

## Life-saving diarrhoea vaccine developed

Lives of 20,000 Bangladeshi children may be saved a year

NAIMUL HAQ

Scientists have successfully developed a vaccine for diarrhoea caused by the Rotavirus. This is thought to be a major breakthrough in medical science.

Diarrhoea caused by the Rotavirus is a major killer of children under two years of age. It causes of an estimated 20,000 deaths annually in Bangladesh. The vaccine has been proven safe and is awaiting the final leg of investigations for its use worldwide.

The oral vaccine, now under study in five countries around the world including Bangladesh, will save the lives of an estimated six to 10 lakh infants under the age of two, each year throughout the world. One of the



Dr David Sack

scientists involved in developing the vaccine disclosed this to The Daily Star in an exclusive interview on Wednesday.

The Rotavirus causes severe diarrhoea and is usually accompanied by fever and vomiting. Being the leading cause of severe gastro-enteritis (diarrhoea) in infants and young children, it virtually infects all children at some time of their life. However, severe diarrhoea and dehydration occur mainly among children aged three to 35 months.

Dr David Sack, director of the International Centre for Diarrhoeal Disease and Research, Bangladesh (ICDDR,B), along with two other fellow scientists in

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## Ashuliya filling-up forced to stop

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The filling-up of the vast Ashuliya low-lying land stopped yesterday after the chief executive engineer of Rajuk filed another case against the developer, Nurul Islam Babul, with the Savar Police Station, accusing him of illegally occupying public land and filling it up without any official clearance.

Savar Upazila Nirbahi Officer (UNO) Jamal Hossain Majumdar told The Daily Star that a platoon of policemen had been deployed at the filling-up site, following filing of the case under clauses 5 and 8 of the wetland protection act.

"All earth-filling activities have been stopped at the moment," said Jamal Hossain.

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## Jail Killing Case Cross-examination of 11th prosecution witness complete

COURT CORRESPONDENT

Cross-examination of Mohammad Mocklesur Rahman, the 11th prosecution witness in the Jail Killing Case, was completed yesterday at the special court set up near the Dhaka Central Jail.

After the cross-examination for about three hours by defence lawyers, judge Ahmed Jamil Mostafa adjourned the hearing till July 9.

During the cross-examination, Mocklesur Rahman said he is now working as a personal staff of the joint-secretary (administration) in the Ministry of Chittagong Hill Tracts Affairs.

"I was a personal assistant to Brig Mushrul Haq, military secretary to

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## AL to stay off House till budget passage

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Barely three days after their maiden appearance in the eighth Jatiya Sangsad, Awami League (AL) lawmakers yesterday decided not to continue attending the House, for "having been deprived of their rightful time for the budgetary discussion".

The parliament is likely to pass tomorrow the budget for the next fiscal. The AL may join the next session.

On the fourth day of joining the parliament yesterday, the AL lawmakers were not present in the House.

"We joined to discuss the budgetary proposals, if we are deprived of our rightful share to speak on the budget, we need not continue..."

Leader of the Opposition in Parliament Sheikh Hasina said while briefing newsmen after the

Awami League Parliamentary Party's (ALPP) scheduled meet.

She said her party joined the House to expose the measures proposed in the recent budget that would drive common people to misery, adding they have not been allowed to speak for the people's betterment.

Following Wednesday night's walkout, the ALPP sat yesterday morning at the opposition's meeting room in the parliament to resolve whether the AL lawmakers would continue attending the House.

Chaired by Sheikh Hasina, the meeting decided that the AL would continue in the House until the passage of the budget for the 2002-2003 fiscal. Members of the AL observed the session was not run as per the Rules of Procedure of the Jatiya Sangsad and that the opposition members were not given their rightful share of time.

The ALPP meeting, attended by 57 of its 58 members, decided the party would set its next course after the passage of the proposed budget.

Briefing newsmen, Hasina said the House witnessed a total discussion time of 22.40 hours until Wednesday, of which the ruling party took up some 13.46 hours and her party that joined on June 24 was given only 2.37 hours for budgetary discussion. The remaining time was given to other House members.

She also said the chair frequently switched off microphones of the opposition lawmakers, even before they were allowed to speak. She cited several examples, including the latest one of Sheikh Fazlul Karim Selim that led the main opposition to walk out from the House on Wednesday night.

Demanding half of the total time

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## AL says Chair manipulates floor time

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The main opposition Awami League (AL) has accused the Chair and the ruling BNP as well of "manipulation" in time allocation for budget discussion in the Jatiya Sangsad, which prompted it to keep aloof from the budget debate only three days after joining the current parliament.

The ruling BNP and the acting Speaker yesterday, however, came up with a good number of proposals to bring the opposition back to the House since the opposition walked out of the House on Tuesday night. Among the proposals was the one to allocate time as demanded by the AL, but it yielded nothing.

"We could have participated in the general discussion on the budget had the authorities proved their sincerity and offered us the time that they are now offering," Deputy Leader of the Opposition Advocate Abdul Hamid told newsmen last evening.

"The train has left the station, and we have nothing to do with the proposal the ruling party made in late afternoon," he said, referring to his party's decision not to attend the session until the budget is passed.

It all started Tuesday night in the House when Acting Speaker Akhter Hamid Siddiqui told the opposition lawmakers that they had only three minutes of the total allocated time left. This prompted the opposition lawmakers to ask for allocation of half of the remaining time for budget discussion since they joined the budget discussion late on June 24.

Yesterday morning, the AL lawmakers resolved at its Parliamentary Party (ALPP) meeting that they would not attend the budget discussion unless they were allowed enough time.

After the meeting, the acting speaker called in the chief whip of the opposition and offered one hour for the ALMPs, but the latter turned

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## Three people electrocuted

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Three people were electrocuted in separate incidents in the city yesterday and Wednesday.

Apu, 6, son of Nurul Islam and a resident of Town Hall slum in the city's Mohammadpur area was fatally injured when he came into contact with an electric wire connected to a table fan at around 10:30am yesterday.

Apu was rushed to the Dhaka Medical College Hospital (DMCH) where attending doctors declared him dead.

In another incident, Shamim, 16, a tea seller, was electrocuted at Dagoir, Natunpara in the city's Demra yesterday.

The incident took place at 2:30pm when Shamim accidentally touched a live wire out of a transformer as he was going past it.

The victim was sent to the DMCH where he died at about 5:00pm yesterday.

Another tea seller, Alam, 20, son of Lal Miah, was electrocuted yesterday while working on the second floor of a building of Basundhara City on Panthapath Road at 7:30pm on Wednesday.

Alam was thrown on the ground by the impact of the shock.

Fatally injured, he was rushed to the DMCH where he died at about 9:00pm on the same day.



PHOTO: AKM MOHSIN

Smiles of promise...Sunflowers are cultivated on an experimental basis in Lalmohon and Char Fashion in Bhola. The seeds of sunflowers are processed into oil, which has a good potential.

## Beximco, Islam groups' loan proposals 3 PCBs set to suffer

SHAHRIAR KARIM

Three private commercial banks (PCBs) -- the IFIC, Arab Bangladesh (AB) and Uttara -- are set to dip into serious financial trouble if the central bank entertains proposals for rescheduling of loans originally taken through fictitious accounts by the Beximco Group and the Islam Group.

After recently defaulting on two monthly installments with the IFIC and three with the AB Bank, the Beximco Group has come up with proposals for loan rescheduling and sought extra seven years to repay the loans.

For the rescheduling, the group has also sought the facility of making only 10 per cent down payment on defaulted installments instead of the entire loan amount. Usually, the 10 per cent down payment on defaulted installments is allowed in case of term loans. However, as most of the Beximco's loans were taken through fictitious accounts and were rescheduled several times, bankers are of the view that the group does not deserve the facility.

As per the last rescheduling arrangement, the Beximco Group has to repay about Tk 127 crore to the IFIC by 2005 in monthly installments. And in case of the AB Bank,

the group has to pay about Tk 190 crore in monthly installments till 2007.

In February, another big conglomerate, the Islam Group, placed a proposal for 50 per cent waiver on Tk 182 crore interests and rescheduling of loans taken by it through similar means from the IFIC Bank and the Uttara Bank. The group has shares in both. A regular in payments, it also asked for extra seven years till 2016 to repay the loans.

The group has also requested for

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## The AJM black hole Closure to save Tk 37 cr a year, mill suffers Tk 1108 cr loss in 30 years

FAISAL PARAG, Narayanganj

With the closure of Adamjee Jute Mills (AJM) on Sunday, the long-awaited curtain will fall on an ignominious chapter of entrepreneurial disaster that have spelled an accumulated loss and liabilities to the tune of around Tk 1900 crore to the government over the last 30 years.

Except for a total of four years since independence when it made profit amounting to a total of Tk 84 crore, the largest jute mill in the world, nationalised in 1974, has cost the government an average yearly loss of Tk 37 crore.

Established in 1951 by Gul

Mohammad Adamjee and once legendary as a glorious example of Asian entrepreneurship, the AJM had, over the years, become an expensive white elephant as production suffered due to unbridled corruption, violent political clashes between different interest groups within the AJM and unhealthy trade unionism. To date, the AJM's liabilities to different organisations including DESA and Titas Gas total around Tk 750 crore.

Seeking anonymity, an AJM official said the amount of losses incurred to keep the mill operational mounted every year. But after

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PHOTO: AFP

DO YOU DOUBT US?...Brazilian superstar Rivaldo arrives from a swimming pool in Yokohama, Japan, yesterday, ahead of the World Cup final clash against slated for June 30.

## The match-up long missed Magicians, machines face off

AP, Yokohama

It's the missing match-up, the game soccer has waited 50 years to see.

Brazil and Germany, the sport's most dominant nations, have never met in the World Cup -- until now.

And what a place for their first meeting -- in the final, for the trophy, with all the world watching.

Brazil have won four of the last 12 World Cup titles and Germany three. Their players are among the most prized in the world.

But, strangely, they've avoided each other in soccer's showcase. No Pele vs. Sepp Maier. No Franz Beckenbauer vs. Gylmar.

It's an unlikely time for the debut meeting, given that both nations struggled in qualifying and were considered by some long shots to even reach the quarterfinals.

Brazil, won the title in 1958, 1962, 1970 and 1994, praised much of the time for their flair-filled attacks. West Germany captured the championship in 1954, 1974 and 1990, sometimes denigrated for its lack of imagination -- and ability to dive in front of officials to gain unwarranted penalty kicks and restarts.

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## Grameen Match Report

## DHL Spec Report