

44pc drug users involved in criminal offences

Speakers tell discussion

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Speakers at a discussion yesterday said around 44 percent drug users are involved in different types of criminal offences, while smoking is the first step of their life before becoming drug addicted.

Education is the best medicine to return drug-addicted people to normal life and save the young generation from the grip of drug, they said, adding that drug abuse poses a major threat to the fabric of the society.

The speakers said this at the discussion on 'Abuse of drug and the role of education institutions to check drug addiction' organised by Manas, an NGO, at TSC auditorium at Dhaka University.

Home Minister Sahara Khatun, law-

maker Dr Mostafa Jalal Mahiuddin, DU VC Prof AAMS Arefin Siddique, film actor Ilias Kanchan and Manas President Dr Arup Ratan Chowdhury spoke at the programme.

Speaking as the chief guest, the home minister said geographically Bangladesh is a route of drug trafficking and it is alarming that the number of drug addicted is increasing day by day.

"Drug addiction is a serious problem in all developed as well as developing countries. All NGOs and socio-cultural organisations will have to assist the government to wipe out drug addiction from the society," she said.

Prof Arefin said drug addiction is a bio, social and psychological disease which destroys one's life and peace of his or her family.

"Education is the best medicine to create mass campaign against the drug abuse. Education institution is the best place where we can start the campaign for making mass awareness of drug addiction," he added.

Presenting a keynote paper, Dr Arup said smoking was the first step for 98 percent drug users before becoming the drug addicted.

"Around 44 percent drug users are involved in different types of criminal offences like snatching, kidnapping, mugging, stealing and killing. We will have to be united and work together to eliminate this social stigma," he added.

He also said that government should take long- and short-term plans to fight the drug addiction.



US Ambassador James F Moriarty calls on BNP Chairperson and Leader of the Opposition in Parliament Khaleda Zia at her Gulshan office in the city yesterday.

'Find out masterminds behind BDR mutiny'

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Rights, business and socio-cultural organisations yesterday called for proper investigation into the massacre at BDR headquarters to find out the masterminds behind the mutiny by BDR jawans.

They also strongly condemned the killing of army officers at the BDR headquarters and demanded stern action against the killers.

Terming the incident a conspiracy to weaken the defence forces, the organisations urged the government and the opposition to work unitedly to resolve the crisis in the greater interest of the country.

In a statement, International Business Forum of Bangladesh (IBFB) observed that this is an irreparable loss for the nation, which cannot be mitigated for many

years to come. The forum also urged the government to take necessary measures to prevent recurrence of such incident.

In another statement, Bangladesh University of Engineering and Technology Teachers Association praised the role of the Bangladesh Army for showing restraint at this critical moment.

Tamuddin Majlish and Trust Bank Limited held doa mahfil at their respective organisations seeking eternal peace of the departed souls of army officers killed in the BDR

mutiny. Amra Muktijoddhar Santan, Bangladesh Supreme Court Bar Association, Bangladesh Human Rights Commission and Bangladesh Chhatra Union also condemned the killings.

Kendriya Command Council, Bangladesh Muktijoddha Sangsad, will hold candlelight vigils at the Central Shaheed Minar in Dhaka and at other Shaheed Minars at the district headquarters at 6:00pm today in memory of the army officers killed in the BDR mutiny.

GRAFT CASES

Ziaul Haq Zia, Milon get bail

COURT CORRESPONDENT

A Dhaka court yesterday granted bail to former state minister for LGRD and Cooperatives Ziaul Haq Zia and former BNP lawmaker AKM Fazlul Haque Milon in two separate cases filed by the Anti-Corruption Commission (ACC).

Zia was accused of embezzlement of Tk 12.97 lakh from the public coffer while Milon was accused of amassing wealth worth Tk 86 lakh illegally and concealing wealth information to the ACC.

Judge ANM Bashir Ullah of the Metropolitan Sessions Judge's Court granted bail to Zia and Milon after their lawyers submitted bail petitions on different grounds.

Zia who was arrested on February 18, was produced before the court yesterday while Milon surrendered and sought bail.

The judge granted bail to Zia upon a bond of Tk 25,000 with two guarantors while Milon upon a bond of Tk 50,000 with two guarantors.

Moving the bail petitions, lawyers told the court that the charges brought against their clients were false and fabricated. So, they prayed for bail. But the prosecution opposed the bail petitions. Moreover, Milon was granted bail from the High Court till submission of the police report.

The court issued an arrest warrant against Zia's son Mashfiqul Haq Joy and fixed March 12 for next hearing of the case.

ACC Assistant Director Monzur Alam, also the investigation officer (IO) of the case, submitted the charge sheet to the Chief Metropolitan Magistrate's (CMM) Court of Dhaka on January 14 this year showing 12 people as prosecution witnesses.

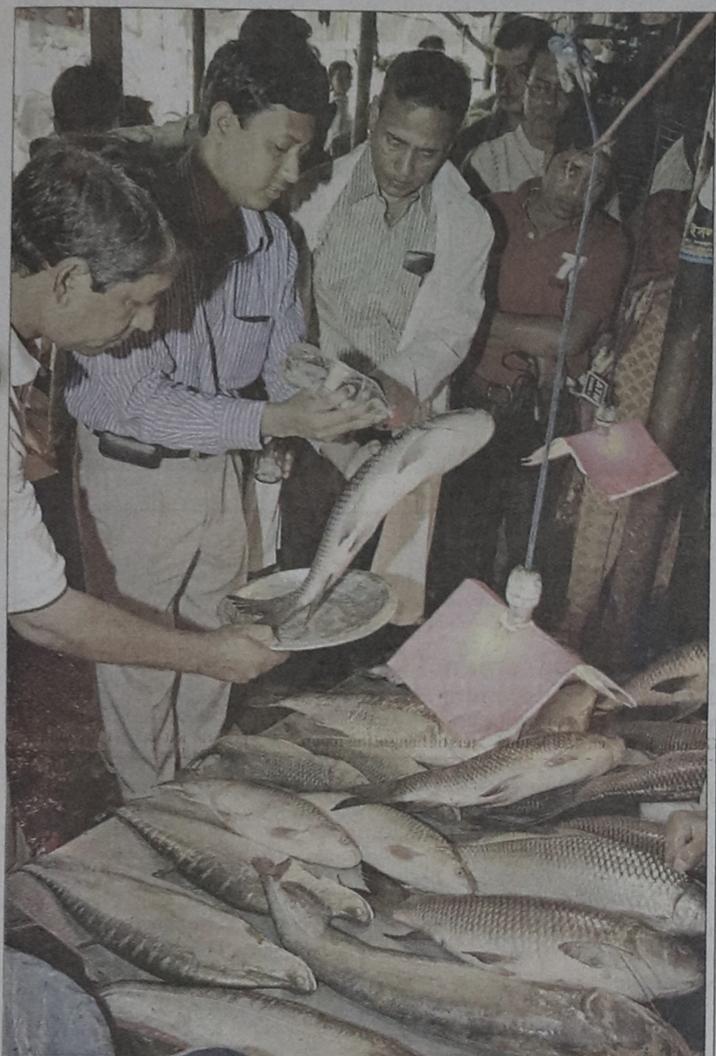
According to the prosecution, it was alleged that Zia, while a minister, forced all car drivers of the Water Supply and Sewerage Authority (Wasa) to buy oil from his son Joy's (MD) M/S Royal Filling Station at Mahakhali in the city that made a dent in the public money amounting to Tk 12,97,178 and swelled the pockets of Zia and his son.

Earlier, Zia was convicted for 31 years imprisonment on different charges filed for graft, cheating and tax evasion.

CASE AGAINST MILON
On January 22, ACC Assistant Director Rafiqul Islam, also the IO of the case, submitted the charge sheet to the CMM's Court, showing 23 people as prosecution witnesses.

In the charge sheet, the IO said that Milon had amassed wealth worth Tk 86,15,777 through illegal means and concealed wealth information of Tk 24,8,508 to the ACC.

On September 18 last year, the ACC filed the case with Ramna Police Station against Milon.



Experts from the chemistry department of Dhaka University and Science Laboratory carry out a chemical test on a fish to find out whether it is contaminated with formalin at Hatirpool fish market yesterday. Paribesh Bachao Andolon organised the anti-formalin drive.

BATAMUL BLAST Hearing on charge framing Mar 12

COURT CORRESPONDENT

A Dhaka court yesterday fixed March 12 for hearing on charge framing against 14 Harkatul Jihad (Hujji) men, including its chief Mufti Abdul Hannan in connection with the Ramna Batamul blast cases.

Judge ANM Bashir Ullah of the Metropolitan Sessions Judge's Court of Dhaka fixed the date after receiving reports on arrest warrants against eight absconding accused in connection with the case filed under Explosive Substances Act.

Earlier on February 18, the court directed the authorities concerned to publish advertisements in two national Bangla dailies asking eight absconding accused, including former deputy minister Abdus Salam Pintu's brother Tajuddin to appear before it by yesterday. But they did not comply with the court order.

As they did not appear, the judge ordered additional district magistrate (ADM) to appoint state-defence lawyers to represent eight absconding accused including Tajuddin.

On the other hand, the ADM had earlier appointed eight state defence lawyers to defend the absconding accused in connection with case filed for killing the victims.

Mufti Hannan and four others, now in jail, were produced before the court during yesterday's hearing while Maulana Akbar Hussain, now on a High Court bail was also present.

The carnage at Ramna Batamul took place during Pahela Baishakh celebrations on April 14 in 2001 that left 10 people dead and scores injured.

On November 29 last year, Criminal Investigation Department submitted the charge sheets of the cases to the Chief Metropolitan Magistrate's Court of Dhaka accusing Mufti Hannan and 13 others of the heinous offences.

SCBA ELECTION Mesbahuddin, Rezaul to lead pro-AL panel

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Bangladesh Sammilita Ainjibi Samannaya Parishad (BSASP) yesterday finalised its panel for contesting the upcoming election of the Supreme Court Bar Association (SCBA).

The pro-Awami League BSASP nominated AFM Mesbahuddin and SM Rezaul Karim for contesting the posts of president and secretary, sources said.

BSASP Member Secretary Advocate Subrata Chowdhury yesterday told The Daily Star that they were yet to officially announce the panel for contesting SCBA election.

BNP-Jamaat-backed lawyers' body Bangladesh Jatiyatabadi Ainjibi Oikya Parishad (BJAOP) on February 20 finalised its panel nominating Khandaker Mahub Hossain and Helaluddin Mollah for contesting as president and secretary.

The election for the 14 executive posts, including president and secretary, will be held on March 24 and 25.

The lawyers said main contest in the election will take place between the panels of BSASP and BJAOP.

BSASP leaders held a meeting at the SCBA conference room yesterday with a view to selecting the candidates for the panel.

Former SCBA presidents M Amir-Ul Islam, Rakanuddin Mahmud and Mahbubey Alam, Advocate Subrata Chowdhury, SCBA Secretary Nurul Islam Sujan, AM Amin Uddin, Bashir Ahmed and Shahidul Karim Siddiqui were present at the meeting.

'Unity a must for nat'l security'

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Speakers at a condolence meeting of those killed in BDR mutiny said, unity among professionals and countrymen is necessary to prevent conspiracy against national security.

They also emphasised the need to finding out the masterminds behind the atrocious incident in BDR headquarters and demanded punishment of

the killers.

Peshajibi Shamannay Parishad organised the condolence meeting at the National Press Club yesterday.

Dr Shorfuiddin Ahmed, chairman of Shadhinota Chikitsok Parishad at the BSMMU said, this is a conspiracy to disturb the elected government that came to power with massive support of the people.

Economist Saiful Haque questioned the need to form-

ing two different investigation committees -- one by the government and another by the military.

Tusher Rehman, Advocate Yusuf Humayun, journalist Omar Faruque, Prof K M Saidul Haque, Prof Dr Aktaruzzaman, Architect M Nazrul Islam, Prof Kazi Faruque Ahmed, Saidur Rahman and Dr Quamrul Hasan Khan, among others, spoke at the meeting.

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We mourn the loss of many who protected us in times of our need. Our sincere condolences reach out to the families who lost their beloved ones.

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