

A day that bears little significance for them

STAR NATIONAL DESK

World Mental Health Day saw only lacklustre programmes in districts across the country, showing lack of awareness among large sections of the population as well as authorities concerned regarding the significance of mental health.

No discussion or awareness building programme was held in Magura district yesterday marking the World Mental Health Day, reports our Magura correspondent.

Asked about the matter, Magura Civil Surgeon (CS) Mohammad Shafikul Alam and Sheikh Rafikul Islam, deputy director (in-charge) of Social Service Department (SSD) in the district, said no programme was held

to observe the day as the higher authorities did not issue any directive in this regard.

According to the statistics of SSD in Magura district, there are 855 mentally challenged and 166 seriously disturbed people in four upazilas of Magura district, including the municipality areas.

Most of the mentally disturbed people are seen moving in different areas including district and upazila headquarters.

In absence of any shelter home or healthcare facilities for such people in the district, they live vagrant life and gradually move towards miserable death.

"Many people are now depressed due to unfavourable socioeconomic conditions, shrinking

employment opportunities, loss of job, insecurity caused by violence and crime. These factors often lead to mental disorder," said Shafikul Alam, the CS.

Khan Ziaul haque, a socio-cultural personality in Magura, stressed the need of shelter, schooling and healthcare facilities for the mentally challenged and disturbed people.

He urged early steps for setting up a school in the district town and arranging a separate ward at Magura Sadar Hospital for the mentally challenged and disturbed people.

Our Barisal Correspondent reports: Hundreds of mental patients in greater Barisal region remain without any treatment as a junior psychiatrist has been serving as the lone mental

doctor at Barisal Sher E Bangla Medical College Hospital (SBMCH) for last nine years.

"Now nine patients, including four females, are taking treatment at the 10-bed psychiatric ward here. Besides, 35-40 patients daily take advice at the outdoor section, from the lone psychiatrist of the hospital," said Dr Anil Chandra Datta, deputy director of the biggest public hospital in Barisal division.

Posts of one associate professor, one assistant professor, and two associate registrars have also remained vacant in the ward for the last nine years, he added.

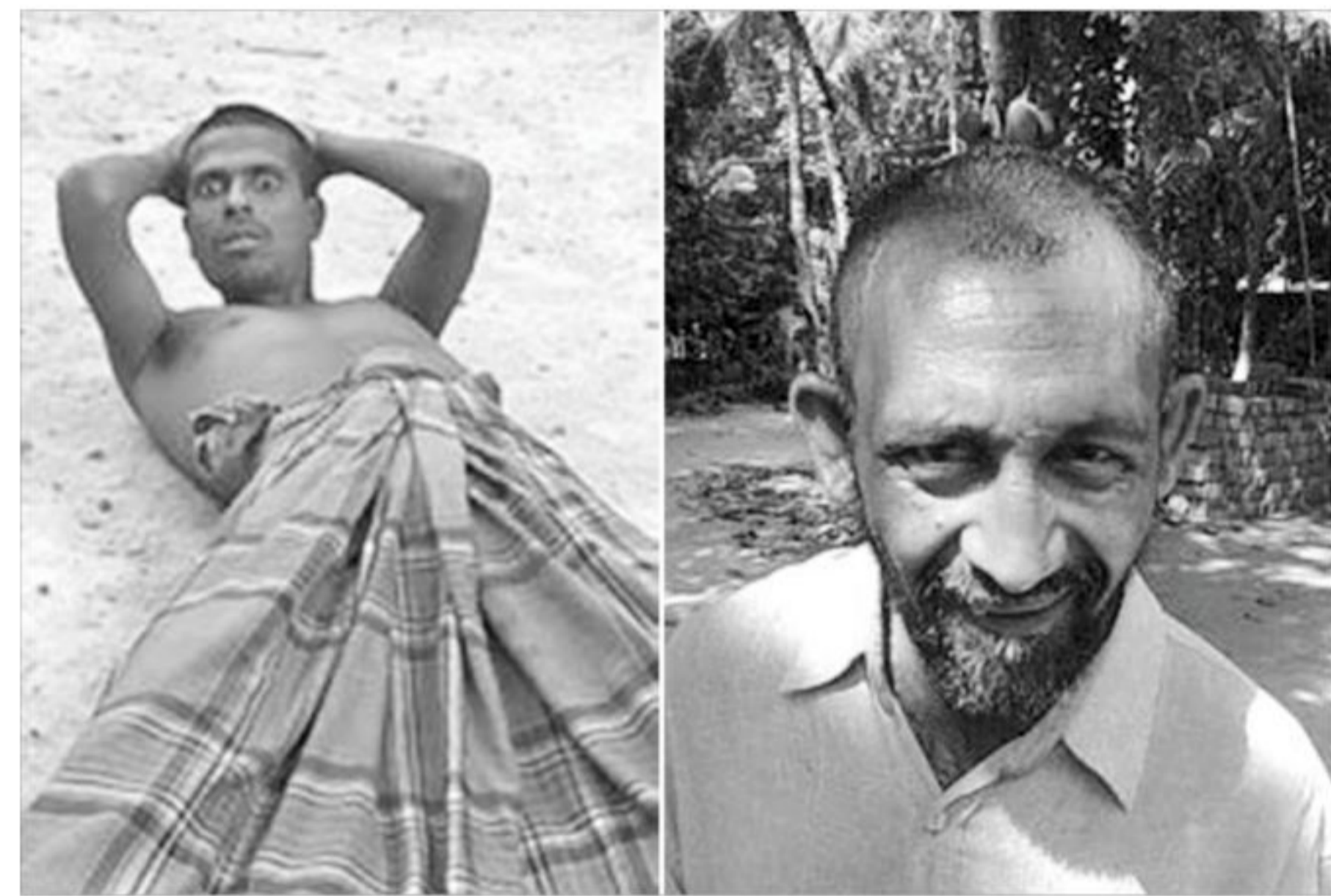
"Mental disorder put an adverse impact on the overall healthcare system. And so, sufficient number of doctors and health workers should be trained up to offer mental health treatment at the community level," he said.

"A national health study shows at least three in ten people suffer from some form of mental illness in Bangladesh and the number is increasing with change in society and lifestyle," said Prof Dr Saroj Kumar Das, former head of SBMCH psychiatry ward.

"The study found a strong link between mental disturbance and drug addiction. It also revealed that children of older parents, nuclear family, and parents with mental problem are more likely to become mental patients," he said.

Our Pabna Correspondent adds: Doctors, nurses and the staffs of Pabna Mental Hospital brought out procession on its premises yesterday, focusing the theme 'Depression, a global crisis'.

At a discussion held at the hospital auditorium marking World Mental Health Day, speakers emphasised treating the mental patients with positive attitude and compassion in family and society.



These are some of the mentally sick people often seen moving here and there during the day hours in Magura town. Nobody seems to care where they get their food or stay at night.

Rokeya university teachers to go on indefinite strike today

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Rangpur

Teachers of Begum Rokeya University, Rangpur will go on an indefinite class boycott today, demanding the removal of two students who 'assaulted' one of their fellows.

The announcement was made at an emergency meeting on the campus yesterday.

Sources said, students of chemistry and statistics departments locked in an altercation over an inter department football match on Tuesday afternoon.

At one stage, Abdul Latif, lecturer of chemistry department, slapped Imtiaz Alam Basunia, a student of statistics department as he misbehaved with the students of the teacher's

department.

As a sequel to the incident, Imtiaz and Titas Chandra Roy, a student of marketing department, assaulted Abdul Latif.

Protesting the attack on Latif, the teachers' association at the university held a meeting where the decision for class boycott was taken.

At the meeting, the leaders of the association also decided to bring out a procession today in favour of their demand.

Dr. Sharifa Salwa Dina, president of the association, said they would continue class boycott until Imtiaz and Titas were removed.

Vice chancellor Abdul Jalil Miah said "We are trying our best to resolve the problem".

Yesterday morning, students of the university boycotted classes, brought out a procession and held a rally on the campus protesting assault on the student.

The university was opened last year.

11 Shibir men arrested

A CORRESPONDENT, Khulna

Police arrested 11 activists of Islami Chhatra Shibir after they clashed with Bangladesh Chhatra League (BCL) at Government BL College at Daulatpur in the city yesterday.

Witnesses said, the clash erupted at 11:00am when two processions of BCL and Shibir were crossing each other on the campus.

Earlier, the Shibir activists locked in an altercation with police near Daulatpur bus stand as police obstructed their procession towards the college.

Both the groups, equipped with iron rods, sticks and bludgeons chased and attacked each other, leaving one person injured.

Injured Masudur Rahman Masud, first year student at mathematics department and also Shibir activist was taken to a local hospital for treatment.

Officer in-Charge (OC) of Daulatpur PS Akhter Hossain said, police arrested 11 Shibir activists from the spot.

Meanwhile leaders of both the student organisations at the college blamed each other for the attack.



PHOTO: STAR

Another Mawa ferry terminal shut

Ferry services at Mawa in Munshiganj is being severely hampered as erosion by the Padma yesterday devoured more than 20 feet of ferry terminal no 1, compelling the authorities to shut it down indefinitely. Ferry terminal no 2 met the same fate on Tuesday as about 40 feet area of the terminal went into the river. The authorities later hoisted the red flag at the terminal (right).



Patients suffer as assault on doctor triggers strike

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Nilphamari

Thousands of treatment seekers suffered as doctors in all government hospitals and health complexes in the district started a two-day work abstention yesterday, demanding punishment to a union parishad (UP) chairman who assaulted a doctor in Kishoreganj upazila health complex.

However, the doctors attended a good number of patients, especially those with emergency need, on humanitarian grounds.

Moklesur Rahman Biman, chairman of Ranachandi UP of Kishoreganj upazila, slapped Dr Shamim Kabir, a medical officer of Kishoreganj upazila health complex, in presence of two leaders of district Awami League (AL) on Monday noon, said Dr Mujibul Hasan, general secretary of the district unit of Bangladesh Medical Association (BMA).

Moklesur got furious as Dr Kabir declined to change the language of a medical certificate that he (Moklesur) thought would go against his friend Biplob Kumar Roy Dipu, chairman of adjacent Garagram UP, and an accused in a case for torturing two tender-aged boys, the BMA leader said.

Biplob was sued in a Nilphamari court on charge of torturing Harun, 8, son of Abdul Khaleque, and Awal, 9, son of Sekandar Ali, blaming them for stealing his

ducks on September 28, sources said.

The guardians of the two boys, who were treated at Kishoreganj upazila health complex, later filed a case accusing the chairman.

However, Biplob Kumar Roy at a press conference on Friday denied the allegations against him and termed the matter as a conspiracy by his rival chairman candidate Mosaddek Ali, also a leader of upazila BNP.

In connection with the case, Dr Shamim Kabir on Sunday issued a medical certificate, mentioning that there was an injury mark on the throat of one of the injured boys.

As lawyers of the accused UP chairman said the medical certificate would go against him, two top AL leaders from the district town along with Ranachandi UP Chairman Moklesur Rahman Biman and a few others went to Dr Shamim Kabir on the same night to pursue him to change the medical certificate, said local sources.

But Dr Kabir refused to comply with their request as the medical certificate was already recorded in the hospital register.

At this, Moklesur became furious and slapped the doctor in presence of the AL leaders.

In protest, district unit of BMA on Tuesday night sat at a meeting, announced a two-day work abstention and wore black badges.

SNAPS AND SNIPPETS

Production at JFCL stops

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Jamalpur

Urea fertiliser production at Jamuna Fertiliser Company Ltd (JFCL) at Tarakandi in the district came to a halt on Monday night due to leakage in ammonia plant of the industry. JFCL sources said, the ammonia plant caught fire after a big sound of blast at 11.00pm halting production. General manager (GM), operation of the industry Md Zahidul Bari told this correspondent that it will take 4-5 days to repair the leakage and resume production.



PHOTO: STAR

Nagorik Committee in Thakurgaon enforced a 6-hour hartal yesterday at Ruhea union in Sadar upazila, demanding correction of a gazette notification that divided the union into two parts. During the hartal, all offices, school and colleges, business establishments remained shut while locals put up rail and road barricades.

Two children drown

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Jamalpur

Two kids drowned in a canal at village Digrichar Baliabari in Islampur upazila of the district yesterday noon. The deceased were identified as Sajib, 4, son of Badiuzzaman of the village and his cousin Sonia, 5, daughter of Shafiqul Islam Nandu of village Defla under Melandah upazila. Locals and victims' family sources said the two children were playing near the canal. They fell in it at around 1.00pm and drowned.

Bodies recovered

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Dinajpur

Decomposed bodies of a truck driver and his helper were recovered from a roadside truck in Hakimpur upazila early yesterday. Police identified them as Bozlar Rahman, 50, the driver hailing from Haripur upazila and Golam Mostafa, 47, his helper from Munshirhat village under the same upazila in the district. Police said, locals informed Hakimpur police on Tuesday night as they were getting bad smell from the truck parked at Chhatni point of Hakimpur-Ghoraghat Road. Later police recovered the bodies from under the seats of the truck.

11 passport brokers jailed

UNB, Khulna

A mobile court here on Tuesday convicted 11 passport brokers and sentenced them to three months imprisonment for harassing passport seekers. The convict are Tapu Biswas, 40, Saiful Islam, 33, Fazlul Akhter Babul, 32, Alamgir Hossain, 35, Abdul Halim, 20, Rajib Hasan, 28, Monirul Islam, 40, Himu, 24, Abdul Mannan, 35, Hafizur Rahman, 39, Ashraful Islam, 45. Police arrested the brokers from local passport office on Tuesday morning. Later, they were handed over to the mobile court. The mobile court, led by Executive Magistrates Moshir Rahman and Ziaur Rahman, handed down the punishment.

Girl dies of snakebite

UNB, Sherpur

A college girl died of snakebite at Daodhara village in Nalitabari upazila on Tuesday. The victim was identified as Asma Khatun, a student of Poragoan Haji Nurul Haque Moitry College and resident of the village. Local sources said a venomous snake bit Asma in the right hand when she went to a nearby latrine of her house in the morning. She was rushed to upazila health complex where the doctors declared her dead.



PHOTO: STAR

Students of Begum Rokeya University in Rangpur yesterday brought out a procession to protest assault on a student by a teacher.



PHOTO: STAR

Patients waiting for doctors at Nilphamari Modern Hospital. Thousands of treatment seekers across the district suffered as doctors went on a two-day work abstention yesterday to protest assault on one of their colleagues on Monday.