

# 40 lakh Hepatitis-C virus

## Experts tell seminar

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Around 40 lakh people in the country are believed to be carriers of Hepatitis-C virus (HCV) that gradually leads to malfunctioning of the vital organ liver and eventual death from it.

This was revealed at a seminar titled 'Mass Awareness to Prevent Hepatitis- C' organised by Sandhani Central Committee in the city yesterday.

Experts at the seminar said an estimated 90 percent of HCV carriers do not know the presence of the virus in them due to lack of awareness.

They said the prevalence rate of the virus among the healthy persons is about 5.5 percent, among the blood donors 6.2 percent, among the liver cancer patients 56 percent and among the

chronic liver disease patients 20-60 percent.

The speakers said since blood screening is the only mechanism to identify or detect presence of the virus, blood screening practice should also be made mandatory in the private sector where blood transfusion is involved.

Speaking as chief guest Health Minister Dr Khandaker Mosharraf Hossain said voluntary blood donation has substantially increased and people are becoming conscious about safe blood transfusion. He said to raise further awareness media should be more active in preventing transmission of HCV.

Vice-chancellor of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujib Medical University Prof M A Hadi, Managing Director of Roche

Bangladesh Md Nasser Shahrear Zahedee, and General Secretary of Sandhani Central Committee Md Mamun Shiblee also spoke.

At the seminar, Sandhani awarded two newspaper journalists for their outstanding contributions to raising awareness about diseases like Hepatitis A, B and C and enhancing public knowledge on safe blood transfusion through their write-ups.

They were Naimul Haq, Senior Staff Reporter of The Daily Star and Shamin Al Amin, Staff Reporter of the ProthomAlo.

The health minister gave away the crests to them.

Roche Bangladesh on the occasion handed over 50,000 pieces of strip kits to Sandhani to detect presence of Hepatitis-C virus in blood.



GPA-5 achievers of Viqarunnisa Noon School and College pose for photograph with Finance Minister Saifur Rahman and Alhaj Mosaddek Ali MP at a reception at the school auditorium in the city yesterday.

## VIQARUNNISA NOON SCHOOL Gala reception for GPA-5 achievers

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

It was a gala day of celebration and congratulations for the students of the Viqarunnisa Noon School and College who secured GPA-5 in the Secondary School Certificate (SSC) examination this year.

The school auditorium was full to the brim with the students, their parents and teachers. Drum beatings in the background added colour to the festivity, as the highest academic achievers were given a reception yesterday.

"Today I am extremely happy with the feeling that I have received recognition for all the studies I did in the last 10 years," said Tajkir Kabir Anannya of the science group before receiving a gift from Finance Minister M Saifur Rahman, who was present as the chief guest.

The guardians, mostly the mothers of the students, were busy clicking their cameras to capture the emotion of the moment when the minister was giving away a set of books to each of the students as a token of recognition.

Out of 776 examinees from the institution, 464 students, mostly from the science group, obtained GPA-5. Of the highest achievers, only 53 students are from the commerce group and eight from the arts group.

Kabir Anannya, who aspires to become an architect in the future, says the academic environment at the Viqarunnisa and the cooperation of her teachers and parents helped her the most in achieving the success.

"I think that the student politics and session jams are very damaging for the education system of the country. All, including the students and the political leaders, must come forward to put an end to these problems," she said.

Rezbin Dilruba, another student, said that the women's education, particularly in the rural areas, should be given more emphasis as most of the girls live in villages and they drop out of schools due to social and eco-

nomicroasons.

Congratulating the students for their extraordinary results, Finance Minister Saifur Rahman said women should have to come forward with their talent and education to contribute to the nation-building.

"There should be more schools like Viqarunnisa, where there is a perfect environment of education," he said, adding that the government always gives importance to women's education.

The credit of the success goes to all – students, teachers and the guardians, said Rowena Hossain, principal of Viqarunnisa Noon School and College.

Alhaj Mosaddek Ali MP, chairman of the school governing body and its members Md Baki Hossain, Md Monir Hossain, Nilufer Islam and Rawshan Ali Bhuiyan were also present at the reception.

## One held with fake certificates

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Detective police arrested a youth at Motijheel T&T Colony in the city yesterday and seized fake seals, police clearance forms and other fake papers from his possession.

Police said they also seized seals of different government officials, including officers-in-charge (OCs), fake certificates of different institutions, stickers used by notary public, machine used for making emboss seal of notary public, stamp papers, and forged certificate of Janata Bank.

The arrestee identified as Faruq Hossain runs a translation centre at Fakirerpool area.

"He provides fake police clearance, bank solvency certificates and fake documents in exchange for money," said DB Inspector Ruhul Amin who led the raid.

## 'Farmers to lose control over seeds with use of GMO'

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Many farm labourers might lose their jobs and bio-diversity would be lost with the massive usage of genetically modified organism (GMO) in the country, said the speakers at a workshop yesterday.

They said some multinational companies are trying to control world's agriculture and their emergence here will drive out the individual farming.

The speakers said patent rights will come straightway with the introduction of GM seed and farmers will lose the authority over the seeds.

They said only 11 companies are now controlling the entire seed market all over the world.

The workshop titled 'Agriculture, Food and Commerce: Peoples' Movement' was organised jointly by Ubining, Coastal Development Partnership, Loko and Uttaron in association with the International Food Security Network and Action Aid in the city.

The speakers strongly opposed the world trade organisation (WTO) agreement on agriculture.

Terming the agreement partial they said fish and jute, two main agricultural products of Bangladesh, are not included in WTO agreement.

The speakers demanded immediate cancellation of the agreement that signed by government in 1995.

They also demanded ban on imported GMO and hybrid agricultural product, and urged all to take stand against the introduction of golden rice in the country.

"On one hand the donors keep telling our government to cut subsidy on agriculture but on the other hand they are subsidising their agriculture sector heavily to get our market, the speakers alleged.

They said they will make a proposal based on the opinions of mass people before Hong Kong WTO conference.

The speakers at the workshop comprising rights activists, language veterans, teachers, NGO workers, and left leaders included Abdul Matin, Farhad Mazhar, Haider Akbar Khan Rono, Latifa Akund, Farida Akhter, Arup Rahi, Pial Rahman, Prof Asif Nazrul, and Rashed Al Mahmud Titumir.