

# BB's monetary

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He, however, said, "I would like to say the discussion that is going on regarding monetary policy is part of a healthy debate."

The IMF representative in Dhaka said the rising inflation has been adversely affecting the country's economy and it relates not only to the supply side factors but also to demand side factors.

Citing the inflation rate in May, he said the highest rate of inflation was not in food items or transport. Furniture, household appliances and some other services and goods were affected by inflation which is actually not related to the supply side.

When the demand side components are key to checking inflation here administrative costs in some sectors keep rising, he observed.

According to him, the government subsidies for different sectors do not reach the right people. Even in the case of diesel subsidy, the benefit goes to the top 40 percent people who in fact do not deserve it.

He said the recipients of such subsidies are mostly people like him who have cars, and not those from the lower income brackets, farmers or rural poor.

"You don't distort the financial system. And eventually you should adjust prices to the international level," he added.

The Fund recommends that Bangladesh acquire an international standard in pricing that will help it adapt to the prices at the

global level, be they rising or coming down.

At the meet, Dunn sought to explain why the IMF refused to disburse the last instalment of poverty reduction growth facilities (PRGF) loan to Bangladesh.

He said the government's excessive bank borrowing, failure to achieve the revenue target and carry out reforms in the tax structure, delay in corporatisation of the state-owned banks and above all declining law and order discouraged the Fund from paying out the loan.

He said the IMF board however appreciates the present government's reform measures including the initiative for good governance and electoral reforms.

Queried if the country would receive the next PRGF loans, he said the board members are looking forward to the ongoing reforms, and they have stressed the need for close dialogues with the government for further PRGF facilities.

## Two murder suspects flee from lock-up

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Rangpur

Two murder suspects who were arrested at Patgram upazila in Lalmonirhat Saturday escaped from a lock-up in Gangachara Police Station in Rangpur the same day. Three policemen were suspended in this connection.

Acting Officer-in-charge of Gangachara Police Station Abbas Ali said Abul Hosen, 30, and Abdur Rahman, 25, of Shankar Dahoh fled from the station while they were in custody. Police are yet to find out how they managed to escape.

Abul and Abdur, sons of Moktar Hosen, allegedly killed Sharifa, 18, daughter of Baccha Miah of Shankar Dahoh on June 16.

Superintendent of Police in Rangpur Hasif Aziz said Assistant Sub-inspector of Police Wahedul and two police constable of Gangachara Police Station-Akkas and

Ashraf-ul-were suspended on charges of negligence of duty.

## Judge Faizee

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return from Singapore where he is having a medical check-up now.

The Supreme Court (SC) registrar sent the letter to the president's office following a Supreme Judicial Council meeting. The council sat at around 11:00am to discuss the next steps regarding the issue. The decisions could not be known immediately.

The SC Registrar Ikhtedar Ahmed yesterday told The Daily Star that on March 19 the council sent its first reference to the president about tampering of certificate by Faizee. Iajuddin sent it back with recommendation for a Supreme Judicial Council probe on March 21.

However, the council could not begin the inquiry as Faizee filed a writ petition with the HC on March 19 against the Chittagong University (CU) syndicate's decision to cancel his LLB certificate.

Meanwhile, Faizee was supposed to stand before the Supreme Judicial Council yesterday reportedly for having judgment in 180 cases pending during his tenure as an HC judge.

Earlier on June 26, the council sent the president the second reference against Faizee regarding the cases that remain to be disposed of.

The embattled judge gave decision on 42 of the cases, but he did not write any judgment. Besides, he dictated to Bench Officer Sheikh Nazrul Islam judgments in 138 cases between April 2005 and December 2006. Nazrul Islam sent the typed out judgments back to him for final correction, but he never returned those.

The president had directed the council to investigate the matter. But meantime, Faizee tendered his resignation Wednesday.

## Mahi, Mannan

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around 4:00pm and looted valuables from the office at gunpoint.

The valuables included two air conditioners worth about Tk 1.60 lakh, two computers worth about Tk 80,000 and a Sony brand television set worth about Tk 25,000. The gang also took away various important documents from the office, the complainant added.

## Motia

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to the EC plan of action.

The AL leader said, "The whole process is so slow and the Election Commission is ignoring the demands of our movement although this Election Commission is the fruit of our movement."

She said they want a free and fair election as soon as possible as her party never thinks of going to power through zigzag path.

Motia observed the CEC didn't say anything about transparent ballot box, a demand of the AL-led 14-party combine.

She aired doubt about preparation of electoral roll within October of the next year. In this context, she cited the EC-prepared voter list under a model project in Sreepur that contains many defects.

## Lankan team

**FROM PAGE 16**  
Mostafa Hassan, an official with SK&F, a leading pharmaceutical exporter to Sri Lanka, told The Daily Star last night that the opportunity for pharmaceutical exports to Sri Lanka is huge and Bangladesh exporters have hardly tapped even 5 percent of the market.

He also said that even though it is the Bangladesh exporters who should invest more into the market, the Sri Lankan government could facilitate exporters by improving the registration process, to either expedite it or synchronise Bangladeshi and Sri Lankan pharmaceutical company registration standards.

The foreign ministry official told The Daily Star that apart from trade, other bilateral issues of economic cooperation, civil aviation and fisheries among others will be discussed.

There is a possibility of resuming the Dhaka-Colombo direct flight, that was suspended in 2002, as the Saarc leaders have pledged to link all eight South Asian capitals for 'better connectivity', he added.

Dhaka has already expressed to Colombo that the aviation authorities concerned from both sides should sit to resolve the outstanding issues, which surround Sri Lanka's demands for greater 'freedom rights', sources said.

The foreign ministry official said that the bilateral talks with Foreign Adviser Iftekhar A Chowdhury, to be held tomorrow, will not include the Colombo-backed 'Mutual legal Assistance on Criminal Matters,' as it is not a bilateral issue.

Sri Lankan Foreign Minister Bogollagama will be accompanied by Mass Media and Information Minister Anura Priyadarshana Yapa, Cultural Affairs Minister Mahinda Yapa Abeywardena, Religious Affairs and Moral Upliftment Minister Pandu Bandaranaike and Minister for Highways TB Ekanayake.

The delegation will have talks with Iftekhar tomorrow at the state guest-house Padma, and later with the Federation of Bangladesh Chambers of Commerce and Industry. They will also call on Chief Adviser Fakhruddin Ahmed.

## Mirza Abbas

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plot allocated fraudulently.

ACC Deputy Director Syed Iqbal Hossain filed a first information report (FIR) with Shahbagh Police Station against Abbas, Lobi and Tetulia (Panchagarh) Upazila Nirbahi Officer Mahfuzul Islam, formerly senior assistant secretary at the public works ministry.

In the FIR, the trio was accused of illegally allocating an industrial plot in connivance with each other in Teigaon Industrial Area for a business organisation, Pacific Chemical Ltd., owned by Lobi. It was mentioned that the three accused have exercised their influence in allotting the 19.44 katha plot by ignoring government rules.

Without having no-objection certificates from the Board of Investment and the Department of Environment, the plot was allocated as an industrial plot.

The case has been filed under sections 5(1)(2) of the Corruption Prevention Act of 1947 and section 109 of the Penal Code.

## Rejoinder

**FROM PAGE 1**  
amended or repealed. To deny it amounts to denying the undeniable.

It is undeniable that the Hon'ble Speaker has upheld the dignity, honour and prestige of the sacred Parliament and his high position as Speaker for the last five years. It is unprecedented that he is the only Speaker who held this high office continuously and successfully for five years ever since 1947.

The news of workshop of Global Organisation of Parliamentarians against Corruption (GOPAC) in South Asia is vital and more important. So, the news should have been prominent instead of the news of any medical bill. By pointing out this, it can't be assumed by any stretch of imagination that the Hon'ble Speaker has undermined the high office of Speaker.

Now coming to the allocation of budgetary fund, sections 18, 9 and 14 of Jatiya Sangsad Sachibhalaya Ain, 1994, the law has been explained and clarified in his early two rejoinders. In every office and institution, where the head is the Principal Disbursing Officer, it is his duty to disburse money since there is none above him to do it under the Act. It is wrong mentioning that the amount Tk 35,71,192 to late Hon'ble Mr Humayun Rasheed Chowdhury for kidney treatment and Tk 5,74,000 to ex-Chief Whip Abul Hasnat Abdullah were paid from the Sangsad Sachibhalaya fund. Had it not been so, the money from Sangsad Sachibhalaya fund would not have been paid.

Going back to the undertaking/guarantee to repay the money if authority i.e. the Parliament and the Supreme Court of Bangladesh, the interpreting authority of the Act gives a decision, that the Hon'ble Speaker shall abide by it, is a clear submission to the rule of law which the Hon'ble Speaker firmly believes in and upholds. And that he has been upholding Rule of Law ever since his enrolment as a lawyer in 1960 for the last 47 years.

The Hon'ble Speaker hopes that the matter should end here without further controversy. It is hoped that in the interest of fair and impartial journalism, this rejoinder be published at the same place of the front page of your esteemed daily.

# Upazila polls

**FROM PAGE 1**  
indicates that the EC is considering the necessity of holding the long due elections to these local government bodies.

"Elections to the local government bodies including city corporations, municipalities and union parishads will begin next January and continue up to December 2008," the CEC said.

Asked how it will be possible to hold elections if the state of emergency remains in force, the CEC said the emergency provision will be relaxed for the areas concerned to hold the polls.

### UPAZILA PARISHAD IN LOCAL GOVT

The first election to the upazila parishads was held in 1985 after its introduction in the local government system during the regime of military ruler HM Ershad. But the very existence of upazila parishads faced severe crisis following the second election in 1990 when Ershad stepped down in the face of mass movement.

The BNP government assumed power in 1991 and dissolved the upazila system. The Supreme Court in a judgment in 1992 directed the government to hold elections to upazila parishads within six months, but the BNP government did not hold the polls in its tenure.

Assuming power through the 1996 general elections, the Awami League passed the Upazila Parishad Act in 1998. The law empowered the EC to declare the schedule for upazila parishad elections.

However, in the midst of volatile political situation, the then EC could not conduct the upazila parishad polls and later the government amended the upazila law and took the authority for announcing its election schedules.

The immediate past BNP-led alliance government, which came to power through the 2001 elections,

moved for holding upazila parishad elections and formed a cabinet committee. But the committee members failed to reach a consensus on holding the polls.

All these governments had meanwhile sought extension of time on many occasions from the Supreme Court to comply with its directives for holding the polls.

The current caretaker government has now moved for holding the upazila parishad elections and assured the EC of returning to it the power for announcing the polls schedule for over 450 upazila parishads.

### POLLS TO OTHER LOCAL GOVT BODIES

The tenure of the city corporations in Dhaka, Rajshahi and Khulna expired on May 14, June 16 and June 26 this year. Elections to these city corporations have not been held on time due to the state of emergency and lack of a voter list.

As per rules, polls to any city corporation are due within the last six months of their tenure.

The tenure of two other city corporations-Sylhet and Barisal-will expire around April-May next year.

Meanwhile, the five-year tenure of over 4,000 union parishads will expire between next January and March. According to the laws, elections to the union parishads are to be held within the last six months of their tenure.

By-elections to some union parishads are also due.

Apart from this, elections to 90 municipalities will be due by the end of this year with the tenure of around 50 having already expired.

Elections to the rest 115 municipalities were held on May 5-10, 2004 and their tenure will expire in 2009.

# Bin Laden

**FROM PAGE 16**  
standing outdoors against a background of a hill and shrubs.

Bin Laden was last heard of in an audiotape posted on the Internet in July 2006, in which he accused Iraqi Shiites of waging "genocide" against the minority Sunnis.

He had also warned in an audio message posted a day earlier that Jihad, or holy war, would go on in Iraq despite the killing of the then al-Qaeda frontman Abu Musab al-Zarqawi.

"The last Prophet (of Islam, Mohammed)...wished to have died as a martyr," said Bin Laden in Sunday's video. It bore the symbol of the As-Sahab group, which usually produces audiovisual statements from al-Qaeda's leadership.

The videotape featured also messages from other al-Qaeda leaders in Afghanistan, as well as testimonies by purported suicide bombers ahead of launching attacks in the war-torn country.

This is the 63rd As-Sahab video to be released in 2007, according to the US-based intelligence institute IntelCenter.

The US Senate on Friday doubled the bounty on bin Laden to 50 million dollars, reflecting frustration that the al-Qaeda mastermind remains free and rising anxiety over possible future attacks.

The vote followed a flurry of reports that the group behind the September 11 strikes in 2001 had rebuilt its safe haven, leadership and capacity to plot terror operations, and was trying to sneak operatives into the United States.

# Speaker's rejoinder

**FROM PAGE 1**  
that the Parliament Secretariat Act, 1994 is supreme and the Act has the effect of nullifying the Standards of Financial Propriety as incorporated in the General Financial Rules then, he should have asked the Finance Ministry, the custodian of the said Rules, to make it consistent with the powers of the Speaker in so far as it relates to his authority to sanction any money for his own benefit. As long as this is not done his unilateral assumption of power of sanction of money for his own benefit will be totally improper, illegal and objectionable.

Mr Speaker's statement that the then Prime Minister returned his summary with the remark that the Speaker should take action in terms of the Parliament Secretariat Act, 1994, does not also fact, empower him to sanction money for his own benefit. He has to follow the procedure as incorporated in the said Act by proposing budgetary provision and obtaining sanction of the Parliament Secretariat Commission. It is pertinent to mention here that his predecessor sanctioned mobile telephones, 35 in number to the Parliament staff to which we, from the C&AG's office objected. The Speaker, after a prolonged correspondence, had to submit this to the Parliament Secretariat Commission, and the Commission did not approve it. As a result, all these mobile telephones had to be surrendered.

It will not be out of place to mention here that the Parliament Secretariat Act itself is not beyond question. The Act was passed by

the then Parliament invoking Article 79 of the Constitution, which reads as under:

Article 79 (1) Parliament shall have its own Secretariat

(2) Parliament may by law, regulate the recruitment and condition of service of persons appointed to the Secretariat of the Parliament.

(3) Until provision is made by Parliament the President may, after consultation with the Speaker, make rules regulating the recruitment and condition of service of persons appointed to the Secretariat of the Parliament, and rules so made shall have effect subject to the provisions of any law.

Mr Speaker -- may I raise a question here? What is the relationship of the Parliament Secretariat Act, 1994 with Article 79 of the Constitution? Does it need one to be a legal degree holder to understand that the said Act is a bad law? The Act has given very wide powers to the Parliament Secretariat, has freed the Secretariat from all sorts of control and scrutiny making it unaccountable to any one excepting the Parliament Secretariat Commission. If the Parliament Secretariat is unaccountable and non-transparent then how can we except that the Parliament will exercise oversight function on the administration to establish transparency and accountability.

## 18 killed

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unidentified gunmen," said Brigadier General Ahmed Deskarra, a senior border guard commander stationed in the nearby city of Sulaimaniyah.

One of the seven guards killed was an officer, he added.

Border guards have come under attack in the past from an extreme Islamist group calling itself al-Qaeda in Kurdistan -- formerly Ansar al-Islam -- which operates along the porous border between Iran and Iraq.

In another attack, three policemen including an officer were killed and two others were wounded in clashes with armed men west of the southern Iraqi city of Nasiriyah, police there said.

And in the village of Aziziyah south of Baghdad gunmen burst into the home of a local councillor, Hassim Jassim, and killed his wife and son, according to police Lieutenant Ali Kadhim.

Jassim was not in the house at the time of the attack, he said.

Just outside the northern Iraqi oil refinery town of Baiji, a Turkish truck driver died in a roadside bomb blast, according to local police.

## Power plant

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contracts of the RPCL without any tender. Captain Reza also unofficially represented Siemens during the secretive tender for the third phase.

The massive corruption spear-headed by LIPPS had affected the financial condition of RPCL to a degree that it was failing to pay Siemens due instalments for setting up the third unit. As a result, the project was delayed by nearly two years.

"Now under a new financial schedule, we have cleared \$108 million payment to Siemens. In the next four months, we will pay it \$3 million each month," said the RPCL high official.

RPCL Managing Director Md Nazmul Hossain Chowdhury told The Daily Star in May, "The Rural Electrification Board (REB) in a study determined that once we complete this project, RPCL will become financially sound within the next five years."

Meanwhile, the joint forces recently visited the RPCL office and collected documents as part of an investigation into the past corruption led by Captain Reza.

The RPCL is currently fighting a legal battle against Captain Reza at the High Court. Reza has claimed Tk 200 crore "compensation" for terminating contracts with the LIPPS. The LIPPS contracts were cancelled following an incident in which Reza and his men sabotaged the Mymensingh Power Plant in 2005 and fled the country.

## Govt to amend

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and academicians to discuss the umbrella act.

Teachers of public universities protested the move to approve the draft of 'umbrella act' for all public universities without consulting the academics and others concerned while academicians said the new act will destroy the autonomous character of the public universities.

Apparently responding to the strong objections, education ministry yesterday called an emergency meeting at the secretariat. Education Adviser Ayub Quadri presided over the meeting where Education Secretary M Mamtazul Islam, UGC Chairman Prof Nazrul Islam and UGC Secretary Mohammed Mufakker were present.

"We have discussed many key issues of the draft umbrella act which the UGC submitted to the ministry in the last week of June. We have decided that some points of the draft would be changed and the UGC will finalise the amendment of the draft by July 31," UGC Chairman Prof Nazrul Islam told The Daily Star after the meeting.

The university syndicate members and deans will be appointed on the basis of seniority, he added.

## Tuku, family

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dock pleaded not guilty and sought justice when Judge M Ashraf Hossain read out the charges against them.

Earlier in the day, the same court set up at the Jatiya Sangsad Bhaban for trying high-profile corruption suspects, framed charges against Tuku in another case in connection with tax evasion and set July 19 for commencing trial.

The National Board of Revenue (NBR) sued him for evading Tk 3.80 crore in income tax. The court, before framing charges, heard both the sides.

## Dinkal case

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According to the complaint, the accused were directors of Daily Dinkal Publications Limited, registered with the RJSCF, and did not submit service return for several years.

The nine others are Tarique's business partner Giasuddin Al Mamun, Sheikh Razzak Ali, barrister Nazmul Huda, Maj (ret'd) MA Mannan, Manjurul Ansan Munshi, Fazlul Azim, Ali Asgar Lobi, Rokonuddin Molla and AKM Mosharrar Hossain.

Of them, Tarique, Mamun, Huda, Manjurul, Lobi and Mosharrar were arrested earlier and they are now in different jails.

The two other accused of the case barristers Nurul Amin Talukder and Abdus Salam Talukder have died already.

# Adviser defends plan

**FROM PAGE 1**  
comment. But all aspects of a problem should be taken into account before making any comment," he added.

He said the move to raise the prices of power, gas, fuel and fertiliser is essential for the economy. The adviser referred to the current international market prices of fuel and fertiliser and said the government is giving huge subsidies to make up for the losses due to low prices of fuel and fertiliser in domestic market.

The adviser, however, claimed price hike of fuel and other utilities would not affect prices of food items and therefore the inflation rate. "Food items mainly determine inflation rate in Bangladesh and as there is no impact on the food prices due to price hike of fuel and other things, I do not see any increase of inflation rate," he said. "There may be a primary shock, but no adverse effect on the economy," he claimed.

Azizul Islam said the BB would study any possible effects of the policy on the country's economy case by case before implementation.

Explaining the reasons behind the government plan to increase prices of gas, fuel, fertiliser and power, the finance adviser said the government is already burdened with Tk 7,500 crore liabilities of the Bangladesh Petroleum Corporation (BPC) and it may increase.

"How can the government bear such huge liabilities?" he posed a question.

He said increased prices of fuel have impact on power prices. Production costs of locally produced fertiliser and import costs of it are also high due to upward trend in prices on the international market.

"We will have to adjust such additional costs somehow," said the finance adviser adding that deficit financing may be an alternative.

"But we already have 5.6 percent budget deficit in the current fiscal and the government does not want to increase it more," he said.

Explaining the problems of deficit financing, the adviser said private

sector credit flow would be hampered due to budget deficit, as it would increase interest rate.

Energy Adviser Tapan Chowdhury termed the CPD observation "baseless comment" and said it was very unexpected.

Regarding the prices of fuel and gas, Tapan said the government is still considering the matter and yet to make any decision. The government will discuss the matter with experts before making any decision.

"Decision to increase prices is one of the toughest jobs for the government as it affects the livelihood of the common people," he added.

On CPD's comment that the government made the decision following World Bank and IMF's prescription, the energy adviser said, "The government makes decisions taking national interest into account."

Bangladesh Bank Governor Salehuddin Ahmed also denied any pressure from the IMF in formulating the monetary policy.

"What the CPD is saying is not our concern. The major targets of our monetary policy are to achieve faster growth and creating more employment as well as keeping inflation under control," the governor replied when asked about the CPD's observation.

The governor said the central bank has not decided yet to increase the commercial banks' reserve requirements with the central bank. He said it is a policy stance that might be made, if necessary.

Replying to another question, Salehuddin said the policy stance would push up the lending rate to some extent, but it would not affect credit flow to the private sector.

"The impact is not likely to be too much," he said projecting that the interest rate may increase by 0.5 percent. It would also not affect economic growth and employment, the governor hoped.

# Mass hysteria affects

**FROM PAGE 16**  
"Fourteen patients, mostly aged between 13 and 16, have been admitted to the DMCH. Ten of them are girls and suffering from headache and a kind of muscle pull. But their neurological and routine examination shows fully normal results. The problem was not due to heat stroke and it should be investigated whether there were any environmental problem in the area," he said.

Four medical teams -- two from the armed forces, one from the Directorate General of Health and one from Narsingdi civil surgeon's office -- are now in Narsingdi to examine the environment and drinking water of the school and nearby areas.

Team members investigating the issue said they started observing the situation from Saturday and it may take several days before they are able to say anything clearly.

A board meeting with ten expert physicians of different disciplines including medicine, psychiatry, neurology, gastroenterology, nephrology, cardiology and others took place at around 9:00am yesterday.

The physicians said there is nothing to be afraid of the unknown disease.

Several patients of the disease have already been cured after treatment at Narsingdi Sadar Hospital and left the hospital, said Shakhawat Hossain, a member of the governing body of Adiabadi Islamia High School and College.

"The school has been declared closed for three days and the vacation may increase if necessary. Principal of the institution Nur Shakhawat Hossain said.

When the students started fainting

## North Korea shuts Nuclear reactor

AP, Seoul

A North Korean diplomat said yesterday that Pyongyang is ready to start disabling its nuclear programmes now that it has shut down its sole operating reactor, as long as Washington lifts all sanctions against the communist nation.

Kim Myong Gil, minister at the North's mission to the United Nations in New York, confirmed the reactor was shut down Saturday after receipt of a South Korean oil shipment, and said UN inspectors would verify the closure Sunday.

"Immediately after the arrival of the first heavy fuel oil, the facilities were shut down and the (International Atomic Energy Agency) personnel will verify that," Kim told The Associated Press by telephone.

IAEA inspectors were expelled from the North in late 2002 at the start of the nuclear crisis. A 10-member team arrived Saturday in North Korea to make sure the reactor at Yongbyon was switched off the first step by the North to scale back its weapons programme since the standoff began.

Kim also raised hope for further progress on disarmament and noted that next steps included the North making a declaration of its nuclear programme and disabling the facilities. But he said that would only come if Washington takes actions "in parallel," including removing wider economic sanctions against Pyongyang and striking the country from a list of states that sponsor terrorism.

"After the shutdown, then we will discuss about the economic sanctions lifting and removing of the terrorism list. All those things should be discussed and resolved," Kim said.

on Wednesday, the school authorities first thought that it might be due to hot weather.

"Thinking so, we arranged taking the classes from 7:30am instead of 10:30am on Saturday. But similar cases took place during the first hour when several students and four teachers fainted," the principal said.

Strangely enough, no one outside the school got senseless or developed the symptoms.

As The Daily Star correspondents talked to the patients, some of them seemed a little bit abnormal.

Class nine student Aleya Akhter, who was admitted to DMCH Saturday morning, said, "It seemed a wind blew towards the classroom through the open window and I felt the smell of a medicine. Suddenly tear started rolling down my cheeks with severe headache and muscle pulling."

Aleya's mother Sharifa Begum said the girl felt breathing problem with chest pain immediately after her returning home from school on Thursday.

The patients' conditions are fluctuating and they are provided with mild tranquilliser, Prof Foyez said, adding, "If the Department of Medicine finds all the test results of the patients' normal, they will refer them to the Department of Psychiatry. They will need counselling."

Last year, such cases took place among the students of a school in Munshiganj and two schools in Faridpur. However, the number of victims was much smaller.

## Suicide attacks

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