

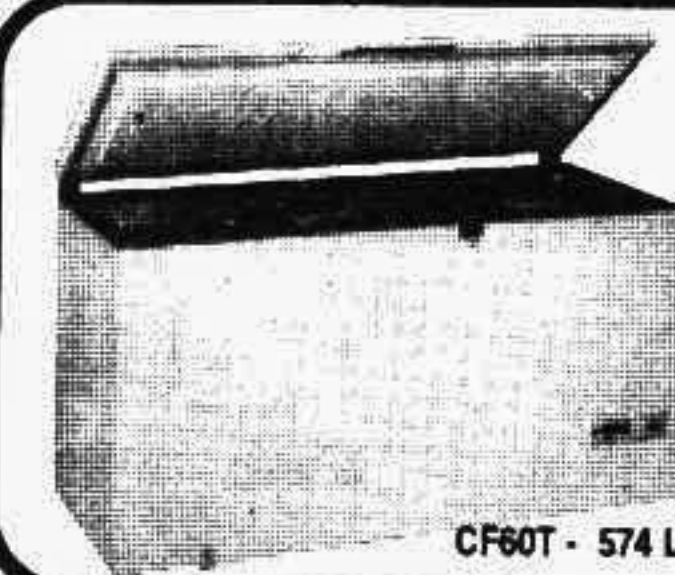
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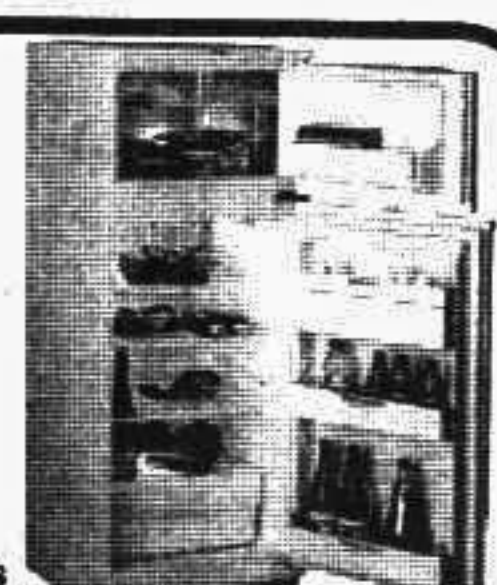
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Down to Earth

Of Blood Donors and Dubious Use of Syringes

By A S M Nurunnabi

The issue of blood donation by private individuals has always been a source of concern. The concern relates to the quality of blood received from the private donors. Another aspect of such concern bears on the estimated need of blood for various emergencies in hospitals and clinics and its estimated availability from private donors and other sources.

According to a report, the quantity of blood needed by organisations like Sandhani and the Red Crescent Society for medical purposes is in the region of two lakh bags a year but, each year, the availability of blood through collection drive falls short by 140,000 bags. How is this gap between demand and supply bridged? From informed sources, it is learnt that in filling this gap, a substantial role is played by professional blood donors. A risk factor lies in the fact that such professional blood donors generally come from the poorer section of society who give their blood for a price. It is the prevailing medical opinion that as many of these donors suffer from disease, those who receive this blood during transfusion are at risk because facilities for screening such donated blood are generally limited.

Because of the inherent risk involved in the use of such blood, informed medical opinion puts emphasis on encouraging regular donations by those donors known to be in good health at four-month intervals. The question of screening blood received indiscriminately from questionable sources has assumed all the more importance in these days of possible HIV infection and other STDs. But the unfortunate thing is that the so-called "safe blood" is generally

in short supply and this shortage sometimes throw the patients needing transfusion into the compelling necessity of using whatever blood happens to be available.

Reportedly the Red Crescent Society has lately taken the initiative of training a limited number of doctors and lab technicians for undertaking safe blood transfusion. Obviously this limited number of trained personnel is inadequate for meeting the needs of so many patients. This underlines the urgent necessity of training more and more personnel in order that we may be able to make the requiring patients feel safe. We may keep in mind that there are patients who must need regular transfusions because of the nature of their disease. It seems to be the moral obligation of those connected with the treatment of such patients to ensure safe transfusion. There seems to be no reason for complacency in this field because we sometimes read reports of infection of children with AIDS in other countries caused by contaminated blood.

In this context, it seems necessary to emphasise that blood plasma and other blood products, which are reported to be in short supply, also need attention for augmentation in their availability in specific circumstances. It was learnt that the Red Crescent Society has a five-year programme to supply only safe blood. Under this programme, appropriate equipment for screening to ensure safe blood is expected to function at suitable centres. But in delivering this programme fails to deliver the goods, the ominous prospect of not getting safe blood may persist with conse-

quential impact in creating hazardous situation. There is another aspect compounding the issue of availability of blood through donors. There are myths which are wrong about the effects of donating blood on health. These wrong ideas need be eliminated through proper health education if we are to ensure donation of blood from healthy people.

Connected with the use of unsafe blood is the abuse of disposable syringes in hospitals which poses a serious threat to public health. It was reported that a section of unscrupulous traders are selling used syringes that can cause diseases like viral hepatitis and AIDS.

In this way the very purpose of using disposable syringes is being defeated. The greedy elements in society who do not miss any chance of making money have pounced on this opportunity of using used syringes. The use of single-pack syringe has been reportedly banned, but it seems there is little enforcement of the law at the field level and the dishonest people seem to be taking full advantage of this lapse. Used syringes that are supposed to be destroyed are said to be slipped out by racketeers from hospitals and passed off as new. This is an indication of the corruption that is present almost everywhere in society.

Now it is the health authorities who have to do something about the menace that is said to be one more problem plaguing our medicare system. Observers are of the opinion that only prompt and decisive action against the criminals engaged in this hazardous malpractices can retrieve the situation.



After a three-day hartal, the Ekushey Book Fair at Bangla Academy drew a large crowd yesterday, a public holiday. — Star photo

Post-polls violence at Mymensingh: 35 hurt

MYMENSINGH, Feb 26: At least 35 people were injured, eight critically, in post-polls violence here on Thursday and Friday between the supporters of rival candidates of the municipal elections, reports UNB.

The seriously injured people, including two with bullet wounds, were rushed to Mymensingh Medical College Hospital (MMCH).

Police said 15-people were injured in a clash in front of Razzak Sarkar Market at Maskanda in the town at about 5 pm today.

Of them, Lovely, 18, and Munna, 25, sustained splinter injuries and were admitted to MMCH.

Another clash took place in front of Nayanmoni Market at Shankipara here at about 3 pm today, leaving 10 people injured.

Sher Ali, 25, suffered bullet wounds in the clash while Selim, 30, sustained splinter injuries. They were also admitted to the hospital.

In a separate incident, Monir Hossain received splinter injuries when a bomb was hurled at Baghmara in the town at about 12:15 pm today. He was also admitted to MMCH in a critical condition.

On Thursday night, Rafiqul Islam, 30, received bullet wounds at Mashkanda while Sumon, 17, sustained splinter injuries at Health Officer's lane at Shankipara and Faroque, 20, sustained stab injuries in front of Polytechnic Institute at Mashkanda.

In another incident, unruly people attacked a house of Franchise at DN Roy Road here on Thursday and beat up the family members, leaving at least five of them injured.

A case was filed with the police in this connection accusing 15 people, including one defeated commissioner candidate.

Cairn

From Page 1

those to Shell without informing Petrobangla or seeking permission from it. The government is now looking into the issue, said a source.

In December last, the government was examining the legal aspects of Cairn's transfer of 50 per cent of its concerns to Shell. As the government was involved in it, Cairn decided to sell all its concerns to Shell, again without prior permission.

Sources said, Cairn would withdraw from Bangladesh by June next. It may, however, remain involved in exploration activities with Shell later. Cairn is also retrenching some 40 employees working in the Bangladesh section at its head office, they said.

"Despite its pioneering role in the private sector oil and gas exploration in the country, Cairn has been unstable here and we must truly calculate how much Bangladesh has been benefited from Cairn's investment," said a source.

Kafco's sales deals

From Page 1
commercial settlement proposed by Kafco's general contractor. The settlement aims to clear the contractor, a consortium of two Japanese companies, one of which is Chiyoda which actually built the plant and the other is Marubeni, from their obligations to Kafco about the faulty plant, and give the contractor plant acceptance.

The plant acceptance is at the core of the proposed deal, with far-reaching consequences for the company and the government of Bangladesh. The government, the largest shareholder and guarantor of \$190 million in outstanding loans to Kafco, has so far resisted the pressure to swallow the "settlement" and plant acceptance. The off-take deals expire seven years after plant acceptance.

Kafco lost at a hearing last year in London in arbitration brought by Transammonia against the company to enforce the urea off-take agreement. But the arbitrator said that if plant acceptance still did not take place within a year, Kafco could

end the off-take agreements. The factory went into production in December 1994, and plant acceptance remained at the heart of the dispute triggered by the frequent shutdowns of the plant which followed. The Kafco management said that faulty design and substandard equipment have led to plant failures, shutting down the plant for a staggering 37 times. The company therefore has until now refused plant acceptance, saying that the plant was not in a suitable state for plant acceptance.

A former managing director Manuher Towhidi says the plant is still not in a suitable state for acceptance. Two major items of equipment which may cause a shutdown at any time will not be replaced until February 2000. Towhidi, at the helm through the construction phase and numerous plant problems afterwards, says the company has been drained of at least US\$ 120 million in lost production and other effects due to a series of mechanical breakdowns and the faulty construction of the plant.

Marubeni is now putting pressure to get the government to agree to plant acceptance before the plant is fully rectified. If the plant acceptance takes place now, then the off-take agreements will continue for another seven years, including the agreement with Marubeni. If the acceptance is deferred until after the condition of the plant is satisfactory, Kafco will be able to end the off-take agreements now.

Both Marubeni and Transammonia make money through commission on sales. Commission can go up to five per cent, and is charged even if Kafco sells directly to the government. The two companies also make money by giving Kafco lower prices. Marubeni is also known to charge very high shipping costs.

On an average, it is estimated, about \$8 million a year will be lost by Kafco to Marubeni and Transammonia because of commission, lower prices and excessive shipping costs if the two off-take agreements continue.

Khaleda warns govt against repression on opponents

BNP chairperson Begum Khaleda Zia yesterday cautioned the government against repression on the opposition activists, reports UNB.

The repression carried out by the police and the armed goons of the ruling party on opposition activists would be boomerang for them," she said, adding that they let loose the terrorists in the name of opposing hartal.

Begum Zia was exchanging views with the leaders and workers of Mohila Dal at her official residence at 29, Minto Road in the evening and reviewing post-hartal situation.

Khurshid Jahan Haq, Begum Sarwari Rahman, Prof Jahannara Begum, Selima Rahman, Firoza Talukdar, Bilkis Islam were present at the meeting.

TCB

From Page 1

the "regular" exporters. TCB gets

five per cent of the "free" quota as per the Textile Trade and Quota Administration Rules 1991.

The EPB distributes the quota among registered garments exporters.

The report however said many of the newcomers do not utilise their quota and sell those for profit. "An informal quota exchange system has developed in the sector," it said.

Other sources alleged that some high-ups in the government are involved in it.

The probe committee report blamed a "softer policy implementation" by the government earlier for the irregularities in distribution of the "free" quota. Earlier, the share of "free" quota was 30 per cent of the total.

According to the report, the authorities took a lax attitude in implementing the quota rules at the beginning to encourage garments export.

Garments is the single largest export earner, accounting for about 70 per cent of the country's total earnings. The target for the current financial year from the sector is 3.1 billion dollars.

The number of registered garments manufacturers and exporters has now increased to 3265 from about 800 nine years ago.

The role played by state-owned enterprise Trading Corporation of Bangladesh (TCB) in dealing with the reserve quota for garments exports came under attack by a government

PM tells rally in city

Resist hartal in every ward

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina yesterday urged the opposition parties to shun violence, and conspiracy and follow the path of peace to save the nation from destruction, reports BSS.

Addressing a public meeting at the Mohammadpur Physical College ground here in the afternoon, she said the frequent hartals only brought miseries to the peace-loving people.

Sheikh Hasina accused the BNP leader Begum Zia of carrying out destructive activities in the name of hartal and killing innocent people like rickshawpullers. She said, "why are you killing rickshawpullers by pouring petrol on their body?"

She called upon the people to resist hartal in every ward in the city and help restore a peaceful atmosphere.

Referring to the just concluded hartal and the municipal polls, the Prime Minister said people had spontaneously participated in the polls defying the hartal. She said about 60 to 70 per cent voters turned up at the polling centres to exercise their franchise.

Sheikh Hasina pointed out that although the opposition parties called for boycotting the poula polls, many candidates belonging to BNP, Jatiya Party and Jamaat got elected.

The prime minister pointed out that in the poula polls 13 candidates from BNP, eight from Jatiya Party, three from Jamaat, two from Workers

Party and 20 independent candidates got elected.

Sheikh Hasina said that the people have restored their voting rights at the cost of their blood and they would protect it by any means. She said that city corporation polls would take place in Dhaka, Chittagong, Rajshahi and Khulna in future and people would exercise their voting rights freely.

She hinted that city corporation elections would also be held in the newly created division of Barisal and Sylhet.

Gold seized at Ctg airport

From Staff Correspondent

CHITTAGONG, Feb 26: Customs officials at Chittagong airport hauled 400 tolas of gold worth about Tk 25 lakh from a passenger who returned from Dubai by Bangladesh Biman at noon today.

Passenger Tajuddin of Raazan was arrested following recovery of 40 smuggled gold bars, 10 tolas each, from inside his shoes and socks, customs sources said.

The seized gold bars were deposited with Chittagong Customs House while the arrested passenger was handed over to police.

Press briefing

From Page 1

Ali had to face critical questions from journalists regarding preparations for the D-8 Summit and failed to give satisfactory answers to a number of questions.

The commissioners' meeting concluded yesterday and the briefing was scheduled at 6 pm.

It is learnt that the media committee set up to oversee the D-8 Summit does not include the DG of EP, PIO or the press secretary to the PM. It is also learnt that till yesterday reporters had not been enlisted to cover the meeting of D-8 council of ministers or the formal session of the Summit.

Incidentally, security passes were issued only late last night which will allow journalists both from home and abroad to cover only the media briefing.

Meanwhile, diplomatic sources said that Nigeria would send a high official to attend the D-8 conference. This, however, could not be confirmed from the Foreign Ministry.



বিজিএমইএ নির্বাচন '৯৯

বিজিএমইএ নির্বাচন অফিস

বিটিএমসি ভবন, ৭-৯ কাওরান বাজার, ঢাকা-১২১৫

সকল ভোটার সদস্যের জন্য

১৯৯৯ সালে বিজিএমইএ'র নির্বাচনী প্রার্থীদের যৌথ পরিচিতি সভা ২৮শে ফেব্রুয়ারী '৯৯ বিকাল ৪ ঘটিকায় চট্টগ্রামস্থ আহাবাদ হোটেলে এবং ২ মার্চ '৯৯ বিকাল ৪ ঘটিকায় ঢাকাস্থ সোনারগাঁও হোটেলে অনুষ্ঠিত হবে। সম্মানিত ভোটার সদস্যগণকে নিজ নিজ ভোটার আইডি কার্ডসহ উক্ত পরিচিতি সভায় যোগদানের জন্য আমন্ত্রণ জানানো যাচ্ছে।

সচিব

বিজিএমইএ নির্বাচন বোর্ড

Parvez fighting death

From Page 1

cleaning the bleeding head found traces of 'gray matter', signs of membrane rupture, in the skull. The trainee doctors, nonetheless, did not think the discovery was serious.

The ward was so badly equipped that they had to send a ward boy outside the hospital to buy an ordinary razor blade and some dressing materials to clear the area of injury and treat it.

"Parvez's condition can deteriorate as it is a head injury," registrar of the ward informed the correspondents. "We will take him to OT but only when it is free. Two more scheduled cases will be done before Parvez can be operated upon," he added.

Parvez, an apprentice motor garage worker, was hit by a brick near Sayedabad over-bridge in the city at around 3pm during hartal hours on Thursday. His cousin Mizan and a tempo driver rushed him to the DMCH hoping to get proper treatment.

Until 10:50 Thursday night, Parvez was almost in a 'state of coma', waiting for a CT Scan investigation that could confirm doctors' suspicion that there were 'foreign particles inside the fractured bones'.

These correspondents found that Parvez was lying on a mattress on the floor.

Attending trainee doctor Nazrul informed the correspondents. "Parvez is in great danger and that his chance of survival is very slim. We have infused one bag of blood while another bag has been kept ready."

In the absence of ambulance service at the DMCH, the hospital authorities were unable to send Parvez to a clinic where CT Scan is performed at a cost of around Tk 3900. Asked if the hospital had any ambulance,

Nazrul said, "The ambulance is strictly meant for administrative purposes."

Parvez's uncle Shahjahan Mia said, "I bought drugs worth Tk 500. No drug was supplied from the hospital." "The doctors asked us to get the CT Scan done as soon as possible."

Till the writing of this report at 11 last night, Parvez was in a state of coma.

Withdraw false cases, demands Mohila Dal

By Staff Correspondent

Leaders and activists of Jatiyatabadi Mohila Dal staged demonstration in the city yesterday demanding withdrawal of 'false' cases filed against four women leaders.

Led by Mohila Dal convener Kurshid Jahan Haq, MP, the activists of the women's front of BNP paraded different city streets and chanted slogans against the government, said a press release.

Later addressing a rally, Kurshid Jahan Haq demanded immediate withdrawal of 'false' cases filed against Selima Rahman, Rebeya Siraj, Laila Begum and Shirin Sultana.

She said the current movement based on 4-point demand will soon turn into one-point out-governance movement if the government fails to behave with the opposition parties properly.

The BNP MP in her speech said the people of the country will foil the evil plan of the government to restore the one-party BKSAL system through mass movement. "The government will not be able to stay in power by holding the one-party municipal polls," she added.



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