify his inclusion. He was later adjudged player-of-the-match and most-valuable-player-of-the-final.

Hussain was ably supported by off-spinner Saqlain Mush-taq, who captured three wickets for 36 runs. Considered as the best finger-spinner in contemporary cricket, Saqlain celebrated his 150th one-day haul with the wicket of Indian stumper Navan Mongia. He played only 78 one-day matches to set a new record, erasing the previous record of South African fast bowler Alan Donald, who reached the 150-mark in his 98th appearance.

After the good work of the bowlers, Pakistan were off to a flying start with their dashing opener Shahid Afridi and Saeed Anwar clobbering 31 runs off the first 16 deliveries.

Afridi, better known for his exploits in the first fifteen overs, smote a huge sixer off Javagal Srinath in his breezy 13-ball 21 before the latter had the last laugh, having the right-hander caught at mid-off in the third over.

But a cool and composed Anwar then took the Indian bowlers for a ride, slamming his 22nd (51) half-century off only 40 balls studded with eight fours and a massive sixer against Indian leggie Sajraj Bahutule.

With Anwar in marauding mood, Pakistan's 100 came in only 13.1 overs. The southpaw shared 74 runs for the second wicket with Aamir Sohail before becoming the lone victim of right-arm seamer Harvinder Singh.

Aamir Sohail scored a struggling 36 off 56 balls. But it was Inzamam-ul-Haq who set the field afire with flurry of shots.

Inzamam hammered three sixes and as many fours in his a run-a-ball 40. But with Pakistan needing one run to wrap up the match, the big man fell to a magnificent one-handed diving catch of Sidhu.

Inzamam was particularly hostile against Bahutule, who conceded 53 runs in his five prodigal overs.



PERFECT IMPACT: Player-of-the match Muhammad Hussain took four for 33 on his first appearance in the Independence Cup.

— Star photo

Sharif-Hasina talks

From page 1

oping trade relation, widening its scope and removing the impediments at the Joint Economic Commission (JEC) meeting to be held next month.

The two countries signed an agreement on promotion of cultural programmes after the official talks. The Bangladesh Cultural Affairs Secretary and Pakistan Foreign Secretary signed the agreement on behalf of their respective countries.

At the talks, Sheikh Hasina proposed settlement of all outstanding issues between the two countries, including repatriation of stranded Pakistanis and division of assets.

On the issue of asset sharing between the two countries, Hasina told the Pakistan side that there was no progress on this matter for a long time. She requested Pakistan to take measures to implement the suggestions of the joint body on asset sharing formed several years ago.

She also requested Nawaz Sharif to take back the Pakistani citizens stranded in Bangladesh. She pointed out that Bangladesh is taking care of 2,40,000 stranded Pakistanis for the last 25 years.

The Bangladesh premier told her Pakistani counterpart that although the problem was a humanitarian one, it was a 'big pressure on Bangladesh'. She mentioned that an accord was signed earlier about the repa-

triation of stranded Pakistanis, but there was no progress since then.

Sharif described repatriation of stranded Pakistanis and settlement of assets and liabilities between the two countries as "outstanding issues" and assured Islamabad's cooperation in this regard.

At the official talks the Pakistan premier was assisted by among others, Foreign Minister Gohar Ayub Khan, Commerce Minister Mohammad Ishaq Dar and Finance Minister Sartaj Aziz.

The Bangladesh premier was assisted by Foreign Minister Abdus Samad Azad, Finance Minister SAMS Kibria, Commerce Minister Mohammad Tofael Ahmed, State Minister for Foreign Affairs Abul Hasan Chowdhury and senior officials.

Sharif's boat trip to Sundarbans today

Pakistan Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif will make a boat trip to the Sundarbans, the world's largest mangrove forest, today, reports UNB.

Sharif will reach Mongla by helicopter at 10:15 am and will make the trip through the Sundarbans.

He will return to Dhaka in the afternoon and leave for Islamabad.

Sharif invites Ershad to visit Pakistan

Former President Jatiya Party Chairman HM Ershad yesterday made a courtesy call on Pakistan Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif at Hotel Sonargaon, reports UNB.

They exchanged opinion on bilateral matters including trade and economic cooperation and international issues of common concern.

The two leaders also discussed the success of the three nation Business Summit.

Sonia

From page 1

who destroyed the Babri mosque in 1992.

Earlier Friday, police recovered explosives accidentally left on a roadway by construction workers shortly before Sonia passed by on her way to the rally.

A police anti-sabotage squad recovered several explosives, including gelatin sticks and detonators, from a pit on the road. Police said the explosives, left behind by workers who used them to break up boulders when they installed pipeline, could have been used by terrorists.

President

From page 1

boost to the economic development," Shahabuddin said adding that it will not only benefit the three countries, but also the other countries of the region.

Nawaz Sharif thanked the President for receiving him and said the holding of business summit in Dhaka is the beginning of a new era of close cooperation in the field of trade and commerce among the three countries.

He hoped that this will go a long way in increasing the quality of life of the people of the sub-continent.

Foreign Minister Abdus Samad Azad, Pakistan Foreign Minister Gohar Ayub Khan, Commerce Minister Mohammad Ishaq Dar, Finance Minister Sartaj Aziz and Bangladesh High Commissioner to Pakistan and Pakistan High Commissioner to Bangladesh were present on the occasion.

Students, transport workers clash in Sirajganj

SIRAJGANJ, Jan 16: A clash between students and transport workers at Chala bus stand on Sirajganj-Belkuchi road today left seven people injured, reports UNB.

Of them, two workers were admitted to Sirajganj Poly Clinic in critical condition.

Police said the clash erupted following a skirmish on Thursday between a student of Belkuchi Degree College and bus workers after he had refused to pay bus fare. The student and his associates allegedly attacked the workers this morning.

Khaleda

From page 1

events in Pakistan vindicated victory of democracy and parliamentary system in his country.

Begum Zia expressed satisfaction at peace and stability prevailing in Pakistan and said that democracy is being institutionalised there, said a BNP press release.

The opposition leader apprised the Pakistan Prime Minister of the current political and economic situation in Bangladesh and hoped more investment and trade would take place between the two countries.

The two leaders also discussed the present political development in the South Asian region.

Pakistan Foreign Minister Gohar Ayub Khan and State Minister for Foreign Affairs Mohammad Siddique Kanju, BNP Secretary General Abdul Mannan Bhuiyan and former Ambassador MM Rezaul Karim were present on the occasion.

Tough movement after Eid, says Khaleda

BNP Chairperson Begum Khaleda Zia asked her party leaders and workers to be prepared for waging tough movement against the government after Eid-ul-Fitr, reports UNB.

"Current movement cannot be suppressed by any repressive steps unleashed by the present regime," she told a meeting of workers of BNP Demra thana unit.

Earlier, Demra thana BNP's general secretary and Ward Commissioner Nabulillah Nabi who was released from jail recently, met Begum Zia Thursday night at the party's central office.

The BNP Chairperson said her party's on-going mass contact programme will have to be geared up during the month of Ramadan to let the people know of various activities of the 'fascist' government against the interest of the country.

She reiterated that the current movement could not be stopped by resorting to torture and repression on the leaders and workers of BNP.

BNP Dhaka city convener Sadek Hossain Khoka MP, Mirza Abbas, Khalilur Rahman, Sheikh Matur Rahman, Shamul Alam Babla and Monir Hossain were present.

Six-hour road barricade in Faridpur

FARIDPUR, Jan 16: Hundreds of vehicles to and from Barisal remained stranded at Bhanga here today as transport workers put up barricade demanding cancellation of direct Faridpur-Mawa bus services, reports UNB.

The barricade continued from 9 in the morning to 3:30 pm, snapping road communication between Barisal and Dhaka.

However, the bus workers withdrew the barricade after the intervention of police.

Hasina

From page 1

wide attention. The Prime Minister said the package of incentives offered by her government for foreign investors has also attracted great attention and very significant investment are coming to Bangladesh.

"A fair wind is blowing today in our region. It arouses great hopes and expectations in us. A preview of this was clearly visible in our summit."

Hasina hoped the directions and the signals that have been given to the leaders of business, commerce and investment in the summit deliberations would lead the region to the next millennium.

Chief Justice, Speakers, ministers, senior political leaders of different parties, diplomats, chiefs of three services, elite and high officials attended the banquet.

Editor: Mahfuz Anam

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Dispute over cricket ground Clash near Rajshahi jail: 30 injured

From Our Correspondent

RAJSHAHI, Jan 16: At least 30 people were injured, 14 of them seriously, in a clash between jail police and local people at Rajshahi Central Jail playground today.

The clash erupted when about 100 members of different sports organisations and some local people tried to prepare a cricket pitch at the ground, the jail police prevented them from doing so. At one stage, the jail police resorted to lathi charge to disperse the cricket lovers.

The agitated cricket lovers, in retaliation for attack, started pelting bricks and used hockey sticks. During the clash 30 people, including two journalists — Subrato Das of Aker Kagoj and Abbas Ali of weekly Dharani — were injured.

Launch dacoity in Jamuna

MANIKGANJ, Jan 16: Armed robbers looted valuables worth over Tk seven lakh from the passengers of a launch in the river Jamuna this evening, police said, reports UNB.

The gang of 10-12 robbers forcibly took the Daulatdia-bound launch to Kushiara Char in Goalanda and decamped with the booties that included jewellery, new clothes and cash.

The passengers came from Dhaka by a bus and boarded the launch at Aricha ghat. The dacoits had also travelled by the same bus in disguise of passengers.

Five jail police were also injured in the clash.

of the injured, 14 were admitted to Rajshahi Medical College Hospital while the others to different clinics of the city.

The sports organisers claimed that the playground belonged to a local sporting club, but the jail authorities alleged that a group of people were trying to occupy the land for their vested interest. The authorities also filed a case in the court demanding the ownership of the playground.

Meanwhile, various sports organisations of Rajshahi city in separate statements today condemned the attack by the jail police on the cricket lovers. They demanded punishment to the persons responsible.

Nikunja plots

From page 1

Assisted Secretary of Rajuk Public Relations department Sheikh Shahinul Islam said the plots in Nikunja, each measuring three kathas, were given to 12 categories of people.

The plots were given to 53 Members of Parliament, of whom six are ministers, 15 judges, 15 army officers, 14 journalists, 16 freedom fighters, 10 artists, 155 businessmen, 213 people from government and autonomous organisations, 69 from non-government organisations and 60 people classified as "others", Shahinul Islam confirmed.

He said that Rajuk would soon select a standard plan for Nikunja and the beneficiaries would have to build their houses accordingly. "As per initial plan the height of each building in Nikunja cannot exceed 25 feet and the roofs should be made of tiles," he said.