

Diabetes an epidemic in Asia

REUTERS, Hong Kong

A common form of diabetes has reached epidemic levels in Asia and is afflicting people at younger age than cases in the West, a South Korean study shows. In the latest issue of The Lancet, researchers warned that these victims would suffer longer from complications of type 2 diabetes, die sooner than people in other regions and that the epidemic may overwhelm healthcare systems in Asia. "The increase in type 2 diabetes in Asia differs from that reported in other parts of the world; it has developed in a much shorter time, in a younger age group, and in people with a much lower body mass index," the researchers

wrote.

Body mass index (BMI) is a measure of body fat based on height and weight.

The authors blamed the epidemic on fast-changing behaviour patterns, such as fast food and a sedentary lifestyle, and said lifestyle modifications must be made at once.

"Preventive action should begin urgently and lifestyle changes such as weight control and exercise are the first step," it said. It called on governments to implement well-targeted, clear action plans.

By 2025, 333 million people worldwide will be afflicted with diabetes, up from 194 million now, they said, citing figures from the International Diabetes Foundation.

Huda bent rules

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Mir Nasir Hossain, a member of the railway authority. "I did not agree with the way the land was leased to Millennium Holdings Ltd," he said.

A few cases over a part of the land are pending while some plots had already been allocated for two CNG filling stations in other parts, the committees observed. Moreover, the application for allotment of the piece of land was made by Millennium Holdings, not the Hilton authority, they noted.

However, ignoring the observations, Huda said establishing a hotel like Hilton in Dhaka will brighten the image of Bangladesh. "The country as well as the railway will gain in the long run," he said.

On the tender process, he told the committees' meeting that it would not be practical to call tender as there are cases pending over the land and that the Millennium Holdings will settle all disputes over the CNG filling stations and the legal complications.

In the beginning of the leasing process, the railway chief estate officer in his letter to the railway director general said there is no scope to consider the application of the Millennium Holdings.

However, the decision was changed following Huda's interest. The railway committee recom-

mended taking 3 per cent gross revenue from the hotel authority but finally the revenue was reset at 1.5 per cent. A few other recommendations were also by-passed in the leasing agreement.

While talking to The Daily Star, Chief Estate Officer M Mokbul Ahmed, who once opposed the leasing deal, denied all complaints and said there were no irregularities in the process of allotting the land to the Millennium Holdings.

He, however, admitted that there were differences of opinions over leasing the piece of land to the Millennium Holdings in the beginning. He declined to make any further comments.

Nazmul Huda could not be contacted for comments despite repeated tries.

Millennium Holdings uses the address of Khan Sons Group Ltd, which is located on the 19th floor of Sena Kalyan Bhaban, on its official pad. But Khan Sons staff could not specify the location of Millennium Holdings.

"We established the Millennium Holdings Ltd only for the purpose of business with Hilton," said its MD Mohammad Iqbal. "We do not have any separate office so far. We are recruiting staff for the office which will be established at the construction site later," he said.



PHOTO: STAR

Bishwa Shanti Sangha takes out a peace procession from Muktagang in the city yesterday demanding establishment of peace across the globe.

BBC Bangladesh Sanglap today

BSS, Dhaka

The recording of the 9th edition of BBC Bengali Service's Bangladesh Sanglap will take place at the Media Centre of Bangladesh-China Friendship Conference Centre at 5.45pm today.

Member of Awami League's advisory council Abul Mal Abdul Muhit, former education minister and BNP leader Dr M Osman Farruk, women's rights activist and part-time teacher of Women and Gender Studies Department of Dhaka University Maleka Begum and popular film actor and campaigner for road safety Ilyas Kanchan will feature in the panel, said a press release yesterday.

The panel members will answer questions and debate issues raised by the audience.

The programme will be broadcast on BBC Bengali radio at 7.30pm tomorrow and telecast on Channel-i at 8.00pm on Monday.

Illegal factory unearthed in Ctg, fined Tk 1 lakh

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Chittagong

A mobile court here on Thursday unearthed an illegal fire extinguisher manufacturing factory and fined it Tk one lakh for storing, marketing and processing sub-standard equipment.

Sources said the court led by Chittagong Port Authority (CPA) Magistrate Md Munir Chowdhury in a drive at Sheikh Mujib Road at Agrabad unearthed the fire extinguisher manufacturing factory M/s JB Enterprise and its owner Md Abul Bashar Bhuiyan was forfeited Tk one lakh.

During the drive the court found that different types of fire extinguishing equipment were being refilled with foam and gas from several big cylinders full of carbon dioxide and nitrogen without any precautionary or safety measures.

The court also found that the factory, running without required licences from Bangladesh Standard Testing Institute (BSTI) and Department of Explosive, was using old materials and equipment after painting and labelling them with stickers.

While enquired neither the owner nor the workers of the factory could tell the mobile court team about the ratio and composition of gas and foam contained in the cylinders, said the sources.

Meanwhile, the mobile court in separate anti-adulteration drives in the last nine days fined at least 11 hotels, restaurants, workshop and brickfield while it realised Tk eight lakh as forfeiture and awarded imprisonment to one person.

During the drives the court also seized eight metric tons flour, 400 kg spices, 25 kg edible oil and 800 kg lachchha semai.

Nido Fair held in Ctg

CU CORRESPONDENT

A daylong Nido Fair was held in Chittagong yesterday amid festivity, aiming to create awareness about health and nutritional needs of the growing children.

Nestle Bangladesh Limited organised the fair on CJKS Gymnasium premises from 9:00am to 7:00pm.

Editor of the Azadi MA Malek and Resident Editor of daily Prothom Alo in Chittagong Abul Momen inaugurated the fair.

At the inaugural ceremony, the speakers underscored the need for organising such fairs highlighting the importance of food value for the improvement of child health.

Nestle Bangladesh Brand Manager Nuzhat Bari and Supply Chain Director Nakib Khan, also a renowned singer, addressed the ceremony.

Thousands of children aged between two to 10 years along with their families thronged the fair and took part in various games and talent shows.

The events for the children included drawing competition, puzzle, story writing, mathematics competition and basketball game. The organisers also offered nutrition counselling for mothers.

The organisers invited more than 12,000 families with their children to attend the daylong fair.



PHOTO: STAR

Children take part in a drawing competition at 'Nido Fair' in Chittagong yesterday.

Ershad now mulls alliance

FROM PAGE 1

Party sources said HM Ershad, Roushan Ershad and a few other senior leaders are interested to join the BNP-led alliance while most of the former lawmakers who are still popular among their constituents are opposed to the idea as they are convinced that in no way will BNP win the next election.

Against this background, Ershad is now trying to float an alliance like Islami Oikya Front that he had formed before the election in 2001. JP has already contacted some Islamic parties and discussions to that end are on, added the sources.

"When the country is going through a crisis period, all the parties believing in Islamic values should be united and I am ready to lead them," a party insider quoted Ershad as saying at yesterday's meeting held at Banani Community Centre.

The deposed military ruler also said that JP cannot afford to make a mistake now and it can return to power again if it remains intact.

Currently, there is a lot of debate on the caretaker government and the election seems uncertain as none of the two main parties wants to make concessions.

"Only an independent and powerful Election Commission can conduct a free and fair election," he observed.

Describing the cases filed against him, Ershad urged his party men, "I am carrying a lot of loads. Please try to be with me. I will lead you and the country to power again. Jatiya Party will have to make an appropriate decision within November 15."

After the meeting, Ershad told the newsmen, "I am in doubt whether or not the 14-party combine will participate in the election as it seems that the CEC will not resign."

He expressed dissatisfaction over the party leaders' reaction on his earlier decision to side with the BNP-led alliance. He said, "The party presidium empowered me to take the decision. Still I sat with the leaders and they assured me that they would support whatever decision I made. But some of them went public with their resentment."

Everyone should speak his mind at the party forum, he added.

Referring to the Nur Hossain Day and Dr Milon Day, Ershad said that Milon was killed in crossfire. "At least 16,500 people were killed in last five

years and 28 people were killed on 28 October alone. Now why should the nation not observe any day for these killings?" he asked.

Roushan Ershad said JP should go with the ideology of Islamic values and Bangladeshi nationalism.

Dr Shafiullah, adviser to the party chairman, said, "We cannot join any alliance merely on the basis of seat sharing."

Another leader of the party observed that the BNP had torn down the backbone of the Jatiya Party by doing away with the upazila system. "So, why should we shoulder the BNP's misrule," he asked.

Some other leaders said it is not possible yet for the party to contest the election on its own.

At this stage, Ershad stopped the meeting and said, "I cannot hear anyone else today because of a problem with the sound system."

JP General Secretary Ruhul Amin Hawlader, Kazi Zafar Ahmed, and Kazi Firoj Rashid were also present.