

Climate change to increase cholera attacks

Say researchers

NAIMUL HAQ

Cholera attacks can substantially increase in Bangladesh due to extreme climate changes like drought or flooding that influence the pattern of rainfall.

This was strongly suggested by American and local scientists after studying cholera incidences of past four decades in the country.

Cholera is an acute intestinal infection caused by the bacterium *Vibrio cholerae*. The microorganism causes severe diarrhoea quickly eliminating body fluid and eventually, in fewer cases, senselessness and death.

After analysing their data for over a year, one of the US scientists told this correspondent through e-mail recently, "The data readings confirm long-standing fears that climate change will affect outbreaks of infectious diseases such as cholera."

Rainfall patterns in the region, as in other parts of the world, are influenced by 'El Niño' a periodic warming of the Pacific Ocean off the West Coast of South America."

Dr Katia Koelle said, "Global

climate change means increased frequency of droughts or floods in Bangladesh and due to this effect Bangladesh would expect increased cholera incidences in the future."

Dr Koelle is a leading scientist of the Department of Ecology and Evolutionary Biology at the University of Michigan, USA.

A leading scientist of ICDDRDB is also involved in the research. The team of scientists led by Dr Mercedes Pascual of Michigan University, has analysed 40 years of records detailing the incidences of cholera at Matlab, 38 kilometers southeast of Dhaka.

They also studied Bangladesh Medical records which suggested that climate change can increase the spread of cholera by creating a pattern of rainfall that favours the transmission of the disease.

During their data analysis, the team created a computer model that took into account disease transmission in the region, local people's immunity and climatic factors such as changes in rainfall.

They found that extreme weather

conditions like drought or floods increased the transmission of the disease.

"Our findings are simple," Dr Koelle said, adding, "Extreme climate conditions enable the waterborne bacterium *Vibrio cholerae* to rapidly multiply and spread more easily. Floods caused by heavy monsoon can contaminate drinking water with the bacterium. In droughts, the bacterium can grow more easily in stagnating water in

ponds and rivers."

The researchers explained that due to heat thirst drives people to drink more liquid and so the incidence of cholera attacks also rises during drought.

They also confirmed long-standing fears that climate change will affect the outbreaks of infectious diseases such as cholera in Bangladesh.

WOMEN EMPOWERMENT

'Silent revolution taking place'

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A six-day training programme for Upazila Women Affairs Officers began at the Regional Public Training Centre (RPTC) in the city yesterday.

A total of 141 newly recruited officers are taking part in the workshop organised by the Advocacy to End Gender-based Violence, a project of the Ministry of Women and Children Affairs, in cooperation with the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA).

The training will focus on gender, reproductive health and women's rights issues and office management.

Speakers at the inaugural session said that although the economic growth is slow, a silent revolution in women empowerment is taking place in the country.

Speaking as chief guest, Women and Children Affairs Minister Khurshid Jahan Haque called on the women officers to change their mentality and work as male officers by overcoming social obstacles.

She also asked them to collect infor-

mation of all incidents of women repression, trafficking and rape at the upazila level.

The government will take further steps to prevent repression of women across the country on the basis of such information, she added.

Bangladesh achieved worldwide recognition for its role in the advancement of microcredit, said secretary of the ministry M Haider Ali.

The main duty of the women officers would be to distribute loan and recover those properly, he said.

Assistant representative of UNFPA Nurul Amin, Acting Director General of Directorate of Women Affairs Abu Taher, Additional Director of the directorate Mohammad Iqbal were also present.

Madrassa Board asked not to give money to Edn Ministry

BDNEWS, Dhaka

The High Court yesterday directed the Chairman and Registrar of the Madrasa Education Board not to hand over any money to the Education Ministry and Madrasa Teachers Training Institute from the fund of the board.

After hearing a writ petition filed by principal of Borail Alim Madrasa Noor Mohammad Rabbani, a division bench of the High Court comprising Justice MA Matin and Justice M Rezaul Haque also issued a rule on the government to show cause as to why its order to give Tk1 crore to Education Ministry and Madrasa Teachers Training Institute from the fund of the board should not be declared illegal.

The Ministry of Education on August 16 this year ordered the Madrasa Board to hand over Tk one crore to Education Ministry and Madrasa Teachers Training Institute.



World Bank Vice-President Praful C Patel makes a courtesy call on Leader of the Opposition in Parliament Sheikh Hasina at her Sudha Sadan residence in the city yesterday.

HC extends Jalil's bail in abduction case

UNB, Dhaka

A regular bench of the High Court (HC) yesterday extended by three months the anticipatory bail of Awami League (AL) General Secretary Abdul Jalil in an abduction case stemmed from a land dispute in the city's Gulshan area.

After hearing the petition, the bench comprising justices Nazmun Ara Sultan and MA Hafiz issued a rule upon the government to explain why the petitioner should not be granted regular bail.

Jalil had earlier surrendered to the court and secured the anticipatory bail for five days from a vacation bench.

Advocate Abdul Baset Majumder appeared for Jalil, also chairman of the Mercantile Bank.

CTG ARMS HAUL

Case hearing begins

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

The hearing of the arms smuggling case filed in connection with the country's biggest arms haul at the jetty of Chittagong Urea Fertiliser Ltd on April 2 last year began here yesterday.

The court of Metropolitan Sessions Judge AKM Anwar Hossain heard two witnesses--Havilder Golam Rasul, who first received the information about the unloading of smuggled weapons, and Nurul Alam Sawdagar.

Nurul Alam, also a witness in another case filed under the Arms Act, was declared "hostile" as he denied knowing anything about the incident.

The court also issued arrest warrant against plaintiff of the case Ahadur Rahman, the then officer-in-charge (OC) of Karnaphuli Police Station now on special duty in Dhaka, for remaining absent from the hearing.

At the hearing, Golam Rasul said

while on duty at the police station on that night he received an anonymous phone call, informing about the unloading of some smuggled goods at the Chittagong Urea Fertiliser jetty.

He claimed to have informed the matter to Sergeant Alauddin of the Karnaphuli outpost adjacent to the jetty and the OC immediately.

"We rushed to the spot and found the deadly weapons and ammunition being loaded on trucks from cargo boats under the supervision of Hafizur Rahman," he said.

"Those involved in the smuggling fled the scene, sensing our presence," he said.

Earlier on October 24, the court framed charge in the arms smuggling case against 44 persons. Of them, 11 have been absconding while 28 are on bail and five are in jail.

Patel meets Hasina

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

World Bank Vice-President Praful C Patel made a courtesy call on Leader of the Opposition in Parliament Sheikh Hasina at her Sudha Sadan residence in the city yesterday and discussed various issues of mutual interests.

After the half-hour meeting, the WB official told reporters that they had discussed development, economic and political issues of Bangladesh.

Problems in power, education and health sectors also came up during the discussion, he added.

Saber Hossain Chowdhury, political secretary to Hasina, told reporters that accountability of the government is a must for good governance. But accountability cannot be ensured unless the election is held in a free and fair atmosphere.

He also said that the Awami League expects that all concerned, including the development partners and donors, would come forward to ensure a free, fair and credible general election in the country.

World Bank Country Director Christina Wallich and Awami League leaders Kazi Zafarullah MP, Dr Mohiuddin Khan Alamgir and Saber Hossain Chowdhury were present at the meeting.

Conduct raids after complaints

DU asks cops

UNB, Dhaka

The Provost Committee of Dhaka University at a meeting yesterday requested the law enforcement agencies to raid its dormitories on "complaint basis" to make them free from outsiders.

The meeting was held with Vice Chancellor Dr SMA Faiz in the chair. Pro-VC Dr AFM Yusuf Haider, Proctor Dr AK Firoz and hall provosts attended the meeting.

The committee also asked the hall authorities to take all-out measures to keep the outsiders at bay.

According to a previous decision of the Provost Committee, the law enforcement agencies do not require prior permission to raid the dormitories, said a DU press release.

It said the hall authorities would cooperate with the agencies in conducting raids.



PHOTO: STAR

Bangladesh Chhatra Union stages a demonstration on the Dhaka University campus yesterday protesting killings of two judges in Jhalakathi.



PHOTO: STAR

Police produce prime accused Hafiz in court in Chittagong yesterday in the arms smuggling case.