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# Treatment still too expensive

Affected poor families suffer most; 10,000 babies born with the disease every year

MOHAMMAD AL-MASUM MOLLA

It was perhaps one of the luckiest days for Osman Haider Chishty and Sanjida Luna, as they welcomed their baby girl on April 10, 2005. They named her Sirajum Munira Punni.

And, like all new parents, Chishty and Luna embraced the joy of parenthood with arms wide open.

By the time she was three years old, Punni's parents noticed that she was often down with fever or cold. Alarmed, they took her to a doctor.

That is when the physician revealed that Punni was suffering from Thalassemia, a disease with a haemoglobin disorder. This came as a shock for both parents.

In fact, when the couple had their blood tests done, they learned that they too were Thalassemia carriers. And with that, their days of struggle began.

Since 2008, Chishty, a businessman, and Luna, a housewife, have been collecting a bag of blood every month for their baby, along with the necessary medications. As days passed, she began needing two bags of blood per month.

WORLD THALASSAEMIA DAY TODAY



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Chittagong University students climbing down from their shuttle train at Sholashahar Railway Station yesterday. Sometimes due to lack of room inside carriages, and sometimes just for fun, they travel on the roofs of the train knowing very well that an accident could result in serious injuries and even death.

PHOTO: RAJIB RAIHAN

# BASIC SCAMS Bacchu out to make the probe drag on

Says ACC official

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Former BASIC Bank chairman Sheikh Abdul Hye Bacchu has been delaying an ongoing enquiry into allegations that he was involved in loan scams amounting to Tk 4,500 crore between 2010 and 2013, Anti-Corruption Commission officials say.

He did not appear at the commission's Segunbagicha office yesterday as per schedule and sent a letter asking for two months' time instead.

ACC officials are investigating 56 cases regarding the loan scams that took place when Bacchu was chairman of BASIC Bank.

"He mentioned in the letter that he was suffering from heart disease. His mother's health condition was not good," said an ACC deputy director, requesting anonymity.

The official added that Bacchu was asked to appear at the ACC on May 15. "He is

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# No secret chamber in King Tut's tomb

INDEPENDENT.CO.UK

Radar scans of King Tutankhamun's tomb have proved there are no secret chambers packed with buried treasure.

The disappointing end to a three-year search for the hidden rooms was announced by the Egyptian Antiquities Ministry.

It scotches the theory proposed by British Egyptologist Nicholas Reeves that Queen Nefertiti's tomb could be concealed behind wall paintings in the pharaoh's burial chamber.

Experts had been divided over the existence of the hidden rooms after scans by American and Japanese scientists proved inconclusive.

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# No progress on quota gazette

Says cabinet secretary; demonstrators to announce fresh programmes today as their ultimatum ends

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

There has been no progress regarding the publication of a gazette abolishing the quotas in government jobs, the cabinet secretary has said as the deadline set by demonstrators expired yesterday.

Officials received no directive about the quota system from the prime minister, Cabinet Secretary Mohammad Shafiq Alam said yesterday.

"There is no progress on quotas. The issue remains at the same stage as it had been before," he told reporters during a briefing at the secretariat following a cabinet meeting with Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina at her office.

Yesterday was the deadline set by the quota reform demonstrators for publication of a gazette regarding the quotas.

On April 26, leaders of the quota reform movement threatened to launch fresh demonstrations in May for the gazette notification.

Awami League Joint General Secretary Jahangir Kabir Nanak met with the leaders the next day and assured them that the government would publish the gazette once the prime minister, who was in Australia at the time, returned.

Leaders of the quota reform movement then postponed their agitation till May 7.

Demonstrators said yesterday that they would announce their next course of action at a press conference at 11:00am in front of Dhaka University's Central Library today.

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# Ramadan office timing 9:00am to 3:30pm

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The government has fixed office timings for the upcoming month of Ramadan from 9:00am to 3:30pm on working days.

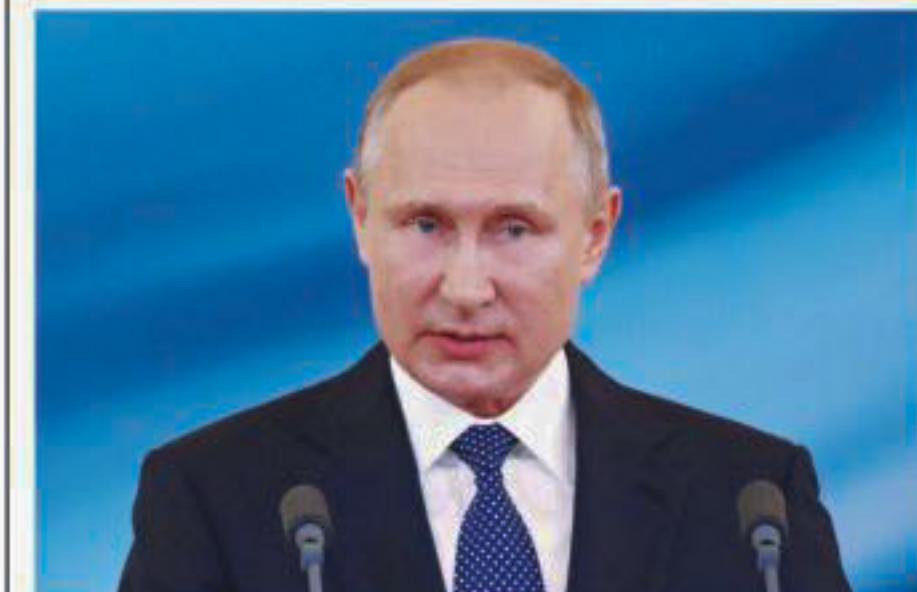
Cabinet yesterday approved the new time schedule, placed by the public administration ministry. Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina chaired the cabinet meeting held at the Prime Minister's Office.

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# Putin sworn in for fourth term

Vows economic reforms amid tensions with West

AFP, Moscow



Vladimir Putin was sworn in as Russia's president for a fourth term yesterday, extending his almost two-decade rule by another six years at a time of high tension with his Western rivals.

The 65-year-old, in power since 1999, is on course to become the longest-serving Russian leader since Joseph Stalin after his

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# হোল্ডিং কর আদায়ের সুবিধার্থে অফিস খোলা রাখা সংক্রান্ত বিজ্ঞপ্তি

সম্মানিত হোল্ডিং করদাতাগণের অবগতির জন্য জানানো যাচ্ছে যে, হোল্ডিং কর, ট্রেড লাইসেন্স ফি, ঢাকা উত্তর সিটি কর্পোরেশনের মালিকানাধীন মার্কেটের ভাড়া ও সালামী পরিশোধের সুবিধার্থে আগামী ১২ মে ২০১৮ হতে ৩০ জুন ২০১৮ পর্যন্ত সকল কার্যদিবস ছাড়াও সাপ্তাহিক সরকারি ছুটির দিন শনিবার সকাল ১০.০০ ঘটিকা থেকে বিকাল ৩.০০ ঘটিকা পর্যন্ত ঢাকা উত্তর সিটি কর্পোরেশনের দৈনিক আঞ্চলিক কার্যালয়ের রাজস্ব বিভাগসহ বাজার শাখার অফিসসমূহ খোলা থাকবে।

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