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## 9pc children in Chakaria attacked with rickets

By Mustak Hossain

A survey on nearly 900 children in 30 villages of Chakaria thana in south-eastern district of Cox's Bazar revealed that about nine per cent of the children in the thana have been attacked with rickets, of whom 61 per cent are under five years of age. Another 22 per cent of the children show biochemical signs of pre-clinical rickets.

This means one in every three children in that thana is affected in some way with the disease.

It is apprehended that a countrywide survey would show similar results, fears Shadiul Haque, executive director of Social Assistance and Rehabilitation for the Physically Vulnerable (SARPV), a non-govern-

mental organisation. The survey was conducted recently by Mother and Child Health (MCH), a non-governmental organisation (NGO), with assistance of the UNICEF.

Haque said a comprehensive study across the country was needed to find out the actual number of the patients affected with the crippling disease.

The report said the cause of rickets in Bangladesh is not clear, but insufficient calcium intake by children and prob-

ably also by their mothers, is thought to be one of the major reasons. "There may be other factors that interfere with the utilisation of calcium," he said.

"The disease in Bangladesh appears to involve deficiency of

calcium. Very few cases detected in Chakaria are over 20 years of age, indicating that the disease has emerged there within the last two decades.

"This suggests changes in local food or agricultural systems — that is reduced access to dairy products, changes in infant feeding practices and increased exposures to calcium-antagonists."

According to the study, there was no symptom of rickets among the tribal people in the area.

"It was officially announced in 1992 that there was no rickets patient in Bangladesh, but now the observation has changed," said Haque.

## Flood situation in 2 hill dists may worsen

On rush of waters from hill areas and incessant rain may aggravate flood situation in Rangamati and Bandarban, weathermen forecast yesterday, reports UNB.

Karnaphuli Hydro Electric Project authorities continued to pump out water through its 13 gates out of 16 floodgates yesterday.

Flood water inundated the low lying areas in Rangamati district with the incessant rain and on rush of hill waters.

The boundary of the LGED building collapsed due to heavy shower.

All the rivers flowing in Bagaichhari, Longodu, Bongkol thana areas swelled further submerging adjacent areas and affecting standing paddy crop.

The district administration, CHT regional council and municipal authorities distributed relief among the affected people. Low lying areas in Sunamganj and Sherpur districts were submerged by flash flood.

Officials in the district reached by telephone said vast areas of the two districts went under water and a large number of house were either collapsed or washed away by strong current.

Disruption in power supply, scarcity of dry food and other essentials compounded the miseries of the affected people. Supplies from other areas remained suspended as the road communication remained disrupted.

Our Staff Correspondent from Chittagong reports: Flood water started receding in Fatukchhari thana area showing slight improvement today while the homeless villagers numbering about 1500 were still staying in school and college there, administration sources said.

Fresh rains in Hathazari and Chandanail thana areas today came under fresh flood, they added.

## Flood situation turns critical in Assam

GUWAHATI, June 26: The flood situation in Assam turned critical today with the rising Brahmaputra inundating large areas in at least six districts of the state, reports PTI.

Official sources here said that in the worst-affected Dhemaji district in upper Assam, railway link beyond Guwahati was cut off as flood waters submerged the tracks suspending train services in the sector.

The rising water has also submerged the national highway in several areas of the district.

The first death was reported in Dhemaji district when a person drowned in the river last week, the sources said.

The situation was also critical in the districts of Dibrugarh, Jorhat, Goalapara, Dhubri and Nalbari where the Brahmaputra was flowing above warning level.

## No US proposal for 'exit corridor' for intruders: Delhi

From Pallab Bhattacharya

NEW DELHI, June 26: India said it had not received any proposal from the United States on providing an "exit corridor" for Pakistan-backed armed intruders in Kargil to go back.

An External Affairs Ministry spokesman told newsmen here in reply to questions that "no proposal has been received." The spokesman's remarks came when his attention was drawn to reports that a US delegation had discussed with Pakistan leadership the proposal for "exit corridor" to be conveyed to India.

New Delhi is seeking to downplay the visit of US Deputy Secretary of State Gibson Lampher who is slated to meet Indian officials here on the talks he had in Islamabad on Friday.

The spokesman said Lampher is coming to Delhi tomorrow on a "briefing mission." Lampher had accompanied Gen Anthony Zinni, US Central

Command Chief, to Islamabad for talks with top Pakistani political leaders and military officials.

The Indian External Affairs Ministry spokesman said involvement of a third party in its bilateral problems with Pakistan was "totally unacceptable" to New Delhi.

AFP says, diplomatic contacts are underway for a meeting between Pakistani Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif and US President Bill Clinton on the Kashmir issue, Pakistani Army Chief Pervez Musharraf said today.

Lots of contacts have been going on to schedule the meeting, Musharraf told reporters in Karachi.

The general said he would not say when the meeting was likely to take place but added: I hope soon.

See also page 9

## DU Senate session today

By DU Correspondent

The annual senate session of Dhaka University will be held today.

The annual senate session of DU has been curtailed from two-day to one-day as Vice-Chancellor Prof. AK Azad Chowdhury is now on a week long visit to Hungary. Pro-Vice-Chancellor Prof. M Shahadat Ali will preside over the Senate meeting. He will place the annual budget for fiscal 1999-2000 before the Senate.

## Food poisoning: 16 fall sick in N'ganj

NARAYANGANJ, June 26: Sixteen people of a bridal party, including the bride and bridegroom, fell sick due to food poisoning at a village in Bandar thana here today, reports UNB.

Police and witnesses said the guests who took food with bridegroom Abdur Rahman, 28, and bride Hasna Banu, 20 fell ill and started vomiting at Rahman's house at village Sonakanda.

The victims were admitted to Narayanganj Hospital. They are Hosne Ara, 35, Arif, 12, Rehana, 35, Selina, 32, Shima, 10, Asia, 16, Shahina, 10, Shahida, 10, Moni, 8, Mohi, 18, Sohel, 15, Shafia, 9, Shantana, 18, and Zakir Hossain, 15.

## Balcony collapse kills 8 in Lucknow

LUCKNOW, June 26: Eight people were killed in Sicha village when the balcony of a house collapsed, police said here today, reports PTI.

The accident occurred last night when people gathered to watch a marriage procession from balcony, police said.

Four people died on the spot, one died on the way to hospital and three succumbed to their injuries in the hospital.

## 2 terrorists held in Ctg

CHITTAGONG, June 26: Chittagong Metropolitan Police (CMP) arrested two alleged terrorists from Double Mooring area here today, police said, reports BSS.

Acting on a tip-off, a team of Double Mooring police raided two houses at Goswail Danga and Abidar Para in the city and arrested Muhammad Alauddin and Abhi Siddique.

The arrested were wanted in a number of cases, including murder and extortion.

## Team leaves

From Page 1

dead organisation," a source observed. "Although IUSTDA awarded it with this study, it did not assign any of its experts to undertake a study in Bangladesh."

Instead, James Chemical assigned Forrest E Cookson, President of American Chamber of Commerce in Bangladesh (Amchem), as its representative. Industry insiders said that the study was more or less "one man show" with a prime target to establish gas export as the most promising way of gas utilisation.

Cookson first came to Bangladesh in the early '90s as a financial expert under a World Bank aided Financial Restructuring project. He stayed here working on various projects ever since.

"It now looks like the campaign of oil companies and the Americans to make Bangladesh export gas is getting stronger and stronger," observed a source.

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## Akhteruzzaman suspended

From Page 1

cause notice on June 24 defending his position which prompted the action. Earlier, BNP advised the Speaker to push his seat in parliament to the last row from the fourth.

In another development, Major Akhter came under "attack" by two of his party MPs in the parliament lobby, yesterday, afternoon. This incident also prompted the action taken against him, yesterday.

Major Akhter in his press statement that appeared on June 12 strongly opposed the June 13 hartal that was called to protest the proposed budget. He told the press, "We cannot observe the hartal imposed on BNP's shoulders by Jamaat and Jatiya Party. He also urged the people not to respond to the so-called hartal."

Bhuiyan in the notice reminded him that he (Akhter) violated party discipline and opposed party discipline, repeatedly. The BNP secretary general in the notice urged Akhter's press statement as "Not only unwanted but also a clear violation of party discipline. Your statement on the hartal has displeased the rank and file in the party and created confusion among the people as well as creating an opportunity for our political opponent to launch a campaign against us."

Akhter in his 4-page reply to the party secretary general stood by his statement and said he did not violate party discipline through making a statement on the June 13 hartal. So the allegation which was brought against me is not correct, he added.

He said the June 13 hartal was called after a meeting of the liaison committee held at Jamaat-e-Islami central office with its secretary general Matur Rahman Nizami in the chair. As per the BNP constitution, this hartal decision cannot be accepted as a BNP decision.

Contradicting Bhuiyan's show cause notice, Major Akhter said presently there is no scope for any important matter to make statement in any legal or party forum because the party national executive committee which is scheduled to sit at least once, every three months, does not hold its meeting.

He said that he made the statement on the hartal before his parliamentary constituency people who elected him MP that appeared in different newspapers. "I cannot take the responsibility of the newspapers and my statement made before the people of Katiadi cannot be regarded as a crime. So the allegation that I have violated party discipline is not correct," he added.

The dissident MP said a vested interested quarter and anti-liberation war group within the BNP are influencing and forcing the party to take undemocratic decisions. They are even trying to mislead the party chairperson in different ways.

He said the main motive of the vested quarters is to defeat the peace-loving, reasonable and pro-liberation force in the party and bring party chairperson under a grip as well as to dissolve the party in the politics of Jamaat and Jatiya Party.

Major Akhter categorically said that his statement did not at all violate the party constitution, break party discipline and was not against the greater interest of the party.

Meanwhile, in an instant reaction on the suspension order, issued against him, Akhteruzzaman, MP said, "I have replied to the show cause notice served against me. I made it very clear in my reply that as per the party constitution I didn't oppose any decision of BNP. I didn't commit any mistake and I stand by my statement."

"I am happy for one reason that I would not have any responsibility for my party and I will not be blamed for any mistake of BNP. From now I will devote myself for the people of

my constituency, who have elected me MP," he said.

He termed the action against him as "temporary victory of the vested interested group." "The conspirators who have been trying to push the party to another path, have succeeded temporarily, through this action."

A defiant Major Akhter was served with show cause notices, at least three, including the latest one, and given verbal warning, a number of times to refrain from making any public statement against party decisions.

BNP Chairperson Begum Khaleda Zia herself had also asked Akhter, in writing, not to make any public comment in future that puts the party in an embarrassing situation.

BNP sources said Major Akhter was served with show cause notice first on November 11 1994 by the then BNP secretary general Barrister Abdus Salam Talukder. He was again served with show cause on January 1998. On every occasion, he had sought unconditional apology.

BNP chief Begum Zia in a letter dated November 26, 1994 said: "You have been forgiven as you have expressed repentance and sorrow and sought unconditional apology for your mistake." She also warned him not to do the same thing, in future.

On the second occasion, Akhter on January 10 wrote an open letter to the Leader of the Opposition to protest boycott of parliament by the party. The letter was distributed among all party MPs and also published in different national dailies.

As punishment, the BNP Standing Committee at a meeting on January 18, 1998 took unanimous decision to suspend Akhter from all organisational activities: As primary member, national council member, Kishoreganj district BNP convenor and BNP National Executive Committee member.

After this disciplinary action, Akhter appeared before the Standing Committee, the highest decision making body of BNP, and sought unconditional apology in writing. Akhter also expressed his sorrow in writing to the party chief and admitted that writing of the open letter to her was not correct. "I hereby withdraw the letter which was given to you and other BNP MPs."

## Wind up trade, Ctg Mayor asks liquor traders

From Our Correspondent

CHITTAGONG, June 26: Chittagong City Mayor Alhaj ABM Mohiuddin Chowdhury has called upon the liquor traders to wind up their business within a week to free the city from the growing menace of drug abuse.

The Mayor made this call at a press conference at the local press club on the occasion of International Day Against Drug Abuse here today.

He said those who would give up the business would get compensation for their financial loss.

The Mayor also said licences of the liquor traders would be cancelled if they don't comply with the request within the stipulated time.

## 62 outlaws

From Page 1

return to normal life, police said.

Whip SM Mostafa Rashidi, SP, Ataul Gani Badsha, Additional SP Majharul Islam and Rupsha thana OC were present at the ceremony. He chaired by Sreepallota UP Chairman Abul Hossain Howlader.

On the same day, 14 extremists from six unions surrendered to Batiaghata thana police at 4 pm with 15 firearms and 14 ammunition. Six outlaws from Pustimari area of the thana also surrendered to the police on the day.

Police said seven members of the outlawed party surrendered to Terokhada police on Thursday with one revolver, one pipegun and four bullets.

In Dumuria thana, five members of the party's Milon faction laid down three guns, one pipegun and four bullets also on Thursday.

## 71.94pc pass Dakhil exams

Results of the Dhakil examination of 1998 held under the Bangladesh Madrasah Education Board, Dhaka, were announced yesterday, reports BSS.

A total of 1,35,974 students sat for the examinations. Of them, 97,814 came out successful. The per centage of pass is 71.94.

Among the successful examinees, 26,735 got first division, 63,714 second division and 7,365 third division.

The 79.41 per cent passed in the Science Group followed by 71.17 per cent in the General Group, 68.98 per cent in the Group and 50 per cent in the Hifzul Quran.

In the Science Group 5,599 got first division, 4,377 second division and 188 third division. In the General Group, 21,046 secured first division, 59,167 second division and 7,170 third division. In the Muzabbid Group, 87 examinees got first division, 164 second division and seven third division and the Hifzul Quran Group, three students secured first division and six second division.

Muhammad Nasir Uddin Laskar of Dhampul Islamia Kamil Madrassah topped the Group.

## Frozen food

From Page 1

Many of the participants even did not think that the fair would produce such a good result. "We could not communicate with other buyers due to time constraints, otherwise the number of buyers would have been much higher," Kamal Ahmed of Sea Food Marketing International PLC, informed.

Around 40 foreign buyers arrived in Dhaka for the fair. Many other foreign businesspersons who were in the city during the fair also visited the exhibition.

Past-president BFFEA felt that the fair will change the poor image of the frozen food industry, abroad.

A daylong workshop was held yesterday, side by side with the fair. It was sponsored by USAID funded agro-based Industries and Technology Development Project (ATDPI) at the same venue.

The workshop placed a number of recommendation including forming a separate body — Shrimp Development Board, declaration of shrimp industry as third sector, and using existing organisations like EPB and Bangladesh embassies abroad for market exploration.

## Miladunnabi

From Page 1

programmes while the newspapers will bring out special supplements highlighting the significance of the day.

Besides, different government and non-government religious and cultural organisations have arranged discussion meetings, *milad mahfil*, *doa* and *zikir-aykar* to highlight different aspects of the life and works of Prophet Hazrat Mohammad (SM).

Similarly, Islamic Foundation has arranged a fortnight long programme of discussion meeting, *milad* and *doa* on the life and works of the Prophet (SM).

Azimpur Choto Daira Sharif Dayemil Shahi Jame Mosque will hold discussion meeting, *milad* and *doa* in observance of the day.

Anjuman-e-Rahmania Maizbandaria, a representative organisation of Maizbandar Darbar Sharif, will hold a rally in front of the Institution of Engineers on the day. The organisation will also bring out a procession after the rally which will be led by Moulana Syed Mahmudul Ahmed Al-hassani Al-Hessani Maizbandari.

## Balanced use of water resources

From Page 1

domestic uses while in the past, they pointed out, use of water was unidirectional aimed at raising agro-yield potential.

Just because of its abundance in the monsoon, water should no longer be taken for granted, the participants said and underscored the need for proper and optimum use of this precious natural resource.

They hoped that the future water sector planning would have participatory approach based on mutual agreement of all stakeholders. They wished to see the plans implemented properly, rather than gathering dust on shelves.

Among other aspects that the participants discussed, they gave special reference to priority fixing in water allocation for various needs like domestic consumption, agriculture, fisheries and navigation. They spoke of arsenic contamination in ground water, depletion of ground water table, huge cost involvement in surface water reservoir facilities and also dwelt on issues like legal framework, inter-departmental cooperation, harvesting rain water, holding public debates, keeping watch on catchment in the upper riparian and strengthening flood warning system.

Water resources secretary Dr ATM Shamsul Huda said that under the new water policy, any water projects are now being conceptualised on a participatory basis taking all stakeholders into cognisance. Besides, dynamism is being infused in the Water Development

Board, side by side allowing target-oriented organisation like WARPO and private sector to take the lead.

He spoke in favour of a perfect balance in harnessing both ground and surface water. While the country's agriculture and domestic purposes would continue to require groundwater, dependence on surface water will still be there for navigation and fisheries, he said.

Presenting a slide-show on steps towards the NWMP, Dr Rashid Faruque gave an idea of weakness of the existing water resource institutions and suggested reforms. He hoped that WARPO would be able to give a lead in multi-sectoral approach in water management.

WARPO director general TA Khan said his organisation is engaged in bringing out topic papers and conducting studies based on which WARPO plans to come up with a good water management plan ensuring optimum use of the precious resource.

He believes that there is no dearth of water even in dry season if the country can harness surface water properly. Initial cost of groundwater extraction may be less but in terms of environmental loss in the long run, it costs much, he pointed out.

BARC executive chairman Dr Z Karim stressed the need for involving local government bodies in productive use of water in the cropping system. He spoke of huge wastage of water in the present irrigation system and called for better on-farm water management. He pointed

out that in the agro-eco system in the country, supply of surface water is not enough and that is why dependence on groundwater continues.

Regarding on-farm water management, Malcom Wallace said run-off water from paddy fields is not necessarily lost altogether, rather that is added to the mainstream again or contribute in refilling the ground-water table.

LGED chief engineer MH Chowdhury said that after the Ganges water treaty in 1996, the level of salinity in southern belt has decreased substantially. He stressed more cooperation between LGED and Water Development Board.

Prof Mahmood Alam of Dhaka University, who could not be present at the Roundtable, faxed to The Daily Star a copy of his speech, wishing to keep his participation on record. He said Bangladesh does not have sufficient legal and institutional arrangements to protect the vital natural resource. He noted that there is no law to stop pollution of rivers and aquifers.

The other participants underscored better coordination among all water users, government agencies and donors. They also said Bangladesh's capability of collecting and analysing data has to be enhanced, developments at the river sources in upstream has to be carefully monitored and the country's success in the field of water management field has to be highlighted for encouragement in future.

## Rupsha bridge JICA team starts 2nd phase of survey

From Staff Correspondent

KHULNA, June 26: A high-powered JICA delegation arrived in Khulna on Friday to conduct second phase of survey for the construction of Rupsha bridge.

Headed by Kenji Maruka, the seven-member team visited some spots specified for the bridge in the afternoon.

The team went to Mongla today to discuss matters relating to economic aspect of the bridge.

JICA conducted first phase of survey in May last year and submitted a report which was approved by the Prime Minister on February 3 this year.

## Biman pilot

From Page 1

Newly married Runa succumbed to her injuries on way to Bagabandhu Sheikh Mujib Medical University Hospital. The condition of her mother was stated to be critical after admission to Dhaka Pangu Hospital.

Later, the bodies were handed over to relatives. Police seized the truck, but the driver managed to escape. A case was filed.

## Harassed

From Page 1

lawmakers, following the party's walkout from parliament at 1:10 pm yesterday. Akhteruzzaman accused the Opposition Chief Whip of failing to adequately protest against the Chair's refusal to allow Col Ali Ahmed MP to speak for another five minutes.

"Others present in lobby did not like Akhteruzzaman's attitude, while Khoka and Patal angrily charged him with serving the interest of the government," said a BNP lawmaker. "Some senior leaders pacified them. Otherwise Akhteruzzaman would have been assaulted."

Recently, Akhteruzzaman issued a public statement opposing his party's hartal against the proposed budget.

## BNP walkout

From Page 1

whip showed another signal to the Chair. But the Chair refused to allow him to speak anymore saying that he has not received any written slip.

Amidst repeated claims by opposition Chief Whip, without microphone of course, that he had already sent a slip to the Chair, Mustafizur Rahman gave floor to Shakhwat Ali Daru of AL.

At this stage, Deputy Leader of the