

They need love, not hate

WAHIDA MITU

"They could not stand my sight, and shunned me from their midst, but I crave for love and understanding, not hatred," said a desolate 12-year old Tania Begum (not her real name) who discovered she was a human immunodeficiency virus (HIV) carrier, after she lost her father, and mother two years later, both victims of Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome (AIDS).

"My relatives and other people began to hate me when they found out that I was tested HIV positive, but it was not my fault" said Tania.

Tania expressed her feelings at a programme jointly organised by Ashar Alo, Bandhu Social Welfare Society and Mukto Akash Bangladesh in the city on Sunday to observe International AIDS Candlelight Memorial Day.

The programme was organised in memory of those who died of AIDS and sympathise HIV carriers under the theme 'Lighting the Path to a Brighter Future'.

"We have been observing this day in Bangladesh since 2002 to pay tribute to those who died of AIDS, while the Global Health Organisation first observed it in 1983 in Washington" said Habiba Akter, Executive Director (ED), Ashar



International AIDS Candlelight Memorial Day is observed every year in Dhaka by various organisations.

Alo. According to government data up to December 2005, the reported number of HIV carriers is 658 whereas the estimated

number of the virus carrier is 7,700, Habiba said.

In her welcome speech she said people from every sphere of life should come forward to

fight the battle against AIDS. The other speakers voiced the same concern and urged people to look at the situation with sympathy rather than disgust.

"Ashar Alo society is a peer support group working for HIV carriers and their relatives as well. It provides nursing and counselling to ensure their rights," she added.

Its activities include providing correct information about HIV to people. It also provides counselling and training to the virus carriers and advocates to eradicate discrimination of the virus carriers in society, said Habiba.

The difference between an HIV positive and an AIDS patient is that when the virus attacks someone, that person is called an HIV carrier. But with the passing of time the person loses his or her resistance power, becomes an AIDS patient and gets infected by several diseases, that usually causes death, explained Habiba.

On the other hand, Bandhu Social Welfare Society has been active since 1996.

"Cultural programmes performed by HIV carriers are one of our front line activities. Through cultural activities we advocate and build awareness about HIV prevention. These activities make HIV carriers feel

that they are a part of the society," said Saleh Ahmed, executive director (ED) of the organisation.

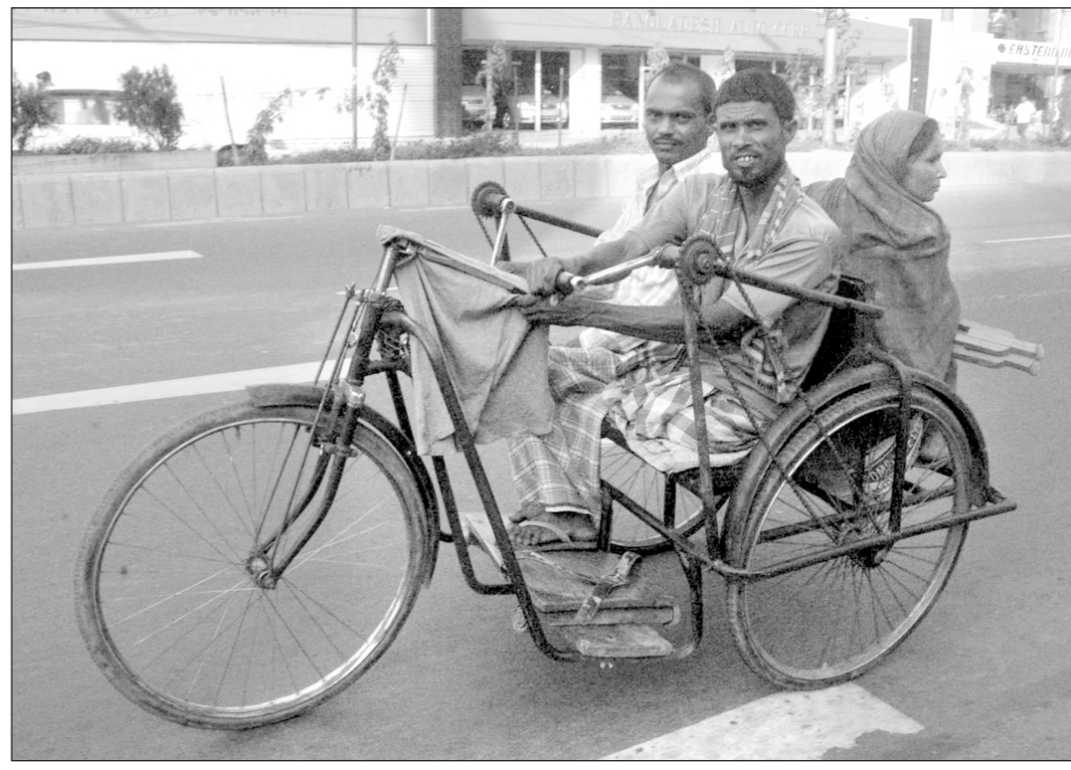
He also told the Star City that those carrying HIV usually survive for three to five years. But nutritious food, medicine and a sound mind can prolong their lives.

"In addition to the estimated number of carriers of HIV and those infected with AIDS many people are at risk and vulnerable to the infections in Bangladesh," said Evaristo Marowa, country co-ordinator, UNAIDS Bangladesh.

"Though at present, the government, Non-Government Organisations (NGO) and global funds assist various national AIDS programmes, more activities are needed to increase awareness and improve the present situation," he added.

HIV positive patients took part in a cultural programme to mark the day. Candles were lit to remember those who died of AIDS and sympathise with those tested positive for HIV and AIDS.

Wahida Banu, chairperson of STD/ AIDS network of Bangladesh, Ms. Mukti, ED of Mukto Akash Bangladesh and a few AIDS patients also spoke.



The trio, two of them paralysed, is out to roam the city in their tricycle. Staying at Mohakhali for a few days they hail from Nokhla thana of Kishoreganj.

Whimsical sale of Tk 50

FROM PAGE 21 Another user concurred with the shopkeepers' statement that retailers too buy cards at a price higher than Tk 50, and cannot sell them at the prescribed rate.

"I went to buy three Tk 50 Grameen Phone cards from a shop in Rup Nagar Bazaar in Pallabi in Mirpur and was surprised when the retailer asked for Tk 159, which is Tk three more on each card. As I charged him, he said the company does not give them any commission and the company has asked them to charge extra," the resident said.

"You may get the Grameen pre-paid card at Tk 50 sometimes, but not Citycell. Citycell has a fixed rate of Tk 55 for the Tk 50 card," he added.

Other shopkeepers added that ever since Grameen's Tk 300 pre-paid card went out of stock, the Tk 50 cards rose by Tk five to eight in various places.

Meanwhile, others complained that not only the Tk 50 card, retailers charge Tk two to five more on Grameen's Flexiload or Aktel's E-fill, on a Tk

50 refill. This practice too has been going on for almost two months.

When Asif Iqbal, head of marketing, AKTEL was contacted he said they were totally unaware of this malpractice.

"We tell the retailers not to charge extra on the Tk 50 as these cards are bought at a price less than Tk 50. We will definitely look into the matter soon," Iqbal said.

Citycell's Call Centre Executive Zakir Mursaleen said they also asked all retailers to sell the card at Tk 50.

"Our control stretches up to the dealer, we cannot really control the retailers," he said.

Yamin Bakht, general manager of Grameen Phone said they are aware of this situation.

"The fact that Grameen is not providing commission is not true. The Tk 50 includes the seller's commission and we do spot checking at times," he said.

"If caught, we will take stern action against these unscrupulous sales," he added.

Subscribers in the meantime await redress from all such

malpractices.

Beggars, vendors

FROM PAGE 21 have been built only for hawkers, beggars and sex workers. People cannot walk on this," said Shah Alam, a pedestrian while crossing the road instead of using the Banani foot-over bridge on his way from Gulshan 2 to Banani.

Sex workers are also found on the over bridges at Banani, Farmgate Police Box and Moghbazar. Some of the bridges are safe haven for drug peddlers, muggers and pickpockets.

"Two or three incidents of mugging or pickpocket regularly occur near the Science Laboratory over bridge," said Arman Ahmed, a salesman of a store on New Elephant Road.

He, however, said the incidents of mugging have decreased recently following frequent police raids and patrol of Rapid Action Battalion (Rab).

Meditation: Refreshing body, mind and spirit

SHARMIN MEHRIBAN

Coaching centres offering academic courses are generally known, but nowhere would one have heard of a centre offering a course on meditation.

Md. Azad Ali, the lone instructor at 'Easy Life Meditation Coaching Centre' that started its operations early this month described meditation as a certain sitting posture with no movement, closed eyes and concentrating on one particular thing.

He said that he had initially learnt the art from books and had been fervently practising it for the last 12 years.

"Duration of meditation could begin with 30 minutes and gradually increase with practice," said Azad, who practises for three to four hours a day himself. The ideal time for meditation is between 5:30 - 6:30 in the mornings and after 10 in the evenings, he added.

Participants at the centre are made to practise once a week for three hours, lest they lose

He also said that the objective of meditation is to bring oneself closer to God and in the process become more conscious of right and wrong. "You gradually learn to perceive other living beings with feelings like yourself," he added.

patience if practised regularly. Azad asks them to shut their eyes and concentrate on a certain thing. Subjects of concentration usually are the sea beach or the midst of a forest.

Of his own experiences, Azad said that he usually thinks of a society devoid of poverty and corruption and sometimes finds himself walking through a forest. He agreed that it is a kind of daydreaming, but emphasises that it enhances one's thinking abilities and inspires

perseverance.

"In such a state, one is not affected by negative feelings like anger and in case you have a problem you can think of a solution," he said.

He also said that the objective of meditation is to bring oneself closer to God and in the process become more conscious of right and wrong. "You gradually learn to perceive other living beings with feelings like yourself," he added.

He said that years of meditation have made him

physically and mentally fit.

"I am not affected by feelings of stress and anger and I am more cordial towards people. In response people are cordial towards me and this cycle refreshes me spiritually," he added.

Meditation seems simple for a first timer, but the presence of an expert is required for effectiveness.

"People tend to feel drowsy or lose their sense of concentration but the expert's presence brings them back to concentration," he

said.

Azad said meditation helps people suffering from various difficulties, economically or otherwise.

He further said that meditation could be beneficial for drug addicts although no addicts have yet shown up at the centre.

"Addicts tend to react negatively, but meditation could divert them towards a positive attitude," he said. He is hopeful about offering meditation courses at drug rehabilitation centres in the future.

A four-month course costs Tk 1,000 a month. Batches do not exceed more than 10 so that Azad can give adequate attention to each participant, who are mainly businessmen, housewives and students.

But why a meditation centre?

"A coaching centre for academic courses, would have certainly been lucrative, but I preferred this because I want to encourage more people towards meditation, Azad said.

Operative but ineffective

FROM PAGE 21 with until 1984. Now it has to deal with 27 public and 54 private universities without enhancement of its organisational capacity.

The private universities added a new phenomenon to the higher education sector in 1992. But the UGC has not been equipped with required manpower to deal with them.

The Private University Act, on the other hand, is too weak and inadequate to address the messed-up situation that has surfaced today, said the UGC chairman.

The public universities exercise autonomy by law while private universities tend to enjoy impunity from government monitoring on the ground that they are self-financed,

resulting in chaos in most cases, said Prof Asad.

When asked about the proposed UGC organogram,

Education Secretary Momtajul Islam said: "It is not in my knowledge, I will look into it."



Recent student outbursts could have been prevented if UGC recommendations were implemented.

useful telephonenumber numbers

OURIER SERVICES

International
Air Borne Express- 9561371, 9561372, 9550724
Air Couriers Int'l (BD) Ltd.- 8815970
Aramex International Courier- 9558003, 9559582, 9565075
Airspeed Express- 9563494
Asian Courier Services Ltd.- 8313543
Baishakhi Courier Service- 9558606
Banmgladesh Express Co. Ltd.- 9565114
Bangladesh Courier Service- 9563989
Bengal Express- 9560642, 9552666
Bangladesh Int'l Courier- 953636
Continental Service Ltd.- 9552948, 9558425
DHL Worldwide Express- 9881703-7, 9886305-9, 9882057
Enem Express- 9330699
Fedex Bangladesh Express Co. Ltd.- 9565114
Modhuban Courier Service-

9550884
Overseas Courier Service- 9352431, 8321169
Pacific Courier- 9568446
Reliance Express Service- 9558515, 7110249
Sky International service- 9660442
Skynet world Wide Express- 9558062, 9560258, 7114787, 7113184
TNT Express- 9566662, 9558239, 8618155
Union Courier Service- 9341722
United Parcel Service Air alliance Ltd.- 8826429, 8810223
National
Asian courier Service Ltd- 8313543
BAE- 9884851
Central Courier Service- 9881118
Confidence Courier Service Ltd. 9567036
Chisty Courier- 7110177-9,
Cosmopol Services- 9552793, 9557975
Dhaka Courier Services- 7236222

Dolphin Courier- 9558802
Dreamland Courier Service- 9550326, 9566975
Pioneer Courier Services- 9561727, 9569759
Probashi Courier Services- 9346359
Rainbow Express Parcel Services Ltd.- 8322773, 8315703
Reliance Express Services- 9558515, 7110249
Sundarban Courier Services- 9551984, 9556189, 9551656
Sunrise Courier Services- 9568751
World Runner Express Ltd. 9112068, Fax - 880-2-9112068

TIPS
Do you know according to Dhaka City Corporation, you must deposit your waste at the collection site between

LIBRARY & INFO-

Libraries, Cultural and Information Centers
Central Public Library- 8626001-4,
Shishu Academy- 9564128
Shilpakala Academy- 8614673
Bangla Academy- 8619550
Islamic Foundation- 9550280, 955640
The American Centre (IRC)- 8813440-4, 9886395
The Nazrul Institute- 9114602
Ford Foundation- 8116133
Alliance Francaise- 8611557
British Council- 8618867-8, 8618905-7
Community Development Library- 8113769, 8113604
Goethe Institute Int'l- Dhaka- 9126525-6
Indian Information Centre & Cultural Library- 8850141, 8850142
The Russian Cultural Centre- 9116314, 9118531, 9118314
Drik Photo Gallery- 9120125, 8112954, 8123412

OUTING

Museum and Zoo
National Museum- 8619396-9
Open: 10 am 5 pm, Friday 3 pm- 8 pm, Thursday closed
Muktijuddha Jadughar- 9559091
Open: 10:30 am 6:30 pm, Sunday Closed
Bangabandhu Smiti Jadughar- 8110046
Open: 10 am 5 pm, Wednesday closed
Ahsan Manzil
Open: 10 am 5 pm, Friday: 3 pm - 7 pm, Thursday Closed
Shishu Jadughar- 9666466
Open: 10 am- 6 pm, Sunday Closed

CITY BUS ROUTE

Bus No.	Route	Starts from
1	Gulistan-Shahbagh-Banglamotor-Farmgate-Mirpur 10, 11, 12	Golap Shah Mazar
2	Gulistan-Shahbagh-Banglamotor-Farmgate-Mirpur 1, 2	Phoolbaria bus station
3	Gulistan-Shahbagh-Farmgate-Mahakhali-Airport-Azampur	Phoolbaria bus station
4	Shyampur-Motijheel-Shahbagh-Farmgate-Airport-Tongi	Shyampur
5	Sayedabad-Kamalapur-Motijheel-Airport-Joydebpur-Gazipur	Sayedabad
6 A	Kamalapur-Motijheel-Gulistan-Shahbagh-Farmgate-Gulshan 1, 2	Kamalapur
6 B	Kamalapur-Motijheel-Gulistan-Maghbazar-Nabisco-Gulshan 1, 2	Kamalapur
6 C	Motijheel Shapla chattr- Malibagh- Farmgate- Gulshan 2	Motijheel Shaplachattr
7	Sadarghat-Gulistan-Maghbazar-Nabisco-Gulshan 2	Sadarghat
8	Chittagong-Motijheel-Shahbagh-Farmgate-Asad Gate-Kalyanpur-Gabtoi	Chittagong Road
9	Demra Rani mahal-Motijheel-Kalbagan-Shyamoli-Mirpur 1, 10, 11, 12	Demra Ranimahala
10	Sadarghat-Gulistan-Kakrail-Malibagh-Rampura-Biswa Road-Tongi Bridge	Sadarghat
11	Sayedabad-Motijheel-Fakirapool-Maghbazar-Mohakhali-Tongi Bridge	Sayedabad
11/A	Sayedabad-Khilgoan-Malibagh-Rampura-Airport-Tongi Bridge	Syedabad
12	Shanir Akhra-Shahbagh-Farmgate-Asadgate-Mohammadpur	Shanir Akhra
13	Motijheel-Shahbagh-New Market-Jhigatola-Shangkar-Mohammadpur	Motijheel
14	Signboard -Motijheel-Shahbagh-New Market-Shyamoli-Mirpur 1, 12	Signboard (Chittagong Road)
15	Chittagong Road-Motijheel-Shahbagh-Farmgate-Mirpur 12	Chittagong Road
24	Gulistan-Maghbazar-Mohakhali-Airport-Uttara-Bipile	Gulistan