

50pc adult people carry TB bacteria

Experts tell workshop

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Around 50 percent adult people of the country carry tuberculosis (TB) bacteria, said the experts at a workshop in the city yesterday.

Of them, TB infects more than three lakh people and about 70,000 die every year, they added.

The workshop on "TB Control: Role of the Mass Media" was jointly organised by Dhaka Reporters Unity (DRU) and Brac for working journalists of different print and electronic media at DRU auditorium.

Dr Mahbub Kamal Siddiqui, director of the National TB and Leprosy Control Programme, attended the workshop as chief guest while Dr MD Khurshid Alam Hyder, consultant of WHO and Dr Vigarunnisa Begum, programme manager of National Tuberculosis Control Programme (NTP) attended the programme as special guests.

Dr Akramul Islam, programme manager (TB) of Brac Health Programme presented the keynote paper at the workshop.

He said of the 22 high TB prevalence country in the world Bangladesh stands at fifth position.

TB is a communicable disease which spreads through cough and sneeze of an infected person. A six-month treatment can cure a patient. But TB becomes incurable if a patient does not take medicine or stop taking medicine before the end of the tenure of taking medicine, said the paper.

The speakers stressed the need for more media coverage on TB disease as due to lack of public awareness many TB infected patients still don't go to hospitals and upazila health complexes for free treatment.

Dr Mahbub Kamal said as TB is a poverty-related disease, collaboration between the government and non-government organisations is needed to fight the disease.

Journalists have a vital role in

this regard, he added.

Dr Vigarunnisa said, DOTS (directly observed treatment short-course) centres have been set up at most upazila health complexes for the treatment of TB patients.

Although TB is a fully curable disease, people still have a fear for it. This has to be removed through mass awareness, she added.

The infection of TB is more prevalent in males than females and due to less outside exposure children are less infected. People aged 15 to 45 are more infected by TB, Dr Vigarunnisa said.

She said there is no countrywide survey on TB prevalence. The government will start a nationwide survey on TB prevalence very soon with the assistance of USAID.

Executive Director of the Centre for Development Communication (CDC) Muhammad Zahangir moderated the workshop presided over by DRU President M Shafiqul Karim.

Indian Dy HC discusses recent events with Hasina

BDNEWS, Dhaka

Indian Deputy High Commissioner Sarvjit Chakravarti yesterday called on the Leader of the Opposition in Parliament Sheikh Hasina and discussed "various recent events".

"It was a courtesy call but not previously fixed. They have discussed various recent events," said a competent source in the party high-ups.

The meeting at Sheikh Hasina's Dhanmondi residence lasted for more than one and half hour.

Altaf, Faruq elected DUJ president, secy

UNB, Dhaka

Altaf Mahmud has been re-elected president and Omar Faruq elected general secretary of the Dhaka Union of Journalists (DUJ) for 2006-07.

DUJ Election Committee chairman Hassan Shahriar declared the results of the election after counting of votes at the Jatiya Press Club yesterday evening.

Altaf Mahmud has been re-elected president securing 611 votes against 398 polled by his nearest rival Dr Utpal Kumar Sarkar.

Abul Kalam has been elected vice president securing 644 votes against 354 received by his rival Mahbub Alam.

For the post of general secretary, Omar Faruq polled 456 votes against 407 received by his nearest rival Saiful Talukdar.

Mafizul Islam was earlier elected Treasurer uncontested.

Shaban Mahmud has been elected joint secretary securing 424 votes while his rival Enamur Reza Dipu bagged 354 votes.

Nure Jannat Akhter Shimu has been elected organising secretary polling 691 votes against 466 received by her rival Gazi Zahurul Islam.

Abdul Majid has been elected publicity secretary securing 589 votes against 435 polled by his rival Wahiduzzaman.

GM Masud Dhali has been elected sports and cultural secretary with 619 votes against 399 votes received by Ahmed Sabir Romeo.

Poly Khan has been elected welfare secretary securing 586 votes against 411 polled by her rival Munir Hossain.

Abu Zafar Surya has been elected office secretary polling 578 votes against 397 received by his rival Rafique Ahmed.

Newly elected executive committee members are: Badhan Sarker-746 votes, Sarmin Rahman Soma-720 votes, Azam Sarwar Chowdhury-700 votes, Rahman Mustafiz-616 votes, Mohsin Khairul Anam-596 votes, Barun Bhoumik-537 votes, Manjus Sree Biswas-528 votes, Anis Ahmed-524 votes and Altaf Chowdhury-504 votes.

2 muggers injured in police firing

Trader robbed of Tk 32,000

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Two alleged muggers were wounded in police firing at Tejaon while two gangs of snatchers stabbed two people in separate incidents in Rampura and Banasree areas in the city in a span of 14 hours ending at 11:00am yesterday.

At Tejaon, the police fired on a gang of muggers who tried to rob a passer-by at around 9:15pm on Monday.

The police said they fired on the gang of four muggers when they hurled a bomb at the police. Two muggers were injured but the others fled.

The police stepped in when the victim raised an alarm. They also seized the auto-rickshaw the muggers were using.

The injured were admitted to Dhaka Medical College Hospital with bullet injuries in their legs.

At Banasree, five muggers stabbed a rickshaw passenger in the head and took away Tk 32,000 and a cell phone set from him at around 11:00am yesterday.

As the victim, Fazul Haq, a trader, raised an alarm, local people chased the gang and caught two muggers, Rabi and Mostafa, and beat up them. But three others managed to escape.

Later, the police took the two injured muggers to the DMCH. The victim is also undergoing treatment at the same hospital.

At Rampura, a gang of three muggers waylaid a private car driver Shahidul Islam and snatched Tk 200 from him at around 6:00am.

They also stabbed Shahid in different parts of his body when he tried to resist them.



Amra Muktiyoddhar Santan forms a human chain in front of the High Court in the city yesterday demanding trial of the killers of former finance minister Shah AMS Kibria.

India's nod to Mujib-Indira accord could resolve 90pc border problems : Babar

UNB, Lalmonirhat

State Minister for Home Affairs Lutfozzaman Babar yesterday said if Indian Parliament had ratified the 1974 Mujib-Indira accord, 90 percent problems related to border between the two next-door neighbours would have been resolved.

"Enclave problem is one that has been hanging over for a long time, which is being tried to be resolved through discussion at different levels between Bangladesh and Indian governments," he told his audience from both sides of the divide.

He was talking to different media of Bangladesh and India at Tinbigha Corridor across the border, some 94 kilometers from this district headquarters.

On his arrival at Tinbigha on the Indian side at noon, he was received by DIG of Jalpaiguri Sector of the Indian Border Security Force (BSF) Harish Kumar.

He took a guard of honour of BSF and exchanged greetings with officials of the Indian border guards. Talking to journalists of both the countries, he said Bangladesh has discussed Tinbigha Corridor problem with India for long time.

Later, he visited Dahagram-Angarpota enclave and attended a public meeting at Bongbari Primary School ground in the Bangladesh locality landlocked with Indian territories. The corridor is the only gateway to the mainland for the frontiersmen.

The inhabitants of Dahagram-Angarpota apprised him of their various problems and needs, including electrification, round-the-clock access to the enclave from mainland through the Tinbigha corridor and land registration.

Babar assured them of resolving the land-registration problem. He said his ministry will con-

tinued discussion with his Indian counterpart and through diplomatic channel for 24-hour movement through the Tinbigha passage.

"As our Prime Minister Khaleda Zia is the sitting Saarc Chairman, I shall request her to discuss the matter with India," said he said.

Under an Indo-Bangladesh accord, the people of the enclave have been granted limited movement crossing over the corridor.

Earlier, Babar along with Director General of the paramilitary Bangladesh Rifles (BDR) Major General Muhammad Jahangir Alam Chowdhury, flew in Patgram helped by a helicopter at about 11:00am.

Rangpur BDR Sector Commander Col Lutfur Rahman received the state minister.

Later, he visited Panbari Border Outpost (BOP) where 19 BDR Battalion Commander Lt Col Shawkat Akhter received him.

BRTC to launch highway ambulance service

UNB, Dhaka

Bangladesh Road Transport Corporation (BRTC) will launch its first ever highway ambulance service in the country and also start courier service during its Service Week beginning tomorrow.

A fleet of 10 ambulances will carry the accident victims to different hospitals and by the year-end the state-run BRTC is planning to increase the number to 25.

Communications Minister Barrister Nazmul Huda will formally inaugurate the service on February 4 marking the 25th founding anniversary of BRTC.

BRTC chairman Adv Taimur Alam Khondaker informed this at a press conference at the BRTC conference room yesterday.

Besides, the BRTC will also launch a courier service on tomorow to ensure quick and smooth delivery of documents and goods.

During the service week, BRTC would also open two car wash stations in city's Kalyanpur and Joara Sahara, Taimur said.

With these new services, he hoped that the BRTC would be able to make more profit.

BRTC director (technical) Col M Ali, director (finance) Syed Enamul Haq and director (administration and operation) MA Khaleq were present at the press conference.

Ramp at Shaheed Minar for people with disability

A ramp is going to be built at the Central Shaheed Minar in the city soon to ensure easy accessibility of the memorial for the physically challenged people, says a press release.

The step has been taken following the efforts of the Federation of NGOs in Bangladesh (FNB) and SARPV, an NGO working for the welfare of the people with disability. The FNB and the SARPV have expressed their thanks and appreciation to those who are implementing the initiative.

MIRPUR LIBERATION DAY OBSERVED Ban Jamaat-Shibir politics to save constitution Urge sector commanders

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The speakers vowed to defeat BNP-Jamaat alliance in the next general election for safeguarding the country's independence from their clutches.

Air Vice Marshal (Retd) AK Khandaker Bir Uttam said defeated forces of 1971 in the guise of religious militants are taking revenge through blasting bombs across the country under the shelter of Jamaat-e-Islami.

Major (Retd) Rafiqul Islam Bir Uttam, said war criminals have staged their come back taking our leniency after 1971.

Salma Begum, mother of Selim who was martyred on this day, presided over the rally addressed by Sector-4 Commander Major General (Retd) CR Dutta Bir Uttam, Major General (Retd) KM Shafiullah Bir Uttam, Proshika Manabik Unnayan Kendra President Dr Kazi Faruque Ahmed, Prof Abdul Ahad Chowdhury, Zahir Raihan's son Anol Raihan and acting president of Nirmul Committee and journalist Shahriar Kabir.

People of Mirpur observed the day through holding rally and bringing out procession to pay homage to the martyrs.

Ekatturer Ghatak Dalal Nirmul Committee organised the programme.

WB suggests raising allocation for agri research

BDNEWS, Dhaka

The World Bank (WB) yesterday called for raising the allocation for agricultural research, saying that poor spending in this field is hampering poverty reduction and food security initiatives.

It suggested increasing the spending on agricultural research to 0.6 per cent of the Agricultural GDP from the current allocation of 0.2 per cent, according to a WB report titled 'Revitalising Agricultural Technology System in Bangladesh' released yesterday.

The study report was based on detailed analysis and extensive consultations with various stakeholders, including researchers, scientists, extension specialists, NGOs, agro-processing enterprises, farmers and government officials.

The report said a dynamic agricultural technology system is vital to ensure national food security and reduce poverty in the face of declining agricultural land base and increasing population.

However, the continuing recent

trend in agricultural research and extension will have a detrimental impact on the sector, it added.

The WB report identified low levels of government spending on agricultural research, institutional constraints and the inability of agricultural research institutes to generate relevant modern technologies and the inability of agricultural extension system to transfer relevant technologies to farmers, particularly small and marginal farmers, as the major barriers to an effective national agricultural technology system in Bangladesh.

The study said public expenditure on agricultural research is not only low by international standards but also it has declined in the last several years.

"At present, the government expenditure on agricultural research is only about 0.2 per cent of the country's agricultural GDP, compared to 0.62 per cent for other developing countries and 2.80 per cent for developed countries as a group," it said.

Although aggregate spending on agricultural research and extension has increased slightly in the last 3-4

years, it is mostly due to an increase in spending on agricultural extension that is for transfer of technology to farmers, the WB said.

Public expenditure on agricultural extension has increased from 74 per cent in 1997-98 to almost 83 per cent in 2004-05, partly due to a large number of agricultural projects that are being implemented by the agricultural extension departments.

In other words, the WB report said, substantial amount of resources are used to implement the projects rather than for providing agricultural extension to farmers.

"Public expenditure on real agricultural extension needs to be increased to promote productive and competitive agriculture in Bangladesh," it said.

The report recommended institutional reforms for national agricultural research and extension system. It also recommended ways to increase funding and exploring opportunities for growth of commercially high value agricultural products such as fruits, vegetables, fish and poultry.



Awami League General Secretary Abdul Jalil speaks at the 14-party meeting at Muktangin in the city yesterday.

2 bills passed in JS

BSS, Dhaka

The Jatiya Sangsad yesterday passed two bills, one for freeing the film industry from obscenity and another for considering boys and girls up to the age of 18 years as children.

The bills are 'Censorship of Films (Amendment) Bill-2006' and 'Court of Wards (Amendment) Bill-2006'.

Information Minister M Shamsul Islam placed the Film Censorship Bill vesting power in the authorities concerned to confiscate films having obscene, nude or vulgar scene.

The screening of films without censorship and licenses, postdated films and films having cut pieces will also be brought under the punitive action.

The information minister said objectionable films have been generating adverse effects on the youths and destroying the social values.

To stop such menaces, the bill has proposed strict punitive measures against offenders.

Meanwhile, the Courts of Wards (Amendment) Bill piloted by State Minister for Land Ukil Abdus Sattar, proposed that those, who are below the age of 18 years would be considered as children. Earlier, the age-limit was 21 years.

While advocating the bill, Ukil Abdus Sattar said the bill has been brought to update the 126-year old laws making them time-befitting.

14-party protests Kansat killing

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Hundreds of leaders and workers of the 14-party opposition combine took to the streets in the city yesterday to protest the killing of eight farmers at Kansat in Chapainabwaganj and demand justice and compensation for the families of the victims.

The BNP-Jamaat ruling alliance has proved itself an autocratic government by killing farmers and violating democratic norms in appointing the chief election commissioner and the two new election commissioners unilaterally, the leaders said at a rally at Muktangin.

This government has been resorting to repression frequently as it does not respect the democratic rights of the common people, they said.

Awami League Presidium Member Abdur Razzak presided over the rally while General Secretary Abdul Jalil spoke as the chief guest.

Referring to the killing of 18 farmers and 17 workers during the previous BNP rule, Abdul Jalil said the Khaleda-Nizami government is the patron of the rich and the enemy of the poor. So they have no right to be in power any longer, he added.

The police firing on the common people demanding electricity for agricultural production is the most extreme repression by the four-party alliance, said Jalil, also the coordinator of the 14-party combine.

Sensing its defeat in the next elections, the ruling alliance is now conspiring to come to power at any cost, he said.

The government has failed to ensure security and establish the rule of law in the country, he said, adding that it is also patronising the militant forces who are now posing a threat to the sovereignty of the state.

It has also violated the basic human rights through extra-judicial killings, Jalil noted.

AL presidium member Abdur Razzak said prices of all agricultural inputs and diesel have shot up during the rule of the alliance government, leading to shortage of about 32 lakh tonnes of food.

He also alleged that the government is harassing the leaders and activists of AL and its allies ahead of the opposition's long march programme scheduled to be held in the city on February 5.

"Lakhs of people from across the country will march towards the city, lay siege to the secretariat and the Prime Minister's Office on the day," he said.

Razzak also warned the government not to prevent the people from joining the march.

At Rampura, a gang of three muggers waylaid a private car driver Shahidul Islam and snatched Tk 200 from him at around 6:00am. They also stabbed Shahid in different parts of his body when he tried to resist them.

BNP grand rally in Ctg tomorrow

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

Everything is set for holding the Chittagong divisional grand rally of the ruling BNP at the outer stadium here tomorrow.

BNP Chairperson and Prime Minister Khaleda Zia is scheduled to address the rally as chief guest at 3:00pm.

Before addressing the meeting, the prime minister will also go to Chittagong Government Veterinary College at Pahartali to upgrade the college into a university by unveiling a plaque.

Speaking at a press conference here yesterday, Fisheries and Livestock Minister Abdullah Al Noman, also joint-secretary general of BNP and chief coordinator of the grand rally, said the rally is aimed at resisting the oppositions' bid to create anarchy in the country.

It will also demonstrate government's determination to continue its ongoing development process by removing all impediments, he added.

Chittagong city, north and south district units of BNP have organised the rally.

Mathematics Festival held in Barisal

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Barisal

Barisal Divisional Mathematics Festival was held at the Barisal Govt Girls High School yesterday.

Bangladesh Mathematics Olympiad Committee organised the daylong programme, which was jointly sponsored by Dutch-Bangla Bank Ltd and the daily Prothom Alo.

Ajita Samaddar, headmistress of the school, inaugurated the function and Dr Iliasuddin Biswas, chairman of mathematics department of Shahjalal Science and Technology University, Robayat Ferdous, teacher of Dhaka University, Munir Hassan, secretary of Mathematics Olympiad committee and Mosharraf Hossain, assistant vice president of Dutch-Bangla Bank Barisal branch, were among the distinguished guests.

About 1,380 competitors from 87 institutions of six districts participated in the math contest.

The programmes included math-trill, spot quiz, mathematics booth, open discussion, awareness about humanitarian and social work conceptions etc.

Earlier, a 111-member committee was formed with renowned educationist Professor Md Shahjahan Mia, as convener and Shovan Karmakar as member secretary, to make the festival successful.

On the occasion, 'Sandhani' organised a blood donation programme and Nusrat Jahan Tonni, a 15-year old student suffering from kidney failure, appealed for humanitarian help before the audience.



Qulkhwani

Qulkhwani of Begum Tahamidur Nahar, mother of Bangladesh Ambassador to the USA Shamsheer Mubin Chowdhury, will be held at her residence 'Winter Lake Fortuna Apartment', House #31, Road #12/A, Dhanmondi R/A, after Asr prayers today, says a press release.

Begum Nahar, wife of late Abdur Mubin Chowdhury, passed away at 6:30pm on January 29 at the age of 88.

Her three other sons are Prof Bazil Mubin Chowdhury, vice-chancellor of Independent University, Shawkat Mubin Chowdhury (Shahan), vice-president of Beximco Group, and late Nasrul Mubin Chowdhury, a businessman.

Her only daughter Rita Khan is the wife of Noor Hossain Khan, a former secretary and chairman of the National Board of Revenue.

WEATHER TODAY

Dry weather likely

UNB, Dhaka

Weather is likely to remain mainly dry with partly cloudy sky over northern part in the next 12 hours till 6:00pm today.

Light fog may also occur over the country during early morning.

Met Office said, predicting nearly unchanged night temperature.

Highest temperature 30.5 degree Celsius was recorded yesterday at Sylhet and lowest 10.7 degree Celsius at Srirongal.

The sun sets in the capital at 5:45pm today and rises at 6:39am tomorrow.

Highest and lowest temperature and humidity recorded in some major cities and towns yesterday were:

City/Town	Temperature in Celsius		Humidity in percentage	
	Max	Min	Morning	Evening
Dhaka	28.2	15.0	71	60
Chittagong	29.5	15.8	69	78
Rajshahi	27.8	12.0	76	68
Khulna	28.0	13.4	79	64
Barisal	28.2	12.5	89	79
Sylhet	30.5	15.3	60	48
Cox's Bazar	30.4	15.8	64	--

Conference

Bangladesh Institute of Labour Studies organises a national conference on 'Occupational health and safety and environment' with Health Minister Dr Khandokar Mosharraf Hossain as chief guest. Venue: PIB auditorium. Time: 9:30am.

Publication ceremony

Publication ceremony of two books titled 'Jatiya sangskriti o ganamadhyan' (National culture and the media) and 'Bangladesh Islam thekey dichchhinmaya korar chakranta' (Conspiracy to detach Bangladesh from Islam) by actor and columnist late Obaidul Haq Sarkar will be held. Venue: Jatiya Kirta Samity auditorium, Paltan. Time: 4:30pm.