

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 country.

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 Shakkhar 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 Quayum, 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 Chishtee, executive director of the foundation, presided over the roundtable.

25 fishermen missing as four trawlers capsized 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, Joypurhat and Gaibandha districts in the last two days.

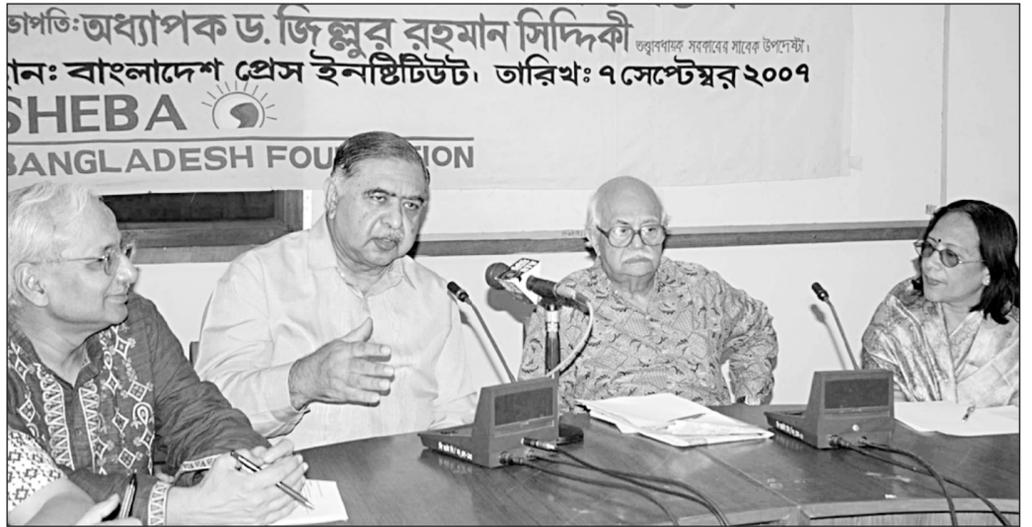
Official sources said a joint team of BDR and Rab challenged a Bogra-bound truck from frontier town of Hilli in Dinajpur at Charnatha Mour at Panchbibi in Joypurhat on Thursday night.

After searching the truck, the law enforcers seized huge smuggled clothes, including 446 pieces of three pieces and 909 metres of cloth and arrested truck driver Rana Miah, 22, son of Dulu Mia of Baghopara 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 from 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 Luftar Rahman of village Mouppukur 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.



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

Health adviser lays foundation stone of Tk 20cr BITID project

BSS, Chittagong

Health and Family Welfare Adviser Maj Gen (Retd) Dr ASM Matiuur Rahman laid the foundation stone of Bangladesh Institute of Tropical and Infectious Diseases (BITID) at Faujdarhat at Sitakunda yesterday.

The BITID will be built at a cost of Tk 20 crore and the first phase of the project with an allocation of Tk 10 crore is scheduled to be completed by December 2008.

Speaking at a function on the occasion, the adviser said people suffering from various complicated diseases, including malaria and tuberculosis, will be greatly benefited through receiving improved treatment from the institute after its completion.

Physicians from home and abroad will also be able to enrich themselves professionally by carrying out research here.

Principal of Chittagong Medical College (CMC) Dr MA Wahhab Chowdhury presided over the function.

Govt colleges in divisional HQs reopen today

UNB, Dhaka

All government colleges in the country's divisional headquarters will reopen today following a government announcement.

In Sylhet, the authorities of Sylhet Osmani Medical College, Monmohan College, Government College, MC College and Govt. Women's College have announced that the educational institutions will reopen today.

Dormitories of Osmani Medical College reopened yesterday.

In Barisal, all government and non-government colleges will reopen today. BM College will resume its classes from Sunday while it has already reopened the dormitories for students.

Khulna University of Engineering & Technology (KUET) reopened the halls for the students yesterday and classes will resume today.

Meanwhile, the syndicate meeting of Khulna University will be held today to take the decision regarding the reopening of the university.

All colleges in Chittagong will also reopen today. **BOU exams begin Sept 21** The authorities of Bangladesh Open University (BOU) have decided to start all postponed tutorial classes on September 14.

Written tests of Ashuganj Power Station Company postponed

Ashuganj Power Station Company Limited has postponed its written tests for the posts of engineer and junior engineer due to unavoidable circumstances, says a press release.

The tests were scheduled to be held today at the Dhaka Engineering and Technology University, Gazipur.

Fresh dates will be announced on the newspapers at a later date.

Engr Munawar succumbs to injuries

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

Engineer Munawar Ahmed succumbed to his injuries at Apollo Hospitals in Dhaka on Thursday evening.

Engineer Munawar, former director of Chittagong Chamber and a leader of Anjuman-e-Mafidul Islam, a voluntary organisation, was in coma since he was critically injured in a road accident on Dhaka-Chittagong road at Nankara at Choudhagram in Comilla on Tuesday morning.

Engineer Munawar was leading a five-member team to distribute relief in the flood-affected areas of Chandpur from the port city when a covered van collided head-on with the pajero they were travelling in at around 10:30am on the day.

The accident also left Standard Bank Director Harun Salam, former director of Chittagong Chamber Shaheedul Alam Quader and their driver Zahir killed on the spot.

Munawar along with another two businessmen - Md Asgar Khan and Md Salim Naser, were critically injured and rushed to Comilla District Hospital.

Later, he was shifted to Apollo Hospitals where he had been under intensive care until Thursday evening when his life-supporting ventilator was withdrawn.

Afghan mine clearing team kidnapped

AFP, Khost

Unknown gunmen believed to be Taliban insurgents kidnapped an Afghan demining team that includes two doctors in a remote village in eastern Afghanistan, officials said Friday.

The team from the Afghan Technical Consultants non-governmental organisation was snatched at gunpoint Thursday about 80km south of Kabul, the director of the organisation told AFP.

"Thirteen of our staff have been kidnapped," director Kefayatullah Eblagh told AFP in Kabul. The team included two doctors and eight mine clearers, as well as drivers and assistants.

He could not say who took the men. Villagers in the area in the eastern Paktia province reported seeing the group being driven off by unknown gunmen.

Din Mohammad Darivish, a spokesman for the local administration, told AFP that Taliban insurgents were likely to have kidnapped the mine clearers.

The Islamic militant group said last week, days after it freed 19 South Korean hostages captured July 19, that kidnapping was an "effective" tool against the government and a tactic it would continue.

Eblagh said his team had gone to the remote area in the Sayed Karam district, under a guarantee from tribal chiefs that they would be safe. The elders had promised to try to free them.



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 also 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 Diarmid 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. "We unfortunately won't be able to evolve quickly enough to keep up."

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.

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.

DBBL provides 100 laptops for nat'l ID card project

Dutch-Bangla Bank Limited has donated 100 laptop computers with scanners to the National Steering Committee on Voter List and National ID Card Project for implementation of field level work of the project at a total cost of Tk 87 lakh, says a press release.

Bangladesh Army is involved in assisting Election Commission for the implementation of a pilot project for voter registration and national ID card issuing programme of the caretaker government.

Chairman of Dutch-Bangla Bank Abul Hasnat Md Rashidul Islam handed over the laptop computers to Army Chief General Moeen U Ahmed at a simple ceremony at Army Headquarters Officers' Mess at Dhaka Cantonment on September 3.

General Moeen U Ahmed appreciated DBBL's support for the project.

Zaheed Hossain Khan, director of the bank and AHM Nazmul Quadir, additional managing director of the bank, were also present at the function.

Death anniversary of Dr Ibrahim observed

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The 18th death anniversary of Dr Muhammad Ibrahim, founder of Diabetic Association of Bangladesh, was observed in a befitting manner on Thursday.

The programmes include placing floral wreaths at the grave of Dr Ibrahim at Banani graveyard, free screening of diabetes at different places in the city, discussion session between selected diabetes patients and specialised physicians and free heart camp.

At the same time, milad mahfil was organised and improved diet was provided to the patients at Birdem hospital.

DAB President Prof AK Azad Khan at a memorial meeting at Birdem auditorium said they would prepare a draft for a national programme for prevention and control of diabetes in Bangladesh and would handover it to the government for taking an action plan.

Health Adviser Maj Gen (retd) ASM Matiuur Rahman consented to the proposal.

Move to motivate madrasa students against militancy

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The government has initiated a move to motivate school and madrasa students against religious extremism, fanaticism and militancy across the country.

"Training will be given to teachers, imams and chairmen who will motivate the students saying that Islam does not allow militancy," Home Secretary Abul Karim told the reporters after a meeting at the secretariat on Thursday.

"Various slogans mentioning the impact of extremism on the socio-cultural and economic life would be disseminated through the media to discourage militancy," he said.

Identifying poverty as one of the causes of extremism, Karim said measures would be taken to create jobs to prevent militancy.

Besides, campaign will be launched at Bangladesh missions abroad to fight militancy, he added.



Thundershowers likely

UNB, Dhaka

Moderate rain or thundershowers accompanied by temporary gusty or squally wind is likely at many places over all six divisions in the next 24 hours as of 6:00pm today.

Moderately heavy to heavy falls are also likely at places over the country, Met Office said in a forecast.

Yesterday's highest temperature of 32.1 degree Celsius was recorded at Ishwardi and the lowest of 23.4 degrees at Sayedpur.

The sun sets in the capital at 6:10pm today and rises at 5:43am tomorrow.

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

City/Town	Temperature		Humidity	
	in celsius	percentage	Morning	Evening
Dhaka	28.8	26.4	83	85
Chittagong	28.8	25.0	88	95
Rajshahi	31.5	24.5	88	95
Khulna	28.2	24.8	98	96
Barisal	28.0	25.5	97	--
Sylhet	31.0	24.6	95	97
Cox's Bazar	30.7	24.7	88	91