

## 50pc rural people seek home remedies for illness

Says ICDDR, B study

BSS, DHAKA

Half of the rural people, consisting over 70 percent of the country's population, do not seek treatment for illnesses because of poverty, ignorance, distant barriers and cultural shyness, reveals a study of ICDDR, B.

The study conducted by the center's Social and Behavioral Sciences Division in rural settings says 53 percent of the rural people, of low-income group in general, possess insufficient money to consult a healthcare provider. They depend on home remedies to come round automatically over time.

It says majority of the people seeking treatment mostly depend on quacks like allopathic village doctors, homeopath practitioners, paramedics, 'kabiraj' as well traditional and religious healers.

Only one in seven people seeking treatment go to qualified MBBS doctors, says the study. The research was conducted over 6,183 individuals in Chakaria under Cox's Bazar to know the type of diseases villagers suffer from and their health-seeking behaviour.

Funded by the Department for International Development (DFID) of The United Kingdom, the study also examined male influence, especially

husbands, over wives' decisions to report illness to doctors. It found that the decision of males around her, especially husbands, dominate women's health needs.

"Findings from Chakaria can be generalised for the rest of Bangladesh, where situation of rural health system is almost identical," Dr Mohammad Iqbal, a key investigator of the study, told on Thursday.

He said informal healthcare providers, especially village doctors like pharmacists and government-trained physicians, were found to be key actors in rural health services.

Cold and fever were the two most common diseases in Chakaria, an area having a combination of plain, hilly and low lying lands in the east and the Bay of Bengal on the west.

The other diseases reported during the baseline study are muscle and joint pain, peptic ulcer, dysentery, neurological disorders and respiratory tract infections.

The gastrointestinal problem among the poor was higher than the rich possibly because poor people often miss meals, do consume excessive dry chillies and take unhygienic food from streets. The aged rich on the other hand were

found to be suffering from muscle and joint pain because of overweight or high body mass indexes (BMI).

SMA Hanifi, an assistant scientist and involved in midterm and end line review of the original 2007 baseline study, said they have intervened into the area's problems. This was in order to check inappropriate and harmful uses of medicine by the informal healthcare providers, popularly known as village doctors.

However a positive trend was seen towards curtailing the trend of harmful drugs prescribed by the village doctors, he said referring to the findings of the midterm review of 2008-09 of the five-year action-research.

The final review is under process and is scheduled to be made public by the 2010 project deadline, he observed.

Dr Iqbal said healthcare seeking pattern of villagers showed that the village doctors are the most popular healthcare providers in rural areas.

As the country has a severe shortage of qualified doctors and it cannot be met in decades, Iqbal suggested that allopathic village doctors could be trained immediately and utilised to serve the majority of the country's population at minimum costs.



Members of Bangabandhu Sangskritik Jote light candles at a human chain in front of the Central Shaheed Minar in the city yesterday in memory of those killed during the August 21 grenade attacks on a Awami League rally.



Also on weekends city dwellers do not see any end of tailbacks at the intersection between Mirpur Road and Dhanmondi 27 in the city. The photo was taken around 12:00noon yesterday.

### 21 AUGUST GRENADE ATTACK

## Govt to hold trial of all political killings

Says Sahara

BSS, Dhaka

Home Minister Sahara Khatun yesterday said a comprehensive investigation into the 21 August grenade attack is going on to bring its godfathers to book.

Sahara said this at a discussion organised by Bangabandhu Academy at Dhaka Reporters Unity auditorium in the city on the occasion of 21 August grenade attack.

She said the government wants to hold trial of all killings of the political leaders, including Ivy Rahman. It also wants to uproot terrorism, extortion and militancy forever from the country, she added. She sought cooperation from all in this regard.

The home minister said the persons, who killed Bangabandhu and promulgated indemnity ordinance to bar the trial of the heinous killing, are behind the evil force trying to thwart the trial process.

"The same force carried out the attack on Sheikh Hasina on August 21, 2004," she said.

A total of 24 people, including AL leader Ivy Rahman were killed in that attack, she

mentioned.

The home minister said the reinvestigation of the 21 August attack case is going on.

She also said the trial process of the war criminals has already started and the investigation is going on in full swing.

The detective branches are carrying out the investigation, she added.

"The trial of war criminals will be completed during the tenure of this government," she said.

The home minister observed that a quarter started creating anarchy since beginning of the trial of war criminals.

"They are hatching conspiracies every day, every moment to stop the trial. But, we will proceed with the support of the people," she said.

Advocate Sanjida Khanom, MP, Awami League Organizing Secretary Ahmed Hossain, Krishak League leader MA Karim, Assistant Attorney General Nur Jahan Begum Mukta and Bangabandhu Academy Chairman Hemayet Uddin, among others, spoke at the discussion.

## Most countries support trial of war crimes

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Most countries responded positively to upcoming war crimes trial, Foreign Minister Dipu Moni told a discussion meeting yesterday.

"Government of many countries wanted to know about the trial. We have discussed the issue and they responded positively," she said.

Dipu Moni, the chief guest, made the remarks at the discussion on 'Supreme Sacrifice of Bir Shrestha Matiur Rahman: Trial of War Criminals and Mass Expectation' held at the National Press Club. Bir Shrestho Matiur Rahman Foundation organised the discussion marking the martyr's 39th death anniversary yesterday.

Dipu Moni said some cliques are spreading rumour that the government is under external pressure to give up the trial for war crimes committed during the Liberation War of Bangladesh in 1971.

Justice Golam Rabbani during his speech demanded establishment of "Bir Shrestho Matiur Rahman Square" as a memorial symbolising the martyr's contribution to the liberation war.

Capt (ret'd) Mujibur Rahman Fakir, state minister for health, also the special guest, urged all to extend their cooperation to implement the government's Vision-2021.

Mahbub Elahi Manju, the foundation vice-president, chaired the discussion while Matiur's wife Mili Rahman was present among others.

Dipu Moni alleged that the successive governments following the assassination of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman in 1975, not only rehabilitated the killers and anti-liberation forces, but also rewarded those.

### Powder seized at Airport identified as 'drug ephedrine'

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The 82 kilograms of powder seized by customs intelligence at Hazrat Shahjalal International Airport Thursday night was preliminarily identified as stimulating drug ephedrine.

Customs Superintendent Shamsul Islam told The Daily Star yesterday that they were assured by various sources that the drug is ephedrine.

He said an exporter agency and a forwarding agency were involved in smuggling the drug, hidden inside garments, to Malaysia in connivance with some officials of the civil aviation authorities at the airport.

A case was about to be filed with Airport Police Station against exporter agency Textile Associates Ltd, forwarding agency HT Cargo Service and aviation management service employee Kudrat-e-Elahi, a scanning machine operator who scanned the cartons containing the drug, he added.

### 'Another black chapter'

BSS, Dhaka

President Zillur Rahman yesterday said the barbaric grenade attack on an Awami League rally on August 21, 2004 in the city will remain as another "black chapter" in the political history of Bangladesh.

In a message marking the day, the president said the grenade attack was aimed at eliminating Bangabandhu's daughter Sheikh Hasina and other top leaders of Awami League so that the evil force can rule the country for a long time.

Zillur Rahman said August 21 is another mourning day in our national history. On this day, the killers tried to implement their heinous plot to assassinate Sheikh Hasina, as they killed Bangabandhu on August 15, 1975, he said.

### Safety for passengers on Eid demanded

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Speakers at a press conference yesterday placed a five-point demand for ensuring safety of home-bound people ahead of Eid-ul-Fitr.

The demands include strengthening coast guard and highway police patrol in both waterways and highways, deploying police and Rab and setting up close circuit cameras at all bus and launch terminals in the city from 20th Ramadan, necessary steps to stop charging additional fare from passengers and introduction of special bus and launch services during the festival. The Journalist Forum for Communication and Environment (JFCE) and Green Club of Bangladesh (GCB) organised the press conference here, says a press release.

GCB President Nurur Rahman Selim and JFCE General Secretary Asis Kumer Dey, among others, spoke at the conference.

## New left-leaning political party CLB floated

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A new left-leaning political party Communist League of Bangladesh (CLB) was launched here yesterday abolishing another leftist party Jatiya Gano Front.

General Secretary of the party Mosharrif Hossain Nannu declared the name of the party at a press conference in the city's Dhaka Reporters' Unity.

Jatiya Gano Front was formed by a revolutionary faction of Workers Party of Bangladesh in 1995.

The leaders of the party vowed to build up a third left-leaning alternative force in the political arena of Bangladesh.

In a written statement Nanna said, "We will unite the communist forces, that are now scattered in the society. We have already started a process of unification."

He said the country is going through a "deep crisis." The actual freedom of the people can't be achieved only by changing the government. The only way of the freedom is to establish a people's government through movement and revolution, he added.

Members of the newly formed party--Ranjit Chatterjee, Tusher Kanti Roy, Abu Taleb, Shamim Imam, Nazrul Islam, Matilal Banik, organisers Taslimur Rahman, Sanjit Prasad Jitu and leaders of different left political parties were present at the press conference.

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