



Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina speaks at the graduation ceremony of the National Defence Course-2009 at the National Defence College at Mirpur Cantonment in the city yesterday. (Story on Page 1)

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Over 7.5 lakh suffer from blindness

Manikganj free from cataract, says ORBIS Int'l country director

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

More than 7.5 lakh people in the country are suffering from blindness while 80 percent of them are suffering from cataract blindness, Dr Abu Raihan, country director of ORBIS International, said yesterday.

He was addressing an experience-sharing meeting on 'Demand Side Financing (DSF) in Eliminating Cataract Blindness' organised by the ORBIS International, Bangladesh at the Dhaka Reporters' Unity (DRU) auditorium.

The DSF pilot project was endorsed by World Health Organisation (WHO) and financed by ORBIS to make the Manikganj district free from cataract. The project, which started in July 2006, will end on December 31.

"During the project, over 7000 surgeries were carried out among over 4,000 poor and ultra poor families. Now we can declare Manikganj as the first district free from

cataract blindness," said Raihan.

He also informed that the project costs around Tk 2.5 crore.

"Around Tk 350 crore is needed for eliminating cataract from the country within five years. It will increase the country's productivity, which will add Tk 2500 crore to the national economy," he also said.

Presenting the keynote paper, Mohammed Nazmul Huq, assistant professor of the Department of Statistics of Jahangirnagar University and consultant of the DSF project, said that 444 health and family planning workers and 820 elected local government representatives were trained up to implement the project.

Naushad Faiz, team leader of the evaluation team of the project; Momotaz Begum, chairperson of Momotaz Eye Hospital; Imrul Hasan Khan, senior programme officer and project manager of DSF, were also present at the meeting.

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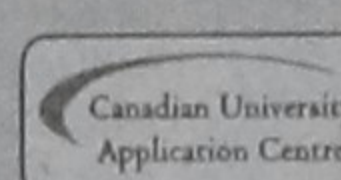
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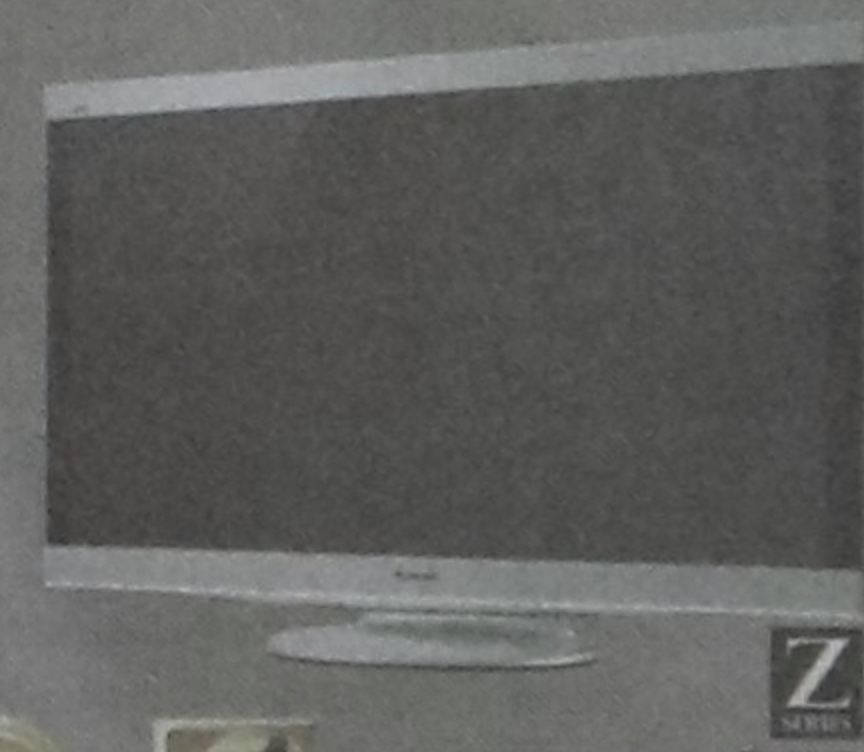
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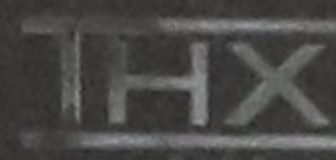
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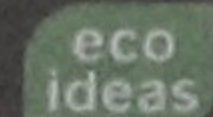
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