

# Allocate more money to raise health awareness

## Roundtable in city told

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Speakers at a roundtable yesterday said the health sector of the country should be allocated more money for raising health awareness including health education and disease preventive training as the sector suffers from inappropriate investment.

Health Reporters Forum (HRF) organised the roundtable on "Invest in health, build a safer future" at the Press Institute of Bangladesh (PIB) auditorium on the eve of World Health Day.

The speakers said the trend of investing more in infrastructure should be changed and private investment in health sector should be monitored. They said there should be indications in the national budget how private sector investment in health should be used.

Changing the mindset of health administration as well as professionals is mandatory to eliminate all sorts of disparity in health sector, they added.

Director General of Health Services Dr Shahjahan Biswas was present at the roundtable as chief guest while National Professor Nurul Islam and World Health Organisation (WHO) representative to Bangladesh Dr Duangvadee Sungkhobol were also present as special guests.

Prof Abul Barkat, general secretary of Bangladesh Economic Association, presented the keynote speech on "Impact of Globalisation on Health" while Farid Hossain, bureau chief of the Associated Press, conducted the discussion. Ivy Zaman, director administration of Fortune Hospital, presented a paper on "Invest in health, build a safer future".

Prof Barkat in his presentation emphasised the health risks posed

by globalisation. Terming a number of diseases "the diseases of globalisation" he said increased worldwide travel and urbanisation, infectious diseases and non-communicable diseases are now posing a threat to developing countries.

He stressed the need for concerted effort of the developing countries to attain the benefits of globalisation.

Accepting the suggestions from the discussants, Shahjahan Biswas said, "Concerted effort is needed to eliminate disparities in investment in the health sector."

Dr Sungkhobol said the avian influenza has the potential to trigger a pandemic. At the same time the use of hazardous chemicals threatens human health and HIV infection, malaria, polio, tuberculosis and providing safe drinking water are the health challenges the South-East Asian region faces, Dr Sungkhobol said.

She said WHO has taken initiatives to minimise threats to international health security.

National Professor Nurul Islam underscored the need for rationalising drug use and maintaining adequate drug supply at reasonable prices to all health centres.

Dr Halida Hanum Akhter, director general of Family Planning Association of Bangladesh (FPAB), Dr AJ Faisal of Engender Health, Prof M Abul Faiz, principal of Dhaka Medical College, Dr Ishtiaque A Zaman of ICDDR, B, Dr Abdul Bais, vice-president, Bangladesh Private Medical and Diagnostic Owners Association, Alfa Arzu, convenor of HRF and Kabir Ahmed Khan, co-convenor of HRF, also spoke on the occasion.

## Huda

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amount of local and foreign currencies from his house on February 3.

The seized currencies include Tk 18,68,470 and Singapore \$1,796, £1,350, 300 euros and 18 dinars.

Huda was arrested by the joint forces at his residence on February 3 night and a day later was sent on detention on charges of anti-state activities, sabotage and corruption.

## SA challenge

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days' rest before facing the current top-ranked side of the world.

The match, which starts at 7:30pm Bangladesh Time, will be telecast live by state-run Bangladesh Television (BTV) and SET Max from the Providence Stadium in Georgetown.

South Africa have four points after wins against Sri Lanka and Ireland while the Tigers are at the base of the table after two defeats in the Super Eights.

Although coach Dav Whatmore's desire to get the India job could be in the back of their minds, captain Habibul Bashar said that his boys are only focusing on the game.

"We are not thinking anything rather than our performance in the coming games. We didn't get any official version on the issue. We lost our first two Super Eights matches badly and the boys' confidence is little bit dented. Our only objective is to play good cricket against the top ranked side (South Africa)," Bashar told a TV channel yesterday.

Bangladesh, who lost their first match against unbeaten Australia by ten wickets and suffered a nine-wicket defeat to New Zealand, failed to keep up their first-round momentum against the mighty opponents mainly due to poor batting and must gear up in this area if they want to push their opponents.

The Tigers, who have never beaten the Proteas in seven meetings, retained the same 12 from the last game, keeping out-of-form opening batsman and vice-captain Shahriar Nafees in the bench.

The match in Guyana will be Bangladesh's only game at this venue before they switch to Barbados for the last three matches.

## Old scripts

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contains a good number of old and invaluable books including "Dissertation on the Languages", "Literature and Manners of Eastern Nations", and over 100 years old edition of 'The Encyclopedia Britannica', he added.

There are a good number of 200 to 300 years old manuscripts and thousands of over 150 years old books in the library, said library committee member Shyamal Bhattacharya, who is a former teacher of Bogra Zila School.

Old manuscripts that are in bad conditions can be preserved with the help of modern technology, he added.

The library's 18 thousand books including the ancient manuscripts should be immediately shifted to the adjacent building that was constructed four years ago for preservation of the valuable books of the library, said the library committee secretary.

## Sylhet mayor

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Kamran, Ward Commissioners Syed Ahmed Hossain, Abdul Quaiyum Jalali, Santanu Dutta, Abdul Wadud Khaleel, Saleh Ahmed Chowdhury, Sazzadur Rahman, Syed Misbahuddin, Faruque Ahmed, Mohammad Shahjahan, and former ward commissioners Humayun Kabir Shahin, Pradip Bhattacharya, Azharuddin Jahangir, Oliur Rahman Chowdhury, Maksud Bakht, Bidhan Chandra Kapali and former executive engineer of the then Sylhet Municipality Padma Sen Sinha, and SCC storekeeper Saiful Alam. Also among them is Ward Commissioner and city Jubo League General Secretary Azidur Rahman Azad who is already behind bars on different other charges.

According to the ACC charge sheet, the accused had leased out Shibganj Bazaar of the SCC without any tender or permission from the ministry concerned. They had allegedly earned around Tk 23 lakh from the lease.

## Benazir's support

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fair elections and level playing fields for all political parties and a caretaker set up to conduct the elections. That demand has not been accepted by the government."

Musharraf is due to seek reelection as president by national and provincial assemblies before holding general elections, the second during his tenure, late this year or early 2008.

He is under western pressure to ensure free and fair elections involving mainstream liberal parties, to counter radical groups who gained influential positions in the last polls in 2002 polls due to a political vacuum.

As well as Benazir, Musharraf has also exiled Nawaz Sharif, her rival, successor and the only other major rallying figure for Pakistani opposition.

Benazir Bhutto and Sharif recently held talks in London.

# High migration cost

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could not go outside freely in fear of arrest."

Thus he spent about six years there and on November 25 last year, police arrested him and put him in a deportation cell for 12 days before sending him back to Bangladesh on December 6.

"I did not return home earlier as I had to spend a substantial amount of money for going to Saudi Arabia. I managed to send only Tk 2 lakh to my family."

Uzzal, 31, of Gazipur, who worked in Bahrain as an assistant to a cook from 1999 to July 2006, used to get wages of Tk 6,000 to Tk 8,000 a month. Most of this money was used for repaying his loans from relatives for financing his migration.

"A good job there is a matter of luck... and only a very few can manage to get those," he said.

AK Sarwar, 41, who was in Saudi Arabia for about a decade since 1987, said carpenters and cooks get comparatively better wages there. Around 90 percent of over 25 lakh Bangladeshis in the Middle East are unskilled construction workers or work in municipalities with monthly wages of Tk 4,000 to Tk 6,000.

Sarwar, now president of Mirpur branch of Oivabashi Karmi Kallyan Association of Bangladesh, said in the 1980s employers used to bear all expenses, including airfares and fees for resident permits and visas for Bangladeshi workers.

But wages and other facilities have come down sharply because of stiff competition for visas among the growing number of recruiting agencies and other middlemen.

Besides, the recruiting agencies use a chain of middlemen to lure rural workers for going abroad for jobs. And these middlemen exploit them in various ways.

"As a result, migration cost for a Middle East bound worker went up ranging from Tk 2 lakh to Tk 4 lakh," said Sarwar, who also worked for a recruiting agency in Bangladesh.

A study on temporary labour migration from Bangladesh also reflected their views.

The study by Mizanur Rahman of Asia Research Unit of the National University of Singapore said a worker now gets wages of

\$80--100 (Tk 5,600-- 7,000) per month working 60 hours a week while he pays \$2,000--2,500 (Tk 1.40 lakh to Tk 2 lakh) for migrating to the Middle East.

But in 1975, a worker used to get \$300--400 (Tk 21,000--28,000) for 40 hours of work a week while he did not have to pay anything for his migration to the Middle East.

"All these recent changes in Asia have exposed the migrant workers to economic misery. Now, more migrants and their families are worried about the economic outcome of labour migration than ever before," says the study.

According to the study, a survey in Singapore also found that 67 percent of Bangladeshi migrant workers in Singapore could not recover their financial cost of migration while 55 percent of them expected to remit only the cost of migration or less.

Besides, 72 percent of the returnee migrant workers borrowed money from loan sharks with 5 and 10 percent interest rates per month, while 80 percent of their families could not recover their investments, the study found.

"...Migration involved a hidden cost, which often damaged the economic base of families of the migrants," said the study.

A Thai worker usually pays an amount equivalent to Tk 90,000 for migrating to Singapore while a Bangladeshi worker pays around Tk 3,15,000, the study pointed out.

A prospective Bangladeshi migrant worker pays roughly \$6,000--8,000 (Tk 4.20 lakh) for going to Korea and \$2,000--3000 (Tk 1.4 to Tk 2.1 lakh) for Malaysia, whereas a prospective migrant from the Philippines pays roughly \$2,500 (Tk 1.75 lakh) for going to Korea and \$1,500 for Malaysia and the Middle East.

## Bangladeshi hurt

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Our Sathkira correspondent reported that the Indian border guards opened fire on Chanduria BDR camp at about 3:30am.

When contacted, Lt Col Asif Abdur Rouf, commanding officer (CO) of 41 Rifles Battalion, confirmed the incident. He said the BSF of Gobra camp under Swarnapnagar Police Station of North 24 Parganas district fired four shots targeting the BDR camp without any provocation, but BDR did not retaliate.

**TWO ABDUCTED**

Our staff correspondent from Sylhet added: The Indian Border Security Force (BSF) picked up two Bangladeshi nationals at Bhologanj of Companiganj upazila yesterday afternoon.

Local said Idris Ali, 30, of Kalasadek and Shahin Miah, 28, of Nayaqangerpar of Companiganj upazila were picked up by the border guards around 3:00pm as they were supervising work at a quarry.

Sources said the BSF also took the motorbike they had used to get to Bhologanj. They said Idris and Shahin might have strayed from their position and gone too close to the border when they were picked up.

# Asia at risk of floods

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the level of greenhouse gases in the atmosphere, which determines the rise in global temperature.

But under any scenario, the world's most populous region will be badly hit.

**Here are the major findings:**

-- 120 million to 1.2 billion people in Asia will experience increased water stress by 2020, and 185 to 981 million by 2050.

-- Cereal yields in South Asia are could drop in some areas by up to 30 percent by 2050.

-- Even modest rises in sea levels will cause flooding and economic disruption in densely populated mega-deltas, such as the mouths of the Yangtze in China, the Red River in China and Vietnam, and the Ganges-Brahmaputra delta in low-lying Bangladesh.

-- Cholera and malaria could increase, thanks to flooding and a wider habitat range for mosquitoes. -- In the Himalayas, glaciers less than four kilometres (2.5 miles) long will disappear entirely if average global temperatures rise by 3 degrees Celsius (5.4 Fahrenheit). This will initially cause increased flooding and mudslides followed by an eventual decrease in flow in rivers that are glacier-fed.

-- Per capita water availability in India will drop from around 1,900 cubic metre (66,500 cubic feet) currently to 1,000 cu. metres (35,000 cu. ft.) by 2025.

## Expat poisoned

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"The man asked for Muktar and told me that Muktar came to Dhaka in early hours of Thursday as he was forced to return from Saudi Arabia," she said.

And after that they started searching for Muktar and finally got him dead at DMCH, she added.

Police suspect that criminals might have made him unconscious somewhere between the airport and Karwan Bazar and left him near the underpass after taking his luggage.

# Saarc car rally reaches Mumbai

BSS, Mumbai

The Saarc Car Rally-2007 on Thursday reached Mumbai, the commercial capital to India, after covering over 8,050 kilometres roadway in Bangladesh, Bhutan, Nepal, Pakistan and India.

As the convoy arrived in Mumbai at 10:00pm on Thursday after crossing Indian states of West Bengal, Assam, Uttar Pradesh, Arunachal Pradesh, Rajasthan, Gujarat, Delhi, Haryana, Punjab and Maharashtra, hundreds of people greeted the participants with clapping.

Mayor of Mumbai Dr Shubha Raul covered the participants of the rally with bouquets at a podium erected at the seaside place, a famous tourist attraction of India.

Later, she hosted a reception for the participants at Taj President Hotel. Since the beginning of the 14th Saarc summit on April 3, the convoy crossed over 1,800 kilometres from Delhi to Mumbai after night halt in Joypur and Udaypur in last three days.

As many as 30 sports vehicles along with 97 persons including celebrities, journalists and government officials from all the eight Saarc nations, the rally covered over 8,050 kilometres roadway during its 22-day journey that started from Cox's Bazar, the tourist capital of Bangladesh, on March 15.

The main objective of the rally is to focus on the regional connectivity among the Saarc countries, highlight the need for improving regional trade, development of infrastructure, enhance people-to-people contact, explore the vast potential of business and investment, promote goodwill, familiarise the places of major tourist attractions and explore possibilities of trade by road.

Today the participants will make a bus journey to Pune, 200 kilometres from Mumbai. They will return to Mumbai today from where they will start for Colombo by air on April 8.

After visiting Sri Lanka till April 12, the rally will go to Male, the capital of the Maldives, where it will conclude its month-long journey on April 13, covering 9,000-km roadway in Saarc countries.

## India, Pakistan

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framework for the Siachen talks. He was later quoted as saying he was "hopeful" of a positive outcome.

Experts say India has around 5,000 troops on the glacier while Pakistan has less than half the number on the frigid wasteland where temperatures plummet to minus 50 degrees Celsius (minus 58 degrees Fahrenheit).

Pakistani analyst and retired army general Talat Masood said the statements from both sides in the run-up to the talks were "fairly optimistic."

"It seems there is a possibility the Siachen issue could be settled now or the signing could be when the Indian prime minister visits Pakistan," he told AFP.

"There is some sense of strategic value of the glacier because Siachen borders China and India."

"But its real value is political and psychological for both as it lies in disputed Kashmir. Its settlement may help in improving the overall climate between the two countries."

## Khulna JP chief

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was released around noon, sources in the joint forces said.

The sources also said Abul was quizzed about an allegation that he used to collect illegal tolls from Haji Rayezuddin wholesale kitchen market in the city. He happens to be an adviser to the traders of the market.

He is also an uncle of Asaduzzaman Litu, the prime accused in a case in connection with the killing of Jessoro Janakantha reporter Shamsur Rahman.

Litu was killed in crossfire involving Rapid Action Battalion (Rab) in Khulna city in 2005.

UNB reported that Humayun Kabir, president of the wholesale kitchen market, said the joint forces sought cooperation from Abul in preventing price hikes of essential commodities in the market.

Meanwhile, UNB from Rajbari reported that Mirgi union parishad chairman and a BNP leader Abdul Jalil Mandal and his associate Mohiuddin Manik were also arrested from the chairman's house in Pangsha upazila on Thursday night.

Police said they were arrested in connection with a case filed by UP member Abdul Majid on Thursday accusing them of misappropriating 17 metric tons of rice which were meant for relief. They were sent to jail after being produced before a magistrate court.

## Criminals held

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they were dealing in illegal arms keeping link with underground parties.

He said they will be brought to Khulna for quizzing in connection with several other cases including the August 17 serial bomb blasts.

Rab sources said the arrestees first identified themselves as Sajal and Shamsu, but disclosed their real names after interrogation in Rab-2 office. They were involved in gunrunning by renting a house at Uttara, the sources added.

# Pak tribesmen storm al-Qaeda bunkers

## 20 more killed in battles

AFP, Wana

Pro-government tribesmen stormed key bunkers occupied by foreign al-Qaeda militants in a Pakistani frontier zone early Friday, leaving around 20 people dead, security officials said.

Tribal fighters celebrated the capture of the bunkers by firing tracer rounds in the air that illuminated the sky over Wana, the main town in the South Waziristan region bordering Afghanistan, residents said.

The latest deaths bring the toll from fierce clashes in troubled South Waziristan, which erupted between the two sides on March 19, to around 270, with about 70 of those fatalities in the past three days.

The government says the tribesmen are trying to drive out Uzbek and Chechen militants because the foreigners have ties to al-Qaeda and are involved in attacks on US and Nato forces in Afghanistan.

In the major assault the tribesmen overran several bunkers held by Central Asian rebels, which were originally built by the Pakistani army but vacated in 2005 after tribesmen signed a peace deal with the government.

"They were very strong bunkers and Uzbek fighters were well entrenched there. But the tribesmen managed to flush them out," local administration chief Mohammad Hassanazada told AFP.

"Some 20 bodies were found lying there before dawn and more casualties were feared as the fighting continued throughout the night," a security official said. Sporadic gunfire continued on Friday morning.

Residents said the dead in the clashes overnight included seven tribesmen, one of whom was the driver of their main commander, Mullah Nazir, the former local Taliban leader.

The clashes broke out last month when Nazir ordered the foreign militants led by Uzbek extremist Tahir Yuldashev, a one-time confidant of Osama bin Laden, to disarm or leave the area.

Thousands of Arab and Central Asian militants were given shelter by Pakistani tribesmen after fleeing Afghanistan when US-led forces toppled the Taliban regime in late 2001, but the two sides have now

fallen out violently.

A ceasefire broke down late last month and tribal elders banged war drums on Wednesday to gather a force of around 1,000 fighters to mount a final push against the foreigners.

The tribesmen at a meeting on Thursday demanded help from military helicopters and heavy weapons from the government to capture the mountainous bunkers.

"The government has been telling us to expel the foreigners. It should help us as we are flushing them out now," a tribal elder named Sher Jan told the jirga or council of tribal elders in Wana.

Local officials said so far the government had not intervened. The Pakistani military said it had not been involved in the fighting, although the government supports the tribesmen's actions.

Uzbek fighters later Thursday torched the house of Sher Jan, in Dana village, 10 kilometres (six miles) west of Wana. Jan has been at the forefront of the efforts to bring the tribal force together.

A gunbattle then erupted in which Jan's brother was killed and his son and a nephew were wounded, security officials said.

# Heroin seized from inside bicycle tyre

STAFF CORRESPONDENT,

Rajshahi

Rapid Action Battalion (Rab) seized 925 grams of heroin in eight packs from inside the tyre tubes of a bicycle near Old Bus Stand area in Chapainawabganj yesterday. They also arrested one person in this connection.

The elite forces arrested Badal Miah of Bakhor as he allegedly brought the heroin into Bangladesh from India tucking the contraband inside the bicycle.

Following a tip-off, a Rab-5 patrol team challenged Badal as he was passing by the Old Bus Stand area and recovered the heroin, Rab officials said.

# Chlorine truck bomb

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dead were policemen, adding that at least another two police officers were wounded.

Ramadi, the provincial capital of the Sunni Anbar province, is a stronghold of Sunni insurgents and a prime base of al-Qaeda operators.

In the past few months, insurgents have been using chlorine bombs to attack security forces and civilians in the province.

Earlier US military announced the deaths of two more soldiers in Iraq in separate attacks.

One soldier was killed and two others wounded when a roadside bomb exploded near their vehicle in the restive Diyala province, north of Baghdad, on Thursday, the military said.

A second soldier was killed and another wounded in a gun attack in the northern oil hub of Kirkuk on the same day, a separate statement said.

The latest fatalities brought the US military's losses in Iraq since the 2003 invasion to 3,263, according to an AFP count based on Pentagon figures.

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The US radio station Radio Free Europe-Radio Liberty announced Thursday that one of its Iraqi correspondents had been found shot dead

in Baghdad.

"Iraqi journalist Khamail Khalfaf, a reporter for Radio Free Iraq, the Arabic language service of RFE/RL in Iraq, was found dead in western Baghdad on April 5, 2007," said the statement.

Iraqi officials had told the station that she had been shot in the head and that there were wounds to her body, said the statement.

She had last been seen on Tuesday. Khamail had already received threats in the past, said the statement.

She had been reporting for the station since 2004 on social and cultural life in Iraq.

Also Thursday, a senior Iraqi journalist was killed when a suicide truck bomb exploded outside a television channel's headquarters in Baghdad, the leading Sunni political party that owns the network said.

Deputy bureau chief Thaer Ahmed Jabr died after a suicide car bomb attack followed by a gun attack on the offices, said a statement from the Iraqi Islamic Party.

Another 12 employees of the 24-hour television channel were wounded, some of them seriously, it added.

# Global warming

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Joseph Alcamo of the Centre for Environmental Systems Research at Germany's University of Kassel, who was lead author of the chapter on Europe.

"You could say that the debate here is a foretaste of the difficulty that lies ahead in terms of policy."

The summary accompanies a massive 1,400-page report which said there was now clear evidence that climate change was already happening, through loss of Arctic ice, mountain glaciers, thawing permafrost and other recently-observed phenomena.

Martin Parry, co-chair of the IPCC's working group, said "the doubt has been removed" that climate change was already on the march.

"On all continents there is a climate change signal, it is affecting animals and plants and on a global level too," he said.

Bettina Menne, a World Health Organisation (WHO) specialist who was lead author on the chapter of health, said 150,000 deaths could be "attributed directly" to climate change in 2000 alone, due to malnutrition and diarrhoea.

Looking to the future, the main report predicts that billions of people will face water scarcity and hundreds of millions will likely go hungry, mainly in the poorest regions least to blame for causing the problem.

Poor tropical countries will be hit worst, it says.

Worsening water shortages in thirsty countries, malnutrition

caused by desiccated fields, property damage from extreme weather events and the spread of disease by mosquitoes and other vectors will amount to a punishing bill that is beyond the ability of vulnerable countries, especially in Africa, to pay.

Biodiversity and natural habitat are in for a hammering.

Even a modest increase in temperatures will bleach many coral reefs, reduce part of eastern Amazonia to a parched savannah, thaw swathes of the northern hemisphere's permafrost and change seasons for plant pollination and animal reproduction.

Green groups sounded the alarm, demanding immediate action to tackle fossil-fuel emissions and help for poor countries to cope with the threat.

"This is a glimpse into an apocalyptic future," said Greenpeace International's Stephanie Tunmore. "The Earth will be transformed by human-induced climate change, unless action is taken soon and fast."

"It is a looming humanitarian catastrophe, ultimately threatening our global security and survival" said Friends of the Earth's Catherine Pearce.

The European Commission said the new report powerfully backed its goal of setting a maximum rise of 2 C (3.6 F) in global temperatures since pre-industrial times.