

INT'L THALASSAEMIA DAY OBSERVED

**1.5cr people carry gene of thalassaemia in country**

## STAFF CORRESPONDENT

It was 35 years ago when Shanti's parents got married and they were not aware of the disease thalassaemia and its dreadfulness.

As a result, three of their children were the carrier of thalassaemia and one of them died.

Shanti is luckier than her brother as she has been suffering from minor thalassaemia which was diagnosed at the age of two and a half years.

The poor parents did not know that the disease could be prevented if they had blood screening before marriage to see whether both of them were the carriers or not.

The situation has now changed and Shanti, a student of Fine Arts of Dhaka University, cannot think of getting married without being confirmed that the man is not a carrier of thalassaemia gene.

According to experts, when both the husband and the wife carry the gene of thalassaemia, there is 25

percent chance that their children will have thalassaemia major, 25 percent chance that their children will be healthy and 50 percent chance that their children will be the carrier of the disease.

So it is a must for every body to have blood screening before marriage or before conceiving as every year some 10000 children are born with the disease in the country, they added.

The experts were speaking at a roundtable organised by Bangladesh Thalassaemia Society at the National Press Club in the capital to mark the International Thalassaemia Day.

They said as the treatment of thalassaemia, in which red blood cell is destroyed due to structural problem of hemoglobin, is very expensive, it is important to take cautionary measures as some 1.5 crore people in the country are carrying the gene of the disease at present.

Prof M A Mannan of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujib Medical

University said the primary screening system of thalassaemia has been initiated at the Department of Child Hematology and Oncology at a minimum cost of BSMU.

Speaking as chief guest Women and Children Affairs Adviser Rasheda K Chowdhury said, "In our society people often show apathy to have blood screening before marriage to know whether or not he or she is a carrier of thalassaemia.

"So it is important to make them aware of the dreadfulness of the disease," she added.

Dr Syed Alauddin Ahmed, Prof Dr Mohammad Abid Hossain Molla of Dhaka Medical College and Hospital (DMCH), and National Prof Dr M R Khan also took part in the discussion.

Lab One Thalassaemia Foundation organised a discussion at Dhaka Reporters Unity (DRU) and launched a one-year Thalassaemia Screening Programme and a website: www.labonebd.com.

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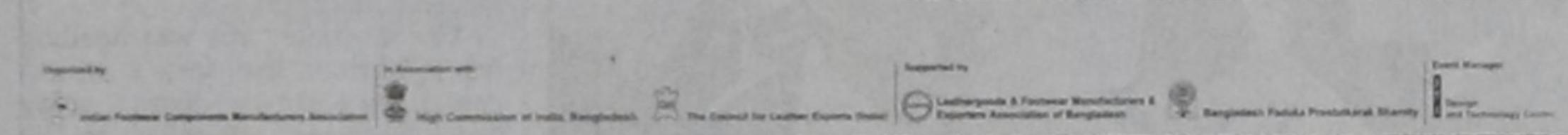
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**ALL-ASIAN INTER-UNIVERSITY DEBATE INAUGURATED  
CG keen to facilitate cultural exchanges: CA**

UNB, Dhaka

Chief Adviser Fakhruddin Ahmed yesterday said the present government is keen to facilitate cultural exchanges and youth empowerment programmes with other countries of South Asia and beyond.

He made the observation while inaugurating the 15th All-Asian Inter-University Debate Championship-2008, first ever in South Asia, organised by North South University at Sonargaon Hotel.

Around 400 debaters are participating in the competition from a dozen Asian countries.

He said youths can contribute significantly towards the prosperity of a nation, and "we must collectively tap their potential to achieve our potentials as nations."

Self-improvement of the youth is essential to ensure national development, he said.

Lauding the North South University Debate Club for organising the All-Asian Inter-University debate championship, Fakhruddin termed the event a congregation of enlightened minds who, he said, will flourish as future leaders of Asia in their respective fields.

"It will also help tapping the potentials of Asia's brightest youths," he added.

He said the All-Asian Inter-Varsity Debate Championship is one of the most prestigious international debating tournaments in Asia, and the third largest in the world.



Chief Adviser Fakhruddin Ahmed speaks at the inaugural function of the 15th All-Asian Inter-University Debate Championship-2008 at Sonargaon Hotel in the city yesterday.

He said the topics such as women's empowerment, human rights, poverty alleviation, terrorism, rural development and environmental issues appear to be well chosen, timely and relevant.

He hoped that this event would serve as an extended forum in Bangladesh for interaction and for the exchange of views on vital socio-economic and cultural themes that confront Asia.

Fakhruddin said the government encourages such endeavours and pledges to offer wholehearted support and assistance for such initiatives.

Vice-chancellor of North South University Dr Hafiz G A Siddiqi also

spoke at the inaugural ceremony.

Collaborating with North South University, throughout the tournament, are BRAC Bank Ltd, Prime Bank Ltd, Southeast Bank Ltd, Citibank NA, Eastern Bank Ltd, NCC Bank Ltd, Nescafe, MOJO, Rahimafrooz, ACI Ltd, Berger Bangladesh Ltd, International Organization for Migration (IOM), Birman Bangladesh Airlines, Pan Pacific Sonargaon Hotel, United International University, St Joseph Higher Secondary School and College, Farzana Shakil Makeover Salon Ltd, The Daily Star, Prothom Alo, ATN Bangla, Radio Foorti, Masthead PR and Computer Source Ltd.

**'Release Hasina, Khaleda'**

DU CORRESPONDENT

Bangladesh Chhatra League (BCL), student wing of Awami League (AL), and Jatiyatabadi Chhatra Dal (JCD), student wing of Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP), yesterday reiterated their demands for the release of Sheikh Hasina and Khaleda Zia.

BCL leaders and activists took out a procession from Madhu's Canteen at Dhaka University that paraded different streets on the campus.

Later, they held a protest rally at the foot of Aparejyo Bangla, while JCD activists took out another

procession and held a rally at Battala (in front of the arts building) at the same time to press home their demands.

In two separate processions, leaders and activists of both the organisations chanted slogans demanding release of their respective party chiefs.

At the rally, BCL leaders demanded unconditional release of Hasina and the front's detained General Secretary Mahfuza Haider Rotan, saying they would go for tough action programmes if their demands are not met.

BCL central unit President Sultan Salauddin Tuku, General Secretary Shafiqul Bari Babu and DU unit President Hasan Mamun spoke at the rally.

General Secretary Syed Abul Kalam, DU unit President Sohel Rana Tipu and General Secretary Sazzad Saqib Badsha spoke at the rally.

Meanwhile, JCD leaders demanded immediate release of Khaleda, Tarique Rahman, JCD President Azizul Bari Helal and other party leaders. The JCD would go for tougher programmes if their demands are not met immediately, they said.

JCD central unit acting President Sultan Salauddin Tuku, General Secretary Shafiqul Bari Babu and DU unit President Hasan Mamun spoke at the rally.

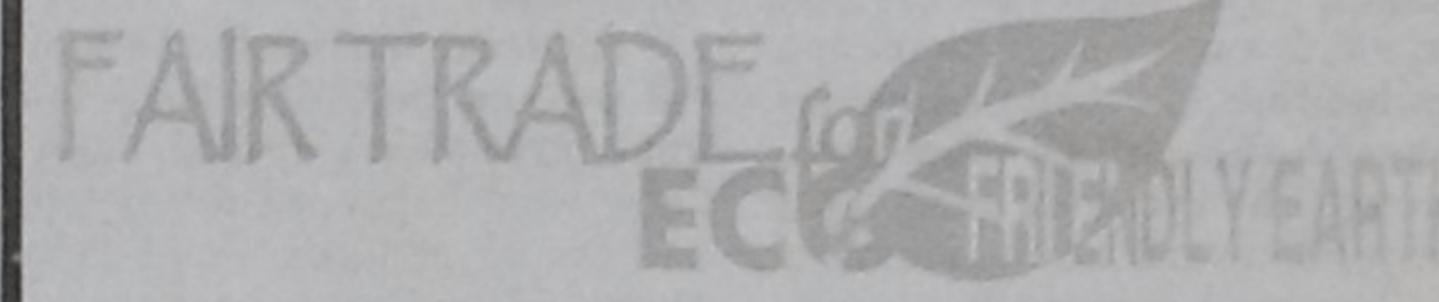
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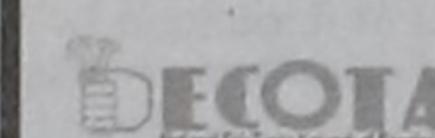
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