

Frequent use of tobacco in slums threat to public health

Speakers tell survey launching programme

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Frequent use of harmful substances like tobacco and betel nuts in the slum areas of Bangladesh is posing a threat to public health, said speakers at a launching programme of a survey report yesterday.

The slum-dwellers suffer from nutritional deficiency, as they can't take balanced diet rather they use harmful substances. They largely depend on cereals, lentils and vegetables for daily calorie, says the survey.

Centre for Policy Research (CPR) of IUBAT launched the survey report at the National Press Club in the city.

The survey titled "Benchmarking the Nutritional Status of Women in the Tongi-Ashulia Road Slums" was conducted by IUBAT College of Nursing students on a sample of 120 married women of the families living in the shanty communities of

Abdullapur/Kamarpara area near Tongi-Ashulia road early this year.

Among the 'ultra poor' the majority experience inadequate calorie intake, it says adding that an unduly high percentage of the calorie intake among the poor under the study derives from cereals, primarily rice.

The study reveals that "Diets among the poor typically lack adequate quantities from the full range of food groups. This lack leads to inadequate intake of necessary micronutrients (minerals and vitamins), which in turn stunts growth and increases the risk of succumbing to numerous non-communicable diseases."

Basic dietary knowledge among many in Bangladesh, rich and poor, is weak. Among the poor this lack is particularly acute, it concludes.

Quoting the survey, John Richards, one of the researchers of the survey, said over six percent of

diets were 'risky,' a large majority of 89 percent was 'fair' and five percent were 'good' while none was rated 'excellent.'

He said 38 percent consumed excessive servings of foods high in fat and sugar content which is associated with a high incidence of heart disease and type-2 diabetes.

The survey reveals that only one-third people protected their families by using either boiled tap water or deep tubewell water for drinking purposes. The rest were suffering serious health hazards for not drinking safe water.

The use of tobacco and betel nut is high in the shanties, which further expose them to serious health risk, says the survey.

Among others, Vice-chancellor of IUBAT Prof Dr M Alimullah Miyan and Professor Dr Karen Lund and chairman of IUBAT College of nursing, were present.

Nothing to worry about anthrax

Assure ministers

UNB, DHAKA

Health Minister AFM Ruhul Huq and Livestock Resources Minister Abdul Latif Biswas yesterday claimed said there is nothing to worry about the anthrax, that has affected cows and goats in Sirajganj and Pabna districts, claiming that the situation is under control.

"We have enough vaccines which are being given to the affected and non-affected cows and goats," the health minister told reporters after an inter-ministerial meeting.

Ruhul Huq said if a person is infected with anthrax he can get cured within a week by taking antibiotics. He also allayed the fear that anthrax spreads from man to man.

The health minister suggested that cattle

dead from anthrax should be buried immediately.

Livestock Minister Abdul Latif Biswas said a camp with officials from the Health Livestock and the Police departments will be set up at the western side of the Bangabandhu Bridge to make sure the anthrax affected cattle heads can not enter into the Dhaka City.

He said vaccines are being given to the affected cows and goats in Sirajganj and Pabna districts. Vaccines are also being given to the non-affected cattle heads.

"We've adequate vaccines as well as preparations to combat the situation," Latif Biswas said.

Now 108 people, 22 cows and five goats are affected by anthrax, he added.



President Zillur Rahman speaks at the Bangabandhu memorial lecture in the city's Osmani Memorial Auditorium yesterday organised by Bangladesh Foundation for Development Research. (Story on Page 5)

Domestic help, mother tortured

House owner, his wife arrested

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Police yesterday arrested four persons of a family, including the house owner and his wife, in the city's Sutrapur for allegedly torturing a teen aged domestic help and her mother.

Sutrapur police arrested house owner Harunur Rashid, a grocer, his wife, son and daughter-in-law from their house at Rokonpur under the police station.

Police said they brutally tortured domestic help Asma Akhter, 16, and her mother Salma Begum, 35, on Friday night.

Officer-in-charge (OC) of Sutrapur Police Station Nazrul Islam told The Daily Star that Asma's mother Salma Begum yesterday filed a case with the police accusing the members of the family for torturing Asma.

Asma in her case alleged that 10 tola gold ornaments went missing from the house of Harunur Rashid on Friday. He and other members suspected Asma of the theft and called in her mother Salma Begum from Uttara.

They confined Asma and her mother to the house and beat them up inflicting serious injuries. Asma and Salma alleged that Harunur Rashid and his family members used a hot rod to burn different parts of their body. They also beat them with sticks.

Sutrapur police took Asma and her mother to Dhaka Medical College Hospital for treatment. After giving treatment, police took them to the police station.

'Law soon to try usurpers of power'

UNB, Dhaka

Law Minister Barrister Shafique Ahmed yesterday said new law will have to be enacted by parliament to hold trial of the usurpers of the state power through martial law in accordance with the Supreme Court judgment.

Talking to reporters at his

ministry Shafique said the government will take steps regarding the trial of military dictators who had grabbed power after receiving the copy of the High Court verdict on scrapping of the 7th amendment to the Constitution.

He said the trial of the military rulers cannot be possible by the

existing laws as the Supreme Court said that the parliament will have to frame law in this respect.

Shafique said the High Court's verdicts on the 5th and the 7th constitutional amendments would block the promulgation of martial law in the country in the future.

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Khaleda wants movement to save sons, war criminals

Says Hanif

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia wants to forge a movement to save his two sons from corruption charges, and to help war criminals evade trials, Mahub-ul-Alam Hanif, joint general secretary of Awami League, alleged yesterday.

He said Khaleda Zia is using the ongoing power crisis as an excuse for a movement, while she actually does not want the crisis to end.

"She threatened to punish government officials who will sign in the electricity generation projects if she took over power again. This proves that she actually does not want the

crisis to end," he added.

Hanif was speaking at a discussion organised by Bangabandhu Diploma Engineers Council at the Institute of Diploma Engineers Bangladesh marking the National Mourning Day.

Hanif, also a special assistant to Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina, claimed the power crisis was created by the last BNP-Jamaat government.

Syeda Sajeda Chowdhury, deputy leader of the parliament; Shamsul Haque Tuku, state minister for home; Asaduzzaman Khan Kamal MP; and Asma Zerin Jhumu MP also spoke at the event.

2 injured in shootout with Rab, six held

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Rapid Action Battalion (Rab) yesterday arrested six alleged criminals, including two bullet-hit, in Konapara area in Demra.

Two criminals identified as Shah Alam, 28 and Hafizuddin alias Hridoy, 20 were shot during a gunfight with the elite force. They have been admitted to Dhaka Medical College Hospital (DMCH).

Rab-1 Commanding Officer Lt Col Rashidul Alam told The Daily Star that the criminals fired at the elite force when a team of Rab raided a microbus at about 12:00 noon in front of Konapara Staff Quarters. The two were shot when the Rab retaliated.

The driver, however, managed to flee with the microbus. Lt Col Rashidul said a pistol, a magazine, one bullet, a toy revolver and a machete were recovered from their possession.

DMCH sources said Rab brought the two injured to the hospital and they are now under-going treatment.

Man dies under train's wheels

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

An elderly man was killed when a train hit him in the city's Malibagh Rail Gate area yesterday morning.

The dead was identified as Chand Miah, 70, a banana vendor of the area.

The accident occurred around 11:30am when a Dinajpur-bound Ekota Express hit the man while he was crossing the rail line defying the signal, said Abul Khair, government railway police (GRP) assistant sub-inspector.

The man died on the spot, Khair added.

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