



A devastating fire engulfs 15 jhut (garment by-products) godowns at Block-B under Mirpur-10 in the city in the early hours of yesterday.

PHOTO: STAR

## Hepatitis B causes 25pc liver cancer

Says Hepatology Society study

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

About 25 percent of the liver cancer cases are caused by chronic hepatitis B virus (HBV) infection, a study by Hepatology Society, Bangladesh revealed yesterday.

Hepatologists said most of the newborn HBV infections are transmitted from mothers infected with the virus during the last trimester of the pregnancy.

Speaking at a press conference at the National Press Club in the city, marking the World Hepatitis Day, they called upon the people from all walks of life to aware about the dangerous turn of hepatitis viruses, which are blamed for liver failure, cirrhosis and cancer.

Prof Mobin Khan, chairman of hepatology department at the Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujib Medical University (BSMMU), National Professor Nurul Islam and Prof AKM Khorshed Alam, president of the hepatology society, also spoke.

The speakers said the hepatitis B and C viruses are mainly transmitted through blood. Uses of infected syringes and needles, circumcision and shaving at barber shops are the other routes of transmission of the viruses.

They said, "Precaution is the only measure to get saved from the HCV infection."

The hepatologists said of the patients admit-

ted to hospitals with acute hepatitis and jaundice, 43 percent are caused by hepatitis E virus, 22 percent by B virus, 8 percent by A virus and 3 percent by C virus.

The society leaders also said one third of the rural population are being exposed to hepatitis B virus during their lifetime. The vaccine for HBV is available everywhere in the country and it may be given to all age groups to save them from liver diseases. The vaccine for hepatitis C is yet to be discovered.

The day was observed yesterday across the world with a slogan "Am I number 12?" with the aim to increase awareness of the shocking statistic that one in 12 people on the planet are living with hepatitis B or C.

Liver Foundation of Bangladesh organised a seminar to mark the day, which was followed by a free hepatitis B and C viruses screening programme at the Bangladesh National Museum in the city.

Speaking as the chief guest, Social Welfare Minister Enamul Haque Mostafa Shaheed said the people should be aware of the diseases, which silently kill the infected persons.

Association for the Study of the Liver, Bangladesh and Viral Hepatitis Foundation jointly organised a discussion on the occasion at Shaheed Dr Milon Hall at the BSMMU.

## 'POLITICAL' CASES 437 more withdrawn

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The government yesterday recommended withdrawal of 437 more cases, identified as 'politically motivated', which were filed during the tenure of the BNP-Jamaat alliance as well as the last caretaker government.

State Minister for Law Quamrul Islam said this after a meeting of the national committee to review politically motivated cases at the home ministry.

"A total of 701 cases were submitted today [Wednesday] for withdrawal. After reviewing, we have decided to recommend withdrawal of 437 cases," he told reporters after the meeting.

Of the cases, 431 cases were filed under penal code and six under Anti-Corruption Commission.

A total of 5,129 cases were withdrawn with yesterday's cases.

## Hasan Mahmud joins NSU as part-time faculty

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

State Minister for Environment and Forests Hasan Mahmud starts teaching 'Climate Change and Disaster Management' in North South University as a part-time teacher.

He is scheduled to deliver a lecture on every Tuesday. Hasan Mahmud is the only minister who is teaching in any university, said a press release.

Earlier, he used to be a teacher of East West University.

Hasan Mahmud did his graduation and master's from Chittagong University in chemistry.

Later, he did two other master's degrees from Vrije University of Brussels in 'human ecology' in 1993 and 'international politics' in 1996 from University Libre des Bruxelles and did his PhD on environmental chemistry from Limburg University Centrum, Belgium, in 2001.

# Saarc move to boost food production

SAC to take up 5 regional projects

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Saarc Agriculture Centre (SAC) is taking up five regional projects to increase food production through sharing experiences and technological expertise among the South Asian countries.

"The projects might be launched next year," SAC Director Dr Rafiqul Islam Mondal told The Daily Star on the sidelines of a workshop yesterday.

SAC is undertaking the first ever projects to step up cooperation in the agricultural sector to ensure food security in the member countries of the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (Saarc), he said.

The Asian Development Bank (ADB)

and SAC jointly organised the workshop titled 'Saarc initiatives on regional food security' at Sonargaon Hotel in the city to discuss the projects.

The projects will focus on increasing food production in the flood-prone, salinity-prone and drought-prone regions, helping marginal farmers, promoting balanced use of fertilisers and chemicals, increasing efficiency to prevent post-harvest losses, upgrading food standards and preventing trans-boundary diseases.

Once the projects are finalised, funds will be sought from development partners. ADB will also provide funds, Rafiqul Islam said.

Addressing the inaugural session of the workshop, Agriculture Minister Matia

Chowdhury said it is imperative that the experts incorporate the climate change issues into the projects.

"It is not enough to develop technologies to increase food production. We must know how to tackle natural disasters, which eat up good amounts of our crops," she said.

Matia said there is similar climate in many areas of the South Asian countries, and that sharing technologies to grow crops in those areas could help increase food productivity.

ADB Acting Country Director Hans Carlsson and Saarc Secretariat Director Riaz Hamidullah also spoke at the inaugural ceremony. Experts from the Saarc countries and development partners attended the workshop.

## CRIMES AGAINST HUMANITY

# 'Probe going on smoothly'

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Law Minister Shafique Ahmed said investigation into the crimes against humanity during the country's Liberation War in 1971 is going on smoothly, although Abdul Matin, a senior investigator, has resigned from the office.

The government will appoint more investigators and prosecutors if the existing investigators and prosecutors feel it is a necessity, he told reporters after a meeting with two representatives of

International Centre for Transitional Justice (ICTJ) at his secretariat office.

The law minister also said that all forms of crimes against humanity in 1971, including the killing of intellectuals, would be tried in the international war crimes tribunal.

The Pakistani occupation forces and their local collaborators had systematically killed the country's prominent intellectuals and professionals at the fag end of the 1971 Liberation War, he said, adding that these killings would be tried

after investigation.

ICTJ's Asian Director Patrick Burgess and Deputy Director Caitlin Reiger, who had observed trials of war criminals in different countries in the world, met the law minister to exchange their views on the trial of 1971 crimes against humanity.

The law minister said ICTJ representatives, who have earlier exchanged views with the Bangladeshi investigators and prosecutors, informed him that the investigation into the crimes against humanity is being conducted in a fair manner.

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2010 BBA (IBA) Orientation Schedule

| Venue  | Date             | Time            |
|--|------------------|-----------------|
| Kalabagan: 166/1 Mirpur Road (beside Dolphin Goli)       | Friday, May 21   | 10 am, 11:15 am |
| Mouchak: 128/2, New Circular Rd (west of Mouchak Market) | Friday, May 21   | 3:30 pm         |
| Uttara: Plot 2, Sector 9 (opposite Mascot Plaza)         | Saturday, May 22 | 4:00 pm         |
| Chittagong: 709/A, Nurbag (behind Central Plaza)         | Friday, May 21   | 10:00 am        |
| Khulna: Royal Hotel (in front of City College)           | Saturday, May 22 | 10:00 am        |

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