

When is surgery a must?

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Some of the rarer symptoms include an upset stomach with a loss of appetite, stiff neck, bad breath, and some children too young to express pain drool incessantly.

Most of us associate tonsillitis with a sore throat on a winter morning, running to our parents with another excuse to skip school.

More often than not, tonsillitis is harmless -- just a regular inflammation on the two lumps of tissue at the back of our throats.

But tonsillitis that keeps coming back should be taken seriously. Many parents have opted for tonsillectomy (surgery to take tonsils out) for their children. For some, including adults, tonsillitis can cause other problems like sleep apnea, which is a disorder

that briefly stops you from breathing at night, especially while sleeping.

Since the 1960s, tonsillectomies have become less and less frequent. Doctors only bring up surgeries if you or your child suffer from tonsillitis at least seven times in a year, five times a year for two years in a row, or three times a year for three years in a row.

Doctors may also suggest operating if the tonsillitis caused by bacteria are resisting antibiotics.

Consulting a doctor for tonsillitis is always the best option. While many prefer home remedies, it heals faster with the prescribed medication. And if you have to get a tonsillectomy done, always know there is a lot of ice cream on the other side of the operation!

'A fantasy' to think UN

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ahead of next week's annual UN gathering of world leaders in New York.

The United Nations will be doing everything it can for a country that Guterres said is on "the verge of a dramatic humanitarian disaster" and has decided to engage the Taliban in order to help Afghanistan's roughly 36 million people.

Even before the Taliban's seizure of the capital Kabul, half the country's population depended on aid. That looks set to increase due to drought and shortages and the World Food Programme has warned 14 million people were on the brink of starvation.

Guterres said he supports efforts to convince the Taliban to form a more inclusive government than when it ruled 20 years ago. The United Nations has little capacity to mediate, he said, and should focus on its "position of an international organization that is there to support the Afghan people."

"You cannot expect miracles," he said, stressing that the United Nations could engage with the Taliban, but that the Islamist movement would never accept a UN role in helping form a new Afghan government.

Humanitarian aid, Guterres said, should be used as an instrument to help convince the Taliban to respect fundamental rights, including those of women and girls.

Governments pledged more than \$1.1 billion in aid this week for Afghanistan and refugee programs in neighboring countries. Guterres also appealed for countries to make sure the Afghan economy is "not completely strangled."

World reaction to the government of Taliban veterans and hardliners announced last week has been cool, and there has been no sign of international recognition or moves to unblock more than \$9 billion in foreign reserves held outside Afghanistan.

"There must be ways to inject some cash in the Afghan economy, for the economy not to collapse and for the people not to be in a dramatic situation, forcing probably millions to flee," said Guterres, who will begin his second five-year term as UN chief on January 1, 2022.

He said the United Nations will work with its partners to ensure that aid is distributed based on humanitarian principles and "that everybody should be treated equally without any kind of distinction based on gender, on ethnicity or any other consideration."

Guterres emphasized that it is too early to know if the Taliban will respect rights and govern responsibly. He called the situation in Afghanistan "unpredictable," adding: "Nobody knows what will happen, but it's important to engage."

Meanwhile, the US negotiator on Afghanistan said that president Ashraf Ghani's abrupt exit scuttled a deal in which the Taliban would hold off entering Kabul and negotiate a political transition.

In his first interview since the collapse of the 20-year Western-backed government, Zalmay Khalilzad, who brokered a 2020 deal with the Taliban to withdraw US troops, told the Financial Times that the insurgents had agreed to stay outside the capital for two weeks and shape a future government.

"Even at the end, we had an agreement with the Talibs for (them) not to enter Kabul," he told the newspaper in the interview published Wednesday.

But Ghani fled on August 15 and the Taliban, in a previously arranged meeting that day with General Frank McKenzie, chief of Central Command, asked if US troops would ensure security for Kabul as government authority crumbled.

"And then you know what happened, we weren't going to take responsibility," Khalilzad said.

SpaceX sends first

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billionaire who chartered the flight. The spaceship's trajectory will take it to an altitude of 357 miles (575 kilometers), which is deeper into space than the International Space Station (ISS).

After spending three days spinning around planet Earth, the four-person crew, all Americans, will splash down off the Florida coast.

"The #Inspiration4 launch reminds us of what can be accomplished when we partner with private industry!" tweeted Nasa administrator Bill Nelson ahead of the launch.

Nasa's commercial crew program was founded in 2011.

SpaceX, founded by billionaire Tesla owner Elon Musk, hasn't disclosed what the trip cost Isaacman -- but the price tag runs into the tens of millions of dollars.

Inspiration4's crew leader is a high school dropout who went on to found Shift4 Payments, which provides

payment processing services. He is also a keen aviator.

His three crewmates were selected through a competition, and their stories have been followed in a Netflix documentary.

Hayley Arceneaux, a pediatric cancer survivor, is a 29-year-old physician assistant. She is the youngest American to go into orbit and the first person with a prosthesis, on a part of her femur.

Chris Sembroski, 42, is a US Air Force veteran who now works as an aerospace data engineer.

Sian Proctor, a 51-year-old geoscientist and educator, was almost selected to become an astronaut for Nasa in 2009, and is only the fourth African-American woman to go to space.

Former US first lady Michelle Obama congratulated the crew after lift-off. "They're inspiring us all with their courage, curiosity, and passion," she tweeted.

Number of US states with high obesity rate rises to 16

AFP, Washington

The number of US states where at least 35 percent of residents are obese rose to 16 last year, with notable ethnic and racial disparities, new data from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) showed Wednesday.

The states are mainly in the country's South and Midwest, and the total figure is up from nine in 2018 and 12 in 2019. The research comes via self-reporting from telephone surveys, and defines obesity as a body mass index BMI of 30 and over.

Having obesity puts people at risk for many other serious chronic diseases including heart disease, stroke, type 2 diabetes, some types of cancer and poorer mental health.

CDC research has shown obesity triples the risk of Covid-19 hospitalization, because the condition is linked to impaired immune

function. It also decreases lung capacity and reserve and can make ventilation more difficult.

The 16 states were Alabama, Arkansas, Delaware (new this year), Indiana, Iowa (new this year), Kansas, Kentucky, Louisiana, Michigan, Mississippi, Ohio (new this year), Oklahoma, South Carolina, Tennessee, Texas (new this year), and West Virginia.

The CDC also studied combined data from 2018 to 2020 to understand racial differences.

No states had obesity prevalence at above 35 percent among Asian residents -- though some studies have shown health risks linked to obesity may occur at a lower BMI among Asians.

Seven states had a high obesity prevalence for white residents, 22 states had a high obesity prevalence for Hispanic residents, and 35 states and the District of Columbia had a high obesity prevalence among Black residents.



Afghan nationals residing in India hold their hands to their heart during a protest against Pakistan's alleged support to the Taliban in Afghanistan, in New Delhi yesterday.

PHOTO: AFP

High allocations, but off garget

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poverty rates, with areas with higher poverty benefiting from a stronger coverage. But in Bangladesh, the opposite seems to transpire.

For example, Barisal with a poverty incidence of 26.5 percent got social protection coverage of 59.9 percent in a particular year, said the report titled 'Bangladesh Social Protection Public Expenditure Review', which was unveiled yesterday.

On the other hand, Mymensingh, whose 32.8 percent of the population live in poverty, got coverage of only 27.7 percent that year.

In Bangladesh, 49-66 per cent of the beneficiaries of allowance and food support programmes are not poor, the report said citing the Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey.

"By improving the targeting of the social protection programmes, the country can further reduce poverty," it said, adding that reallocating existing transfers to the poorest could reduce poverty by 24 percent.

The report found that the social protection programmes were mostly focused on rural areas.

But with almost one in five of the urban population living in poverty and half of the households at the risk of falling into poverty, there is a need for rebalancing geographic allocations between rural and urban areas.

About 11 percent of the people in urban areas are covered by social protection whereas 19 percent of the urban population is poor.

The coverage in rural areas is higher than the poverty rate, with programmes reaching 36 percent of people, while 26 percent live in poverty.

Using a social registry, such as the National Household Database can improve targeting of both programmes and households at a reduced cost, the report said.

Some risk groups remain underserved. In particular, there are gaps in programming for early years and the economic inclusion of poor and vulnerable youth and adults.

For example, in every eight poor persons, one is a young child. Yet, the poor young children receive only 1.6 percent of social protection

expenditures.

"Investing in early childhood helps a child grow healthier and be more productive in adult life and thus break the cycle of poverty across generations," said Aline Coudouel, lead economist of the WB and a co-author of the report.

"The country has taken innovative programmes, reflecting the life cycle approach. As patterns of risk change in different phases of life, the lifecycle approach needs to encompass support from pregnant mothers to old age, persons with disabilities as well as from households facing shocks to those in chronic poverty," she added.

The social protection expenditures dedicated to persons with disabilities (PWDs) do not meet the mark, either.

The country's cost of disability is estimated at 1.7 percent of GDP while the share of the social protection expenditures dedicated to PWDs is only about 2 percent in fiscal 2018-19 (up from less than 1 percent in fiscal 2009-10).

Meanwhile, on average, it takes at least two months to transfer funds from the treasury to beneficiaries, in part because of a multiplicity of steps and delays can impact implementation.

For instance, for the Food for Work programme, central allocations were released relatively fast but delays of up to 100 days were noted between receipt of funds, project approval, implementation and payments.

The report recommends scaling up the government-to-person payment scheme that cut social protection fund processing time to 10 days.

The WB also suggests for following National Social Security Strategy (NSSS) that lays out a comprehensive roadmap for social protection in Bangladesh.

It recommends revising the list and strengthening the categorisation of social protection programmes to better inform policies, resource allocation, reporting and monitoring.

"We have many social protection programmes, but some of them are fruitless," said Hossain Zillur Rahman, executive chairman at Power and Participation Research Centre.

Unesco announces 20 new biospheres in 21 countries

AFP, Abuja

Unesco on Wednesday added 20 new sites in 21 countries to its global network of biosphere reserves, the UN agency's designation for specially protected regions.

New biosphere reserves are designated each year to promote sustainable development, protect terrestrial, marine and coastal ecosystems and encourage conservation.

For the first time, Lesotho, Libya and Saudi Arabia joined the list.

In Lesotho, the Matseng Biosphere Reserve covers an area of 112,033 hectares in the northern highlands, sometimes called the Kingdom in the Sky, according to Unesco.

"The site is an endemic bird area of high priority, with species such as the Drakensberg siskin."

In Libya, the 83,060 hectares Ashaafan Biosphere Reserve is located in the north-eastern part of the Nafusa Mountain.

With "dry woodlands and steppe grasslands to the north and hyper-arid southern zones in the Sahara Desert", the area is home to endangered species, such as the Striped hyena and the Land tortoise.

Finally in Saudi Arabia, the Juzur Farasan Biosphere Reserve is an 820,000 hectares archipelago located at the extreme southwest of the country near the Yemeni border.

The islands are home to threatened red mangrove Rhizophora mucronata, the largest population of Idmi gazelle in the country and various species of seabirds, marine species and reptiles.

Crores looted, no action

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The lawmakers said the government was claiming that more electricity was being produced than the demand. So, why is it necessary to extend the tenure of quick rental power plants again? They alleged.

They alleged that the tenure of the law was being extended to give some people taxpayers' money.

However, the objections were rejected as the bill was finally passed by a voice vote.

While placing the bill titled "Quick Enhancement of Electricity and Energy Supply (Special Provision) (Amendment) 2021," State Minister for Power Nasrul Hamid said the bill is aimed to extend the tenure of quick rental power plants by another five years till 2026.

The term for the existing law was going to expire next month.

On September 6, the cabinet approved the draft of the bill.

The tenure of the special provision, enacted in 2010, had earlier been extended several times.

Opposing the bill, Gonoforum MP Mokabbir Khan said the bill was brought to the House hurriedly. There was an ill intention behind it and that in no way, the bill should be passed. There was a terrible crisis of power in 2010. Now the crisis is over and there is no need for this bill, he added.

Jatiya Party lawmaker Mujibul Haque said he did not think there was any need to extend the tenure of the law.

He said the government needs to ensure power connection lines first. He said people of his area are not getting the benefit of generating so much electricity. There is no power in his area for five to six hours a day.

"People of my area cannot sleep in summer. People in my area were forced to go on strike. When

Certainly, the political inclination is to increase coverage size but benefit size needs to be addressed properly.

"Urban poverty is an emerging challenge and needs a plural programme. We should be exercising our minds to address it," said Rahman, also the chairperson of Brac.

The pandemic years have shown few lessons, said Binayak Sen, director general at the Bangladesh Institute of Development Studies.

"Conceptually we must distinguish three categories of poor: the new poor, old poor and transient poor. But, we don't have an instrument to capture these categories. We also have to start applying the universalising principle to specific programmes such as old age, maternity allowances, nutrition programmes," he added.

Until 2015, the social protection programmes were limited to programmes for reduction of poverty and vulnerability of households, said Nazma Mobarek, additional secretary to the Finance Division.

After that, there has been a paradigm shift after adopting NSSS strategies including a lifecycle approach social security programme.

About concerns about better targeting, she said the government has taken several reform programmes digitising the payment system.

By June next year, all Social safety net will be paid through G2P, she added.

Over the last decades, Bangladesh has expanded its coverage of social protection programs that now reach three in every 10 households in the country, said Dandan Chen, World Bank operations manager for Bangladesh and Bhutan.

"The COVID-19 pandemic has accentuated the need for a more robust, efficient and adaptive social protection system," she said.

Going forward, well-targeted and less fragmented social protection programmes that consider the demographic change, unplanned urbanisation, labour market vulnerability and frequent shocks will help the country continue with its success of poverty reduction, Chen added.

Covid positivity

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In 24 hours till 8:00am yesterday, DGHS confirmed 51 deaths from Covid-19, taking the total number of patients to 27,109.

The death rate was 1.76 percent. Of yesterday's deceased, 25 men and 26 women.

The highest, 29, died in Khulna division, eight in Chattogram, six in Khulna, four in Rajshahi, three in Barisal and one in Rangpur divisions.

Kushtia youth

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prime minister and made derogatory comments, according to the statement of the case filed by one Ejazul Hakim of Kumargara area with the police station on Wednesday afternoon.

In the case statement, Ejazul said the activities of the accused caused deep resentment among people. The plaintiff feared that the law and order could deteriorate in the area as the youth's activities tarnished the image of the state.

Ejazul also said many shared the video on Facebook and everybody was hurt by it. The Facebook Live session also tarnished the image of the prime minister, he said.

Around 9:30pm on Wednesday, a team of Kushtia Model Police Station conducted a raid and arrested the accused from the same area.

Replying to a query from a local journalist, OC Sabbirul said the arrestee is a student of a private polytechnic college.

After his arrest, Sabbirul was produced before the chief judicial magistrate court, which sent him to jail on Wednesday night, added the OC.

Journos need

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So, I do not think that they need to be worried," the minister said.

In the meeting, National Press Club President Farida Yesmin wanted to know why BFIU mentioned pro-Awami League and Pro-BNP beside the leaders' names and posts.

Drawing the attention of the information minister, journalist leader Manzurul Ahsan Bulbul asked why they sought bank statements only from the leaders of one particular professional group.

No request made

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railway culverts, railway tracks and telephone poles between Phulbari-Charkai. Another group of Mukti Bahini ambushed Pakistani troops in Mahendranagar area and killed one.

Mukti Bahini attacked Pakistani troops in Lubachara area in Sylhet district killing 20 and injuring 30 enemy soldiers. Three Mukti Bahini men were wounded during this operation.

Mukti Bahini ambushed enemy troops in Uliabihar near Gaibandha, killing 20 Pakistani soldiers and injuring one. Mukti Bahini recovered 13 rifles, one Chinese automatic and some ammunitions.

In the Kushtia-Jashore-Khulna sector, Mukti Bahini killed two Pakistani troops in Palia area today and destroyed one Pakistani jeep and one vehicle on Sonabaria-Mandra road.

YAHYA'S DILEMMA
In an editorial published today South China Morning Post wrote that Pakistan President Yahya Khan was facing a dilemma as, on the one hand, People's Party leader Zulfikar Ali Bhutto was coming close to threatening President Yahya Khan with a popular uprising in West Pakistan unless he was made prime minister of the whole country, and on the other, Yahya Khan was far behind the deadline he himself set for the promulgation of a new constitution and convening of an election National Assembly.

It may be mentioned here that Yahya Khan said on June 28, 1971 that a new constitution would be promulgated and an elected National Assembly would be convened within four months.

The Hong Kong-based newspaper further commented, "The mood in West Pakistan and inside the army is not one of conciliation. Can President Yahya entirely ignore the strength of feeling in East Pakistan so eloquently demonstrated by the large-scale desertions of East Bengalis from the diplomatic and other forces?"

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Classes twice

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and Thursdays and pupils of ninth grade on Saturdays and Wednesdays, from Monday, Belal Hossain, director of Directorate of Secondary and Higher Education (DSHE), told The Daily Star yesterday evening.

He said students of sixth and seventh grades will go to classes on Mondays and Tuesdays.

The DSHE sent a directive to secondary schools and colleges regarding the new routine, he said.

In-person classes at schools and colleges resumed on September 12, when students returned to classrooms after 543 days of closure caused by the coronavirus pandemic.

Candidates of HSC and SSC exams of 2021 and 2022 and this year's Primary Education Completion Examination and its equivalent exams are attending classes every day.

Students of classes one to four and six to nine are attending in-person classes once a week.

Students of pre-primary sections like playgroup and nursery will not have to return to classrooms right now.

The DSHE earlier directed secondary schools and colleges that they would hold two classes for each grade when these will reopen. Directorate of Primary Education officials said primary students would attend three classes a day.