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Face of a 'strange disease' unmasked

By Mustak Hossain back from Pabna

Mahbubul Islam Prince, a young man of village Charrupur, of Pabna district, experienced a tragic turn in his life when his parents died of 'strange diseases', his younger brother had to give up studies and he was barred from marrying his beloved after he, too, was attacked by the 'disease'!

The 'strange disease' was unknown to them until a health-worker came to their village and spoke about 'arsenicosis' caused by drinking of arsenic-contaminated ground water.

"Now I recall that the palms of my parents' hands and soles of their feet got darkened and grew harder, cracks appeared on them and they began to suffer from constant pain," said the 29-year old Mahbubul Islam Prince.

"Some spots had also begun to appear all over the body of my parents. We thought it was some strange kind of a skin disease and they died without any treatment", he said.

"Arsenic was the silent killer of my parents and a disaster for my whole family," he

said. But when some people from the Dhaka Community Hospital (DCH) came to our village and tested the water samples of our own tube well, they found presence of alarming proportion of arsenic.

"They also told us about the symptoms of Arsenicosis; now I know that my parents died of arsenicosis," he said.

Since there is no surface water in this area, located on a shoal land, we have to depend on tube well water as the lone source of drinking water.

My younger brother Ziaur Rahman Sumon, was forced to drop out from school due to severe pain caused by arsenicosis and discriminatory behaviour of his school-mates," he said.

"As I was also suffering from arsenicosis, spots also appeared on my neck and hands. I was barred from marrying my betrothed, Shahnaz Parveen, by her parents for obvious reasons," he said sadly.

Thanks to the active campaign of the DCH, all villagers of our locality started to drink

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They now know symptoms and prevention of Arsenicosis



Affected hands of a man suffering from Arsenicosis. — Star photo

White House, Congress bicker over budget

Clinton refuses to accept aid cut, plans to veto defence hike

WASHINGTON, Oct 18: President Bill Clinton vetoed the Republican-led Congress' foreign aid bill today because it cuts his proposed spending by 2.3 billion dollars, reports AP.

The president also refused to sign other spending bills passed by Congress despite a budget deadline looming this week.

And he was considering vetoing a defence spending bill because the Republicans want to spend more than he requested on the military, said spokesman Joe Lockhart.

Even with a veto, foreign aid likely would continue to flow at current levels as part of stopgap spending legislation that covers agencies and departments for which there has been no appropriation.

Nonetheless, some money for counter-narcotics, fighting AIDS and aiding former Soviet states would be lost, according to Sen Mitch McConnell,

Daily Star's car parts stolen

By Staff Correspondent

A gang of miscreants, brandishing firearms, ran away with four windowpanes and both the side-view mirrors of a microbus owned by The Daily Star early Monday morning.

According to the driver of the vehicle, the incident took place at Kakrak in the city at about 3:00am when the vehicle was being used for distribution of newspapers.

Motor workshop executives have estimated the loss to be more than Tk 50,000.

The miscreants also flattened all four wheels of the vehicle as they left the scene with the valuables. The Ramma police has been informed of the incident.

World War-II bomb found in Cox's Bazar

COX'S BAZAR, Oct 18: An unexploded bomb weighing 35 kilograms was found at village Modhakassapia of Chakaria Thana here today, reports BSS.

Chakaria police said, one Abul Hossain of Modhakassapia found the 21-inch-long bomb while he was removing earth at his house.

The bomb was dropped by Japanese Army during the World War-II, but it did not explode, police and local people believe.

The bomb was handed over to Chakaria police by local UP chairman.

Another 'guest house' sealed

By Staff Correspondent
Another 'guest house' at city's Banani area was sealed by police yesterday.

With this five 'guest houses' in city's Gulshan and Banani areas have so far been closed since Saturday last.

Gulshan police said that a joint team of Gulshan police, Dhaka City Corporation and intelligence agencies raided Orbis, the guest house, at Block A, Road No 18, Banani at about 5 am.

"It was unauthorised," police said.

Over 50 vehicles damaged during rickshaw strike in Barisal

From Staff Correspondent

BARISAL, Oct 18: Over 50 vehicles were damaged by striking rickshaw pullers here today.

Earlier they had called a half-day strike to protest the killing of fellow Shahjahan, rickshaw puller, by unidentified persons Saturday night.

Over 30 rickshaws, 15 tempos, two microbuses, two motorcycles and a private car were damaged by the agitating rickshaw pullers.

They also held a rally, followed by processions and later submitted memorandums to the DC and the SP.

Sufia Begum, wife of Shahjahan, filed a murder case with Kotwali thana today, accusing 23 people. Most of the accused are BNP workers and supporters, including four brothers of district BNP secretary Obaidul Haq Chand.

Police arrested one Khokan, 24, in this connection.

'MV Ocean won't affect ship movement'

KHULNA, Oct 18: After surveying the grounded ship at outer channel of Mongla port, the authority today indicated that it would not affect movement to vessels in immediate future, says UNB.

Port sources said Deputy Harbor Master Capt Sharif visited the areas around the ship MV Ocean Wave, which ran aground on the outer channel near Hiron Point, after developing a leak on its bottom on October 8. The report has been submitted to the authority.

Eight raped every 24 hrs in Pakistan

LONDON, Oct 18: An average of about eight women are raped every 24 hours in Pakistan, where domestic violence affects nearly 90 percent of the country's women, the human rights defence group Human Rights Watch said, reports AFP.

"Violence against women has escalated to the level of a national crisis in Pakistan," the organisation said in its report scheduled to be released in London on Tuesday.

"It doesn't meet the president's priorities," Lockhart said today. "Wye River is certainly an important element to that, and it is an important part of continuing to exercise US leadership around the world. We can't expect nations in troubled parts of the world, like the Middle East, to move forward with their peace process when we won't meet the commitments we've made."

The administration also had complained that the legislation cuts many economic assistance programmes, including those for poor countries in Africa.

Lockhart said a veto of the defense spending bill may be on the way. "That is under consideration," he said.

The foreign aid bill passed over loud opposition from Democrats, who claim it short-

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Pakistan in Sharjah Cup final

SHARJAH, Oct 18: Pakistan rode on the fury of their new pace sensation Shabbir Ahmed to ease into the Sharjah Cup final with a 118-run romp over Sri Lanka here today, reports AFP.

Shabbir, playing only his second international, wrecked Sri Lanka's reply to Pakistan's 239-8 with the wickets of skipper Sanath Jayasuriya and Romesh Kaluwitharana in his first three overs.

Pakistani captain Wasim Akram joined in with his 100th wicket at this desert venue as the Sri Lankans crashed for 121 in a match that ensured the winner a place in Friday's final.

Pakistan can, however, still make the final if Pakistan defeat the West Indies in the last league match on Tuesday.

Pakistan head the table with five points from three games, while Sri Lanka finished the league with three points. The West Indies, who have two points, must beat Pakistan to qualify.

Shabbir, a pencil-slim 17-year-old from Khanewal in Punjab province, burst last Friday denied the Sri Lankans certain victory and forced a tie, hit an unbeaten 59 of 50 balls to help Pakistan recover from a middle-order slump.

Deputy Harbor Master Capt Sharif once again proved a stumbling block for Sri Lanka as Pakistan scored 239 for eight after electing to take first strike.

Razzaq, whose five-wicket

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