

Awareness a must to prevent HIV/AIDS

Speakers tell Prothom Alo discussion

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Speakers at a discussion yesterday said though the prevalence of HIV/AIDS is still only one percent, there is nothing to be contented as Bangladesh is one of the most vulnerable countries for its geographical location, huge population and low-level educational status.

It is time to disseminate complete messages among the people about HIV/AIDS properly so that they could be empowered and build strong resistance in the community against the disease, they added.

Styled 'Empowerment and Service Delivery: AIDS Perspective Bangladesh', the discussion was organised by the daily Prothom Alo at Bangladesh-China Friendship Conference Centre in the city.

The speakers said the HIV situation in the country is far better than that of its neighbouring countries due to its

culture, religious barrier and awareness campaign taken by the government and non-government organisations.

"We need not to be panicked, but we must understand that it is time for raising awareness of HIV/AIDS at every level as still very few people know about the causes of AIDS, how to prevent it and who the vulnerable groups are," they added.

They said around four crore people are aged between 15 and 24 in the country. In 50 percent cases, the disease spreads through the people who belong to this age group. So, more attention should be given to the people belonging to this age brackets.

Quoting a research finding, HIV/AIDS Sector Director of Save the Children USA Dr Nezam Uddin Ahmed said 90 percent children have ever heard about HIV/AIDS but only 25 percent of them know

how it spreads. While two percent are going through a denial phase who think that they would not get infected with HIV/AIDS.

Presenting a keynote paper, he said, "So, it is important to disseminate total messages among this group through proper channel," adding that it is good that the government has introduced the issue of HIV/AIDS in school curriculum from grade 6 to 12.

It would force the students to know about AIDS and take preventive measures and at the same time teachers' training in this regard would also be helpful for the students in getting clear messages, he added.

Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujib Medical University Vice Chancellor Prof Nazrul Islam underscored the importance of providing proper care and treatment for the people living with HIV/AIDS or get HIV

infected.

"They should be taken care of for ensuring a better life while they must be registered and observed so that they cannot spread the deadly virus," he said, adding that sex workers, injective drug users, males having sex with males, migrant and garment workers are belonging to most vulnerable groups and attention should be paid much to these groups especially.

There are more than one lakh sex workers in the country. Every sex worker attends some five customers on an average every day and if the workers get infected with the disease, they would transmit the disease to five lakh people every day, he added.

The speakers called on all to be a responsible citizen, live healthy life and take measures to prevent the disease like using condom during sexual intercourse, screening blood during blood transfusion and maintaining the religious norms.

At the same time, the government should consider AIDS as a threat to the nation and move forward to address the issue with due commitment, they said, adding that mass media can also play an important role.

Moderated by Dr Abdun Noor Tushar, the discussion was also addressed by Editor of the Prothom Alo Matiuir Rahman, NASP Line Director Dr Md Ishak Khan, Treasurer of STD/AIDS Network Dr Nazneen Akhter, Executive Director of Ashar Alo Society Habiba Akter, Awami League leader Dr Dipu Moni, Shahnaz Begum of Durjay Nari Sangha and cultural activist Nasiruddin Yusuf Bachchu also spoke the discussion.



The Council for Chamber Presidents accords a reception to Army Chief General Moeen U Ahmed at Bangladesh-China Friendship Conference Centre in the city yesterday. (Story in Star Business-B3)

'Establish land rights of indigenous people'

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Leaders of Bangladesher Samajtantrik Dal (BSD) and Indigenous Rights Movement demanded rights to land and constitutional recognition of the indigenous people.

They made the demand at a meeting held at BSD office in the city yesterday.

The speakers urged the political parties to include their demands in their electoral manifestoes and implement those after ascending to power.

BSD Convener Comrade Khalequzzaman chaired the meeting.

'Transparency in govt instts can curb graft'

Says ACC boss

A CORRESPONDENT, Benapole

Ensuring transparency and accountability in the government institutions can effectively curb corruption in the country, Anti-Corruption Commission (ACC) Chairman Hasan Mashhud Chowdhury said yesterday.

ACC has been trying to check corruption at some certain places, as it is not possible for it alone to do the job at every level, he said at a meeting with officials of government institutions at the Jessore collectorate conference room.

Stressing the need for the government officials to have

interaction with common people, the ACC chief said that the government staffs must take a stand against corruption.

He also called on the officials to refrain from indulging in corruption at first and then work towards curbing corruption.

Deputy commissioner, additional superintendent of police, and commanding officer of Bangladesh Rifles were present at the meeting.

Earlier, the ACC chairman distributed prizes among the students of Jessore MM College who won various anti-corruption competitions.

Obituary

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

AKM Abdul Alim, former teacher of Department of Islamic History and Culture of Dhaka University, passed away due to old-age complications at his residence in the city yesterday at the age of 80, says a press release.

His quikhwan will be held at his residence (Property Enclave, 54 New Eskaton Road) in the city after Maghrib prayers tomorrow.

Teachers of Department of Islamic History and Culture expressed shock at his death and prayed for salvation of the departed soul.

Alhaj Ishaq Ali

A CORRESPONDENT, Benapole

Alhaj Ishaq Ali, younger brother of former lawmaker Alhaj Ali Kader of Jessore-1, passed away due to a cardiac arrest yesterday at the age of 65.

He left behind his eight sons, three daughters and a host of relatives and admirers to mourn his death.

Leaders of BNP and Awami League expressed shock at his death and conveyed sympathy to the bereaved family members.

Begum Fazilatun Arshad

BSS, Dhaka

Begum Fazilatun Arshad, wife of former secretary of Bangladesh Services Limited late Mohammad Ali Arshad, passed away at her residence in the city yesterday at the age of 77.

She left behind his one son, three daughters and a host of relatives and admirers to mourn her death.

She will be buried tomorrow after arrival of her son and daughters from abroad.



Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujib Medical University Vice Chancellor Prof Nazrul Islam speaks at a discussion Styled 'Empowerment and Service Delivery: AIDS Perspective Bangladesh' at Bangladesh-China Friendship Conference Centre in the city yesterday. On his left are Nasiruddin Yusuf Bachchu and Dr Nazneen Akhter and on his right are Nizam Uddin Ahmed and Dr Md Ishak Khan.

DAP deviates from master plan

Say urban planners, environmentalists

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Architects, planners and environmentalists at a press conference yesterday said the final draft of Detailed Area Plan (DAP) of Dhaka metropolitan city has deviated from the original Dhaka Metropolitan Development Plan (DMDP), also known as master plan.



Save Toma

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Taslima Akter Toma, founder principal of Rajdhani Preparatory School and Girls' College in Rayerbazar, has been suffering from breast cancer.

Her condition is deteriorating day by day as the malignant cells have affected her bones. Doctors have advised her to go abroad immediately for better treatment, which involves around Tk 70 lakh.

Toma, one of the brightest students of Underprivileged Children's Educational Programmes (UCEP), joined it as a teacher after finishing her training there.

She established the Rajdhani Preparatory School for the destitute children and female students in 1999 with all her savings.

Toma, once a child worker who rose to become a teacher, received an award for her outstanding achievement in 2004 from the Ministry of Women and Children Affairs on the occasion of International Children's Day.

Today she is going through a very difficult time, as she cannot afford the expensive treatment.

Toma, a mother of two boys, has now appealed to generous people and philanthropic organisations to extend a helping hand to save her life so that she can do more to help the destitute children.

Contributions can be sent to Taslima Akter Toma, Savings Account No. 34046589, Sonali Bank, Chief Adviser's Office branch, Code No. 01073. Persons willing to donate money can also contact her at 3/9 Salimullah Road, Mohammadpur. Phone: 9121332, 01715034876.

They also pointed out many inconsistencies between DAP and the structural and urban area plans, the two components of DMDP, which was initiated in 1992 by Rajdhani Unnayan Kartripakkha (Rajuk).

They demanded immediate steps to form a technical committee comprising urban planners to rectify the flaws and anomalies in the DAP before its finalisation.

If the DAP is not changed, it will go in favour of land grabbers filling up water bodies and occupying open spaces, they added.

Bangladesh Institute of Planners (BIP), Bangladesh Paribesh Andolon (Bapa), Bangladesh Environmental Lawyers Association (Bela) and Centre for Urban Studies (CUS) jointly organised the press conference at BIP auditorium.

There are may areas in the structural plan of DMDP, which are identified as flood flow zones, but DAP has termed them housing project development area, said Syeda Rizwana Hasan, director (programmes) of Bela.

Such identification is inconsistent with the Wetland Protection Act 2000, she said.

Location and amount of flood retention areas specified in DMDP Drainage Working paper has also been changed, said architect Iqbal Habib, joint secretary of Bapa, who presented a written speech.

"The changes of location 9 and location 19 (eastern fringe area) in the report is clearly

visible," he added. The amount of open space designated in the proposed plan is very little, which requires further attention from the authority, he said.

Demarcation of existing open spaces and water bodies to be conserved are ignored which is very urgent to protect them from encroachment, Habib said.

He also said the draft final plan even did not consider the transportation network.

Bapa President Prof Muzaffer Ahmad said such a DAP would not be able to improve the quality of life of city dwellers.

Dr Sarwar Jahan, president of BIP, Prof Nurul Islam Nazem, Dr Israt Islam and architect Firoz Uddin also spoke at the press conference.

The speakers also called on the authorities to ensure effective public consultation on DAP so that people's aspirations are reflected in the plan.

One killed in road accident

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Dinajpur

An elderly person was killed in a road accident at Nawabganj in the district early yesterday.

The victim was identified as Mozibor Rahman, 70.

The accident took place when a Dhaka-bound speeding bus hit him from behind at Bhaduria Bazar.

WEATHER TODAY

Dry weather likely

UNB, Dhaka

Weather may remain dry with partly cloudy sky over the country in the next 12 hours until 6:00pm today.

Night temperature may remain nearly unchanged over the country, Met Office said.

Country's highest temperature 29.7 degrees Celsius was recorded yesterday at Cox's Bazar and lowest 12.4 degree Celsius at Srimangol.

The sun sets in the capital at 5:11pm today and rises at 6:22am 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	27.1	16.6	70	69
Chittagong	28.5	17.2	71	74
Rajshahi	28.0	15.0	77	76
Khulna	27.5	16.5	79	81
Barisal	28.2	15.5	90	91
Sylhet	28.5	15.5	68	72
Cox's Bazar	29.7	18.0	72	77

Death anniversary

METRO DESK



Today is the 37th death anniversary of Yusuf Ali Chowdhury (Moham Mia), a renowned

politician of the sub-continent, says a press release.

On the occasion, Yusuf Ali Chowdhury Smriti Committee will hold a milad mahfil and discussion at Moez Manzil in Faridpur. Faridpur Islamic Foundation and Faridpur Muslim Mission will organise a seminar on different aspects of his life while Kanulpur Jame Ashrafia Madrasa, Kanulpur Jame Masjid will hold milad mahfils. Chittagong Crescent Society will organise a discussion and milad mahfil at its office in Chittagong.

Relatives and admirers are requested to attend the programmes.

Abdus Samad

STAFF CORRESPONDENT



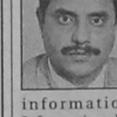
Today is the sixth death anniversary of Abdus Samad, father of Shafig Mohammad

Ruman, editor and publisher of the daily Sirajganj Kantha, says a press release.

On the occasion, the daily Sirajganj Kantha organised a milad mahfil at its office in Sirajganj.

Mustafizur Rahman

STAFF CORRESPONDENT



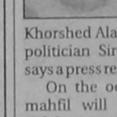
Today is the fourth death anniversary of Mustafizur Rahman, former deputy principal

information officer of Information Directorate, says a press release.

Relatives, colleagues and admirers are requested to pray for peace of the departed soul.

Syeda Zakia Sultana

STAFF CORRESPONDENT



Today is the 12th death anniversary of Syeda Zakia Sultana, wife of Additional DPI late

EC moves to stave off influence

FROM PAGE 1

The EC Secretariat will inform the 39 registered political parties and the cabinet division about its decision through letters in a couple of days.

Meeting sources said the commission also decided that fertiliser dealers registered with Bangladesh Chemical Industries Corporation (BCIC) are eligible for contesting the parliamentary and upazila elections.

The dealers' association had recently sought explanations from the EC about it.

The EC Secretariat will notify the association about the decision soon and issue a circular.

Following the decision, 4,800 fertiliser dealers are now eligible for contesting the polls.

The meeting also discussed the defection of disgruntled leaders to other parties.

Talking to reporters at

office, Election Commissioner Brig Gen (ret'd) M Sakhawat Hussain suggested that the political parties nominate more than one candidate in each constituency and confirm the returning officer about its candidate before scrutiny of nomination papers.

According to the provision stipulated in the Representation of the People Order (RPO) and constitutions of political parties, a party must pick its parliamentary contenders from panels prepared by the grassroots level committees.

The BNP is yet to begin the process and is about to ignore the mandatory provision as it just began selling nomination papers yesterday without directing its grassroots level committees to prepare panels of prospective candidates.

The issue was raised at yesterday's EC meeting without

naming any political party. The commission, however, did not take any decision on enforcing the provision fearing further political complications, meeting sources said.

About the effectiveness of the provision, Election Commissioner Sakhawat said the provision is mandatory for all registered political parties. "If a political party does not follow the provision, we may seek explanations from the party," he said.

But he said any party might not enforce the provision because of severe time constraint. "We do not expect that everything will be done overnight," he said.

Sakhawat reiterated that there is no room for misusing the EC's authority to cancel candidatures on grounds of gross irregularities in the polls.



Members of the UN assessment team call on Awami League President sheikh Hasina at her Sudha Sadan residence, left, and BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia at her Gulshan office, right, in the city yesterday and discussed issues relating to the upcoming parliamentary election.

UN team hopes emergency to go

FROM PAGE 1

"concern" for holding free and fair elections.

"We're hopeful that the state of emergency will be lifted before the elections," he told a correspondent.

On the question of holding election under or without emergency, Vendrell said general sense is "positive". Explaining the point, he said unless there is untoward incident, they don't think that the emergency will be in place in the run-up to the polls.

Asked whether they received any assurance from the advisers, Vendrell, former special representative in Afghanistan of the European Union, said they did not seek any assurance.

"What we like to see is ensure a right climate that requires political freedom, access of media, freedom of expression and level playing field," he told another correspondent.

Two other members are Bhojraj Pokharel, chief election commissioner of Nepal, and Ms. Aracelly Santana, former deputy director of the UN's Electoral Assistance Division.

UN Resident Coordinator and UNDP Resident Representative Reneta Lok Dessallien accompanied the team members.

The UN assessment team was dispatched to Dhaka by UN Secretary General Ban Ki-

Moon in response to a request made by the caretaker government during his recent Bangladesh tour.

The team is tasked with assessing the preparations and conduct of the elections through visits to Bangladesh before and during the elections.

They will report to the secretary general with their key findings and recommendations after holding talks with government and political leaders as well as the Election Commission and civil society before their departure on November 29.

The team will return for about a week at the time of the electoral race.

MEETS HASINA During a meeting with the UN team, Awami League President Sheikh Hasina said her party will participate in the December 29 polls even if the BNP stays away from the crucial race.

"Hasina informed the delegation that Awami League was fully prepared to contest the polls on the previous date, December 18. But, for a party's convenience, the election is deferred to December 29, thus making the state of emergency prolonged," AL chief's Special Assistant Dr Hasan Mahmud told reporters after the meeting at Sudha Sadan.

The UN assessment team was informed the UN team about

the problems the candidates are facing for not getting voter list this time like previous elections, he said.

Earlier speaking to the media, Francesc Vendrell, head of the UN team, said the United Nations wants to see the upcoming general elections take place without the state of emergency.

"We will, of course, prefer to see the country going to the polls without the state of emergency," he said.

The UN team chief added: Nobody likes to see the state of emergency unless it is necessary. "But, it seems to me, the emergency will either be lifted or play a very minor role if it is not lifted before the election-day."

Vendrell said though the UN is not sending any team of election observers, findings of the observers of the European Union, Commonwealth and the USA would be taken into account of the world body.

Hasina said Awami League also discussed how the next parliament could be made functional and participatory.

"Hasina said Awami League took steps in 1996 to make the parliament effective. The then opposition parties were invited to take the posts of deputy speaker and chairman of various committees, but no positive response was given by the main opposition party," Hasan said.

He said if voted to power again, Awami League would take initiatives, including inviting name from the opposition parties for the post of deputy speaker to make the parliament effective.

Instead of ministers, MPs will be given priority for the posts of chairman of the parliamentary committees, Dr Hasan said, explaining the policies of a future Awami League government in the changed context.

MEETS KHALEDA The UN assessment team met BNP chairperson Khaleda Zia at her Gulshan office yesterday and discussed BNP's participation in the upcoming general election.

After an hour-long meeting, team leader Vendrell told reporters they are hopeful that the emergency will be lifted giving adequate time to the candidates for campaigning. He said major parties also want withdrawal of emergency.

Vendrell said they will report to the UN secretary general about their assessment on election.

Khaleda's adviser Shamsheer Mobin Chowdhury said they informed the UN team of their concern relating to continuation of emergency and amended RPO.

Reaz Rahman and Khondkar Delwar Hossain were also present at the meeting.