

Safe water system needed to fight water-borne diseases

Experts tell regional seminar

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A cost-effective safe water system is necessary in South East Asia Regional (SEAR) countries to cope with water-borne diseases as the world climate has changed significantly posing serious threat to sources and supply of water, said the experts at the inaugural session of a seminar yesterday.

The two-day regional seminar on 'The Safe Water System (SWS)', organised by World Health Organisation (WHO) in collaboration with Bangladesh government, began at Sheraton Hotel in the city.

"Over the centuries, the world climate changed with a marked rise in temperature. The world is getting warmer while change has also been marked on sea level," said Dr Steve Luby of ICDDR,B while presenting a keynote paper titled 'Background and global experience with SWS'.

Global warming might have an impending effect on the sources and supply of water in some of the SEAR countries including Bangladesh which are close to sea and are likely to go under water partly, he said, adding that a safe water system is necessary to cope with such a disaster.

In another keynote paper titled 'Regional situation of access to safe drinking water and sanitation', WHO Regional Adviser Payden said 94 percent of diarrhoeal diseases can be prevented through modification of environment, surveillance of water and control of water quality.

A study reveals that diarrhoeal diseases are the third leading cause of death across the world that takes a death toll of 2.2 billion people every year. Children constitute 90 percent of diarrhoeal diseases victim. About 990 children die from diarrhoeal

diseases in Bangladesh every day while 5500 children die across the world.

Speakers at the inaugural session pointed out that it would be tough for Bangladesh to provide water through conventional piped water supply system as the population is increasing alarmingly and it would be 23 million by 2015.

They mentioned that piped water supply system is often vulnerable to contamination due to illegal connections, negative pressure and decrepit network.

Speaking as chief guest, LGRD and Cooperatives Adviser Mohammad Anwarul Iqbal said Bangladesh is passing through a crucial health crisis due to the outbreak of diarrhoeal diseases in flood-affected areas.

It is expected that the outcome of this seminar will help in combating the diarrhoeal diseases among the urban slum dwellers and other low-income communities, he added.

The seminar is being held with two objectives. These are implementation of SWS in urban high-risk settlements and raise awareness about the potential benefits of Household Water Treatment and Safe Storage (HWTS).

A total of 40 participants including government officials from 10 SEAR countries and representatives of development agencies and NGOs are taking part in the seminar.

Mustafizur Rahman, chief engineer of public health engineering department (DPHE), presided over the inaugural session which was also attended by WHO Adviser Dr Andrew F Trevett, and Secretary to LGRD and cooperative ministry Safar Raj Hossain.

Flood forecast in proper time can save lives, properties

Say speakers at seminar

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Valuables worth Tk 9 lakh looted, 3 injured

CU CORRESPONDENT

Armed robbers looted cash and gold ornaments worth around Tk 9 lakh after injuring three of a family at East Syed Nagar village under Boalkhali upazila of the district in the early hours of yesterday.

Sources said a gang of 40 to 50 robbers entered the residence of one Bacha Mian at the village at around 2:00am and took away 45 tolas of gold ornaments and Tk 2 lakh in cash at gunpoint.

When the house inmates tried to resist, the robbers opened fire and injured three of the family members.

Extortionist held

UNB, Dhaka

An extortionist was arrested with a pistol in the city yesterday.

The police said Shaikat, 23, and his accomplice Kajol in a motorbike came to the Health and Family Welfare office at about 10:00am and demanded toll from Executive Engineer Shahjahan Ali.

Receiving information, the police rushed to the spot and arrested Shaikat with a loaded pistol, but Kajol managed to escape.

Flood forecast in proper time can save lives, properties

Say speakers at seminar

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Speakers at a seminar yesterday underscored the need for extending the lead time for flood forecasting and warning from 48 or 72 hours to at least 10 days for a better disaster management.

They said forecasting and information dissemination in proper time can save lives and properties from disasters.

Terminating the current forecasting and warning system quite inadequate, the seminar styled 'Flood forecasting in Bangladesh with special focus on flood 2007' at the city's Cirdap auditorium urged a basin-wide flood management approach to extend the lead time of forecasts.

The seminar was jointly organised by Bangladesh Water Development Board (BWDB) and Institute of Water Modelling (IWM).

Jalaluddin Md Abdul Hye, chief engineer, hydrology, BWDB, said the lead time should be extended since the sea level rise due to climate change has now become a reality and Bangladesh has

started facing wetter monsoon with intense rainfall and flash flood.

Claiming remarkable success in the flood forecasting and warning, he added that, "the accurate and timely forecast of flash flood in the North-Eastern region saved Boro rice and if we could launch a strong hydrological data of both the monsoon and the dry season, effective disaster management would be possible."

Saiful Hossain, executive engineer, Flood Forecasting and Warning Centre (FFWC) while presenting a paper said that under the current structure, FFWC can find out upstream water level from 12 stations and rainfall data from about 36 stations of the Indian territory which is hardly sufficient and currently available Digital Elevation Model (DEM) is very complex and is not sufficient to produce quality flood maps.

Meanwhile, he laid emphasis on availability of a suitable model, computer with GIS software, trained manpower and coordination with institutions concerned for

developing 'Decision Support System'.

Abu Saleh Khan, an IWM professional, in his paper 'Lead-time in flood forecasting - past experience and way forward' discussed the issue from 'Climate forecast application in Bangladesh (CFAB)' experience, where it was even made possible to provide seasonal outlook starting at the beginning of the monsoon with 1-6 months lead time.

Stressing on making the best use of technology right from now, he said, "Efforts should be concentrated to prioritise the land topographic data collection by survey of Bangladesh to demarcate extreme flood prone areas".

Badru Alam Tarafdar, additional secretary, Ministry of Water Resources, attended the meeting as the chief guest and Dr M Mirjahan, head, Department of Water Resources, Buet attended the seminar as special guest.



Workers of Water and Sewerage Authority (Wasa) demolish unauthorised structures on a canal at Agargaon in the city yesterday.

One killed as train rams truck

CU CORRESPONDENT

One person was killed and another injured when a train rammed a truck at Kailalatali Bazar level crossing at Halishahar in Chittagong yesterday.

The dead could not be identified immediately while the injured was identified as Mohammad Rafiq, 30, a day-labourer.

Sources said a Chittagong Port-bound goods train from Faujdarhat rammed into the truck, which was crossing the rail track, at around 4:00pm, leaving two people injured.

The injured were rushed to Chittagong Medical College Hospital (CMCH) where the doctors declared one of them dead.

The other person was undergoing treatment at the hospital, sources said.

3 brothers get life for killing cousin in Chittagong

CU CORRESPONDENT

A Chittagong court yesterday sentenced three brothers to life imprisonment in Munir murder case.

The court also fined the lifers Ilias, Naser alias Khokan and Shahed Tk 50,000 each. If they fail to pay, they will have to serve one more year in jail. Of them, Shahed is still at large.

Chittagong Third Additional Metropolitan Sessions Judge Akramul Haq Chowdhury handed down the verdict.

However, six other accused -- Siddique Ahmed, Mamta Begum, Kala Mian, Alim Uddin, Nantu Chowdhury and Mohammad Ismail

-- were acquitted.

According to the prosecution, the convicts stabbed their cousin Munir Hossain to death at Khalashi Pukur Par on June 7, 2002 as he married their sister Anjuman Ara Mukta against their wishes.

The programme would also include a fashion show, he said.

Through their last three year's efforts, Dhaka Sheraton Hotel was able to collect Tk 1.22 million, he added.

Louis Arsenault thanked the Sheraton Hotel authorities and said the money will be utilised to immunise children against six major killer diseases.

Speaking at the programme Director (Administration) of Earth Foundation Chomon Afroz reiterated her organisation's assistance to such noble cause.

VoIP equipment seized in N'ganj

UNB, Narayanganj

Members of Rapid Action Battalion (Rab) seized VoIP equipment worth Tk 50 lakh from a high-rise building at Bangabandhu Road in the town last night.

Sources said the elite force raided the 10th floor of Lufa Tower at about 9:00pm and seized the VoIP equipment and 400 SIMs of various mobile phone companies.

They also arrested a VoIP operator during the raid that continued till 11:30pm.

Public holiday on Aug 30 for Shab-e-Barat

UNB, Dhaka

The government has declared August 30 as a public holiday as the holy Shab-e-Barat will be observed on the night of August 29.

However, the offices which have their own rules for office timing and holidays and the offices, organisations and institutions the services of which have been declared essential by the government will follow their own rules in public interest, said an official handout yesterday.

Sheraton donates Tk 7.7 lakh to Unicef for its immunisation programme

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Dhaka Sheraton Hotel has handed over two cheques for Tk 7.7 lakh to Unicef with a view to strengthening its immunisation programme for children.

Sheraton General Manager Trevor MacDonald handed over the cheques to Unicef Country Representative Louis Georges Arsenault at the hotel yesterday.

Sheraton raised the fund by organising a concert in 2006 for the benefit of children and drew a fund worth Tk 3.69 lakh.

The programme was organised jointly by Sheraton Hotel and ntv. Earth Foundation was the sponsor of the event while Radio Today was the media partner of the event.

Remaining Tk 4.01 lakh was collected from hotel occupants who were invited to donate \$1 or its equivalent in local currency upon their check out.

MacDonald said Dhaka Sheraton would soon organise a musical show where famous musical bands Nagar Baul (James) and Musique Sense from the Philippines will perform.

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Flood-affected people stand in a long queue to collect safe drinking water in the city's Adabar area yesterday as Wasa authorities have been providing water to the displaced people for the last few days.