ferent parts of the country. From 9:30 am to 12.30 pm different types of sports like archery, 100mt long run, 50m long run and paddle boat race for both the male and female participants. At the prize giving ceremony in his speech Managing Director of Sanofi-Aventis Iftekharul Islam said, "The Spirit to Survive is a sporting event for the cancer patients which serves a noble purpose that is to encourage the cancer patients and to share their stories, their courage and their tremendous spirit which they amply demonstrated with their active and joyous participation".

Participants Professor Mahbubul Alam, Asma Rahman, Saima Akhtar, Syeda Iasmin, Dr. Rowshon Ara Feroj all expressed their gratitude and appreciation for organising such a sporting event. Dr. Rowshon Ara said, "Such kind of sporting events are very encouraging which can divert as well as entertain the cancer patients who have to go through tremendous physical and mental stress."

When asked about the reasons of taking such steps with the cancer survivors Dr Mahmood Abedin Khan, Oncology Manager of Sanofi-aventis said, "Sanofi-aventis has been working with oncology for about 10 years. Through such events Sanofi-aventis wants to create a platform for the cancer survivors from all over the country to meet and share their stories with one another. We believe the tremendous mental strength of one survivor can induce another. We want to start the chain reaction."

Dr Mahmood Abedin Khan also pointed out that in our country there exists a shameful attitude towards the cancer patients. Once the disease is diagnosed, it is taken as a death sentence and the cancer patients are seen as sorry figures of human existence who have nothing left but to await the final destination. Sanofi-aventis has a noble desire. They want to change this social attitude and to remove the stigma. They want to show society that cancer survivors can lead active, healthy and happy lives. Society should take a positive attitude and support cancer patients who have to cope with various physical, mental and social challenges in their fight against the disease.

There is also a scientificexplanation behind organising such sporting activities with the cancer patients. In the past it was believed that the adult brain cannot change or grow, all it could do was break down. New research shows that our least-understood organ has a remarkable ability to retrain and even regenerate itself. It is believed now that our brain can play a crucial role in healing our body and improving our health. Now doctors and researchers are teaching the patients how to use their mind to ease the pain.

Society should take a positive attitude and support cancer patients who have to cope with various physical, mental and social challenges in their fight against the disease.



Renowned Oncologist Professor M A Hai said, "Mental strength, courage and happiness help cancer survivors to fight against cancer. In case of Shirin Akhtar it was the combination of all three to take such adventurous steps to relay "The Flame of Hope". Dr Rezaul Farid Khan, Director Medical Affairs, also supports such sporting events. In his opinion, "This type of sporting event will definitely minimise physical and mental stress related to their disease and treatment as well as the social stigma related to cancer."

Fighting a deadly disease is not easy yet even in the tempest of fear, frustration and confusion men and women like Mohammad Imran, Shirin Akhtar, Ferdousi Kabir, Dr. Rowshon Ara Feroj and many others do not give up their hopes or dreams, rather they choose to continue their battle against the fatal disease, against and the prejudices associated with it. Undoubtedly by taking part in this sporting event these survivors have shown their remarkable courage and have emerged as the true winners. ■