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Thursday, April 26, 2012

Metropolitan

# Noise pollution increasingly posing as health hazard

Say speakers



Poribesh Bachao Andolon forms a human chain before Faculty of Fine Arts of Dhaka University yesterday to observe 'International Noise Awareness Day'. Photo: STAR

### Staff Correspondent

Noise pollution is increasingly posing as a serious health hazard to the urban population and must be curbed through awareness programmes among the masses, said speakers at a seminar yesterday.

The gradual loss of hearing goes unnoticed until permanent deafness occurs. The issue still remains as the least addressed and proper execution of relevant laws is indispensable in this regard, they said.

National Institute of Ear, Nose and Throat (ENT) and Teachers' Association of Dhaka Medical College (DMC) jointly organised the seminar in observance of "International Noise Awareness Day" for the first time in Bangladesh.

Presenting a keynote paper, Prof Pran Gopal Dutta, vice chancellor of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujib Medical University, said unpleasant sounds turn to noise, leading to non-auditory effects like headaches, nausea, insomnia, anxiety and stress.

Even the most unnoticed form of noise pollution, like snoring, is obnoxious for children and can hamper their normal growth, he said.

Preventing noise pollution requires monitoring of noise levels, creating awareness on the precautionary measures and keeping records of measurements of noise level exposure, he added.

He also urged doctors to lend mental and societal support while treating hearing impairments in patients.

Humayun Kabir, senior secretary to the health and family welfare ministry, said despite the presence of a law, there are some problems in its execution and the media has a vital role to play in creating awareness about the issue.

Mesbah ul Alam, secretary to the environment and forest ministry, said a drive conducted by Department of Environment (DoE) found 146 out of 164 points in the city having sound levels exceeding tolerable limits.

"It is a sound crime," he said, adding that awareness should come from the family first and then spread throughout the society.

DoE Director General Monowarul Islam said noise pollution is not being considered as a problem at national and international levels as people are more concerned about air, water and soil pollution.

He stressed the need for stronger partnerships among organisations working on curbing noise pollution.

The association President Prof Khan Abul Kalam Azad and DMC Vice Principal Prof Ismail Khan also spoke.

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