

'79pc returnee migrants not aware of HIV infection risks'

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Speakers at a dissemination seminar yesterday said 79 percent of the returnee migrant workers have no knowledge of modes of the HIV transmission that increases the risk of their being infected with the virus.

Currently around seven million Bangladeshis are working as migrant worker at around 100 countries and sending remittance worth \$10 billion dollars. So, their health, working environment and safety should be ensured, they said.

The International Organisation for Migration (IOM) commissioned the assessment study titled 'Situation Assessment of HIV/AIDS related knowledge, picture and services among Bangladeshi migrant workers'. The study was conducted on 248 migrant workers from November 2009 to January 2010.

It revealed that 57 percent of departing and 58 percent of returnee migrants have no

knowledge about sexually transmitted infections.

Expressing grave concern over the lack of awareness of the HIV and other sexually transmitted diseases among this group, the speakers stressed the need for special training and orientation to the departing migrant workers.

Citing the study, they said only 2 percent of returnee migrants received formal training or orientation on the HIV/AIDS before migration, which is very frustrating.

Though Bureau of Manpower, Employment and Training (BMET) conducts a two-hour pre-departure briefing, the health matters especially the sexually transmitted diseases remain totally absent there, Shakirul Islam, chairman of Övibashi Karmi Unnayan Program (OKUP), said while presenting the key findings.

"The health rights of the migrants should be mainstreamed in the health policy as well as in the migration policy of the country," said Rabab Fatima, regional

representative for South Asia, IOM.

Sixty to 70 percent of the total detected HIV positive cases in the country belong to the migrant group, said Dr Salil Panakadan, country coordinator of UNAIDS, stressing the need for preparing the migrants to face the vulnerabilities of the virus in the destination countries.

Both the sending and the host countries have responsibilities to protect the rights of migrant workers and there should be accessible information centres for them. The Bangladesh missions in receiving countries also can play an important role in giving orientation to the workers, he added.

Dr Zafar Ahmed Khan, secretary in charge to the Ministry of Expatriates' Welfare and Overseas Employment spoke as the chief guest while Dr Mohammad Ali Belal, line director of National AIDS and STD Programme, and representatives from different NGOs also spoke at the seminar.



Press owners and employees stage a demonstration in front of the National Curriculum and Textbooks Board (NCTB) in the city yesterday demanding cancellation of the international tender for printing textbooks.

Agri ties with Uganda to be expanded

DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT

Bangladesh expressed keen interest to obtain seeds of high-yielding rice varieties from Uganda and offered to develop human resources in the agricultural sector of Uganda.

Both the countries also agreed to sign a deal on agricultural cooperation.

The agreement was reached at meetings between Foreign Minister Dipu Moni and Ugandan State Minister for Foreign Affairs Isaac Isanga Musumba and Ugandan State Minister for Agriculture Aggrey Henry Bagire in Kampala yesterday, said a foreign ministry press release.

Dipu Moni is now attending the Review Conference of the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court (ICC) in Kampala.

At the meetings, Uganda agreed to pro-

pose a draft Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) on agricultural cooperation. Bangladesh would send a delegation to Uganda to finalise the MoU.

The two sides also agreed to examine the possibility of Uganda leasing out agricultural land to investors from Bangladesh for farming.

During the discussion, they reviewed the existing level of cooperation, and examined ways to further broaden and deepen cooperation in the identified sectors.

Agricultural cooperation in the form of sharing of experience, technology and seed featured prominently in the meetings.

Ugandan State Minister for Agriculture shared the problems of distribution of food in his country despite being self-sufficient in food production.

Bangladesh also expressed its keenness to import cotton from Uganda, a major cotton producer, to feed the readymade garments

industry.

The Ugandan ministers sought investment from Bangladesh in establishing readymade garments factories in their country. They said that such value addition to their cotton industry would be beneficial for both the countries.

The Ugandan ministers indicated that the investors from Bangladesh could benefit from the quota-free, duty-free export preferences Uganda enjoyed under the AGOA (African Growth Initiative of America) in exporting their products to the US market.

Dipu Moni offered to export Bangladesh's pharmaceutical products, which she described as competitive in terms of price and quality, to Uganda to meet its demand. The Ugandan ministers readily agreed to the offer.

She also said that she would soon send a business delegation to Uganda to explore the opportunities in trade and investment.

SHITALAKKHYA

12 more structures demolished

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A joint team of Narayanganj district administration and Bangladesh Inland Water Transport Authority knocked down illegal portions of 12 structures on the Shitalakkhya during an eviction drive yesterday.

The structures include three concrete buildings, walls, concrete toilets, and tinshed buildings, said Alamgir Kabir, deputy director of Narayanganj river port.

The authorities, however, left a part of a four-storied building to be pulled down by its owner.

The team led by executive magistrates Shova Shahnaz and Shamsuddouza started the drive near Syedpur Bridge (Kadamtali in Laxma mouja) to complete the unfinished demolition work of a guide wall of Sharmin

Jute Balers and an extended part of Kadamtali Jam-e-Masjid.

"Though the mosque authorities claimed that they built the building as a residence of their Imam, we found garments machinery and fabrics in it," said Syed Mehedi Hasan, additional deputy commissioner (revenue) of Narayanganj.

The drive got stalled for some time on reaching Bhagabandj due to lack of proper direction and coordination. The rubbles of the structures were being thrown into the river, which may cause further filling up of it, reports our Narayanganj correspondent.

The authorities resumed the drive following a dismissal of an appeal petition by the Supreme Court around four months after the last drive in February.

The district administration, however, allowed 10 top business groups including City Group of Industries, Heidelberg Cement Bangladesh Ltd, Kamal Vegetable, Akij Cement, ACI Cement, Cemex Cement and Molla Salt Industries a three-month time to remove their concrete jetties from the river area on their own initiatives.

Bangladesh Inland Water Transport Authority employed around 200 labourers, two tugboats—Augrabahak and Augrani, and two workboats for the demolition work yesterday.

Authorities have notified 320 illegal structures including jetties, warehouse, walls and extended parts of residential and industrial buildings for demolition.

The drive will resume on Monday.



Winners of the MCCI awards -- (standing from right) Pinaki Roy, SM Babu and Shafiqul Hassan -- pose with the guests at the award giving ceremony at the MCCI conference hall in the city yesterday. Sitting from left are Dr Akbar Ali Khan, Industries Minister Dilip Barua and MCCI President M Anis Ud Dowla.

2 journo, enterprise win MCCI awards

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Metropolitan Chamber of Commerce and Industry (MCCI) yesterday awarded two journalists for their investigative reports on river pollution and an enterprise for its commendable initiative for effluent treatment.

The awardees are Pinaki Roy, deputy chief reporter of The Daily Star, SM Babu, special correspondent of ATN Bangla, and Echotex Limited.

The MCCI instituted the award in 2009 with a view to raising awareness about river pollution and other environmental pollution.

Pinaki and Babu were awarded as the best investigative journalists in the print media and electronic media respectively. They received MCCI crests, certificates and Tk 1 lakh and yearly subscriptions of internal magazines, reports and publications up to Tk 50,000.

On behalf of Echotex, Shafiqul Hasan received an MCCI crest at the award giving ceremony at the MCCI conference hall in the city.

Speaking as the chief guest, Industries Minister Dilip Barua said the awards will inspire reporters and entrepreneurs to put in their best efforts to raise awareness about environmental degradation.

MCCI President M Anis Ud Dowla said the chamber has introduced the award with a view to developing wider awareness to help formulation of balance action programme for minimising river pollution.

Former adviser to the caretaker government Dr Akbar Ali Khan, The Financial Express Editor Moazzem Hossain,

Bangladesh Environmental Lawyers Association (Bela) Executive Director Syeda Rizwana Hasan were present at the award giving ceremony.

A selection committee comprising five eminent personalities selected the winners from a total of 20 entries.

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