

# Increasing drug abuse may help spread HIV

## Speakers tell seminar

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Speakers at a seminar yesterday said the growing drug abuse and injection might spread HIV infections in the country alarmingly in near future.

The use of syringe in drug addiction poses a serious threat as it may contribute to the rapid spread of HIV, they said.

The seminar was organised by Asokti Punorbason Nibas (APON), a drug rehabilitation centre, in the city on the occasion of its 10th anniversary.

"The abuse of drugs has emerged as a serious problem. Some 560 cases relating to drug smuggling and abuse were filed in the last month alone," said Kamaluddin Ahmed, director general of narcotics control department.

Speaking as chief guest, he said the government is going to increase the number of seats at Drug-addiction Cure Centre at Mohakhali in next two years.

Kamaluddin called for concerted efforts at national and international level to stop production and supply of drugs.

Speaking as special guest, US Envoy to Bangladesh Harry K Thomas termed drug addiction a danger for global community.

He said drug addiction is the source of many crimes in the society.

Harry called upon the parents to be more careful about their children saying that family bondage can solve many problems.

Matiur Rahman, editor of the Prothom Alo, said the drug addiction is spoiling many of our adolescents and youths.

"The country will face a tremendous challenge if the government does not take stringent measures to stop smuggling, supply, illegal production and use of drugs in the country," he added.

Matiur Rahman assured that his paper will always stand by the Apon and other organisations in checking drug abuse.

UN Consultant Dr Shamim M Chowdhury said Apon began functioning at a time when there was no other organisation for the rehabilitation of drug addicts.

Director of Apon Brother Ronald Drahozal said, "The drug addicts are not bad, not even mad, they are just sick, and so they have the right

to be cured."

Apon, launching its journey in 1994 with a view to treating and rehabilitating the drug addicts, has treated as many as 1000 drug addicts.

Country Director of Family Health International Bangladesh Robert Kelly, Care Bangladesh HIV Programme Coordinator Vaidyanathan Krishnamurthy, Apon Executive Committee Vice-chairman Dr Mirza Ahad and General Council Chairman Prof Nurul Alam also spoke.

Apon Executive Committee Chairperson Sylvia Islam presided over the seminar.



PHOTO: STAR  
Jatiya Sramik League took out a procession in the city yesterday in support of Sunday's hartal called by Awami League.

