

# April in a US Season of Scandal

by Dr Mizanur Rahman Shelley

*The loss of Paula Jones is not proportionately all gains for Clinton. Legally his war continues though one battle has been won. Independent investigations into the President's so-called White Water real-estate dealings and the alleged sex with White House internee Monica Lewinski continues, as the investigator Judge Kenneth Star refuses to be daunted by the closing of the Paula Jones case by Judge Wright.*

FOR US President Clinton, this April certainly was not the cruelest month. The first of April if anything signified for him, the beginnings of the 'Spring of hope'. For Paula Jones, at the same time the warm Spring apparently turned into the 'Winter of discontent'.

It all happened on the first of April. The All Fool's Day. That was when Little Rock's Judge Suzan Weber Wright decided that Paula Jones' allegation of "sexual harassment" by President Clinton, when he was Governor of Arkansas in 1991, constituted no genuine case for trial. The Judge opined that even if the alleged behaviour of the former Governor — turned President were true it could be at worst called "borrish" and offensive but under the strict Arkansas Law did not amount to sexual harassment as it did not cause any proven damage to her career, body or mind.

Judge Wright was appointed by Clinton's Republican predecessor, President Bush. She was also a former student of sometime Professor of Law William Jefferson Clinton. At that time she protested against the teacher later turned President awarding her B++ grade when she thought that she deserved an A. No wonder then, when President Clinton was contacted during his tour of Africa by his lawyer Benett to behold that Judge Wright had thrown out four-year-old Paula Jones petition for the trial of the Pres-

ident Clinton gasped in disbelief and said, "Is it some kind of April Fool Joke?" On being assured by the lawyer that it was no joke but a sublime reality, Clinton was "pleased".

The post-victory response of the president and his friends was based on a strategy of a controlled and subdued reaction. There was no "wild celebration" at least in public. The President's accomplished spouse Hillary Rodham Clinton also displayed her characteristic cool and composure as she clinically told the radio that the Judge has done what was right in the context of law and evidence. This, she added, would free the President to do the job he was expected to do for America, and was doing pretty well.

She was right, the American economy is more buoyant than ever before. In the Wall Street the Dow-Jones line crossed the highly symbolic 9,000 mark displaying the robust health of the US stock market in the first week of April. Unemployment was reduced to an all-time low. And as the President asserted on his return from the eleven-day "African Safari". Crimes of violence and against property, had reduced to the lowest level so far. Americans across the land gave good marks to Clinton. Evidently his Casanova escapades do not seem to worry the citizens enough to shake their confidence in the President.

In the market it has been

business, as usual. In the struggle between Dow-Jones and Paula Jones, the former never weakened and always won. In her legal battle against Clinton, Paula Jones lost at least the first round of her four-year-long engagement in court. She is evidently in a sorry state. Her advisers and lawyers have not closed the possibility of her going on an appeal to higher court. Nonetheless at the moment she has no money to pay her lawyer's bills of hundreds of thousands dollars. Some lawyers are suggesting in desperation that President Clinton be made to pay half of Paula Jones' legal costs. She has collected only a paltry sum of \$50,000 from sympathisers in donation and her proposed book seemed to have few takers among publishers.

However, the loss of Paula Jones is not proportionately all gains for Clinton. Legally his war continues though one battle has been won. Independent investigations into the President's so-called White Water real-estate dealings and the alleged sex with White House internee Monica Lewinski continues, as the investigator Judge Kenneth Star refuses to be daunted by the closing of the Paula Jones case by Judge Wright.

Early April is agog with another type of trial for President Clinton — trial by the Press and TV Cameras. So far as media, especially the electronic part of it is concerned, says a commentator, "America is a monotheme

society". One could hardly disagree. It is Saddam Hussein bashing or cascade of criticism of China's human rights policy. The US TV would speak of nothing but one of these for the most part for a week to two. This is the season of Presidential sex, this early Spring for the US TV. All the mighty channels which were sombre from 24th March with the tragic heart-breaking killing of four school girls and a teacher in Arkansas allegedly by a thirteen and eleven-year-old boys suddenly shifted gears on the 1st April from school violence to White House sex.

The rejection of the Paula Jones petition for trial of the President for demanding oral sex was the catalyst that brought all the "President's women" centre-staged on all US major TV channels. They are all there, looming larger than life in front of the cameras — Monica Lewinski with alleged affairs with the President and perjury; Catherine Wily with her allegation of presidential groupings in the fabled Oval Office and even good old Jennifer Flower with her somewhat protective complain against Bill.

What will a bewildered, if also amused world make of all these? The USA undoubtedly is the only polar power militarily and politically in the world of our time. It bestrides the globe like a colossus in the President's without question the most powerful man on the planet. He plays role of a veritable god in relation to the world outside. He brings democracy to Haiti, his troops spearheading UN peacekeepers. He bombards wayward Serbs in Bosnia to bring welcome and just-peace there. He delineates human right policy that China should follow and holds recalcitrant Iraq and Libya on a tight leash of economic sanctions and threat of superior military force under the banner of the United Nations.

Yet this god is castigated by his peers, fellow US nationals for his irresponsible playful-ness with women in his own country, is an amazed yet reverent world expected to regard the USA as a new Olympus with Clinton as the mighty Zeus riddled by the arrows of Cupid, ever protected by the jealous love of the queen goddess Hera and surrounded by new incarnation of the goddess of beauty, Aphrodite? Gods and goddesses play at Olympus and commit no sin. Sin is for the mortals eking out merely human existence in foothills of Olympus.

# Down the Memory Lane Bangabandhu's Burial

by Mashiar Rahman

Major and a Lieutenant along with some soldiers descended on Tungipara in a helicopter on the morning of August 16. They came in for the Imam who leads prayers of a local mosque and enquired whether the villagers were prepared to bury the mortal remains of Bangabandhu. The answer was affirmative.

At last, some officers came to Tungipara around 2.30 pm with the mortal body of Bangabandhu wrapped in a coffin.

The Major disregarding minimum sense of conventional Muslim ritual wanted the coffin to be lowered to the grave. The grief-stricken villagers were horrified and, instantly reacted. "We must see the body" the villagers stubbornly insisted. "Can't you bury without seeing the body?" the bewildered Major enquired. "Well, if you declare him Shahid (martyr)," replied the courageous pesh Imam Moudvi Sheikh Abdul Halim.

The helpless Major had no answer. "Do you want him to be given 'kafan' and 'daffan', buried in consonance with Islamic rites?" demanded Moudvi Abdul Halim. "Yes" the Major said that there would be 'kafan' and 'daffan' but it had to be done in their presence.

Would there be 'namaz-e-janaza'? "Yes", the Major said. He asked a policeman if they could join the prayers. The policeman firmly replied they could if they were clean in the religious sense. However, they could not join the namaz-e-janaza as they were not given time to get themselves cleaned.

At last, Bangabandhu was laid to eternal rest side by side with his father's grave.

Bangabandhu's wife, three sons, two daughters-in-law and his brother Naser were buried in their blood-soaked clothes in the Banani graveyard with no religious rites for them.

"গায়ে পাতারা সেই দেনার বুনে পুথো যায় বাবে, ফালগুনী হাতরা কাদিয়া উঠে অন্য মাঠখানি ভরে।"

It is an irony that a man who was the unquestioned leader of the people, popularly known as "Bangabandhu" and "father of the nation" and all through a champion of the people's cause and surrounded by innumerable disciples and admirers did not find any solace, not to speak of protection, from any one and who with the rest of the members of his family was brutally and barbarously assassinated — a tragedy that has no parallel in the world. Neither in the past nor, I believe, will there

be any in the future.

The pages of history are like heaps of carcasses over which vultures were hovering, pages besmeared with the blood of the martyrs of the liberation war — however, these appear both insignificant and immaterial compared to the traumatic assassination of Bangabandhu.

It was a crude terror in the sense that poison too can be pure and unalloyed. It seemed as if Carlyle's "vast empire of pain", Nazrul Islam's "vast ocean of pain" and also Mir Mosharrar Hossain's "Bishad Sindhu" on Karbala massacre — all meaning very much the same melancholy had, nevertheless, mingled together to overwhelm us like one of the cataclysmic floods which overtake these parts from time to time, only in this instance with far more cruelty.

Today the rumbling of a hidden thunder is felt very acutely, the sky looks vicious and the weather more hostile. Truly, trial is a duty the nation owes to humanity.

To me, it appears, from that dark night onwards, the morning has closed its eyes, heedless of the insistent calls of the loud east wind, and a thick veil of darkness has been drawn over to every wakeful sky. Let me not forget for a moment, let me carry this pang of sorrow in my dreams and in my wakeful hours. The day is gone, birds will sing no more and the wind has fizzled out.

My heart bleeds for Bangabandhu and his family. Whoever will read this tragic story will feel sorry like me. It was as if a high-intensity earthquake, and its impact was more devastating in the sense that the cowardly assassination planned and executed by the niggardly butchers rendered the whole nation an orphan if the death of a father is viewed from this angle. What happened when Nawab Sirajuddin, the ruler of Bengal, Bihar and Orissa and apple of the eye of the people was murdered by the beastly butcher Mohammadi Begh consequent upon the carousel of Robert Clive, Mir Jafar and Jagat Seth? The soul of the deceased Nawab rested in heaven — though historian R C Majumder (vide the *History of Bengal*, published by Dhaka University) hailed this event i.e. the coming of the British colonial power to India, as one very much beneficial to the

medieval India — but with his demise, Bengal went under foreign domination and with it the whole of the subcontinent which groaned in pangs for 190 years until 1947.

No doubt, the brutal assassination of Bangabandhu is an act of historical ingratitude besides being despicable. Pray that, notwithstanding anything, none embraces death like this. To evaluate it objectively death itself is insignificant since it is deemed as an inevitable process when none, as the rule of nature, escapes from its icy hand. However, at that inevitable hour, let the soft touch of a loving hand caress the forehead, let this life end at the sight of a sympathetic and affectionate face with tears rolling down the cheeks.

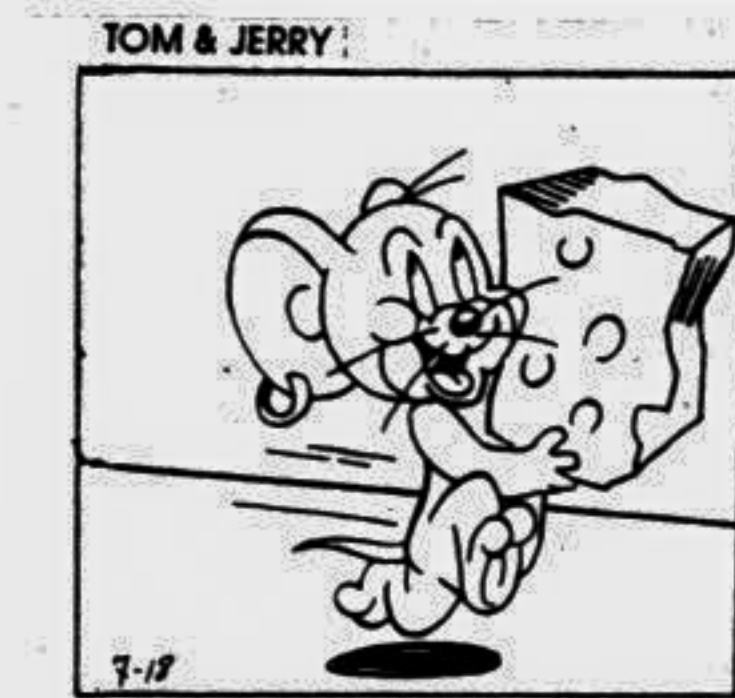
Everything with which I have been so far and so long identified myself seems to be defeated being swept aside in a deluge of events. Everything, as if, goes back before my eyes as I stagger back to the bed and attempt at burying my aching head between the blankets and pillows. Notwithstanding the proverbial truth that time is a great healer, I, in my anguish and loneliness, find the days ahead are terrible to bear and the nights more nightmarish.

Again, the woodlands have hushed their songs, and the doors are all shut at every house. I have no sleep in the night. Again and again in my uneasiness I open my doors and look out on the darkness, can see nothing but horror before me and hear cries of howl. I suffered a fatal stroke on the fateful night on 15th August 1975 and the damage is irreparable. In my life the rains have stopped, the sky has started to change its colour for a waiting dusk and a subsequent night. I try to find solace in my loneliness. When the chilly wind has been blowing continuously, when the leaves in me have long faded out, there has been useless and abortive protest in the lonely corner of my heart.

It is a story without any end. A story for tonight and every night. It is a tale replete and mingled with relentless tears.

"Weep Bengalees weep now"

"আপালে দুইটি জোয়াল বন্দ সায়া মাঠ পানে চাই  
হায়া রবতে বুক ফাটাইছে নয়নের কল নাহি।"



## Metropolitan

### 'Effectiveness of Mujibnagar Govt earned credibility for Bangladesh'

Speakers at a discussion in the city yesterday said the effectiveness and dynamism of the Mujibnagar government had earned credibility for Bangladesh and its government from the world community and military and diplomatic support from the friendly countries, reports BSS.

They said the war-time Bangladesh government led by acting president Syed Nazrul Islam and prime minister Tajuddin Ahmed had run its activities very successfully till the victory of the country on December 16, 1971.

They said if the Mujibnagar government could not discharge its duties and responsibilities correctly with farsightedness, the independence would have been delayed.

The discussion on "Historic Mujibnagar Day" was held at the Bangla Academy which organised the function marking the Mujibnagar Day '98. Former Vice-Chancellor of Rajshahi University Dr Mazharul Islam was in the chair.

Director General of Bangla Academy Syed Anwar Hossain, former ambassador M Walur Rahman, former registrar of Bangladesh Agriculture University Prof Abdul Mannan, Dhaka University Prof Abu Zafar and eminent freedom fighter Subrata Barua spoke on the occasion.

### 50 graduates to vie for 25 seats of JU Senate

By JU Correspondent

The election of the registered graduates' representatives to the Senate of Jahangirnagar University (JU) will be held on April 26.

A total of 50 candidates from two separate panels are contesting for 25 seats of the JU Senate.

One panel named "Sarbadallo Oikhya Panel" backed by a JU teachers' group led by the former president of Federation of Bangladesh University Teachers' Association (FBUTA) Prof Khondaker Mustahidur Rahman has nominated Prof Sharif Enamul Kabir, former President of JU Teachers' Association, Dr Md Nasiruddin, former Proctor of JU, and former Jatiyatabadi Chhatra Dal, Bangladesh Chhatra League (BCL) and Samajtantrik Chhatra Front leaders for their panel.

The other panel named "Ganatantrik Progotishheel Panel" backed by another teachers' group led by JU Pro-VC Prof Alauddin Ahmed has nominated Afsar Ahmed, JU Proctor, Md Delwar Hossain, former GS of JUCSU, and a number of former JUCSU BCL and former leaders of JU VCP and Bangladesh Chhatra Union.

A total of 2001 Registered Graduates will cast their votes in the election. The election will be held from 9 am to 5 pm at the JU Teachers' Club on the campus and at the National Press Club in the city.



Thai Ambassador to Bangladesh Pithaya Pookaman called on Post & Telecommunication Minister Mohammad Nasim at his office in the city yesterday. — PID photo

### Agri-scientists urged to devote themselves in cereals' research

By Staff Correspondent

Nobel laureate agronomist Dr Norman Ernest Borlaugh has urged agricultural scientists to devote themselves in research work on cereals in the wake of population boom in various countries of the world.

Dr Borlaugh, who has been conferred with honorary D.Sc. degree by Bangladesh Agriculture University, was addressing a gathering of 500 scientists at Bangladesh Agricultural Research Institute (BARI) at Gazipur recently, says a press release.

Agriculture and food advisor to the Prime Minister, AM Anisuzzaman, attended the function as chief guest. Besides, executive chairman of Bangladesh Agriculture Research Centre (BARC), Dr Z Karim, DG of BARI, Dr MA Majed, DG of Bangladesh Rice Research Institute, Dr M A Hamid Mia, director and advisor of Wheat Research Centre Dr MA Razzak and Dr Craig A Meisner also spoke at the function.

### Muktijodha Sangsad programme on Mujibnagar Day

The Central Command Council of Bangladesh Muktijodha Sangsad has organised a three-day programme on the occasion of the historic Mujibnagar Day, reports UNB.

On the first day of the programmes today a discussion will be held at the National Press Club auditorium on "Mujibnagar and Bangladesh".

Regional Commander of the Mujib Bahini during the War of Liberation, Water Resources Minister Abdur Razzak will attend the discussion as the chief guest while Assistant Regional Commander of the Bahini Shipping Minister ASM Abdur Rab and the Pro-Vice-Chancellor of Jahangirnagar University Prof Alauddin Ahmed as the special guests.

Chairman of the Central Command Council of Bangladesh Muktijodha Council Principal Abdul Ahad Chowdhury will preside over the function.

### AIUB seminar held

A seminar on "post-secondary education in Canada: Myths and realities" was held at the AMA International University-Bangladesh (AIUB) in the city yesterday.

Prospects and scope for higher education in Canada were discussed at the seminar, says a press release.

The key speaker was Mel D Broitman, an eminent Canadian journalist. The seminar was presided over by Vice-Chancellor, AIUB of the Carmen Z Lamagna, and attended by the students, faculty members, Dr Anwarul Abedin, Chairman of the AIUB Hasanul A Hasan, Director (HRD), Ishi-aque Abedin, Director (International Affairs) and officers of the University.

## Weather

### Thundershowers likely

Rain or thundershowers accompanied by temporary gusty or squally wind is likely at a few places over Dhaka and Sylhet divisions and at one or two places over Rajshahi, Khulna, Barisal and Chittagong divisions in the next 12 hours till 6 pm today, reports UNB.

According to the Met Office, slight rise in day temperature is expected over the country during the period.

The country's highest temperature 35.4 degree Celsius was recorded yesterday at Satkhira and the lowest 18.5 degree Celsius at Rangpur.

The sun sets today at 6:22 pm and rises tomorrow at 5:31 am.

Maximum and minimum temperature and humidity recorded in some major cities and towns yesterday were:

City/Town	Temperature in Celsius	Humidity in percentage
	Max	Min
Dhaka	32.0	80
Chittagong	32.5	72
Rajshahi	31.6	63
Khulna	34.4	61
Barisal	33.0	66
Sylhet	33.0	76
Cox's Bazar	34.0	72

# Socio-economic and Psychosocial Problems

by Dr Md Salim Shakur

IN Bangladesh about 90 per cent children suffer from various degree of malnutrition. According to UNICEF, *The State of World Children 1998*, some 56 per cent under-five suffer from moderate and severe malnutrition, 21 per cent of whom are severely malnourished. Recognising that malnutrition is hindering national development, the government has formulated a National Nutrition Policy and launched a nation-wide nutrition intervention programme — the Bangladesh Integrated Nutrition Project.

However, management of malnutrition is not simple as it is the result of complex interplay of factors involving such diverse elements as household access to food, child and maternal care, safe water and sanitation and access to basic health services. Elements such as social, political, economic and cultural are involved beyond physiological. Therefore, the approach to it should be multi-sectorial. Management of severely malnourished children, who are more likely to die as a result of common childhood diseases, poses to be a big problem.

In spite of tremendous and enormous progress in various fields of medical science in later half of 20th century, it is unfortunate that fatalities of severely malnourished children which varies from 15 per cent to 30 per cent have remained unchanged over the last 50 years.

Underlying the family dysfunction, the psychosocial problems associated with malnutrition contributing to mismanagement and eventual case fatalities associated with severe malnourished patients is probably underemphasised. Although poverty in isolation is not an indicator, yet it is the greatest risk factor. Children may also fail to thrive on nourishment in spite of material affluence due to poor parent-child interaction, inadequate parental knowledge, parental psychopath and dysfunctional family units.

We have done a study taking a modest attempt to identify the family characteristic, psychosocial attributes and sociodemographic elements associated with malnutrition which may have negative impact on management of malnourished patients.

The purpose of this write-up is to draw together the information we have gathered about malnourished children's backgrounds and their problems and so to provide an overview of their difficulties, apart from their material deprivation. The study was conducted in Dhaka Shishu Hospital on 200 severely malnourished children between age 3 months and 60 months over a period of six months. One hundred better nourished children of same age

group and similar sex distribution were taken as comparison group from admitted patients of the hospital.

The majority of the patients were between 3 months and 12 months (55 per cent), followed by age group between 13 months and 24 months (20 per cent). There were 52 per cent male and 48 per cent female patients. Majority of them belonged to urban slums, followed by rural inhabitants. The fathers of malnourished patients were mostly day labourers (35 per cent), rickshawpullers (33 per cent) and farmers (10 per cent). Seventy-eight per cent fathers were illiterate and 20 per cent had primary education and only 1 per cent had secondary education and none had higher than secondary education.

Mothers' educational status was having secondary and above 2 per cent versus 81 per cent of comparison group and it was statistically significant. Mothers were mostly garment

ling (12 per cent), mother's sickness (12 per cent) and death of mother (24 per cent).

In 91 active cases available for interview, whose other siblings were present at home during mother's attendance in hospital, the other siblings at home were looked after by grandmothers in 14 per cent cases, by fathers in 10 per cent cases, other minor siblings in 22 per cent cases, neighbours in 21 per cent cases and nobody in 23 per cent cases. Marriage documents of parents were absent in 93 per cent cases against 12 per cent of comparison group and it was statistically highly significant.

Fifty per cent fathers of malnourished patients were found to have completely abandoned the family, 15 per cent were separated with another marriage and 10 per cent fathers and 8 per cent mothers were dead. Of fathers of malnourished patients who were separated with another mar-

keep their malnourished children in hospital until necessary and why there is increased DORB.

Lack of useful manpower is one of the most important causes of unwillingness of parents to admit their children and to continue treatment. Only 68 per cent mothers were in a position to stay with their admitted children. It was revealed that of other siblings left at home during mothers' hospital attendance 23 per cent were looked after by nobody which is inhuman, as the situation may not only keep them starved but make them more vulnerable to accident like catching fire, electrocution, drowning in nearby ponds etc.

The data collected on family characteristic also suggests that majority of malnourished families have family difficulties and parental marital problems. Absence of valid marriage documents were 36 times higher in malnourished group than control and it was statistically significant.

Due to absence of marriage contract and consequently no formal documentary divorce, the mothers of malnourished children were not in a position to claim maintenance allowance from their husbands, by resorting to legal procedures. Single parent condition, particularly maternal isolation, has already been identified as contributing factor in families of NCFT (Nonorganic cause of failure to thrive). In summary, after separation or divorce, most parents are spending less money and devoting less time to children's rearing than they did when the family was intact, resulting in poor health and nutrition of affected children.

In considering strategies for intervening and tackling malnutrition one must appreciate that these children, although identified in the hospital were a selected population, and are likely to have more extensive and complex problems than those found in the community. They not only are children suffering from high degree of malnutrition due to poor dietary intake due to poverty but they have complex family difficulties.

When young children are identified with poor growth in any setting, one should consider the possibility of a combination of psychosocial, dietary, developmental, familial, behavioural factors and sociodemographic attributes being present. For those children who are suffering from severe, or perhaps, moderate malnutrition, the variability of their problems suggests that their needs would best be met by a multi-disciplinary approach.

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workers (33 per cent) and maid servants (23 per cent) followed by day labourer (17 per cent). Twelve per cent mothers were full-time housewives against 62 per cent of control group or comparison group and it was also statistically significant. Monthly income of case group was less than Tk 1500 in 76 per cent vs 8 per cent comparison.

Number of siblings up to 3, was found in 51 per cent versus 83 per cent of control and it was statistically significant. Full positive paternal attitude to admit their malnourished sick children was found in 9 per cent cases against 63 per cent comparison children. Father of active cases group never attended their children even for a day after their admission in 76 per cent cases against 8 per cent of comparison only.

Discharge on risk bond (DORB) and absconding patients were statistically 11 times higher in malnourished group. Financial problem (45 per cent) and family problem including father's (15 per cent) and grandmother's (12 per cent) pressure to go back home and cause of other children (17 per cent) at home were the main reasons of DORB. Sixty-eight per cent mothers were available in hospital to attend their malnourished children and rest were attended by grandmothers (11 per cent), uncles (12 per cent) and other minor siblings (9 per cent). Causes of extra maternal (32 per cent) care in hospital where fathers were not allowed (29 per cent) were mother's job (22 per cent) cause of other sib-

riage, only 14 per cent financially maintained the previous malnourished patient's family fully, 18 per cent partially maintained, and 68 per cent not at all. Eighty-four per cent parents of malnourished patients were not living together (functionally single) against 8 per cent of comparison group which is again statistically significant. Of the parents living together 65 per cent fathers were found to maintain their family either partially or not at all.

The data presented here reflects negative attitude of patients' fathers in admitting their children to take part in medical expenditure and to continue treatment in hospital till necessary, resulting in significantly higher frequency of DORB. Socio-economic status of household influences the behaviour of individual in the society. Demographers are also finding socioeconomic status as useful tool as it provides insight into demographic behaviour of individuals, such as attitude towards family size, family planning practice etc.

We also found in the study that multiple (>3) siblings are significantly higher in malnourished families than comparison. The study also reveals that the malnourished children under study here have more extensive and complex problems in the form of family difficulties and family disruption, which to some extent justifies as to why they don't want to

The writer is Associate Professor, Nutrition and Gastroenterology, BICH and Consultant, Dhaka Shishu Hospital.