

50pc adult population carry TB germs

Says expert

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

About 50 percent of the country's adult population carry tuberculosis bacteria, but very few of them carry active germs as the bacteria remain in hidden form.

Dr Fahim Ahmed Chowdhury of Brac Health Programme revealed this yesterday, urging the government to step up preventive measures to control the disease.

"Bangladesh ranks sixth among the 22 high burden countries of TB, which infects 93 lakh people and claims 23 lakh lives every year across the globe," Fahim said at a roundtable on 'TB control programme in Bangladesh' at the National Press Club.

The Health and Environment Journalists Forum, the National Tuberculosis Programme (NTP) and Brac Health

Programme jointly organised the roundtable, moderated by Forum President Mustafiz Shafi.

Line Director of TB, Leprosy Control Programme Dr Provat Chandra Barua, Forum General Secretary Saiful Islam Shameem, Dr Mahfuza Rifat and Dr Jalal Uddin Ahmed of Brac, Dr K Zaman of ICDDR,B, Provir Kanti Das of BGMEA, Dr Wahiduzzaman of Chest Disease Hospital, Dr Lutfar Rahman of Urban TB Control Programme and journalists Masud Kamal and Shishir Morad also spoke.

Dr Fahim said TB detection and cure rates in the country have reached to 73 percent and 92 percent respectively, well above the target of millennium development goal -- 70 percent for case detection rate and 85 percent for cure rate.

"But much more needs to be done to

control multi-drug resistant (MDR) and extremely drug resistant (XDR) tuberculosis," he said, adding that the cases of MDR TB is on the rise due to non-compliance with medicines.

Some doctors are also responsible for MDR and XDR cases in the country, said Programme Manager of NTP Dr Nazrul Islam.

Making inappropriate prescriptions ignoring proper doses of drug, drug combination and duration could also lead to drug resistance, he added.

Dr Nazrul said a total of 283 MDR tuberculosis cases have been recorded in the country so far and 19 of them died and 22 became defaulters, a rate which is growing due to high toxicity of drugs. The MDR drugs are generally 100 times expensive than the normal drugs.

'97pc accidents occur due to drivers' carelessness'

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Around 97 percent road accidents occur due to drivers' carelessness, said Dhaka Metropolitan Police Commissioner AKM Shahidul Hoque yesterday.

He made the comment at a workshop on traffic rules for motor vehicle drivers held at Pallabi Community Centre at Pallabi in the city.

Around 300 drivers of different modes of vehicles took part at the workshop.

Dhaka Sarak Paribahan Samity general secretary Khandaker Enayet Ullah, Bangladesh Sarak Paribahan Federation acting general secretary and high police officials spoke at the workshop.

The commissioner said police would help drivers

willing to have real driving licenses and for having such licenses traffic police will not file criminal cases against the fake licenses holders till March 31, 2010. He warned that after the deadline police would go tough against the fake driving license holders.

He said they are trying to form a culture among commuters to follow traffic rules

spontaneously instead of compelling them to follow.

Citing statistics of road accidents happened between January to November, he said carelessness of drivers were responsible for 97 percent road accidents.

He urged the leaders of transport owners and workers association to find out corrupt leaders and suspend them from their organisations.

ZAKER PARTY COUNCIL 'Stand united under dynamic leadership'

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Zaker Party Chairman Mostafa Amir Faisal Mujaddedi yesterday called upon the patriotic and democratic people in the country to stand united under dynamic leadership for establishing a happy, prosperous and welfare state.

He was addressing the party men at the inaugural session of national council of the party at Bangabandhu International Conference Centre in the city.

Faisal stressed the need for making the parliament effective though participation of opposition political parties to strengthen democracy.

He emphasised on infrastructural development to lure foreign investment and expansion of small and medium entrepreneurs to vibrant country's economy.

Former president Prof AQM Badruddoza Chowdhury urged all the political parties for practicing constructive politics for betterment of the country and strengthening democracy.



A three-day international tourism stamp exhibition titled 'World tourism on stamp' begins at the Zainul Gallery at the Faculty of Fine Arts on the Dhaka University campus yesterday.

Call to save Shikkatuli pond

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Residents of Shikkatuli and Paribesh Bachao Andolon (Paba) yesterday demanded Dhaka City Corporation save Shikkatuli pond from earth filling for construction a building.

They also demanded formation of an investigation committee at the rally held in front of Nagar Bhaban to find out the reasons of losing the government lands and old ponds, including Shikkatuli pond.

Residents of Shikkatuli and Paba jointly submitted a memorandum to the mayor to realise their four points demands.

They said Shikkatuli pond had been using by the locals for decades and it was as Waqf land.

Recently, a section of people filed a case against DCC to get the pond under their ownership, but DCC did not take proper steps to win the case. Those people won the legal battle within a short time, they added.

This is the only pond in the area and it helps reduce the waterlogging problem during the rainy season.

Their other demands include initiative to clean the pond and removal of waste from in front of the pond and keeping dustbins at some places around the pond.

TWO MORE RAB BATTALIONS

Cop, Rab chiefs asked to examine proposal

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Home Minister Sahara Khatun yesterday directed the chiefs of police and Rapid Action Battalion (Rab) to examine in details about a proposal for formation of two more battalions for the elite force.

She also asked Inspector General of Police Nur Mohammad and Director General of Rab Hassan Mahmood Khandkar to get specific information on funding, manpower and logistics for the proposed battalions.

The minister gave the directives when the IGP and Rab DG met her at the ministry to discuss the proposal, sources said.

In November, police headquarters for-

warded the Rab proposal to the ministry for setting up two more battalions in greater Mymensingh and Rangpur regions.

Incepted in March 2004, Rab has now 12 battalions and a headquarters where over 8,000 forces are working against authorised positions of little over 9,000, Rab sources said.

"We had earlier sent a proposal to set up two more battalions for Rab and today we have a discussion with the home minister on the proposal," the IGP told The Daily Star yesterday.

The Rab chief said, "The home minister instructed us to come up again with detailed information about how funds, manpower and logistics for the proposed battalions will

be managed."

As per organogram, Rab forces is supposed to be formed from the members from police, army, navy, air forces, Bangladesh Rifles (BDR), Ansar, coastguard and from civilians. However, no coastguard member has been appointed in Rab on deputation so far.

Rab sources said getting manpower for Rab from some of those forces, including BDR, officers from the armed forces division, has been appeared as a problem as those forces are now facing manpower shortage. The police top brass has also expressed his unwillingness to appoint its force on deputation to Rab due to shortage of manpower.

'Implement Nat'l Film Archives project'

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Filmmakers along with National Film Archives Alumni Association formed a human chain at Agargaon in the city yesterday demanding immediate implementation of the National Film Archives project and construction of own building at its designated plot in Agargaon in the city.

Filmmakers Tareque Masud, Morshedul Islam, rare film collector Syed Abdul Ahad, Alumni members and members of Chalchitra Sangsad attend the programme at the designated plot of the archive in Agargaon.

Dhaka City Corporation (DCC) a couple of days back embarked on construction of a road across the plot.

"We want the DCC to stop its move and the government to implement the archives project immediately," said Tareque Masud.



Filmmakers along with National Film Archives Alumni Association members form a human chain at Agargaon in the city yesterday demanding implementation of the National Film Archives project and construction of building for the archive at its designated site.

Sahara's remarks protested

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Ain O Salish Kendra (ASK) in a statement yesterday protested the remarks of Home Minister Sahara Khatun, who said none is being killed in crossfire.

Such remarks will encourage law enforcers in such unlawful activities, it added.

The minister at a function on Saturday said there is no crossfire in the country. It has never happened. What is happening is that the law enforcers are being compelled to shoot miscreants to defend themselves when the criminals open fire on them.

The statement also demanded that details of all inquiry reports of such incidents (crossfire) be made public so that people can believe that their elected representatives are telling true about such incidents.



Members of Shia community take out a Tazia procession yesterday on the occasion of the holy Ashura to be observed across the country today, commemorating the historic Karbala tragedy.



Sadat Hossain re-elected Dhaka Club president

METRO DESK

Sadat Hossain Salim has been re-elected the president of Dhaka Club Limited for the third consecutive term, says a press release.

He bagged 619 votes while his rival got 357 votes in the annual election of the club held on Saturday.

Sadat Hossain Salim is presently the vice-chairman of Rupayan Group. He is also a renowned conservationist and an expert on birds of Bangladesh. He wrote a book on birds.

A 10-member executive committee of the club was also elected. The members are Nurul Islam Khan (Akkas Khan), Shakil Kasem, Zahid Hassan, Khawzah Zain Niaz, Ruhul Amin Babul, Shahjahan Chowdhury, Siraj Uddin Haider, Shahzada A Hamid (Saad), Iqbal Bahar Chowdhury (Kochie) and Gaus Uddin Khan.

Work abstention of diploma nurses following quarrel with college staff

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A squabble between the diploma student nurses and 4th class employees reached stalemate at Dhaka Nursing College, adjacent to Dhaka Medical College and Hospital (DMCH), yesterday.

Under the circumstances, the diploma nurses of the college have started work abstention at DMCH.

Following an objectionable remark by a security guard on Saturday night, a group of diploma nurses attacked the guard and injured him severely.

Security guard Nurul Islam Musa made the remark as one of the nurses entered the college hostel around 11:00pm.

Eyewitnesses said as the news spread to the hostel, more than 50 student diploma nurses came and beat up him severely. Later, he was taken to DMCH.

Protesting the incident, the 4th class employees withdrew other employees from the college and threatened the principal and student nurses.

Talking to The Daily Star, Principal of the college Tahatun Nahar admitted that the employees have threatened her.

A five-member committee, led by Laily Begum, has been formed to investigate the issue. The probe body will submit its report within five workdays.

Food for work not enough to fight poverty

Prof Barakat tells seminar

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Janata Bank (JB) Chairman Prof Abul Barakat at a seminar yesterday said food for work or relief programme would not be able to eradicate poverty completely.

These programmes of the government might help reduce poverty temporary, he added.

The economist said the government should take long term plans to reduce the eradication instead of short term programme like relief or food for work, etc.

Prof Barakat said this at the seminar titled 'Poverty reduction in spirit of Bangladesh Liberation War' at Cirdap auditorium in the city.

He suggested proper distribution of resources among the ultra-poor people to reduce poverty.

The JB chairman, also professor of Economics department, read out a keynote paper at the seminar which was presided over by Proshika Executive Director Mahbub-Ul-Karim.

Mohiuddin Khan Alamgir, chairman of parliamentary standing committee on public undertakings, was present at the event as the chief guest while Whip Sagufa Yasmin was present as the special guest.

The government has already started working

to eradicate poverty with long-term vision and plans as well, said Mohiuddin. "Growing number of population is our main challenge and ultra-poor section is mostly affected by the bad impact of poverty."

Senior Assistant Editor of the daily Sangbad Moniruzzaman moderated the seminar while Editor of the Shamakal Golam Sarwar, Brac University Pro-VC Golam Samdani Fakir, Managing Editor of BSS Azizul Islam Bhuiyan, Prof MM Akash, Prof ABM Nasir, Fahmida Khatun of CPD and Muhammad A Arafat of Independent University of Bangladesh also spoke.

Politicians, economists and development activists at the seminar suggested structural change in the country's economic management to ensure equal opportunities for all and fair distribution of resources.

Organised social insurance systems, including well-covered safety net and establishment of pro-people administrative and political culture, have also been recommended.

Prof Akash stressed the need for a discussion in the parliament for a structural change in economy. "Bangladesh is mired in economic plundering and the politicians are blamed for the situation."

Lawyer stabbed to death in city

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A Dhaka judge court lawyer was stabbed to death by burglars at his Dhalpur residence in the capital's Jatrabari yesterday when he got hold of and stopped one of them.

Police arrested the burglar Chan Miah, 25, of the area.

The victim advocate Shamsul Haque alias Rintu, 45, was rushed to Dhaka Medical College Hospital where doctors declared him dead around 4:00am.

Officer-in-charge (OC) of Jatrabari Police Station Moniruzzaman said a gang of three burglars stabbed him indiscriminately, leaving him injured around 3:00am.

Quoting the victim's family members, the OC said Rintu and his family members started chasing the thieves while the gang was trying to escape after stealing coconuts from a tree adjacent to their house.

At one stage, Rintu chased down Chan Miah while two others -- Sohel and Makki -- fled after stabbing him, he added.

Family members said they could not ascertain the motive behind the killing.

Advocate Mazharul Hoque Pintu, a brother of the deceased, filed a murder case with Jatrabari police station accusing the three burglars.

'Ensure women's participation in decision making'

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Speakers at a view exchange meeting yesterday called for ensuring participation of women in the decision-making process at every level in order to achieve empowerment of women and establish their rights.

Women, representing half of the population, should account for one-third of decision-makers at all levels, they said.

Karmojibi Nari, a platform for working women, organised the meeting at the National Press Club in the city.

Speaking as the chief guest, lawmaker Asaduzzaman Noor said the existing social system tends to suppress women's voice, but it is time to bring about changes.

He also assured that he would help ensure gender equality at every level.

Sharifa Khan, deputy director (WTO Cell), commerce ministry, said scopes should be created for women to reach the decision-making level at the government and private organisations.

Executive Director of Karmojibi Nari Rokeya Rafiq emphasised the need to change people's attitude towards women in order to establish their rights.

She also called on women to unite to realise their rights.

Shanta Maria, news room editor, Radio Amar, Dil Monwara Monu, executive editor of the fortnightly Anannya, and former BGMEA president Anwarul Alam Chowdhury Parvez also spoke at the programme.



Asaduzzaman Noor speaks at a meeting at the National Press Club in the city yesterday. On his right are Rokeya Rafiq and Rekha Chowdhury and on his left is Anwarul Alam Chowdhury Parvez.

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