

COLD RELATED DISEASES

Pollution, ignorance leads to infection

SHARMIN MEHRIBAN

In a ward in Dhaka Shishu Hospital, a worried Parul looks down at her three-month old son, Tausil, who was lying on the bed beside her.

"He has a cold," she said taking off a part of his clothes to show how heavily he was breathing.

Environmental pollution, poor living conditions and ignorance give rise to more infectious cold-related diseases in winter, the susceptible age group being children below the age of five and adults above 45, according to hospital sources.

"Cold-related diseases like pneumonia and bronchial asthma are categorised as acute respiratory-tract infections and the leading causes are coughs and colds," said Dr Md. Salim Shakur, director, senior consultant and member of the management board of hospital and a professor at Bangladesh Institute of Child Health.

Excessive clothing blocks the

evaporation of sweat and babies in wet diapers for long periods or a cold breeze can lead to coughs and colds, he added.

Other causes are sudden changes in humidity and temperature, external environmental pollution like smoke from vehicles, indoor pollution like overcrowded households, smoke from burning wood as kitchen fuel, cigarette smoking, malnutrition and illiteracy.

Among the diseases, pneumonia is potentially fatal unless diagnosed and treated early.

Symptoms of cold-related diseases are lack of appetite, difficulties in feeding in cases of nursing children, nasal blockage, sleeping disorders and irritation.

"Most patients are from the lower class and are brought here after they have reached a critical stage, especially the ones from out of Dhaka," said Dr. Abdur Rahman.

He also added that the patients are usually brought to hospitals after they are treated at local

clinics and by quacks.

Many patients treated at the hospital for cold-related diseases are male.

"Female children have the same level of immunity as the males," said Dr. Azizul Haq, but he could not confirm whether parents of infected female children do not wilfully bring them to hospitals.

"Negligence could be another reason why there are fewer female patients in hospitals," said a nurse.

A few mothers said they could not provide enough breast milk for their infected children, which is also a factor in low level of child immunity.

"I did not have the appetite nor could I have what I really wanted to eat," said Khadija, whose two-month-old son, Rahim, was suffering from a cold and fever.

In cases of adults, the major causes of cold-related diseases are viral and bacterial infections, said Dr. Morshed, tending a patient at Dhaka Medical College

Hospital (DMCH).

"The left part of her body became numb with the cold breeze blowing from a broken window pane during a long train journey," said a lady, who was attending to her elderly mother-in-law in the same ward.

"Viral and bacterial infections are transmitted through consumption of contaminated food and water and breathing in a polluted atmosphere," said another doctor from the adult male ward.

Adults with viral and bacterial infections have low levels of immunity and are easily infected with cold-related diseases, he added.

Simple precautions like immediate change of children's wet diapers, cleaning sweat before it dries off the body, covering one's mouth while coughing, wearing clothes that are loose for body sweat to evaporate and shutting windows when cold breezes blow, can prevent these diseases, according to Dr. Shakur.

HUNTING FOR BEES



The Small Green Bee-eater (*Merops orientalis*) or Shui Chora, a fairly tame bird is a rare sight in cities and usually seen in plenty in rural areas breeding in the open country with bushes. Just as the name suggests, bee-eaters predominantly eat insects, especially bees, wasps and ants, and often hunts from low perches, maybe only a meter or less high. Before eating its meal, the bird removes the sting by repeatedly hitting the insect on a hard surface. Our photographer spotted this bird yesterday perched on a tree in the Botanical Garden, Mirpur.

Recognising women's contributions to '71

NOVERA DEEPIKA

As Bangalee women's multi-dimensional contributions to the country's Liberation War have

been ignored in the last 34 years, Liberation War Museum has been holding a month-long exhibition titled "The Liberation War and Women" to portray their

contributions. "Bangalee women had immense contributions to our Liberation War, which have not been recognised properly. The

objective of this exhibition is to evaluate their contributions," explained Dr Sarwar Ali, member secretary of the trusty board of the museum.

"The assault, torment and torture on Bangalee women during the war have been focused with great importance, but the direct contributions of women and the boldness and determination that they showed during the wartime has been neglected and remained unrecognised," said Sarwar Ali.

Sarwar Ali said: "To portray the sacrifice of the nation, it is usually said that 30 lakh Bangalees were martyred and two lakh women tortured during the war. But it is hardly said that the women led the struggle to achieve freedom. They gave shelter to the freedom fighters and helped them by hiding arms in the wartime. They took care of the wounded fighters in different shelter camps as doctors and nurses."

"The names of the prominent female artistes of Swadhin Bangla Betar Kendra and Bangladesh Mukti Sangrami Shilpi Sangstha, prove the immense contributions of women who fought for the nation with the weapon of music," he continued.

At the entrance to the exhibition hall, a striking sculpture titled "Andhokarer Utsha Hotey" by noted artist Ferdousi Priyobhashini has been placed.

"The torch in my sculpture is the symbol of courage through which I made an urge to the womenfolk to make the dreams come true that Begum Rokeya had 100 years ago. The stone symbolises the hope on which the women will stand together in the struggle against evil," Priyobhashini said explaining her work.

She continued: "I tried to express my optimism by calling on the women to rise to achieve the ultimate goal of freedom. Women are being tortured all around the world, but they should not lose hope. They must have the courage and boldness to fight against all evils."

About the exhibition, Priyobhashini said: "Through such an exhibition we can pay tributes to the greatest Bangalee women who had showed us the way to freedom."

In the first segment of the exhibition, the printed copy and manuscript of Begum Rokeya's Sultana's Dream, that she wrote

one hundred years ago, have been put on display.

The photographs, letters and brief profiles of the legendary Bangalee women including those who fought against the British rulers are also on display. These valiant fighters are Pritilota Wadeddar, Ashalota Sen, Leela Roy, Manorama Basu, leader of Santal movement Ila Mitra, martyred editor of 'Shilalipi' Selina Parveen, freedom fighters Bir Protik Dr Captain Sitara Begum, Bir Protik Taramon Bibi, Mirana Begum, Forquin and Shirin Banu.

Kamruzzaman Zilan, an expatriate in Melbourne, had witnessed the horror of the war. He thinks such an exhibition is a significant effort of the Liberation War Museum. "This exhibition has taken me to those days of pain and glory," he said.

Shahin Aziz, another visitor said: "This is a very positive effort to change the common idea of people that freedom fighters were men only. The immense contributions of women have been portrayed here with due importance."

The exhibition has a special segment of photos and profiles of women leaders who continued to struggle against the evil even from behind the bars. These leaders include Matia Chowdhury, Jotsna Niyogi, Hosney Ara and Ila Mitra.

The articles on Liberation War by foreign woman journalists like Germaine Green and Jill Tweedie displayed at the exit of the exhibition, portrayed the brutality of Pakistani army and the bravery of Bangalee freedom fighters.

Shirin Begum, daughter of Hosne Ara, the first Muslim woman who fought against the British rulers, at the inaugural session of the exhibition said: "I cannot keep myself away from seeing that my mother finally gets the recognition after such a long period of time."

Maffidul Haque and Sara Zaker have developed the concept of the exhibition while Ashok Karmakar has done the design.

The exhibition, inaugurated on December 27, 2005 in the seminar hall of the museum, will continue until January 31 next.



One of the displays at the exhibition had photos and brief profiles of the Bangalee woman freedom fighters from the British era.

DU campus returns to normalcy

WAHIDA MITU

With the end of the 23-day winter, Christmas and Eid vacation, the Dhaka University (DU) campus area is gradually buzzing with students.

Although the campus saw a very poor turnout in the re-opening week, some department held the scheduled classes and on January 15, the first day even teachers were absent.

"I had only two scheduled classes on the first day, but I stayed back," said Rimi Sultana. "Since then, I have been attending classes regularly," she added.

Like Rimi many non-resident students preferred to stay home on the first day while others went to the university to attend classes, meet friends to exchange Eid greetings.

"As the university reopened a few days after Eid, festivity was still in the air and my friends and I had a lot of fun," said Intiaz Ahmed, a student from the Finance department.

Some students viewed the reopening of the university not only as the start of classes but also of their studies as the environment and regular interaction with teachers in the classes encourage them to study.

"I enjoyed the holidays, but coming back and seeing familiar faces and surroundings too gives me immense pleasure," said Anjuman Ara Panna, a student of English. "I relax and revitalise myself during the vacation so that when classes resume I can concentrate more on my studies," she added.

"The vacation refreshes me, but unscheduled holidays are quite depressing," said Arif Rahman. "These unscheduled holidays affect our academic year," he added.

"After the reopening the entire area buzzes with life and activity, which is wonderful to look at. Closure of the university for holidays makes the entire area dull and gloomy," Arif said.

The DU halls are awaiting the return of resident students, who are coming gradually.

As most students make the vacation, especially at Eid, to spend time with family and friends, they delay in coming back to their studies.

"Resident students take a longer time to return to the halls. They prefer to spend a few days longer than the scheduled holidays with their families," said Anisur Rahman, a resident DU student.

But students who returned immediately after the vacation found it difficult to cope with the food problem as either the canteens were closed or there was insufficient or no food.

"Our hall canteen provided breakfast and dinner for us," said Faysal Ahmed, a resident student of Suryasen hall. He and his hall mates went to Nilkhet or Chankharpu or a relative's house nearby for lunch.

The problem is almost resolved, as

most canteens have got down to providing meals regularly since Thursday.

The next vacation DU students are awaiting is the one-month long summer vacation in June.

"Before the summer vacation we don't want to face any unscheduled holidays and want to complete the honours final year examinations within the exact time frame," said Habib Ashraf, a fourth year economics student.

DU authorities are expecting to complete all scheduled delayed examinations of the different department before this year's summer vacation.

In the meantime, the university authorities have already begun to hold admission tests for the next academic year with the first one held on Friday. The rest of the tests are scheduled to take place within a month.

The campus is set for its usual boisterous mood with the freshers once again.



DU campus is buzzing with excitement by the students after a long holiday.