

Vitamin A plus national campaign begins today

UNB, Dhaka

The national Vitamin A plus campaign will be observed across the country today to prevent childhood blindness, reducing child mortality and strengthening immunity.

More than 2.20 crore children aged six months to five years will be fed high-powered Vitamin A capsules while more than 1.90 crore children will be given deworming tablets, officials said.

Messages on exclusive breastfeeding for children till age six month will also be publicised during the campaign.

Children aged six months to 11 months will be given blue-coloured capsule of high-powered Vitamin A, children aged one year to five will be given red-coloured capsule of high-powered Vitamin A and children aged 2-5 years will be given deworming tablets.

Over four lakh health workers and volunteers will work together to make the nationwide campaign a success.

Every year, almost five lakh children in the world fall victim to night blindness disease due to lack of Vitamin A leading to their blindness. One third of under-five Bangladeshi children died due to the disease.

According to an estimate of WHO, night blindness was identified as one of public health problem.

High-powered Vitamin A capsule distribution activities among children aged six months to five years every six month began in 1974 for preventing night blindness and blindness.

Observance of Vitamin A week began from 1994.

Very limited

FROM PAGE 3 About fine against the law violators, Asif said the amount has to be increased. "Tk 50 is very low amount. It should be at least Tk 1,000." He stressed the need for increasing more mobile court.

He suggested introducing a chapter in the textbook curriculum with pictorial images to create awareness about the menace from the very childhood.

Turin Afroz, a legal adviser of Bangladesh Anti-Tobacco-Free Kids, said a draft of the amended tobacco control act with provisions of tougher measures was supposed to be placed in the cabinet on December 29 last year, but that was not done in the wake of pressure from the owners of tobacco industries.

Abdul Baset Majumder, vice chairman of Bangladesh Bar Council, ZI Khan Panna, chairman of human rights and legal aid committee of Bangladesh Bar Council, and Farida Akhter, executive director of UBINIG, among others, also spoke.



The people of Chittagong city breathe a sigh of relief as rain started falling on Thursday night following a fortnight of pre-monsoon heat wave. The photo was taken in the city's Jamal Khan area.

PHOTO: PRABIR DAS

Port city dwellers cool off in overnight rain

ARUN BIKASH DEY, Ctg

A fortnight of suffering in the sweltering heat seemingly ceased as it began drizzling Thursday evening. Soon the light falls turned to heavy shower, bringing some respite to the city people from the extreme of the pre-monsoon temperature.

Accompanied by cold breeze, the downpour continued for several hours throughout the night. From yesterday morning, it has been raining intermittently.

Over the last 24 hours till 12:00noon yesterday, the Chittagong Met Office recorded 83.4 millimetres of rain. Officials said the rainfall was caused by monsoon winds and likely to continue for the next 24 hours.

The downpour not only relieved people, but put them in misery when it came to commuting.

Rokeya Begum, a resident of Chawk Bazar area, was seen standing at the entrance of Chittagong Shopping Complex, trying to avail a rickshaw or auto-rickshaw home.

"I feel relieved for the shower, as we expected it for the last two weeks to get respite from severe heat. But on the other hand, I along with my children have to wait for hours to return home, which is very much tiring", she said.

Rickshaw pullers are not interested in going to Chawk Bazar area, while the drivers of CNG-run auto-rickshaws demand very high fares, she complained.

Shafiqul Islam, who carried out his duty at his office in Muradpur, was trying to catch a rickshaw ride to his house in Chandgaon residential area Thursday evening.

Taking shelter under the roof of a roadside shop, he expressed his resentment at the reluctance of the rickshaw pullers.

"The drivers of rickshaws and CNG-run auto-rickshaws seem to feel very happy, seeing the miseries of the commuters", Shafiqul said, talking to the correspondent.

"On a normal day, they request us to ride their rickshaws. But whenever it begins raining, they show reluctance".

Locals saw some low-lying areas, including Halishahar, Bakalia, Probortak intersection, Bahaddarhat, Kapasgola and Chawk Bazar, had gone under knee-deep water due to the ceaseless rain. The drains also overflowed, forcing people into wading through filthy water all their way.

77pc elderly slum people face health problems: Study

UNB, Dhaka

When their wearied bodies demand rest and care, elderly people in the country's urban slums are instead condemned to toiling in their closing days if they are to eat and survive the day.

Visiting several slums in Narayanganj, the correspondent of the news agency found the elderly people living miserable lives in shanties without healthcare and necessary support.

Jabeda Khatun, in her early 70s, lives alone in Khyshipara Slum in an inhuman condition, although once she had a happy family in Bikrampur.

It was the erosion of the mighty Padma that devastated her family 30 years ago, devouring their homestead and all the belongings. Then Jabeda along with her family took shelter in the slum.

Her husband died 20 years ago, and her only son was killed in a road accident three years back. Jabeda has a sister-in-law, but she is struggling to survive with her four children. So there is no one who could take care of her.

A wretched Jabeda said she had long been suffering from eye problems, but could not afford to consult a doctor. "I have poor eyesight. I cannot see anything clearly.... how will I live?" she asked.

The miseries of elderly people in urban slums are very common in Bangladesh. Although about 33 percent of urban people live in slums, they have

access to limited basic facilities.

According to a recent study conducted by Population Research and Development Associates (PRDA), the overwhelming majority (77.8 per cent) of the elderly people suffer from health-related problems in the urban slums.

The major health-related problems of the elderly people in slums are fever (49.7 per cent), pain (36.3 per cent), weakness (21.2 per cent), asthma or breathing complications (14.5 per cent), gastritis or ulcer (13.5 per cent), rheumatism, eye diseases and others.

The PRDA conducted the study titled "Older People in Dhaka Slums: A Socio-Economic Assessment" on 10 slums of Dhaka city from Oct 2010 to Jan 2011. It found that about 59.2 per cent elderly people got treatment in a pharmacy or dispensary, while about 17.4 per cent sought treatment from public healthcare facilities, 14.7 per cent from private doctors and 7.1 per cent from NGO facilities.

A consultant of PRDA, Naushad Faiz, said some two-thirds of the elderly people in slums were engaged in household works with the percentage of women higher than men.

About 6.5 million people in the country are visually impaired, while 40

Free diabetic test camp

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A daylong diabetic camp was organised in Shatkhira yesterday offering free diagnosis for the disease to more than 300 people.

The camp at Shaheed Muktijodhya College in Tala upazila found 96 people with diabetes positive, out of 305, who came there for the test.

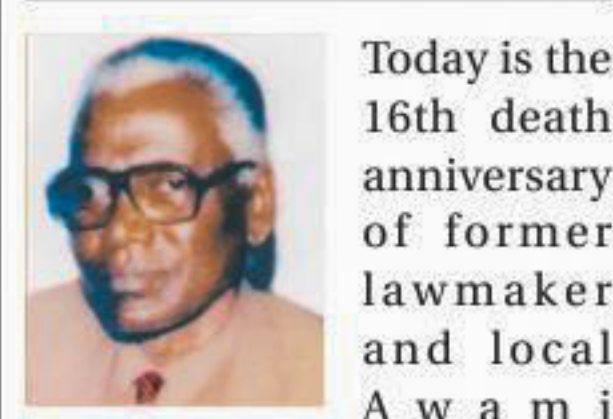
The patients diagnosed with diabetes were provided with medical consultation and treatment by Associate Prof Dr M A Hasanat of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujib Medical University.

The camp was arranged by F R F Diagnostic & Research Centre, a non-profit organisation, with financial assistance from Fazlur Rahman Foundation.

According to a report of World Health Organisation (WHO) released recently, one in ten adults worldwide has diabetes.

Death anniversary

STAFF CORRESPONDENT



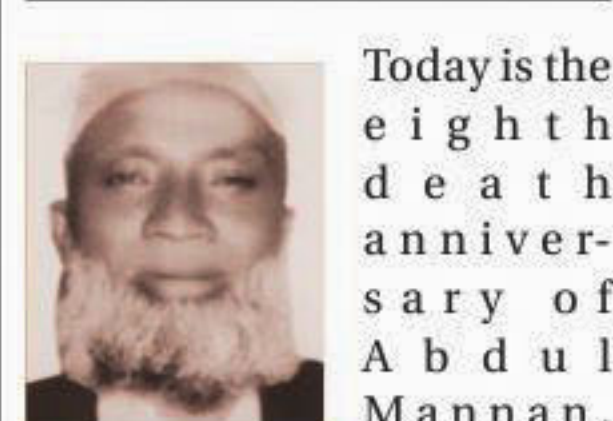
Today is the 16th death anniversary of former lawmaker and local Awami League leader, advocate Dabir Uddin Ahmed.

On the occasion, Qurankhwani and a milad mahfil will be held at his residence at 261/B, Khilgaon-Chowdhuripara in the capital and at Islampur village home in Ullapara upazila of Sirajganj, says a press release.

Dabir, a close associate of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, was an organiser of the Liberation War in 1971.

Abdul Mannan

STAFF CORRESPONDENT



Today is the eighth death anniversary of Abdul Mannan, father of Shamsul Hoque, assistant director (admin) of Bangladesh Rice Research Institute (BRRI).

On the occasion, Qurankhwani, a doa mahfil and destitute feeding programme will be held after Zohr prayers at Telipara Jame Mosque at Chandana in Gazipur, says a press release.

A doa mahfil will also be held after Asr prayers at BRRI Gazipur Jame Mosque on June 4 and after Juma prayers at his Moizdiur village residence in Noakhali on June 8.

His relatives and admirers are requested to attend the programmes.



Gano Adhikar Mancha Convener Dr Mahfuzur Rahman speaks at a discussion at Theatre Institute Chittagong in the port city yesterday.

PHOTO: STAR

Balance power between president, prime minister

Say speakers

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

Speakers at a discussion yesterday stressed the need for strengthening the local government bodies to resolve the problems of people.

They also suggested for balancing the power of the president and the prime minister in the constitution.

Gano Adhikar Mancha organised the discussion at Theatre Institute Chittagong yesterday.

Former president of Chittagong District Bar Association Advocate Salehuddin Haider Siddique said, according to the constitution, people are the source of all power of the state, yet their rights are being contracted day by day.

So long, the people of the country do not realise their constitutional rights and raise their voice for establishing those rights, their miseries would go on increasing, he said.

He said the political parties consider the country as their paternal property and decide to boycott national assembly sessions

without taking the consent of the people who voted them into power.

Stressing the need for city government to control the police, Prof Dr Gazi Salahuddin of Chittagong University, said police were once under the civil administration, but the system had been changed later.

He also suggested for reforming in the current election process to improve the country's political situation.

Advocate Iftekher Saimul Chowdhury suggested for balancing the power tagged with the post of the president and that of the prime minister's in a 40 per cent - 60 per cent ratio.

Awami League Chittagong city unit General Secretary Kazi Enamul Hoque Danu, Gano Forum Chittagong city unit General Secretary Jane Alam, Jatiya Samajtantrik Dal Chittagong south district President Nurul Alam Montu, Workers' Party leaders Abu Hanif and Rakhal Chandra Banik also addressed the programme with Gano Adhikar Mancha Convener Dr Mahfuzur Rahman in the chair.

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The Daily Star

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COMING OUT TOMORROW

LINKING YOUNG MINDS

Star Campus, a weekly publication of The Daily Star that comes out every Sunday, will have a great variety of articles for its readers this week. The Spotlight is an eight page delight for fashion fanatics and whoever is eager to know about what is in this season. We also have the bi-weekly column Extra Credit, which will be on eccentric teachers who dare to think out of the box and encourage students to do the same. We have an exciting review on The Vagina Monologues as it hit the country and taught the students more than a thing or two about stopping violence against women. The Star Chat this week will have an exclusive interview with Theatre activist Arij Anam Khan as he shares stories about his childhood, inspirations and aspirations. Don't forget to grab your copy of Star Campus, as it hits the country tomorrow and as always, have a good read!

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