

Low earners smoke more

Finds survey

UNB, Dhaka

Although use of tobacco is widespread in Bangladesh, it is higher among the lower socio-economic groups in both rural and urban areas, says a recent study.

Moreover, the prevalence of smoking goes down with increasing levels of wealth in both rural and urban settings in the country.

The Centre for Control of Chronic Diseases in Bangladesh conducted the study among 39,038 individuals to determine the prevalence of risk-factors and chronic diseases in four Health and Demographic Surveillance Sites of International Centre for Diarrhoeal Diseases Research, Bangladesh.

A total of 13,584 men and 25,454 women aged 25 years and above were interviewed.

On average, the number of sticks smoked daily was 12.5 for men in rural sites and 11.8 in the urban site. Women in the urban site who reported smoking, smoked slightly more (6.2 sticks daily) compared to women in the three rural sites (5.6 sticks daily).

The study also shows that men from low-income groups not only smoke more frequently, but also they consume more sticks compared to men from high-income groups.

According to the WHO report on the Global Tobacco Epidemic 2008, nearly two-thirds of the world's smokers live in a group of 10 countries that includes Bangladesh.

30 lakh cases

FROM PAGE 20

The minister said the Supreme Court has to enhance overseeing the subordinate courts to ensure quick disposal of cases.

Calling upon the judges to build a people-friendly judicial process in to protect their dignity, Shahfique said the government is reforming the judicial system to reduce sufferings of litigants.

It has also taken steps to amend the civil and criminal procedure codes to make the ADR system mandatory in disposing of cases involving petty crimes and disputes, he added.

State Minister for Law Qamrul Islam also spoke at the function with acting director general of JATI M Mafizul Islam in the chair.

Mobile-talking

FROM PAGE 1

Maj Mahfuzul Haque, commander of Crime Prevention Company-3 of Rapid Action Battalion-12, said Rab members and police sergeants launched the mobile court drive at Rabna bypass of sadar upazila in the morning.

"All should know that from now on we'll continue this type of operation to create awareness among the drivers," he added.

Nepal first

FROM PAGE 20

to Nepal. Besides, they also agreed allowing trucks from Bhutan and Nepal to enter about 200 metres into Bangladesh through Indian territories.

The imported DAP reached Chittagong port on May 17. Cargo boats carried it to Nowapara Railway Station in Jessore.

Bangladesh Railway brought forty-two Indian wagons up to Jessore and loaded the fertiliser in four days from July 10.

One train with 995.5 MT of fertiliser in 18 wagons and the other with 1,393 MT in 24 wagons returned to Rohanpur on Wednesday night and finally left for Nepal at 8:00am and 3:00pm respectively yesterday.

One lakh MT of DAP would be carried to Nepal through this route, Mohammad Shahidullah, station master of Rohanpur Railway Station, told The Daily Star.

Bangladesh and India have already permitted transit of 50,000 MT of DAP to Nepal, he noted.

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina on June 22 told parliament that the process of allowing Nepal and Bhutan to use Chittagong and Mongla ports to transport their goods to a third country through Bangladesh is close to the final stage.

Syrian opposition calls for civil disobedience

REUTERS, Istanbul

Syrians should wage a campaign of civil disobedience to try to force President Bashar al-Assad from power, an exiled dissident said yesterday at a meeting in Turkey aimed at forging a united opposition.

The opposition, divided between Islamists and liberals, is holding a "National Salvation Congress" to try to unite behind the goal of ending 41 years of Assad family rule, but is struggling to agree on whether to form a shadow government.

The West has criticised Assad's crackdown on four months of protests demanding political freedoms. On Friday, his troops killed at least 32 civilians, including 23 in the capital Damascus.

US Secretary of State Hillary Clinton, visiting Turkey, said Assad's repression of peaceful protests was "troubling."

The opposition said the authorities had targeted a wedding hall in Damascus where it had planned to hold a simultaneous conference, connected by video link to the one in Istanbul.

Assad's promises of reform have failed to quell the protests. Rights groups say some 1,400 civilians have been killed in the crackdown.

"My feeling is that the situation has reached a point of no return and the regime has also reached a point it cannot retreat after such a level of bloodshed," said Hassan Najjar, an exiled Syrian originally from Aleppo, now based in Germany. "After 41 years, the question is how can you bring together a fragmented opposition? We have had only four months and what has been achieved is a miracle."

But splits seemed to open over whether to form a government-in-waiting or wait to see how the uprising unfolds.

"People are demanding that the opposition speed up unifying its efforts so that people deal with it as a credible alternative," Ali Sadreddin Bayanouni, the former head of Syria's Muslim Brotherhood told Reuters.

Student dies

FROM PAGE 20

authorities, who took no safety measures although the site is situated in a busy place.

Locals said a worker of the same construction site died two months ago after he fell from the building in absence of necessary safety measures.

In protest against Munna's death, angry locals ransacked the ground floor of the building. Police also detained six construction workers from the spot.

Witness Monirul Islam, a resident of Panthapath, told The Daily Star, "Soon after the brick hit the victim, he skidded off the footpath and fell on bamboos of the construction site. His head was profusely bleeding. Locals later rushed him to nearby Samarita Hospital.

"When the incident took place, there was no safety measure in place. However, the workers of the construction site hurriedly installed a safety net to hide their fault and fled off the scene," Monirul added.

Munna's father Abu Kalam said he and his only son Munna were attending at the hospital for the last seven days by turn. His son fell victim to the negligence of the building owners when he was returning home, he lamented.

"My son wanted to become a fashion designer after passing the HSC exams. He had already visited a private university in Uttara," said Kalam. He added, "My wife has not yet been informed about our son's tragic death. How can I inform her about it!" he continued.

During a visit to the construction site, hundreds of bricks were seen piled on the edge of the first, third, seventh, ninth and tenth floors. One of these bricks fell from the 10th floor and killed Munna.

No-one of the officials of the construction site was available to talk about the incident.

Chile miners sue government for negligence

AFP, Santiago

Some 31 miners who endured 69 days trapped underground when a northern Chile mine collapsed are suing the government for negligence saying there was lack of security, one of them said Friday.

"We want what we went through at the bottom of that mine to be recognized. We are here to say that the 31 of us wish that all our suffering, and the suffering of our families, is recognized," miner Luis Urzua told reporters.

A security guard of the construction site, Mohammad Majnu said all the officials, staffers and construction workers of the building fled just after the incident.

Sher-e-Bangla Nagar Police officer-in-charge Syed Ziauzzaman said they detained six workers but all the officials went into hiding.

The OC said they are trying to identify who are responsible for the incident.

According to the Bangladesh National Building Code (BNBC), the owner, structural engineer and architect of an under-construction building are responsible for taking safety measures to protect public life and property during construction period.

The Rajdhani Unnayan Karttripakkha (Rajuk) that approves design of a proposed building has no legal mandate to enforce safety measures at a construction site, said Rajuk Chairman Md Nurul Huda.

"The affected person can file a case against the building owner on charge of not taking safety measures," the Rajuk chairman added.

Rumana

FROM PAGE 1

unsuccessful operation for her left eye at the hospital on Tuesday.

Also a postgraduate student of the University of British Columbia in Canada, she got her eyes damaged in a brutal attack by her husband Hasan Sayeed Sumon on June 5.

After eye experts in Bangladesh and India could not find any cure for her eyes, she was taken to Vancouver on July 5.

"Rumana and her parents are devastated," said Maqsood. "We were hoping against hope. After the operation on the left eye went fruitless, we looked forward to the right eye surgery." After the surgery, doctors told Manzur, who accompanied his daughter to Canada, that the attack was calculative, said Maqsood.

Before leaving the country, Rumana told this correspondent that she could not think for once that she would not be able to see her only daughter Anushey again.

She had been dreaming of completing her study in UBC and returning to her classroom in DU after getting her eyesight back.

Sumon, who pushed his fingers into her eyes, is now behind bars. He was arrested on June 15.

In the meantime, Rumana has appealed before a family court to take her five-year-old daughter to Canada and signed papers to divorce her husband.

Shab-e-Barat

FROM PAGE 1

coming year by taking into account their past deeds.

Shab-e-Barat also means the night of forgiveness. On this exalted night, Muslims pray to Allah both in preparation for the holy month of Ramadan and seeking forgiveness of the sins committed.

The government has announced public holiday tomorrow as the holy Shab-e-Barat falls tonight.

President Zillur Rahman, Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina and Leader of the Opposition Khaleda Zia in separate messages greeted the Muslim Ummah on the holy occasion.

In his message, the president called for country's continued progress, welfare and greater unity of Muslim Ummah and also sought divine blessings on the holy night of Shab-e-Barat.

He said the holy night brings the opportunity for the mankind of special kindness and forgiveness of Allah.

"Shab-e-Barat announces the arrival of holy Ramadan," Zillur Rahman said, hoping that it would bring progress and welfare for all.

In another message, the PM called upon all to dedicate them to the task of building the country and seeking human welfare being imbued with the spirit of holy Shab-e-Barat.

"Let us establish the spirit of Islam, the religion of peace, at all tiers of individual, social and national life by forsaking all prejudice and narrowness," she said, adding that the night would open up new horizon of peace, progress and development.

In her message, BNP chairperson Khaleda Zia greeted the Muslim Ummah and prayed for happiness, peace and progress of the Ummah.

BNP, allies

FROM PAGE 20

The meeting, chaired by the BNP chief, agreed to announce a hartal if the law enforcers obstruct the demonstrations. It primarily fixed July 28 for the hartal, though the decision will be finalised later, according to meeting sources.

The alliance may declare a mass procession programme before Ramadan and the leader of the opposition herself will lead the procession.

Jamaat-e-Islami Acting Secretary General ATM Azharul Islam, Islami Oikya Jote (IOJ) Secretary General Abdul Latif Nezami and Bangladesh Jatiya Party President Andaleev Rahman Partho, among others, were present.

Suranjit came up with these comments at a discussion styled Restoration of Democracy, Trial of War Criminals and Plan of Action organised by the Bangabandhu Sangskritik Jote, a cultural organisation, at the city's Public Library, said a press release.

BNP founder Ziaur Rahman after assuming power distorted the constitution by making arbitrary changes. They [BNP] dreamt of turning Bangladesh into a state of Pakistan, alleged Suranjit. BNP institutionalised looting when it was in power and to do the same, it now wants to throw away the constitution, he said.

Presiding over the function, cultural personality Tarana Halim said BNP has long been conspiring against the pro-liberation forces.

The organisation's joint secretary, Arun Sarkar Rana, among others, was present at the function.

Population 14.23cr

FROM PAGE 1

Its population now is higher than the combined total of Thailand, Myanmar, Sri Lanka and Singapore.

The fifth census, conducted between March 15 and 19 this year, has led to debates and controversies due to contradictions with the bi-yearly projections of the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs.

BBS officials claim the census is an accurate reflection of a house-to-house survey.

The 2011 census found that the male/female ratio has shrunk over the years.

Now there are 100.3 men against every 100 women, while the figure was 106.4 against 100 in 2001.

"This deserves more research. But a reason behind the trend could be that a lot of people have

migrated to other countries over the years, and most of them were men," said BBS Director General Shahjahan Ali Mollah in his presentation at the press conference.

The increasing number of women is more striking in Barisal, Rajshahi, Rangpur and Sylhet districts, where women outnumber men by some margin.

Dhaka remains the most populated district in the country with a staggering 4.67 crore. In 2001 it was 3.9 crore, the report says.

However, in a rare exception, population of Barisal has thinned over the last 10 years. The district now has 81.40 lakh people while the number was 81.70 lakh in the last census, the report added.

"The reason behind the population decrease in Barisal could be that many

Essentials' price

FROM PAGE 1

Ramadan when demands for vegetables such as aubergine, and some commodities including cooking oil, sugar, onion, pulse and chickpea go up.

Prices of chickpea, a key item for iftar, rose by eight percent to Tk 64-72 a kg compared to the previous month.

Traders and commodity processors said soybean and palm oil, and sugar became dearer due to a hike in their prices on the international market.

They blamed continuous devaluation of taka against the US dollar, supply crunch and retailers for the rise in prices.

Mostafa Kamal, chairman and managing director of leading commodity processor and importer Meghna Group of Industries, said sugar prices increased mainly because of a fall in supply, as four of country's six refineries remained shut for various reasons.

He claimed that local processors are selling cooking oil below their production costs, as exchange rate of US dollar continues to increase.

"In such a situation, prices of imported commodities will go up," he said.

Idris Ahmed, an onion wholesaler at Shyambazar in old Dhaka, said onion prices increased due to a fall in import from India.

Shahjalal Patwary, a vegetable wholesaler at Karwan Bazar, said there has been a shortfall in supply of vegetables since the beginning of this month.

According to a government estimate, the country has a stock of over three lakh tonnes of sugar and two lakh tonnes of cooking oil.

Bangladesh imported 12.97 lakh tonnes of sugar and 12.93 lakh tonnes of

cooking oil in fiscal year 2009-10.

Import of sugar and edible oil stood at 9.16 lakh tonnes and 10.52 lakh tonnes between July and March of the last fiscal year, according to the National Board of Revenue.

There will be no shortage in supply of sugar and cooking oil during the Ramadan, said Mozibur Rahman, chairman of Bangladesh Tariff Commission, which is responsible for building a price structure of essentials.

"I don't see any reason for spike in prices of sugar and edible oil, as there are sufficient stocks of both the items. More imports are in the pipeline," he said.

Rahman blamed retailers for the current price spiral of sugar.

Philippine colonel calls for president's ouster

AFP, Manila

A colonel in the Philippine navy has been stripped of his post and put under investigation over a video in which he called for President Benigno Aquino's overthrow, the military said yesterday.

Colonel Generoso Mariano was removed as deputy chief of the Naval Reserve Command on Friday and investigated for possible sedition and unbecoming conduct, navy spokesman Lieutenant-Colonel Omar Tonsay said.

"The tape showed him speaking out against the government," Tonsay told AFP, adding the footage appeared to show Mariano laying out scenarios when a president's removal could be justified.

Confusion

FROM PAGE 1

UNFPA officials said the economic and social affairs department of UN collects data on various indicators such as growth rate, birth rate and death rate of a country to project its population.

A census is more accurate than all forms of projection. Therefore, the UNFPA has revised its report with more accurate projections, they said.

Experts, however, questioned the way the census was conducted and the results obtained.

Prof Nurunnobi, a leading population researcher, said, "The [latest] census lacked proper promotional activities and people were not much enthusiastic about getting listed." Besides, enumerators did not visit all houses.

Experts say many things like policy-making and development activities involve population count. Therefore, confusion about the national population would result in weak policymaking and national development measures.

An accurate count is also closely related to food production, imports of various goods and economic indica-

city

people have migrated to other districts due to the recurring cyclones and other natural disasters in the region," said Mashiur Rahman, economic affairs adviser to Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina.

Ashim Kumar Dey, census director of BBS, said there could be errors in the data found in the census. "If there are any errors in the preliminary results, they would be revealed in the PEC (post-enumeration check). As for the results, these are what we found in our nationwide survey," he said.

Planning Minister Air Vice-Marshal (ret'd) AK Khandaker was present as the chief guest at the programme chaired by Chief Census Commissioner Riti Ibrahim. Yuki Suehiro, in-charge of UNFPA, also spoke.

Pakistan president heads for Iran talks

AFP, Tehran

Pakistani President Asif Ali Zardari was due in Tehran yesterday for talks with officials expected to include his Iranian counterpart President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad and supreme leader Ali Khamenei.

Iranian officials have given few details of the talks' agenda. Iran's ambassador to Pakistan Mashala Shokri said only that they would address "bilateral relations and regional issues."

But the visit comes less than a month after Zardari was in Tehran for a counter-terrorism summit on the sidelines of which Iran and Pakistan agreed to cooperate with Afghanistan in the fight against militants.

Zardari's visit, on which he was to be accompanied by Interior Minister Rehman Malik, also comes after Washington announced it was deferring \$800 million in military aid to Islamabad while it sought better defence cooperation.

Male, female

FROM PAGE 1

According to the report, the number of males is higher mainly in the urban areas than the rural parts, except the Chittagong Hill Tracts.

During the last decade, the number of women has increased by around four million, which the primary results marked as "a spectacular change in the sex composition of Bangladesh's population."

The sex ratio gap narrowed down by 5.73 percent in this period as the number of men was 106.4 against 100 women in 2001 making the sex ratio 106.4, compared to almost a similar figure of 106.1 in 1991, demonstrates the report.

It attributed such change in sex composition to several factors including a significant increase in migration, mainly concerning males.

Improved census coverage of the female population and a decrease in maternal and female child mortality also might have affected the change, the report pointed out.

In Bandarban, the number of males is 2 lakh while 1.8 lakh are female, in Rangamati 3.1 lakh males against 2.8 lakh females and in Khagrachhari 3.1 lakh males against 2.9 lakh females, making the sex ratio 110.3, 110.8 and 104.6 respectively.

But in the Chittagong division, the number of males are 1.37 crore while the females are 1.43 crore, making the sex ratio 96.1.

A total of 11.35 lakh males live in Chandpur, while the number of women is 12.54 lakh.

The average sex ratio gap in Khulna and Rajshahi divisions stands at almost 100 women for 100 men.

A further research on these topics will be done after receiving the final tally in September, noted the study.

Deadly horse virus spreads in Australia

AFP, Sydney

A small farm near horse racing facilities in Australia's third largest city was placed under lockdown yesterday following two fresh outbreaks of the Hendra virus that can be fatal if contracted by humans.

Two horses were put down after showing signs of the bat-borne virus in separate cases in Brisbane and in Hervey Bay, 300 kilometres north of the city, which is home to two million people.

Hendra is carried by fruit bats -- also known as flying foxes -- and spread to horses through half-chewed fruit or water and food contaminated by their urine and droppings.

Tarique's trial

FROM PAGE 20

issuance of an arrest warrant against Tarique Rahman, senior vice chairman of the party.

"Tarique Rahman is the future leader of the country. People didn't accept the cases against him and they also won't accept his trial," said Mirza Fakhru Islam Alamgir, acting secretary general of BNP.

Police sued Tarique as the government is afraid of him, complained Fakhru adding, the government is now filing cases against one after another opposition leaders and workers including Khaleda Zia, Tarique Rahman and Arafat Rahman Koko only to divert people's attention.

He also claimed the government is doing everything to stay in power forever but people won't accept it.

According to him, the government could not implement its electoral pledges and consequently is isolated from people.

The BNP leader censured AL for "destroying all democratic institutions and the country's charter."

"We are urging all to come forward, as there is no alternative to movement to save the country," said Moudud Ahmed, standing committee member of BNP.

Party leaders Rafiqul Islam Mia, Abdullah Al Noman, Shawkat Mahmud, Aman Ullah Aman, among others, addressed the rally.

Two killed

FROM PAGE 20

along with his daughter Samia Amber Bonnh, sister-in-law Nazneen Sultana, 24, and brother-in-law ABM Maidul Islam Sohag, 21, were on a rickshaw in front of the IDB Bhaban around 11:15am, when the accident happened.

The impact of the dash threw the passengers off the rickshaw and left Belal and the rickshaw puller, whose identity could not be known instantly, critically injured. Belal sustained head injury.

Pedestrians took both the seriously injured to local hospitals. Belal was later shifted to Dhaka Medical College Hospital (DMCH) where the doctors declared him dead around 12:30pm.

Sohag told The Daily Star that they were going to IDB Bhaban from their residence at Uttar Kazipara in Kafrul to buy computer parts. At the time of the accident the baby girl was on his sister's lap.

He said Belal was also worked for Diganta TV, Rtv, Jamuna TV, and Mohana TV before he joined Somoy TV four months ago.

Abdul Latif, officer-in-charge of Kafrul Police Station, said locals caught the helper of the bus and handed him over to police after a beating. Police later seized the bus but the driver was nowhere to be found.

According to the helper, the rickshaw suddenly came in front of the bus which made collision was unavoidable, said police.

The victim of the other accident Yusuf was critically injured when the human hauler hit and crushed him. Locals rushed him to DMCH where Yusuf died at 12:00pm.