

HYGIENE PRACTICE

90pc diseases in rural areas preventable

Says Brac health expert

MOON MOON SULTANA, back from Mymensingh

Nowadays, Abdul Aziz, a retired schoolteacher, passes his time delivering messages on hygiene to his neighbouring villagers. He is the president of an 11-member Village Wash Committee (VWC) of Naudhar village under Trishal Pouroshava in the district. The committee works for creating awareness among the villagers to practise safe hygiene and sanitation. "Earlier I was not bothered about the practice of hygiene among the neighbours due to my personal preoccupation, but now we have got to realise the importance of hygiene practice by all for a healthy and sustainable environment," said Aziz. The other members of the committee include local government representative (one male and one female), ansar and VDP member, religious leader, and small entrepreneur of the same village. They hold meeting once in a month and discuss sanitation and hygiene issues. There are a total of 2139 VWCs in six upazilas namely Mymensingh Sadar, Trishal, Bhaluka, Gafargaon,

Haluaghat and Gouripur. These committees are working to create awareness among people about hygiene practice, which can prevent 90 percent of diseases in rural areas, said a health expert. With a view to help achieving hundred percent sanitation across the country by 2010, Brac launched this awareness campaign known as Water Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH) programme initially in 50 upazilas of Bogra, Mymensingh, Khulna, Dinajpur, Panchagarh, Thakurgaon, Feni and Noakhali in May 2006, said Alamgir Hossain, senior regional manager of Brac health programme. Brac is going to expand its WASH network in another 50 upazilas in Magura, Jhenidah, Kushtia, Sherpur, Sylhet, Sunamganj, Hobiganj and Cox's Bazar from the next month. Bishwajit Sarker, regional health coordinator of Mymensingh WASH programme, said it aims at eliminating the practice of using unhygienic latrine and water among the rural and underprivileged people. Some 37.5 million people in 150 upazilas of 41 districts will be benefited by this programme through the change of their behaviour, he added.

Bishwajit said community leaders including local government representatives, ansar and VDP members, retired teachers, religious leaders and small entrepreneurs can play the advocacy role in implementing the WASH programme. While talking to this correspondent, Aziz said although many of the villagers were aware of cleanliness but only few of them set up sanitary latrines and followed health rules. The VWC has been able to develop fraternity among the villagers, and as a result they now care for each other's health and environment, said Rebeka Sultana, management trainee of WASH programme in Trishal Upazila. Naima Sultana, who works at Naudhar village as programme assistant of WASH, however pointed out some problems regarding motivating villagers to give voluntary services. "Most of the VWC members and other villagers seem reluctant in giving time for a meeting, and often they ask for free latrine, tubewell and other things in exchange of their time that they spend in attending a meeting and following hygiene practice," she added. Admitting this, Kamal Ahmed, a

'Form body to monitor, regulate cable operators'

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Cable Operators' Association of Bangladesh (Coab) yesterday urged the government to form a committee to monitor and regulate the activities of cable operators in the country. The committee should be comprised of officials from the information ministry, finance ministry and commerce ministry and Coab representatives, it said. The Coab leaders made the call at the launching ceremony of online survey of cable television viewers at Dhaka Reporters' Unity auditorium. Bangladesh Cable TV Viewers Forum (BCTVF) organised the programme. President of National Press Club Shawkat Mahmud formally opened the online survey. The Coab leaders demanded proper implementation of Cable TV Operation Rules 2006, which require the cable operators to offer channels to subscribers as per their demands and charge them on the basis of number of channels. Coab Secretary General Nizamuddin Masud called for a ban on transmission of two Indian channels -- Zee Bangla and ETV Bangla - - arguing that when Indian cable operators do not downlink free Bangladeshi channels, why downlinking of their channels would be permitted in Bangladesh. He said the results of the survey of cable television viewers would help them get an idea of which channels the viewers want to watch, making it easier for cable operators to offer channels of viewers' choice. General Secretary of BCTVF Ahmed Feroz also spoke at the programme.

3-day folklore workshop begins tomorrow

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

With a view to enriching the country's culture and heritage, Asiatic Society of Bangladesh is going to organise a three-day workshop on folklore beginning from tomorrow under its current 'Cultural Survey of Bangladesh' project. National University Vice Chancellor Prof Dr Wakil Ahmed will inaugurate the workshop styled 'Role of proverbs and maxims in the folk knowledge', said Prof Sirajul Islam, chief editor of 'Cultural Survey of Bangladesh' project at a press conference. Asiatic Society of Bangladesh organised the press conference at its office in the city yesterday. Prof Sirajul Islam said about 150 folklore researchers from different districts and upazilas and local folklore activists will join the workshop and present proverbs and maxims collected from their own areas. He also said these collected proverbs and maxims will not only enrich our culture but it can also contribute to the research of history, social science, anthropology, economics and agriculture as regional sayings reflect social attitude and relations. Reading out a written statement, he said, "About 30000 proverbs and maxims will emerge from the workshop and it will be a big achievement for us if the collected proverbs and maxims are published after proper analysis." Prof Islam also said the influence of folklore is very evident on the fine arts, stage arts, design, fashion, exhibition and clothing all over the world as its attraction is also increasing day by day. Citing a survey of World Intellectual Property Organisation, he said the annual market price of country's tangible and intangible commodities is about Tk 1000 crore. The folklore researchers will uphold their own districts' valuable proverbs and maxims in 16 sessions of the workshop and will discuss about the regional characteristics, language and present condition of the proverbs and maxims, Prof Islam said. Referring to the Bangladesh Asiatic Society's current project, he said after the Bangladesh it is one of the mammoth tasks of the society which will contain thirteen volumes and each volume will deal with the cultural aspects of Bangladesh like its architecture, the fine arts, literature, folklore, and indigenous culture. Asiatic Society President Prof Emajuddin Ahmed said the influence of globalisation is also evident in Bangladesh like other countries of the world and the country's folklore is at the brink of extinction due to the influence of globalisation.



JAHANARA IMAM MUSEUM INAUGURATED

Next generations will take pride in it: Selina Hossain

DU CORRESPONDENT

Many of the invited guests and journalists were eagerly reading a framed letter written by Shaheed Janani (mother of the martyrs) Jahanara Imam during the War of Liberation asking her son Rumi, a freedom fighter, to sacrifice his life for the freedom of the country. In another frame, hung on a wall, there are letters sent by Jahanara Imam to different hospitals just after the war in search of missing Rumi. The same frame also contains some responses from the hospitals in the negative that "spells out emotion of a mother to get back her missing son." "For years from now on, our next generations will take pride observing the living history of the struggle and sacrifice of a mother for independent Bangladesh," said a noted litterateur Selina Hossain while inaugurating Shaheed Janani Jahanara Imam Memorial Museum at a house named Kanika

at 35 Dhanmondi (Old Elephant Road) where she and her family members had lived. "Jahanara Imam was a mother who sent her son to war for the liberation of the country, and it is our duty to preserve the museum for our own sake," Selina said. The museum will also protect the history from distortion, she added. Jahanara Imam's youngest son Saif Imam Jami in collaboration with the relatives took the initiatives to preserve the memories of her mother. Many of the memoirs of Jahanara Imam including her bed, photographs, letters, books written or read by her, awards and utensils have been kept in an organised way in a small room. There are also her spectacles, batches, passports, chequebooks of different banks and other things. Jahanara Imam, also founder of Ekatturer Ghatak Dalal Nirmul Committee (committee to eliminate killers and collaborators of 1971),

also known as Forum for Secular Bangladesh, died at a hospital in the USA after prolonged sufferings from cancer in 1994. Saif Imam Jami presided over the inaugural ceremony. He said, "In 1994, I could feel my mother's love for the country and its people, I could also see the love that the people gave to my mother. At that time I thought to preserve her memories in any form." "Today's museum is the realisation of that thought," he added. The museum will remain open from 10:00am to 5:00pm on every Saturday. Artist Hashem Khan, Prof Muntasir Mamun, writer Shahriar Kabir, Kazi Mukul, Shyamoli Nasrin Chowdhury, Salma Haq, Shimul Yusuf, Mofidul Haq, Shaheed Rumi's friends and others were present on the occasion.

'Recognise household arts to establish women rights'

Household arts should be given national and social recognition in order to establish equal rights and status for women, said speakers at a view exchange meeting organised by Work for a Better Bangladesh (WBB) trust in the city yesterday. WBB Project Officer Shakila Ruma presented a paper at the meeting moderated by WBB Project Director Sayed Mahbubul Alam, says a press release. Shakila Ruma said females are facing widespread discriminations in their families because the importance of household arts are not acknowledged or appreciated. "Women population will become self-reliant when they will see their works are being appreciated by the family members," said Ruma in her paper. "According to the government accepted Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (PRSP), the contribution of women in the household arts would be included in the national income of 2007," said the speakers. They urged the government to take necessary steps to appreciate the financial aspect of the household arts in the national income in light of the PRSP. Kuheli Mustafa, general secretary of Welfare Association for Cancer Care (WACC), Nagorik Uddyog's Programme Director Nasrin Mahmud and Officer Shoma Dutta, Chief Executive of Conscious Creative Home, Tushar Chandan, TMSS Officer Rina Akhter, Journalist Upama Das Gupta, WBB Trust Officers Nazneen Kabir and Aminul Islam Shujan, Project Officer of Manabik Rezia Khandakar also addressed the meeting.

RU IRREGULARITIES

UGC continues investigation in presence of pro-BNP teachers

RU CORRESPONDENT

The University Grants Commission (UGC) yesterday continued its investigation into alleged irregularities and corruptions at Rajshahi University (RU) during the last five years. Campus sources said some influential Pro-BNP teachers received the complaints along with the probe body members. For this reason, many complainants did not lodge their complaints, they added. A complainant told newsman that he could not say anything about recruitment-related corruption fearing future harassment from the teachers who were sitting there. He said Prof Nazrul Islam, former president of RU Teachers' Association (Ruta) and relative of RUCV, was sitting there from the morning. Sources also said Convener of Pro-BNP teachers' group Prof Abdus Salam, social science faculty dean Prof Sadekul Islam, science faculty dean Prof Abul Hashem and education and research institution dean Prof Nazrul Islam were also sitting in front of the treasurer's office from the morning to monitor who were giving interview before the probe body. Many teachers, students and officials have criticised the body for allowing the Pro-BNP-Jamaat teachers to sit there, and raised questions about its neutrality.



Law and Information Adviser Barrister Mainul Hossain presides over a meeting of the advisory committee on law and order at home ministry in the city yesterday.

Road accidents kill five

STAR REPORT

At least five people were killed in separate road accidents in Manikganj, Mymensingh and Benapole yesterday. Our correspondent from Manikganj adds: Two people were killed in a road accident on Dhaka-Aricha highway in Manikganj yesterday. The dead were identified as Alal Uddin, 35, of Baistia village under Ghior upazila and Sujon Chowdhury, 28, of Tepra village under Shivalaya upazila in Manikganj. The accident occurred when Alal, a farmer, was going to Pukhuria Bazar while Sujon, an employee of Akij Partical and Board Mills, was returning home from the workplace, family sources said. Police said the accident occurred at around 6:15am at Pukhuria under Ghior Police Station when the driver of a Rajbari-bound truck loaded with rod from Dhaka lost his control over the steering, leaving Sujon dead on the spot. Alal succumbed to his injuries on the way to Manikganj Sadar Hospital. The bodies were sent to Manikganj Sadar Hospital for autopsy. Our correspondent from Mymensingh reports: Two people, including a schoolgirl, were killed in separate road accidents in Gouripur and Phulpur upazilas here yesterday. According to police, a schoolgirl identified as Khadeja, 11, was crushed under the wheels of a bus on Mymensingh-Kishoreganj road at Gaurampur in Gouripur upazila, leaving her dead on the spot. The agitated people blocked the road for an hour protesting the incident.

An unidentified woman was killed at Sarchapur on Mymensingh-Haluaghat road in Phulpur upazila when a speedy bus crushed her while she was crossing the road. The bodies were sent to Mymensingh Medical College Hospital (MMCH) for autopsy. A correspondent from Benapole adds: One person was run over by a bus on Benapol-Jessore road in Benapole yesterday. The dead was identified as Shibchandra Roy, 30 of Chowgachar Dhaluni village. Witnesses said the accident occurred at the Navaron-Kashipur crossing on the road when a Benapole-bound bus knocked Roy's bicycle from behind, leaving him dead on the spot. Sources said Roy was going home on his bicycle. Police sent the body to the morgue for autopsy.

Call to gear up social afforestation

BSS, Narayanganj

A fortnight-long tree fair began here yesterday with a call to gear up social afforestation movement to save Bangladesh from desertification. The fair titled 'Tree Plantation Movement and Tree Fair-2007' is being held on Chashara Shaheed Zia hall compound under the joint auspices of district administration, Department of Agriculture Extension (DAE) and Narayanganj Forest office. Divisional Commissioner, Dhaka Ekram Ahmed inaugurated the fair as the chief guest while Deputy Commissioner Faizul Kabir presided. Speaking on the occasion, the chief guest laid emphasis on proper implementation of the social afforestation programme at barren places. Later, he distributed saplings to headmasters of different educational institutions free of cost. Earlier, a colourful procession was brought out from Chashara Victory Monument. A large number of students, teachers, environmentalists and NGO activists participated in the rally.

WEATHER TODAY

Light to moderate rain likely

UNB, Dhaka

Light to moderate rain or thundershowers accompanied by temporary gusty or squally wind is likely at a few places over Khulna, Barisal, Chittagong and Sylhet divisions and at one or two places over Rajshahi and Dhaka divisions in the next 12 hours until 6:00pm today. Moderately heavy rainfalls are also likely at places, Met Office said.

Highest temperature 34.5 degree Celsius was recorded yesterday at Ishwardi, Majdee Court and Bogra and lowest 23.9 degree Celsius at Majdee Court.

The sun sets in the capital at 6.50pm today and rises at 5:13am tomorrow.

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

City/Town	Temperature in celsius		Humidity in percentage	
	Max	Min	Morning	Evening
Dhaka	33.7	26.0	75	72
Chittagong	32.8	25.6	67	76
Rajshahi	33.6	25.5	83	—
Khulna	32.5	27.0	80	72
Barisal	32.0	26.2	92	83
Sylhet	29.7	25.7	98	90
Cox's Bazar	33.9	26.2	69	71

Expand DOTS coverage to combat TB

Experts tell workshop

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Directly Observed Treatment Short course (DOTS) programme must be expanded to successfully combat tuberculosis (TB) in the country as a huge number of people are vulnerable to the disease, experts at a workshop said yesterday. Although the government and non-government organisations (NGOs) have been working to control the disease, patients' reluctance to complete the full course of medicine due to the lack of awareness hampers the success of their efforts, they said. If a TB patient does not complete the six-month course of medicine properly, the disease may become severe and turns into Multi Drug Resistant Tuberculosis (MDR-TB), the speakers said, adding that 70,000 people die from TB and 3,00,000 people contract the disease every year.

They also called on the media to play an important role in raising awareness among the people about the DOTS therapy. National TB Control Programme, Directorate General of Health, Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, Brac and the National Press Club jointly organised the workshop on 'Present context of TB control: Role of mass media' at the National Press Club in the city. The speakers stressed the need to set up DOTS centre in every medical college and institution and to make the existing centres active. As TB is linked to poverty as well as malnutrition, development of socio-economic condition of the people is equally important along with the TB control programme, said Dr Mahboob Kamal Siddiqui, line director (TB-leprosy), DG Health Services.

Obituary



MM Sultan Ali passed away due to cardio respiratory failure on Saturday at the age of 70, says a press release. He left behind his wife, two daughters and one son to mourn his death. His quikhwani will be held at his residence at House No #5, Road No # 6, Block # E, Section # 2, Mirpur in the city after Asr prayers tomorrow. All have been requested to pray for salvation of his departed soul.

Death anniversary



Today is the 14th death anniversary of Dr Nazir Ahmed Biswas, a freedom fighter, former president of Awami League. Chuadanga district unit and founding vice-chairman of Bangladesh Red Crescent Society, says a press release. Relatives and admirers have been requested to pray for salvation of the departed soul.