



## FTA with Sri Lanka this yr

14 deals signed after Hasina-Sirisena official talks

UNB, Dhaka

Bangladesh and Sri Lanka yesterday agreed to sign a Free Trade Agreement (FTA) by this year, aiming to further strengthen and institutionalise bilateral trade cooperation between the two nations.

The decision to sign the FTA was finalised during the official bilateral talks between visiting Sri Lankan President Maithripala Sirisena and Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina at the Prime Minister's Office.

Briefing reporters after the meeting, Foreign Secretary M Shahidul Haque said the FTA with Sri Lanka would be Bangladesh's first such deal with any country and a necessary study would be done prior to signing of the agreement.

He said the meeting marked the beginning of a new journey in Dhaka-Colombo relations as the Sri Lankan president termed his visit to Bangladesh a historic one.

The two leaders asked the officials concerned to complete all necessary steps promptly regarding the FTA.

The foreign secretary said if the FTA is inked, it would help Bangladesh enter such deals with other countries. There were some FTAs in the pipeline, he added.

Following the official talks, the two countries signed 14 instruments -- one agreement and 13 Memorandums of Understanding (MoUs) -- to strengthen cooperation in the areas of economy, agriculture, shipping, higher education, information technology and media.

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Visiting Sri Lankan President Maithripala Sirisena talks to Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina during a ceremony to sign an agreement and 13 MoUs at the latter's office yesterday. The two countries also agreed to sign a Free Trade Agreement (FTA) by this year.

PHOTO: PMO

### MoUs SIGNED ON

Dhaka-Colombo cooperation in agriculture, shipping, higher education, research, information and communication technology, information & broadcasting, radio, film & television, foreign service academy, financial services, investment and economic cooperation.

### AGREEMENT ON

Visa waiver for diplomatic and official passport holders of the two countries.

## Fresh flood strikes Sirajganj villages

Part of embankment washed away; Jamuna, Brahmaputra continue to flow above danger line

STAR REPORT

Fresh floods hit at least 30 villages of Sirajganj after a portion of an embankment eroded while the Jamuna in Gaibandha and Brahmaputra in Kurigram were flowing above the danger level yesterday, bringing misery to people in the districts.

Many families in char areas of Gaibandha were living in waist-deep deluged houses raising their bedstead above the water level on bamboo poles.

Meanwhile in Kurigram, water of the Dharla, Teesta and Dudhkumar started receding, according to the district Water Development Board.

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PHOTO: STAR

A joint team of army and the Water Development Board repair a flood control embankment at Bahuka in Sirajganj after a part of it was breached by the onrush of waters of the Jamuna River Thursday night. The river has been flowing above danger level flooding areas of the northern region of Bangladesh. The photo was taken around noon yesterday.

## 6 more Sitakunda kids hospitalised

Condition of others improving

ARUN BIKASH DEY, Chittagong

Six more children fell sick yesterday in Sitakunda's Tripura Para and were admitted to hospital immediately, but 51 children, hospitalised with similar symptoms, were apparently getting well.

However, nine children, who had similar symptoms, died this week at their houses in remote hilly areas in the district. They are believed to have been suffering from the same disease.

All the victims are between one and 12 years old and the symptoms include fever, rash, breathing problems, vomiting and blood in stool, said Dr Azizur Rahman Siddique, civil surgeon of Chittagong.

Of them, 13 have been admitted to Chittagong Medical College Hospital and the rest to Bangladesh Institute of Tropical and Infectious Disease (BITID) in Sitakunda's Fouzdarhat, he added.

Azizur said the condition of the children was improving.

The civil surgeon further said he would take an initiative to vaccinate the children. "We will investigate why the children were not brought under vaccination and take tough action against anyone responsible for neglect, if there was any," he told The Daily Star.

A three-member probe committee headed by Mirsarai upazila health and

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## Annisul blames homegrown mosquitoes

Says he can't tie mosquito nets in people's homes, but is 'sorry' for their sufferings

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Dhaka North City Corporation Mayor Annisul Huq has blamed the mosquito population inside people's houses for the chikungunya outbreak.

He claimed the viral disease was spreading fast because of the mosquito populations inside households, rather than those growing in the city's drainage system.

"Aedes mosquitoes breed in clear water that is mostly kept inside residences. We cannot go inside people's homes to stop mosquitoes from spreading," he told a press conference at the DNCC Nagar

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## CHIKUNGUNYA OUTBREAK

## Authorities failed to act timely, promptly

City dwellers say as the viral disease reaches an 'epidemic level'

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The number of chikungunya cases continues to increase with city dwellers blaming the authorities' failure to take timely and preventive actions for the outbreak of the disease.

The number of reported cases has risen to around 3,000 from 2,748 on Wednesday and 2,700 on Tuesday, said Prof Meerjady Sabrina Flora, director of Institute of Epidemiology, Disease Control and Research (IEDCR).

The actual number of the chikungunya cases, however, would be higher as many go unreported.

Epidemiologist Prof Mahmudur Rahman and entomologist Prof Tauhid Uddin Ahmed yesterday said the present chikungunya situation could be termed an epidemic.

But it is for the government to decide whether it would make the declaration

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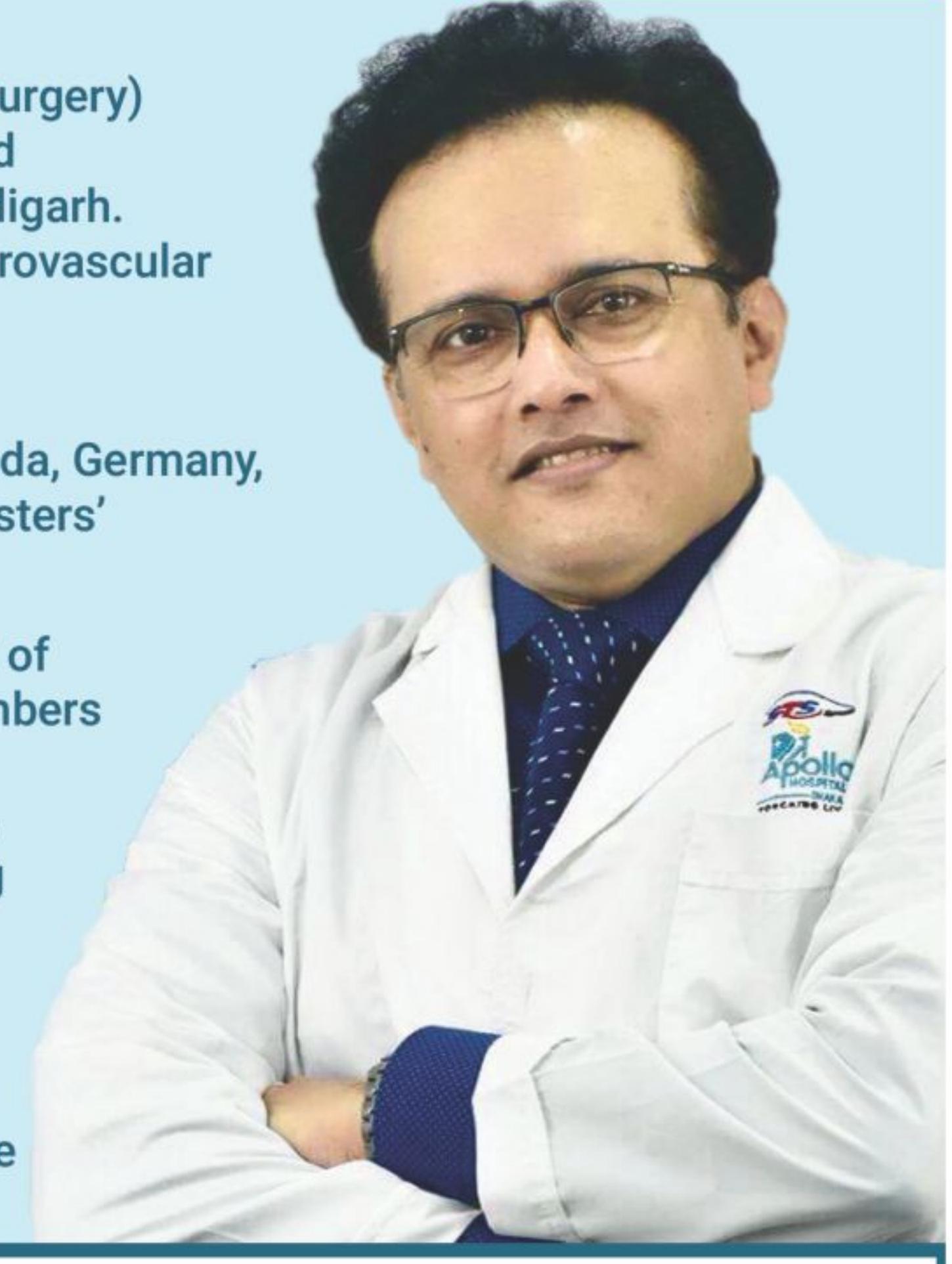
"Whatever happened, when a player like Tamim doesn't want to talk about it, we should respect it."

BCB PRESIDENT  
NAZMUL HASAN  
ABOUT TAMIM'S PULLING OUT  
OF ENGLISH COUNTY OVER  
ALLEGED HATE ATTACK

Renowned Neurosurgeon, DR. AMITABHA CHANDA joins APOLLO HOSPITALS DHAKA as Full Time Consultant

Dr. Amitabha Chanda  
Senior Consultant  
Neurosurgery

For Appointment  
10678



- He obtained his MBBS and MS (General Surgery) from Medical College Calcutta and passed MCh (Neurosurgery) from PGIMER, Chandigarh. He had completed his fellowship in Cerebrovascular & Skull Base Surgery (USA) and Skull Base Surgery (Canada).
- He has extensive training from USA, Canada, Germany, Austria and Korea and has completed Masters' course in AO Spine.
- He has 23 years of experience in the field of Neurosurgery with one of the highest numbers of successful "Awake Brain Surgeries" for brain tumors in India. The areas of his expertise are Skull base surgery including skull base tumors and pituitary tumors, Endoscopic and Minimally Invasive Neurosurgery, Cerebral Aneurysms and Arteriovenous Malformations, Revascularization of Brain, Complex Spine surgeries, Pediatric Neurosurgeries.



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