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VOL. X NO. 223 REGD. NO. DA 781

www.dailystarnews.com

DHAKA SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 2, 2000

3rd Millennium

BHADRA 18, 1407 BS

JAMADIUS SAANI 2, 1421 HIJRI

12 PAGES PRICE : TAKA 6.00

Conventional antibiotics now largely ineffective

Indiscriminate use, substandard drug, lack of knowledge and self-prescription major factors

By Naimul Haq

About two-thirds of patients in the country are failing to respond to conventional antibiotics and three drugs for treatment of typhoid have become largely ineffective, several studies have revealed.

Physicians, pharmacists, microbiologists and officials of some multinational pharmaceutical companies are of the view that antibiotics applied to cure certain diseases have largely lost efficacy due to a host of factors. These include indiscriminate use, substandard drug, self-prescription and lack of knowledge.

The studies show that chloramphenicol, penicillin,

quinolones, furazolidone, ampicillin, cotrimoxazole, sulphamethoxazole and nalidixic acid commonly used as 'first line' drugs to treat typhoid, pneumonia, meningitis, malaria, diarrhoeal diseases, tuberculosis (TB), sexually transmitted diseases, respiratory infections, gonorrhoea and even 'hospital-acquired' infections are mostly useless.

The Centre for Health and Population Research during its six-year study from 1993 found that Shigella species bacteria — dysenteriae (type 1) and flexneri — were largely resistant to ampicillin, trimethoprim, sulphamethoxazole and nalidixic

acid. Director of the centre Dr David Sack told The Daily Star that many patients who were seriously ill had to be given more expensive drugs due to the 'drug resistance' problem.

"We found drug resistance to a large extent while treating dysentery and intestinal infections as well as gonorrhoea," he went on. "If you are infected with resistant microbes, eventually you are likely to be exposed to serious side effects."

An ICDDR report said that in 1990, almost all cholera isolates gathered from different study areas by it were sensitive to cheap drugs like furazolidone, ampicillin, cotrimoxazole and nalidixic acid. But now these are mostly useless.

Dr Sack said the findings are regularly shared with the government. Microbiologist Dr Shamir K Saha, who conducted a study on children with pneumonia and meningitis at Dhaka Shishu Hospital from 1993 to 1997, said that microbes were not sensitive to cotrimoxazole or trimoxazole.

In another study on children with typhoid, he found that cotrimoxazole, amoxicillin and chloramphenicol were mainly ineffective drugs. Dr Saha said, "It was observed that a large number of newborns were resisting common antibiotics in treating meningitis and sepsis (blood infection). We also observed multi-drug resistance in many instances."

Some other studies have also revealed that there is increasing resistance of microbes to newer drugs.

About 98 per cent of gonorrhoea microbes have become resistant to penicillin. Newer expensive drugs like ciprofloxacin are also showing a rising failure rate in treating gonorrhoea.

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Hasina to chair another crucial meeting

By Reaz Ahmad

The ruling Awami League leadership holds an emergency meeting tonight to discuss steps to increase organisational strength badly affected by intra-party conflicts in recent months, party sources said.

The move follows the BNP-led opposition alliance's recent announcement that it would contest the next general elections unitedly and form a coalition government if it wins.

The 65-member Central Working Committee of AL and its 12-member advisory Council would attend tonight's crucial meeting at the Ganabhaban, said a party official, according to UNB report at 11:45 last night.

meeting being held just a day before she leaves for New York to attend the UN Millennium Summit.

Earlier on Tuesday, the PM had a special meeting with her cabinet colleagues. Two ministers who do not belong to AL—Anwar Hossain Manju and ASM Rob—were not invited to the meeting.

The meeting of the Awami League Central Working Committee, which was scheduled to be held today (Saturday), will now be held tomorrow (Sunday) at 7 pm at Ganabhaban, said a party official, according to UNB report at 11:45 last night.

Hasina would give some policy directives for the party rank and file at the meeting tonight, keeping in view the next elections, one source said.

If allowed to speak, the source said, many of the leaders might raise the issue of growing squabbles between rival factions of the party at grassroots level. The law and order in the country may also come up at the meeting.

The last triennial council of the party held in June this year noted that intra-party conflicts were eating into the party base. But the following months saw escalation of violence resulting from feuds at various levels of the party.

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Dhaka, Thimpu agree to renew trade accord for 3 more years

Bangladesh and Bhutan yesterday signed an agreed minutes to increase investment and bilateral trade between the two countries, reports UNB.

The two sides agreed to renew the existing bilateral trade agreement for three more years as its tenure expires on September 8 this year.

Commerce Secretary Golam Rahman signed the accord on behalf of Bangladesh while Foreign Secretary Dasho Ugen Shering on behalf of Bhutan.

"If any change and modification is necessary, it will have to be done," he said.

Brutal!

By Staff Correspondent

A five-year-old child died of burn injuries due to alleged brutality of a couple who employed her mother as a domestic help.

Nisha Akther died at Gana Sasthya Kendra Hospital in the city at about 1 pm yesterday after fighting for life for about a week, hospital sources said.

Police said her mother Syria Begum worked at the residence of Anwar Hossain in the city's Kadamtoli area.

As the child responded to nature's call at the kitchen, housemistress Nasrin Begum poured boiling lentil soup on her and Anwar pressed a burning cigarette on her body, police said quoting the victim's mother.

Dhanmondi police arrested the couple from their home and handed them over to Shyampur police. The victim's mother earlier lodged a case there.

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Sun Rises	Sun Sets
Sept 2	6:15 pm
Sept 3	5:41 am

Prayer Timings

September 2		
Fajr	Azhan	Jamaat
4:30	4:30	5:05
Zohr	12:45	1:30
Asr	4:45	5:00
Maghrib	6:25	6:30
Esha	8:00	8:30

Source: Islamic Foundation



Mohammedans' Pakistani recruit Tahir Zaman (C) trying to dodge past an Abahani defender during their Premier Division Hockey League clash yesterday. Mohammedans won 4-1. Story on page 8.

Frustrated JCD workers look for alternatives

By Nazmul Ashraf and Abul Kalam Azad

As a moratorium on BNP's student wing Jatiyatabadi Chhatra Dal (JCD) enters into the third month, thousands of its activists are going for alternatives.

Frustrated with student politics, a section of the JCD workers is devoting more time to studies. Some of them are preparing to sit for the BCS examinations or are registering in computer courses to improve their job prospects.

Senior JCD members, mostly non-students, are increasingly pursuing careers in various businesses. Those aspiring for positions in the organisation's new committees are frequently visiting BNP leaders who are working to reshape the organisation with new leadership. They are also maintaining close contacts with top JCD

leaders in the dissolved central committee since they are also involved in the process.

Yet, many others are simply awaiting their fate with one of the country's biggest student organisations.

A considerable section of JCD activists, however, are still participating in various BNP programmes like attending public meetings, picketing during hartals and organising demonstrations, all the while maintaining contacts with the rank and file of the main opposition party.

A BNP decision not to accommodate non-students in the new JCD leadership has prompted some former students to undergo various courses at Dhaka University.

Since the July 7 moratorium, most JCD workers including top leaders have become

increasingly conspicuous by their absence on the Dhaka University campus although some of them are still found gossiping in small groups around the DU central library or on Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujib Medical University campus.

Madhu's Canteen, the hub of student politics on the campus, seldom sees any JCD activist nowadays.

And, although the pro-government Bangladesh Chhatra League (BCL) that took over the DU dormitories a few years ago is apparently happy with the suspension of JCD activities, some are actually beginning to miss their arch rivals.

"We are missing you on the campus," a BCL leader was heard telling a former JCD leader at the university the other day.

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3 Sirajganj JSD leaders killed in road accident

From Our Correspondent

SIRAJGANJ, Sept 1: Four people, including three JSD leaders were killed when a micro-bus carrying them collided with a passenger bus at Jhophari on Dhaka-Bogra Highway under Bogra Sadar thana today.

The dead were identified as Abdul Aziz Mirza, 55, General Secretary of JSD district unit, Mosarraf Hossain Master, 65, former president of the district unit, Mamunur Rashid, 44, joint secretary of the unit and the driver of the micro bus Abdul Salam, 35.

The seriously injured Abdul Hal Talukdar, president of district JSD and Advocate Masud Parvez, member of the unit. They were first admitted to Mohammad Ali Hospital and later shifted to Dhaka Medical College Hospital (DMCH).

The incident occurred at about 1:30 pm when the five JSD leaders were going to Dinajpur to attend a wedding ceremony at Dinajpur.

The passenger bus coming from opposite direction hit the micro-bus, leaving Mosarraf Hossain Master, Mamunur Rashid and Abdul Salam dead on the spot while fatally injured Abdul Aziz succumbed to his injuries at Mohammad Ali Hospital at Bogra at 5:20 pm.

Police seized both the vehicles. The driver of the passenger bus fled the scene soon after the incident.

Four die in Kishoreganj boat capsizing

KISHOREGANJ, Sept 1: Four people died when a boat capsized in Urdighir haor in Karimganj upazila on Thursday, reports UNB.

The victims were identified as Ambia Khatun, 35, of Padmakurpur and her two-year-old daughter Runa, Shilpi daughter of Nazrul Islam of Moishakhali village, and Zorina Khatun, 30, of Patharapara village in Sadar upazila.

They were going to Daridangata village of Karimganj upazila from Ballabari ghat to attend a marriage ceremony.

Police said the engine-driven boat carrying 15 passengers was overturned by gusty wind at around 3 pm.

Rest of the passengers swam ashore. The bodies of the four were recovered this morning.

Special tribunal to try Boral's killers: Nasim

From Staff Correspondent

KHULNA, Sept 1: Special tribunal will be formed to try the killers of Advocate Kalidas Boral, a veteran Awami League leader, who was gunned down on August 25, Home Minister Mohammad Nasim today declared at a mourning rally at Chittalmari in Bagerhat.

Chittalmari Thana Awami League organised the rally on the Sheikh Hasina High School premises which was presided over by Thana Awami League president Sirajul Huq Mallik.

Nasim said, not only the arrested persons but also the accomplices of the killers would have to face the same fate. The government, he said, would not hesitate to take stern actions against the killers and persons who were behind the killing.

The Home Minister reached Chittalmari at 3:30 pm amidst unprecedented security mea-

sures. Special police forces were deployed at every vulnerable point.

All officials of Bagerhat district and police administration including the DIG and the Additional DIG, Khulna Range were found busy arranging Home Minister's visit and ensuring his security at a time when entire thana was mourning the sad death of Advocate Boral.

People were wearing black badge and black flags were seen hoisted atop almost all the houses at Chittalmari.

The Home Minister went to Boral's village home at 4:30 pm to console Happy Boral, complainant of her husband's murder case.

Nasim assured Happy Boral that all alleged killers and godfathers would be given exemplary punishment.

CPI (M) heading for a split?

From Pallab Bhattacharya

NEW DELHI, Sept 1: With just seven months left for fresh assembly elections in West Bengal state, is the ruling CPI (M) there heading towards a split?

The question is being asked with increasing frequency as the chasm widens between CPI (M) leadership and three senior dissident leaders Subhas Chakrabarty, West Bengal's Transport Minister, Saifuddin Choudhury, a former member of Lok Sabha and an articulate speaker, and Samir Puttunda, a young leader, on the issue of inner-party democracy.

The three leaders have been at loggerheads with the CPI (M) leadership for more than a year now to press the demand for greater freedom to discuss the party's decisions and policies within the organisation.

Saifuddin Choudhury was quoted as saying that he, along with Chakrabarty and Puttunda planned to quit the party in October after a special Congress of CPI (M). He said another veteran Lok Sabha member of the party Tarit Topedar and a large number of "grassroot" workers are likely to join them.

Choudhury, a former Lok Sabha member from Katwa in

Midnapore district of West Bengal, said he would not like to call their leaving CPI (M) a split but a "dignified separation" as living together "hurt" both the sides. He said they would ensure that their forming a separate party does not harm the Leftists and help "reactionary" forces.

Choudhury said their proposed party would serve as an alternative to those who wanted a change in West Bengal but at the same time do not want either Trinamool Congress or BJP.

Dengue: 12 more hospitalised in city

By Staff Correspondent

Twelve more people with dengue fever were admitted to different hospitals and clinics in the city yesterday.

Of them, seven were admitted to private Ibn Sina Clinic, three to Bangladesh Medical College Hospital (BMCH) and two to Red Crescent Holy Family Hospital, sources in the hospital and clinics said.

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The CPI (M) leadership, including Jyoti Basu, has repeatedly made it clear that there is no place for dissidence in the party and the door was open for those who wanted to leave the party. But the party has so far stopped short of expelling Chakrabarty, Choudhury and Puttunda, apparently keeping in view possible adverse fallouts in next year's elections.

Puttunda is the secretary of South 24 Parganas district unit of CPI (M).

Meanwhile, predictably, the CPI (M) seems to have agreed to project Buddhadeb Bhattacharya as its Chief Ministerial candidate in next year's assembly polls after Jyoti Basu's likely resignation as Chief Minister. Choudhury said this month on health grounds.

Though CPI (M) is yet to publicly announce the exit of Basu from politics, the party appears reconciled to the fact that it has to face the coming elections without the charismatic appeal of the veteran Marxist leader who has been Chief Minister for more than 23 years at a stretch.

The feeling in CPI (M) is that the new chief ministerial candidate should be given at least six months to settle down so

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'My enemies are out to destroy my career'

From Sakyasen Mitra

CALCUTTA, Sep 1: Noted singer Suman Chattopadhyaya believes that some of his enemies are using his former wife Maria to destroy his career.

According to Partha Ray and Swapan Chakrabarty, counsels for Suman, the singer has never tolerated Maria, physically or mentally. The two will be moving to the High Court soon to appeal for an anticipatory bail for the singer.

In the writ petition, prepared by the two lawyers, Suman states, "For the last four years, I have not stayed with Maria. So, the question of torturing her does not arise at all."

"How can I torture a person when I do not see her at all? Moreover, during this entire period I paid a sum of Rs 10,000 per month so that Maria and my adopted daughter Virginia could lead a normal life."

Suman has stated in an affidavit, "Virginia and Maria had arrived in Calcutta in 1990. They came to me simply because they had nowhere else to go. However, when the visas of both expired, I married Maria out of compassion. We got married on March 14, 1991. However, since then I have rarely received any cooperation from Maria."

According to the petition, Maria could not tolerate the fame that Suman achieved through his album *Tomake Chai*. During that period, Suman made a huge number of fans. However, whenever they used to call up, Maria would behave rudely with them.

Regarding the allegations of financial instability, the singer has also stated that these are false. "Other than the 10,000 rupees, I used to pay all the costs regarding insurance policies."

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Tribal people staged a demonstration at the Central Shaheed Minar in the city yesterday protesting the killing of their leader Alfred Soren. Soren was killed on August 18 by armed men of two landlords at village Vimpur in Noagaon.

Star photo