

Pneumonia catches people cold

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Pneumonia and bronchial infections are likely to cause worry this season, experts predict.

These diseases that attack the lower respiratory tract mostly of children have already turned serious, apparently catching the health department napping.

In the last eleven months more than 1600 children, mostly less than ten years of age, have died from the airborne diseases.

The health directorate said that more than 4.19 lakh people, most of them children, were attacked by the diseases due to which the highest number died in Chittagong division during the period.

According to sources, the Dhaka Medical College Hospital (DMCH) paediatric unit is facing difficulties in admitting all the patients reporting for admission while the Dhaka Shishu Hospital and Institute of Child and Mother Health (ICMH) at Matwail are also facing similar

problems accommodating child patients.

Many patients are being referred to other hospitals or private clinics for treatment, most of the doctors contacted said.

Meanwhile, many private hospitals and clinics are packed with patients with symptoms of pneumonia and bronchiolitis. "We are forced to turn away many children as we do not have sufficient beds," said an attending doctor of Central Hospital in the

city. According to experts, the situation is likely to turn worse due to lack of awareness among the masses.

"Most patients report at the last stage of their infection. There is very little we can do to save them then," said a senior doctor of Dhaka Shishu Hospital yesterday.

Experts also said that the sudden

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13 BCL Ctg city leaders resign to protest criminals' presence

CU CORRESPONDENT

Thirteen leaders of the newly formed committee of Bangladesh Chhatra League (BCL) Chittagong city unit yesterday resigned in protest at inclusion of 'listed criminals, non-students and married persons in the committee'.

Vice-presidents Hasan Murad Biplob and Abdul Alim, Organising Secretary Abul Bashar, Social Welfare Secretary Nur-e-Islam Sohail and nine members at a press conference at the press club in the city announced the decision 48 hours into the formation of the committee on Tuesday.

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85 gold bars seized from car

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Detective Branch (DB) of police yesterday recovered 85 gold bars reportedly worth about Tk 85 lakh from a private car at Moghbazar.

Acting on a tip off, a team of the DB stopped a private car (Dhaka Metro Kha-11-2568) in front of the Janata Bank's Moghbazar branch at around 3:05am. They searched the boot and recovered the gold and four Sony camcorders from a luggage.

Police also arrested Nahid, 29, Iqbal Hossain, 25, and Abdul Malek, 40, allegedly members of an international gold smuggling racket. The DB launched a manhunt in the city to arrest other members of the gang.

A case was filed with Ramna Police Station.

Police display 10kg of gold bars and four camcorders at the Detective Branch of Police office in Dhaka after the detectives, following a raid on Moghbazar yesterday, recovered them.

PHOTO: STAR

DU deans' election White panel wins 5 posts, Blue 2

DU CORRESPONDENT

Pro-ruling BNP and Jamaat-e-Islami teachers of White Panel bagged five posts and Awami League-backed Blue Panel secured two in the deans' election under seven faculties of Dhaka University (DU) yesterday.

The White Panel secured deans' position in the Arts Faculty, Business Faculty, Biological Science Faculty, Law Faculty and Pharmacy Faculty while the Blue Panel had to be satisfied with the Science Faculty and

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No Bangladeshi ever caught in terror link

Morshed says US caution to citizens also issued in India, Pakistan, Sri Lanka

BSS, Dhaka

Foreign Minister M Morshed Khan yesterday claimed no Bangladeshi has been caught anywhere in the world for involvement in any act of terrorism.

He was briefing the press prior to his return from Abuja, Nigeria,

after attending Commonwealth heads of the government meet as the leader of Bangladesh delegation.

He said the US government's 'advisory' announcement to its citizens for cautious movement has also been issued in respect of countries like India, Pakistan, Sri

Lanka and some other states.

"Bangladesh is a tolerant practicing democratic country," he said as mentioned by different world leaders.

Replying to a question on similar

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PHOTO: STAR

A policeman inspects one of several sacks that contained 3,300 bottles of the contraband cough syrup -- phensidyl -- recovered yesterday from Munshirtek graveyard in Sutrapur.

Muggers kill banker, rob Tk 9 lakh

UNB, Ctg

Muggers gunned down a bank official and snatched Tk 9 lakh from him at Jolarhat in Pahartoli Wednesday night.

Nirab Brahmamath, 45, officer

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87 states ink UN anti-graft pact

Cost of corruption stands at \$1.5 trillion a year

AFP, Merida, Mexico

The cost of corruption represents five percent of the world economy - or more than 1.5 trillion dollars a year, according to World Bank figures published at a UN conference on corruption.

Daniel Kaufman, director of global governance at the World Bank Institute told reporters on Wednesday that the figures were an approximate calculation --

since corruption was largely clandestine -- yet 'realistic'.

At the close of the second day of the conference of ministers and government officials from some 125 UN member states, a total of 87 governments had signed the first UN Convention Against Corruption.

The convention must be ratified by a minimum of 30 national assemblies before it can go into effect. It is the first document of its

kind that is expected to have a global impact.

The convention is a breakthrough, as signers agree to return assets obtained through corruption and assist each others by providing evidence, freezing bank accounts, confiscating property and extraditing suspects.

It also requires signers to beef up and enforce anti-corruption laws

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Antiwar trio blasts US contract policy

AP, Brussels

European leaders continue to show dismay towards the Bush administration's decision to rule out opponents of the Iraq war from bidding on reconstruction contracts, saying it could hinder US efforts to restructure the country's near \$125 billion debt.

French President Jacques Chirac, German Chancellor Gerhard Schroeder and Russian President Vladimir Putin all raised the contracting issue during previously scheduled telephone calls with President Bush yesterday, the White House said.

"Iraq's debt to the Russia Federation comes to \$8 billion and as far as the Russian government's position on this, it is not planning any kind of a write-off of that debt," Defense Minister Sergei Ivanov told reporters earlier, responding to a question about the contracts. "Iraq is not a poor country," he said.

Much of Iraq's estimated \$125 billion debt is owed to France, Germany, Russia and other nations whose companies are excluded under the Pentagon directive.

Reacting to the international outcry against the decision, the White House said it was not up for reconsideration. The only consolation

offered to angry allies was that the Bush administration "will welcome the opportunity to talk to them and explain to them about why this decision was made," White House press secretary Scott McClellan said.

The White House says countries wanting a share of the \$18.6 billion in reconstruction contracts in the 2004 US budget must participate militarily in the postwar effort.

"These are countries that have been with us from Day One, these are countries that are contributing forces, that have been making sacrifices and that's why this decision was made," McClellan said. "If additional countries want to participate with our efforts in Iraq, then circumstances can change."

Germany, a leading opponent of the war, called the decision "unacceptable," and government spokesman Bela Anda said it went against "a spirit of looking to the future together and not to the past."

In Moscow, Deputy Foreign Minister Yuri Fedotov said the directive "will hardly foster the mobilization of the international community" to rebuild Iraq, "more likely the opposite," according to the

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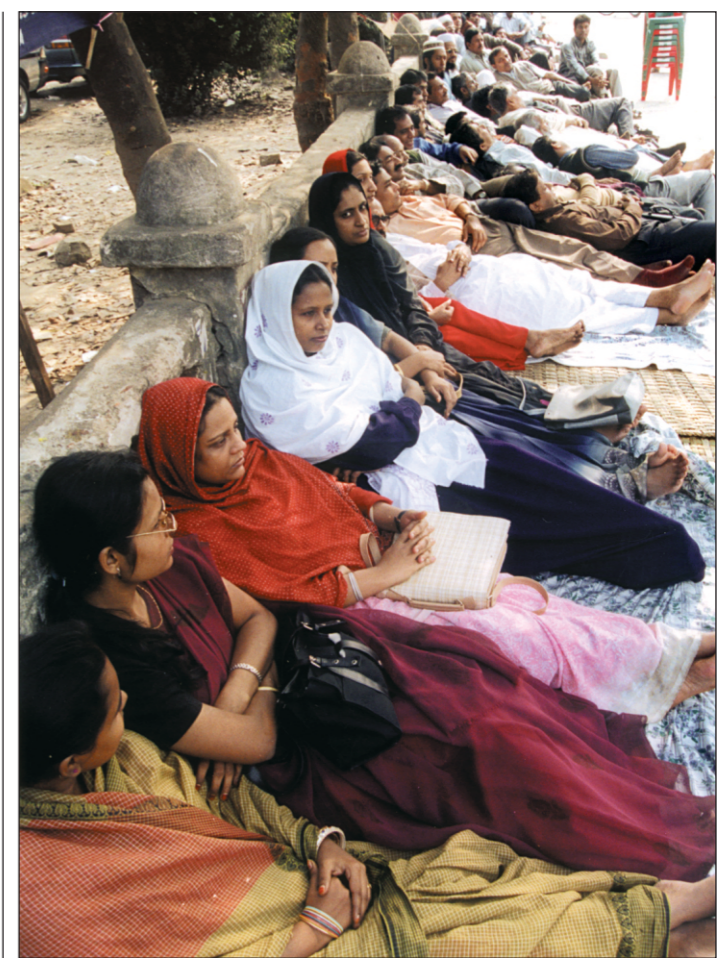


PHOTO: STAR

Members of the National Teachers-Employees' Front lie down at Mukhtangan in the city yesterday to press for their 8-point demand including an increase in allowances.

Blast claims 3 in Tel Aviv

Israeli army kills 5 Palestinians in Gaza Strip raid

REUTERS, Tel Aviv

An Israeli gangland bombing that initially raised fears of a Palestinian suicide attack killed three people and wounded more than 19 others yesterday at a money-changer's shop on a busy Tel Aviv street.

At Gaza Strip, Israeli soldiers during gun battles that erupted after an armoured push into Rafah refugee camp to detain an Islamic Jihad militant, witnesses say. Palestinian officials identified the dead as four civilians, including a medic, and a gunman.

In scenes reminiscent of suicide

bombings that have killed hundreds of Israelis in three years of violence, ambulances raced to the area and radio stations interrupted their regular broadcasts to report on the explosion in Tel Aviv.

Israel Police Commissioner Shlomo Aharonishky told reporters after the blast, "We are declaring war against the underworld -- and this will be a war we will win."

Zeev Rosenstein, who has survived four underworld attacks since 1996, was slightly wounded in the blast that blew out windows

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