

New oral saline hits market soon

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Amid rising demands during the current floods, a new oral rehydration saline (ORS) based on an improved formula will hit the market soon, promising better results in combating diarrhoea.

The Social Marketing Company (SMC) is set to market by October about 50 lakh packets of the new ORS jointly developed by the World Health Organisation (WHO) and the United Nations Children's Fund (Unicef). Each packet of 500 cc will cost roughly Tk3.

"The new ORS is far more effective especially for infant children," Parvin Rashid, managing director of SMC, told The Daily Star yesterday describing the merits of the new product now being used only in a few developing countries in the world.

"It can also be used in place of standard ORS for treating adults with cholera. It is proven that the new ORS ensures fewer morbidity and mortality if used timely and properly," she said.

The low 'osmolarity formula' of the new ORS can reduce stool output by 20 percent, vomiting by 30 percent. It also cuts the number of loose motion and its quantity substantially, she mentioned.

Oral rehydration therapy with such less expensive glucose and electrolyte solution has reduced substantially deaths from dehydration due to diarrhoea, scientists who developed the new formula claim.

The SMC management said the new ORS will be manufactured at their new plant at Valuka in Mymensingh.

It is estimated that with the recession of floods by October, millions of ORS packets will be needed for treatment of mostly children suffering from water-borne diseases like diarrhoea.

About 15 lakh people on an average suffer from diarrhoea every year in Bangladesh.

"It would be so timely if we could have launched the new ORS now but the pressure on us to supply the traditional standard ORS is delaying it," said Parvin.

FM on Muslim force

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Any notion of a "Muslim security force" to assist in the reconstruction of Iraq sends a wrong signal to the world that the help for the war-scarred country is only a Muslim or non-Muslim issue, Foreign Minister M Morshed Khan said yesterday.

"To say it is an issue for Muslim countries may suggest that it is a Muslim or non-Muslim issue, which would send a wrong signal," Morshed told reporters at his office.

The statement came when he was asked if Kuwaiti Foreign Minister Sheikh Mohammad Al-Salim Al-Sabah, scheduled to visit Bangladesh on August 23, would raise Bangladeshi participation in a Saudi-proposed "Muslim security force" in Iraq.

Although Saudi officials sat with Dhaka's envoy to Riyadh on the issue, Bangladesh did not make any official proposal for its troops.

DETAINED CONTAINERS

Search on, no weapons found yet

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

Search of the detained containers at Chittagong port for smuggled weapons began yesterday, port and police sources said.

Police, army, intelligence personnel, port and customs officials and consignees concerned were present during the search that started at 11:00 am yesterday.

On the first day of the search, the containers laden with refrigerators were opened for physical examination. But no smuggled weapons were found, port officials said adding that it would take at least 10 days to complete the search.

Earlier on Monday, over 500 containers were detained at Chittagong port yards to carry out search for smuggled

weapons following information received by intelligence agencies. Those containers reached Chittagong port on board two ships from Singapore and Colombo ports.

Security inside the container terminal of Chittagong port was beefed up yesterday for the search operation, police sources said.

1,404 more held

UNB, Dhaka

Police arrested some 1,404 people, including five listed criminals, on various charges during their country-wide drive in last 24 hours ending at 6.00am yesterday.

'Resist distortion of history'

DU CORRESPONDENT

Speakers at a rally yesterday called upon the student community to come forward to resist the conspiracy of the BNP-led alliance government to distort the history of the liberation war.

They said the present government has been distorting the history of the glorious liberation war in the textbooks as well as in the documents of the country's liberation war.

The seminar on 'Distortion of history of the liberation war in the documents and text books: What the student community can do' was organised by Bangladesh Chhatra League (BCL), student wing of the opposition Awami League (AL), at the

TSC auditorium of Dhaka University.

Presenting his keynote paper, Dr Montajuddin Patwari of Bangladesh Open University said the present government has included many imaginary information and explanations in the third part of the documents of the liberation war.

If they had any respects for the country's liberation war, they could not do it, he added.

Bhorer Kagoj Editor Abed Khan said the alliance government's move to distort the history of the liberation war will never be successful.

The history cannot be distorted. It will remain the same as it was, he added.

Dhaka University Teachers' Association President Prof AAMS

Arefin Siddique said the BNP-led coalition government wants to give former president Ziaur Rahman more prominence than Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, and as such they are trying to distort the history.

But none can undermine the glorious role of Bangabandhu in our independence movement and none can erase his name from the history of our liberation war, he added.

Prof Harun-ur-Rashid, dean of Social Science Faculty of Dhaka University, said the move for distorting the history began after the killing of Bangabandhu on August 15, 1975.

Advocate Shirin Sharmin Chowdhury, BCL President Liaquat Sikder and General Secretary Nazrul Islam Babu also spoke.

Corruption prevalent at every level: Minister

LGED to build flood control embankments

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The government will take initiative to build flood control embankments, bridges and culverts involving the local government engineering department (LGED) rather than floating tenders as corruption is prevalent at every level, said Water Resources Minister Hafizuddin Ahmed yesterday.

He also said the government could not implement various projects to control floods, such as river dredging, due to lack of funds.

"We do not have enough funds to implement massive flood protection projects. Moreover, corruption and lack of unity among political parties hamper the development process," the minister said at a seminar on 'Flood management: Improvement of drainage and environment'.

The Media Network for Sustainable Development organised the seminar, with Dr Kholiquzzaman, chairman of Bangladesh Unnyan Parishad, in the chair.

Speaking at the seminar, experts recommended dredging the rivers, improving the drainage system and preserving water bodies.

They also called for basin-wise water management and exchange of information with neighbouring countries to reduce the extent of loss in floods.

Prof Hamidur Rahman, in his keynote paper, said that filling up of low lands, encroachment on rivers and other interventions would worsen the flood situation in near future.

Hasanul Haq Inu, president of Jatiya Samajtantrik Dal, blamed the successive governments for their failure to control floods effectively.

Political will is needed to protect the country from such natural calamities, he added.

Tauhidul Anwar Khan, member of Joint River Commission, said, "If we receive flood-related information in

advance, we can take precautions."

But the neighbouring country does not provide such information, he said.

"All the countries in South Asia but one agreed to exchange meteorological information," he added.

Gias Uddin Ahmed Chowdhury, additional director general of Water Development Board, and Md Azharul Haq, former managing director of Wasa, also spoke.