

## Social movement a must to stamp out illiteracy

Speakers tell roundtable

### STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Speakers at a roundtable yesterday underscored the need for social movement with the participation of people from all walks of life to remove the curse of illiteracy from the society.

They said the history of the literacy movement is old and despite spending huge amount of money and labour at government and non-government level for so many years, the country is yet to achieve its desired level of literacy.

The roundtable titled 'Literacy movement: Success and failure' was organised by Shakhhara Shikha O Gobeshona Foundation at the National Press Club in the city to mark the International Literacy Day being observed today.

In his keynote paper, Rafiq Hasan, president of the foundation, said programmes and efforts taken

by government and non-government organisations to remove illiteracy could not play a significant role as these were stereotyped and dependent on bureaucracy or donor agency.

He said it is a matter of great shame that the country failed to get rid of the curse of illiteracy in last 35 years.

Rafiq said there is a debate over the literacy rate as different government and non-government organisations give different rates of literacy.

According to government, the present literacy rate varies from 45 percent to 66 percent while the non-governmental organisations show the literacy rate at not more than 42 percent, he added.

Citing a research, Rafiq said the literacy rate among the women is 12 percent below the men's rate.

Abdul Qayum, senior zonal

manager of Brac, said the literacy movement suffered serious setback due to lack of integration between the organisations working in this field and lack of proper planning.

"We have to take the responsibility from the micro level and it should start from the domestic helps of our houses," said Journalist Ershad Majumder.

Urging for coming out from the typical definition of literacy, the speakers said education should be practical so that the literate people can do something.

They stressed on ensuring participation of common people and local government like union parishad to make the literacy movement a success.

Khwaja Mohammad Moinuddin Chishti, executive director of the foundation, presided over the roundtable.

## 25 fishermen missing as four trawlers capsize in Bay

UNB, Bagerhat

Twenty-five fishermen went missing as four trawlers capsized in the Bay on Thursday night.

Survivors said the trawlers, carrying 50 fishermen, were hit by strong current and sank in the Bay.

Fishermen from a nearby trawler rescued 25 people while the rest remained missing until the filing of this report at 4:30pm yesterday.

## Smuggled goods worth Tk 10 lakh seized

Bss, Rangpur

Members of Bangladesh Rifles (BDR) and Rapid Action Battalion (Rab) seized huge smuggled Indian goods worth about Tk 10 lakh and arrested three persons from Dinajpur, Joyphurhat and Gaibandha districts in the last two days.

Official sources said a joint team of BDR and Rab challenged a Bogra-bound truck from frontier town of Hilli in Dinajpur at Charmatha Mour at Panchbibi in Joyphurhat on Thursday night.

After searching the truck, the law enforcers seized huge smuggled clothes, including 446 pieces of three pieces and 909 metres clothes and arrested truck driver Rana Miah, 22, son of Dulu Mia of Baghpara area of Bogra town.

Meanwhile, Rab members arrested Abul Hossain alias Bimal Das, 36, son of Sadhu Das of village Narchi at Sariakandi in Bogra at Rajmoti Market at Gobindaganj in Gaibandha and seized 172 pieces of smuggled Indian sarees from his possession the same night.

In another raid, Rab arrested absconding warrantee Obaidul Islam, 27, son of Lutfar Rahman of village Moulikur at Birampur in Dinajpur from Birampur rail gate area yesterday morning.

After depositing the seized goods with Hilli customs authorities in Dinajpur, the law enforcers filed separate cases in these connections and handed over the arrestees to the respective police stations yesterday afternoon, the sources said.

## 10 migrants die trying to reach Canaries

AFP, Madrid

At least 10 would-be migrants were found dead on a flimsy boat trying to reach the Canary islands, Spanish emergency services said yesterday.

Divers from Spain's civil guard had found 10 bodies, a spokesman from the civil guard told AFP.

"There are six survivors, two of whom have been taken to hospital," he said, adding that the search was continuing.

At least 18 people were on the boat that was found off Gran Canaria, Cadena Ser radio reported.

On August 20, 12 Africans died as they tried to reach the Canaries on a similar vessel. Thousands have arrived in the Spanish islands off the African coast.

The human body is not designed to handle extreme heat for long periods of time; mechanisms like sweating are only effective as a temporary fix. But that could change if our environment becomes radically different. Some experts speculate that humans might even develop some kind of biological way to better tolerate heat.

"The problem is that this process of evolutionary adaptation for humans takes not decades, but tens of thousands of years," said Dr Claudio Ceconi, spokesman for the European Society of Cardiology. "We unfortunately won't be able to evolve quickly enough to keep up."

## Depression feels worse than many chronic diseases: Study

AFP, Paris

The first worldwide comparison of depression with four other non-fatal chronic diseases shows that feeling seriously blue is the most disabling of all, according to a study released yesterday.

Combining through self-reported health data on 245,404 adults from 60 countries collected by the World Health Organisation (WHO), researchers found that an average of 3.2 percent of those surveyed had experienced depression over a one-year period.

This was a bit lower than for asthma (3.3 percent), arthritis (4.1 percent), and angina (4.5 percent), and higher than for diabetes (2.0 percent).

But the results of a quality-of-life index called the "global mean health score" showed that depression was, by a significant margin, the most difficult to bear.

Individuals burdened with diabetes returned an overall satisfaction score of 78.9, and a score of nearly 80 for the three other chronic ailments. Respondents with no chronic diseases scored 90.6 on the 1-to-100 scale.

For those suffering from depression, however, the score was only 72.9.

চাপতি: অধ্যাপক ড. জিলুর রহমান সিদ্দিকী  
স্থান: বাংলাদেশ প্রেস ইনসিটিউট, তারিখ: ৭ সেপ্টেম্বর ২০০৭

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PHOTO: STAR

Dr Kamal Hossain speaks at a roundtable titled 'Education-students and expectations' at Bangladesh Press Institute (PIB) in the city yesterday. On his right is Dr Badiul Alam Majumder and on his left are Dr Zillur Rahman Siddiqui and Dr Shawkat Ara Hossain. SHEBA Bangladesh Foundation organises the roundtable.



Bangladesh Dalits Human Rights accorded a reception to the children of the dalit community who passed this year's SSC and HSC examinations with flying colours at WVA auditorium in the city yesterday.

## Global warming may pose heart threat

AP, Vienna, Austria

Global warming may be melting glaciers and forcing polar bears onto land, but doctors warn it could affect your heart.

"If it really is a few degrees warmer in the next 50 years, we could definitely have more cardiovascular disease," said Dr Karin Schenck-Gustafsson, of the department of cardiology at Sweden's Karolinska Institute.

On the sidelines of the European Society of Cardiology's annual meeting in Vienna this week, some experts said the issue deserves more attention. It's well-known that people have more heart problems when it's hot.

During the European heat wave in 2003, there were an estimated 35,000 deaths above expected levels in the first two weeks of August. In France alone, nearly 15,000 extra people died when temperatures soared. Experts say much of that was due to heart problems in the elderly worsened by the extreme heat.

The hardening of the heart's arteries is like rust developing on a car, said Dr Gordon Tomaselli, chief of cardiology at Johns Hopkins University. "Rust" develops much more quickly at warm temperatures and so does atherosclerosis," said Tomaselli, who is programme chair at the American Heart Association.

In higher temperatures, we sweat to get rid of heat. During that process, blood is sent to the skin

where temperatures are cooler, which opens up the blood vessels. In turn, the heart rate rises and blood pressure drops. That combination can be dangerous for older people and those with weakened cardiovascular systems.

Extreme events like the recent devastating fires in Greece may complicate the problem. The increasing number of forest fires that have swept through Southeast Asia in the last decade have also brought a spike in heart disease, experts say.

But because there are so many scientific uncertainties about climate change, like how fast it will occur, or what other factors, such as pollution levels or natural phenomena, might affect it, doctors are unsure what exactly to prescribe.

In addition, there are too many unknowns in connecting global warming and heart disease to make predictions about how many more people will have heart problems in the future.

Other factors may also make climate change more dangerous, such as the fact that in the future the majority of the world's population is expected to live in cities. With concrete skyscrapers, fewer trees and pollution spewed from factories and cars, cities are at least a few degrees hotter than surrounding rural areas.

Doctors also suspect pollution, which is expected to get worse with climate change, contributes to heart disease. They think that when

the lungs are irritated by tiny airborne contaminants, that could set off a bad reaction in the heart.

"A lot of cardiovascular risk could be avoided by targeting the urban heat effect," said Diarmuid Campbell-Lendrum, a climate change expert at the World Health Organisation. Although some European countries have put heat warning systems into place to alert people when they might be at increased risk, more needs to be done, Campbell-Lendrum said.

Still, higher temperatures won't be bad news for everyone. "Skiers aren't going to like it, but warmer weather could encourage some people to exercise more and actually improve their health," said Dr John Cleland, a heart failure specialist at the University of Hull in Britain.

The human body is not designed to handle extreme heat for long periods of time; mechanisms like sweating are only effective as a temporary fix. But that could change if our environment becomes radically different. Some experts speculate that humans might even develop some kind of biological way to better tolerate heat.

"The problem is that this process of evolutionary adaptation for humans takes not decades, but tens of thousands of years," said Dr Claudio Ceconi, spokesman for the European Society of Cardiology.

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