

Discriminatory social norms increase risks of HIV/AIDS

Speakers tell discussion

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Speakers at a discussion yesterday said prevailing discriminatory social norms debar adolescents from learning and talking about sexual problems and thus increase the risk of HIV/AIDS infection.

National Association of Unesco Clubs in Bangladesh (NAUCB) organised the seminar cum discussion titled 'Dissemination of Information and Raising Awareness about HIV/AIDS among Youths' at the conference hall of Bangladesh National Commission for Unesco (BNCU) marking the World AIDS Day 2006.

Establishing a healthy pattern of sexual behaviour from the beginning is easier than to change a risky behaviour that has already developed, said Dr Halida Hanum Khandakar, adding that though the government has initiated HIV education in school curriculum with very limited information, different

opinion prevail among parents and teachers whether these should be included in the school curriculum as science, biology or health education.

Support of the teachers and guardians can help young people know about their reproductive health, to make safer choices about safer behaviour and practice, which could be most effective to reduce their chance of getting infected by HIV, Dr Halida added.

She also said the invisible nature of the disease gives a false sense of security to HIV infected people and to people with high risk practicing behaviour and encourage them for not testing or reporting.

Although the situation is not that much worse in Bangladesh, vulnerability prevails for people's unsafe sex and the intravenous drug using, the speakers said, adding that if we compare with other Asian nations, the average number of sex partners of a sex worker in a week is higher

in the country and the rate of using condom for safe sex is negligible.

The HIV/AIDS issue is very important and sensitive as well. But it is time for all, specially the youth, to take away all uneasiness and torpidity and to talk candidly, said Zaglul Ahmed Chowdhury, managing director and chief editor of Bangladesh Sangbad Sangstha (BSS).

Journalist Gias Kamal Chowdhury presided over the discussion while students of different colleges, universities and girls guides were also present and shared their views.

Gias Kamal Chowdhury stressed the need for obeying religious rules and practicing according to that.

Journal Editor of the daily Independent Dr Masudur Rahman, Secretary of BNCU Mahmudul Hassan and Secretary General of NAUCB Mahabubuddin Chowdhury were also present.

Mobile court realises Tk 4.4 lakh in Ctg

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Chittagong

A mobile court here yesterday in separate drives fined seven cargo vessels, two brickfields and four commercial centres and realised over Tk 4.4 lakh for different allegations.

Sources said the court led by Chittagong Port Authority (CPA) Magistrate Md Munir Chowdhury in a drive fined seven cargo vessels Tk 2 lakh.

The fined vessels, MV Nazimuddin, MV Shahjahan, MV Aga Nagar-2, MV Jahangir-2, MV Master Riden, MV Three Star and MV Golup-2, had no radio telecommunication equipment violating maritime law.

The court in separate drives fined Musa Bricks at Fateyabad yesterday and Bengal Bricks Industries Limited at Faujdardhat on November 30.

The court realised Tk 1.5 lakh from the two brickfields for illegally producing bricks without valid Bangladesh Standard Testing Institute (BSTI) license.

Meanwhile, the court in a drive in city's Halishahar area fined Chandrima Hotel, Jahin Bahutal Complex, Rajmukt Community Centre and Shapla Community Centre Tk 90,000 for stealing and wasting water with illegal water supply lines of Water and Sewerage Authority (Wasa).

Smuggled goods worth Tk 1.41 crore recovered

BSS, Rajshahi

Members of the 10th battalion of Bangladesh Rifles (BDR) in separate drives seized smuggled goods worth Tk 1.41 crore from the frontier areas of the district last night.

Acting on a tip-off, a squad of the paramilitary force conducted its first drive in Alupatti area under Boalia Police Station in the city and recovered smuggled sarees and winter cloths worth around Tk 1.26 crore.

In other drives, BDR personnel seized consumer goods like refrigerator-compressors, cosmetics and georgette sarees worth about Tk 15.04 lakh. None could be arrested in these connections, BDR sources said.

'KILLING' OF BCL MAN Hartal observed at Taherpur

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Rajshahi

Awami League-led 14-party observed a dawn to dusk hartal at Taherpur yesterday protesting 'killing of a Bangladesh Chhatra League (BCL) leader in crossfire'.

All types of vehicular movement were off the road and businesses remained closed at the upazila headquarters during the hartal hours.

The 14-party will enforce another full day hartal at Durgapur upazila today.

They said Kismat Gonokoir union BCL President Ahsan Habib Babu was 'killed in planned way in the name of crossfire'.

Babu was arrested from Taherpur bazar on Friday and was killed in 'crossfire' 100 yards off the scene.

The demonstrators said members of Rapid Action Battalion (Rab) killed Babu 'at the instruction of the four-party alliance leaders' pointing gun on his head in front of several witnesses.

The hartal supporters held a grand rally in the evening at Taherpur with local municipal Chairman Mansur Rahman Mirzha in the chair.

Babu's father and district AL Social Welfare Secretary Afsar Ali Mollah, Organising Secretary Akhtaruzzaman and Shilmaria union Chairman Sazzad Hossain Mukul addressed among others.

lftexhar made PIO

lftexhar Hossein, director general of Bangladesh Film Archives, has been appointed as the Principal Information Officer of the Information Directorate, says a Press Information Department (PID) press release.

He is the senior most member of BCS (information) cadre. Prior to his new assignment, he served as the director general of the Directorate of Film and Publication and Directorate of Mass Communication. He also served as the vice-chairman of Bangladesh Film Sensor Board and First Secretary (press) of Bangladesh Embassy in Riyadh.

He was awarded a fellowship on Public Relations from the International Training Institute in Sydney, Australia.



Former lawmaker KM Hemayet Ullah Auronga joins BNP presenting a bouquet to BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia at the city yesterday.

FALLOUT OF POLITICAL IMPASSE DU academic activities at standstill

150 exams deferred

KAMRUL HASAN KHAN

Academic activities at Dhaka University (DU) have come to a standstill due to current political unrest since a couple of days before the caretaker government took the helm.

About 150 examinations have been deferred and no classes held since then.

Moreover, Chhatra Sangram Parishad, an alliance of seven students organisations backed by 14-party alliance, has enforced an indefinite strike on the campus since November 19 protesting the attacks on their leaders and activists by Jatiyatabadi Chhatra Dal (JCD) on the day.

The present situation will add to the session jam of the university, which is already experiencing a session jam of over one and a half years, students said.

The university reopened on November 11 after a month-long Eid and Puja vacation and 11-day unscheduled closure, but classes were held on only three days until November 19. And more than 150 examinations of different faculties and institutes have been deferred so far,

Taxi driver killed in city

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Police recovered the body of a man in the city yesterday.

He was identified as Mohammad Harun, 30, a taxi driver of Madartak in Sabujbagh.

His body was found lying in a drain near Mollartak in Dakkhinkhan at around 6:30am.

Sources say the body was left there by unknown criminals with several stab injuries in the chest and abdomen.

Police also recovered his taxicab from the spot.

The body was identified by the victim's relatives when it was sent to Dhaka Medical College morgue for autopsy.

Mohammad Farooq, a relative of the deceased, informed the police that Harun had been missing since Saturday morning when he left home with his taxicab.

according to sources in the office of the examination controller.

Uncertainty also looms over the admission tests for first year honours classes under the session 2006-07.

"Our third year final examinations began in the last week of September. Since then the schedule has been changed thrice, but we are yet to complete the exams," said a student of Mass Communication and Journalism Department.

It will take at least two to three months to complete the deferred examinations, said Prof Harun-Rashid, dean of social sciences faculty.

DU Treasurer Prof Syed Abul Kalam Azad said the authorities can hold more classes and examinations

by reducing scheduled vacation and on holidays to minimise the loss, but at first the university needs a congenial atmosphere.

However, the DU syndicate will take any decisions in this regard, he added.

Former president of DU Teachers' Association (Duta) Prof AAMS Arefin Siddique told The Daily Star that the impasse in the national politics must be resolved first, which would help bring back normalcy to the campus.

The authorities should also ensure peaceful co-existence of all student bodies and make the dormitories free from illegal arms to create a congenial atmosphere on the campus, he added.

BCL, JCD clash in Barisal

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Barisal

At least eight activists of Bangladesh Chhatra League (BCL) and Jatiyatabadi Chhatra Dal (JCD) were injured in a clash between the two rival student wings on Barisal Government College campus yesterday.

The injured were identified as Miraj, Pappa and Sohel of BCL and Mehedi and Chhoto Rubel of JCD.

Witnesses said a group of BCL activists led by Farhad Bin Alam Zakir, former vice president of the college student union, tried to enter the college campus at about 11:00am. At that time, a group of rival JCD cadres led by Hafiz Ahmed Bablu, former general secretary of the college student union, resisted and attacked the BCL activists with lethal weapons and bricks in front of the police deployed in the area.

Then both groups were engaged in fierce clash spreading panic in the areas. They fired blank gunshots and blasted hand bombs and used lethal weapons and bricks.

After half an hour reinforcement of police rushed to the area and brought the situation under control.

Later JCD activists led by Parvez Akon Biplob, former vice president of the college student union and district JCD secretary, brought out a procession condemning the BCL

attack on them. On other hand, BCL activists also brought out a short procession blaming their rival JCD for attack on them.

BCL leader Zakir claimed that they were preparing to hold pre-scheduled programme fixed by the College Academic Council on the campus in the morning.

But the JCD cadres along with outsiders tried to prevent them from entering the campus.

On the other hand, JCD leaders Biplob and Bablu denied the allegation of the BCL saying the BCL cadres accompanied by non-students and outsiders tried to enter the campus violating the rules of the college, so the general students resisted and drove them out of the area.

BCL cadres fired gunshots and blasted bombs, they added.

Professor Satya Ranjan Das, principal of the college, said the situation is under control and he held meetings with the leaders of the rival groups.

In the meeting both groups agreed not to take any non-students and outsiders to the campus and to follow the rules and schedules fixed by college authorities in order to maintain peaceful educational atmosphere and discipline on the campus.

Motor vehicle owners urged to collect tax, fitness stickers

The government has decided to distribute tax and fitness stickers marked with '2007' and route permit stickers marked with '2009' for all motor vehicles except motorcycle, says a Bangladesh Road Transport Authority (BRTA) press release.

The BRTA has requested the owners of motor vehicles to collect the stickers from its circle/zonal office and post office (for renewal of tax token).

Those who did not get stickers even after depositing money earlier are also requested to collect stickers from the offices concerned.

The press release also said that legal action would be taken against the vehicles without stickers from January 2007.

Shafiu Azam's anniversary of death today

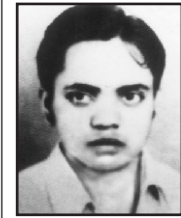


Today is the 15th death anniversary of SM Shafiu Azam, the doyen of civil service of Pakistan and Bangladesh

and former chief secretary of the then East Pakistan, secretary to the central govt of Pakistan, cabinet secretary and minister for jute, commerce and industry, energy and mineral resources, says a press release.

In observance of the day, S M Shafiu Azam Memorial Committee has chalked out elaborate programmes to recall the contributions he made to the country in various fields.

Special programmes will also be held at Dr S M Muhammad Haque Government Primary School and at Latifa Khatun Orphanage and Forkania Madrasa at his village home in Chittagong. Special prayers will also be offered for salvation of the departed soul at his grave and alms will be distributed to the destitute on the occasion.



Abdullhel Baki, Amirus Salam

Today is the 35th death anniversary of Shaheed Abdullhel Baki, Bir Pratik and his comrade Shaheed Amirus Salam Babul, says a press release.

On this occasion, Pallima Sangsad, Shaheed Babul Academy and Shaheed Baki Memorial Library have chalked out elaborate programmes.

Pallima Sangsad and its affiliated organisations would place wreaths and offer Munajat at the graveyards of the freedom fighters at 7:30am. Shaheed Babul Academy would organise a Quarkhwani and milad mahfil at 9:00am and Pallima Sangsad and Shaheed Baki Memorial Library would organise another milad mahfil at 5:45pm.

Laila Yahya



Today is the first death anniversary of Laila Yahya, wife of Prof Md Yahya, says a press release.

She was the founder member & past president of Inner Wheel Club of Dinajpur. On the occasion, family members will offer munajat and fateha at her grave and also a doa mahfil will be held at her residence in Dinajpur.

Relatives and admirers have been requested to attend the doa and pray for eternal peace of the departed soul.

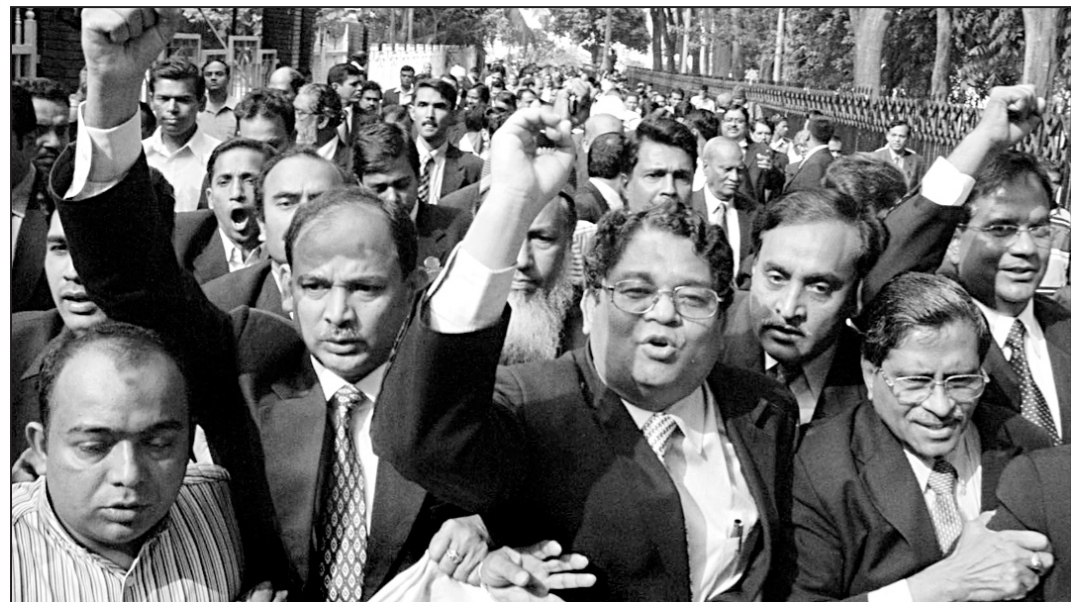
DHAKA TODAY

Workshop

Population Services and Training Centre (PSTC) will organise a workshop titled 'We promise to stop AIDS'. Venue: PSTC conference room. Time: 10:00am.

Workshop

A workshop on 'Status on flood forecasting and warning services in Bangladesh' will be held. Venue: Spectra Convention Centre. Time: 5:30pm.



Sammilita Ainjibi Samannaya Parishad stages a demonstration on High Court premises in the city yesterday protesting the stay order on three writ petitions challenging the legality of president's taking over as the chief adviser to the caretaker government.

MBBS QUESTION LEAKAGE Publication of probe report demanded

DU CORRESPONDENT

Disqualified MBBS admission seekers of government medical colleges for the year 2006-2007 yesterday urged the caretaker government to cancel the admission result and arrange a fresh test.

They also demanded immediate publication of probe report on the controversy of question leakage in the admission tests held on November 17.

A number of disqualified students and their guardians articulated their demand at a press conference at Dhaka University Journalists' Association office.

A High Court Division directed the government to maintain a status quo on the MBBS admission test for six weeks on November 27.

The order came following a writ petition filed by five disqualified candidates challenging the legality of the examination. In the writ, the petitioners said the question paper was leaked out early hours of November 17.

A five-member investigation committee consisting of Md Monirul Islam, additional secretary of health (chief), Sadaruddin, joint secretary, Coordination, Prof Dr Hosne Ara Tahmin, addition director general, administration, Prof M A Hayee, Ziaul Haque, senior assistant secretary, Hospital Core, has been formed.

One killed in road accident in B'baria

OUR CORRESPONDENT, B'baria

One person was killed and another injured in a road accident when two trucks collided head-on at Dharker village on Brahmanbaria Comilla highway under Akhaura upazila of the district at 1:00am today.

The dead was identified as truck driver Madu Mia, 28, of Narayanganj district. The seriously injured truck helper is Tajul Islam, 32, of Bhurichang under Comilla district.

According to hospital and police sources, a stone laden Comilla bound truck collided head-on another vegetable laden Brahmanbaria truck due to dense fog on the road.

In a critical condition, Tajul Islam was admitted to Brahmanbaria sadar hospital. On information police rushed to the spot and sent the body to Brahmanbaria sadar hospital for autopsy.

406 women victims of violence in Nov

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A total of 406 women were the victims of different sorts of violence in the country last month, said a report of Bangladesh Mahila Parishad yesterday.

Of them, 76 women and children were killed and 54 others assaulted.

The report was prepared on the basis of stories published in 12 national dailies.

According to the report, there were 68 incidents of rape, 18 of which were gangrape and 12 of

them killed after the rape. Besides, 14 women were sexually abused and 17 others abducted.

There were 17 acid victims of whom five got burn injuries. Eighteen women were the victims of dowry and of them 15 were killed.

A total of 56 women and children were trafficked. In addition, four domestic helps were assaulted.

There were three incidents of fatwa and 17 incidents of police assault during the period.



Major General (ret) Moinul Hossain Chowdhury speaks at a discussion styled 'Finding a way to overcome the national crisis' at Spectra Convention Centre in the city yesterday.

WEATHER TODAY

Light to moderate fog likely

UNB, Dhaka

Weather is likely to remain dry over the country in the next 12 hours until 6:00pm today.

Light to moderate fog may occur over the river basins of the country during early morning. Met Office said predicting nearly unchanged night temperature over the country.

Highest temperature 28.4 degree Celsius was recorded yesterday at Chittagong and lowest 09.0 degree Celsius at Jessore and Chuadanga.

The sun sets in the capital at 5.11 pm today and rises at 6:27am tomorrow.

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

City/Town	Temperature		Humidity in percentage	
	Max	Min	Morning	Evening
Dhaka	26.5	16.0	73	67
Chittagong	28.4	15.7	85	51
Rajshahi	25.8	09.7	57	80
Khulna	25.7	12.0	52	67
Barisal	26.6	11.2	69	84
Sylhet	27.2	15.3	82	71
Cox's Bazar	27.5	16.5	61	55