

Nutrition situation deteriorates with outbreak of diarrhoea

Say experts

MAHBUBA ZANNAT

Nutrition situation is deteriorating in the country with the outbreak of diarrhoea when 12 to 15 percent of children are already suffering from malnutrition due to poverty, food insecurity, low birth weight, lack of awareness and hygiene practice.

Diarrhoea is a major cause of malnutrition and morbidity of children aged under five years across the globe, and 17 percent of children below five years die every year globally due to diarrhoea, of which 95 percent children are in developing countries, says World Health Organisation.

There is a vicious cycle of child malnutrition and diarrhoea. If a child is infected with diarrhoea, it becomes malnourished and if a child is malnourished it gets diarrhoea easily, experts said, adding that after suffering from diarrhoea for more than 15 days, a child certainly develops malnutrition, and eliminating malnutrition could avert half of all childhood mortality.

Though different programmes have been taken to address child nutrition, the nutrition situation is still grave in the country and if diarrhoea is not addressed in an integrated way, the nutrition situation would not improve soon.

experts cautioned.

"The death rate due to diarrhoeal diseases has decreased much in the country, but the incidence of diarrhoea is not reduced at all," said Dr Shahadat Hossain, scientist and head of Longer Stay Unit of ICDDR,B.

If safe drinking water could be ensured, prevalence of diarrhoea would decrease 35 percent and it would improve further 35 percent through improved sanitation, he said, adding that still very few people in the country have access to safe drinking water. Even in the capital the quality of drinking water is very low.

Every year around 11 million children under five years die globally. About half of these deaths are associated with under nutrition and about 2 million with diarrhoea, said the experts.

"As soon as a child is affected with diarrhoea, lots of important ingredients like water, sodium, zinc, copper and magnesium come out from the body that leads to death," said senior scientist of International Centre for Diarrhoeal Diseases and Research, Bangladesh (ICDDR, B) Dr S K Roy, adding that whenever the children suffer from diarrhoea, their food intake reduces from 30 to 40 percent that further leads to weight

loss as the body burns muscle to produce energy.

He said diarrhoea also hampers the growth of the children for next one year.

It has been seen that a child suffering from malnutrition needs more time to recover from diarrhoea than a healthy baby, he added.

"Severe malnutrition contributes to more than 15 percent of all deaths among children under five years in the developing world. If severe malnutrition in childhood cannot be managed properly, the risks of death are as high as 40 percent. To reduce child mortality by two thirds by 2015, the problem of severe malnutrition should be addressed properly," opined the experts.

Hospitals experience huge number of diarrhoea patients twice a year. Once it persists from May to June and then from August to mid-October.

The ICDDR,B authorities told The Daily Star that it itself experienced 600 to 650 patients on an average every day during this summer.

"It is important to provide safe drinking water, sanitation facilities, food hygiene and nutrition education to mothers to reduce the frequency of diarrhoea," suggested Dr Roy.

According to Bangladesh Demographic and Health Survey 2004, the prevalence of child underweight during a period between 1990 and 2004, fell from 67 percent to 48 percent, and child stunting from 66 percent to 43 percent. Yet the current prevalence is still unacceptably high.

According to experts, nutrition programmes often cease to function properly as soon as the government or donor support is withdrawn. Lack of communication and collaboration among the different sectors to address the problems in a unified manner has also contributed to poor nutritional situation.

Dr SM Mostafizur Rahman, assistant director of National Nutrition Programme (NNP), said, lots of problems like lack of household food security, care for mother and children, health environment and services, adequate knowledge about nutrition, safe drinking water and sanitation are acting as impediments to improve the nutritional status in the country.

"The NNP is covering only 105 upazilas of 34 districts, and the programme needs permanent central, district and upazila level offices with required number of skilled manpower for its better performance," he added.

ROUNDTABLE ON WOMEN DEV POLICY

Some speakers draw ire for using vulgar language

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Some speakers at a roundtable yesterday drew ire from the audience for using vulgar language to express their views about equality between men and women.

"Equality between men and women does not mean women dancing in the nude, but such activities are taking place in society in the name of equality," said Kamal Uddin Zafri, principal of Jameya Kashemia Narsingdi.

Kamal repeated such language several times during his speech, causing embarrassment to women who attended the roundtable on 'National Women Development Policy: National consensus needed' organised by the Islamic Law Research and Legal Aid Bangladesh at the National Press Club in the city.

A female journalist attending the event strongly protested the remarks, saying that such language cannot be used in a roundtable.

To calm the situation, former secretary and Jamaat-e-Islami sympathiser Shah Abdul Hannan, who chaired the roundtable, made an apology for such vulgar remarks. "I am really sorry on behalf of the organisers and the speaker that such language has been used in the meeting. This kind of language should not be used in such meetings," he said.

Some Islamic scholars who took part in the roundtable told The Daily Star that they also felt embarrassed when they heard such remarks, as there were a number of women in the audience.



Save the Environment Movement Chairman Abu Naser Khan speaks at a discussion on 'Biodiversity at Lawachhara and our responsibilities' at the Dhaka Reporters' Unity auditorium in the city yesterday. Save the Environment Movement and Bangladesh Environmental Lawyers' Association organised the event.

Street dwellers lack access to healthcare

Reveals ICDDR,B study

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Street dwellers in the city are extremely vulnerable in terms of their health needs, hygiene and utilisation of healthcare services and this marginalised group is neglected by public and private sectors, a study conducted by Institute of Cholera and Diarrhoeal Diseases Research, Bangladesh (ICDDR,B) revealed yesterday.

Only mobile clinics of Marie Stopes are available for this group of people, it said.

Researchers at the presentation at Sasakawa Auditorium of ICDDR,B said only 57 percent of the people living on streets know where the vaccines are provided.

The study found that 21 percent women gave birth on the streets and in 73 percent cases the deliveries were attended by the neighbours and relatives.

ICDDR,B conducted the research in 11 areas of Dhaka city from July to December last year. It aimed at ascertaining the extent to which the needs for essential services among street dwellers are being met through the existing facilities.

Around 896 people living on the streets of Mirpur Mazar, Gabtoli Bus Terminal, Cantonment Railway Station, Gulshan Circle-2, Mohakhali Bus Station, Karwan

Bazar, Kamalapur Railway Station, Dhaka Stadium, High Court, Saidabad Bus Station and Sadarghat Launch Terminal areas were interviewed.

It is found that most of the street dwellers have been suffering from diseases of respiratory and digestive system, weakness, severe pain and scabies.

A total of 88 percent of the people living on the streets are used to open defecation, said Dr Mohammad Jasim Uddin, assistant scientist of ICDDR,B, while presenting the paper.

Incidents of violence against women, sexual abuse and drug abuse among the male are also high, while 83 percent of the female respondents said they were assaulted while staying on the street, he added.

He recommended that public and private sector providers should develop a system to inform street dwellers about availability of healthcare facilities.

The recommendations also include special attention to street children to bring them under the EPI programme, use of drug sellers to inform street dwellers about available healthcare facilities and health education programme and to establish static clinics to provide healthcare services to them.

Reshuffle in police admin

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The government yesterday gave new postings to 11 top police officials in a reshuffle in the police administration, sources in the police headquarters said.

Additional IGP (current charge) Sheikh Sajjat Ali of the Police Headquarters has been transferred as Commandant of Bangladesh Police Training Academy at Sardah in Rajshahi while incumbent Commandant Mukhlesur Rahman posted as DIG (current charge) at the Police Headquarters.

Additional Commissioner of DMP Md Moniruzzaman was transferred as DIG at the Police Headquarters while DIG (current charge) of Sylhet range Abdus Salam will take over as the Additional Commissioner of DMP.

DIG Mejbaur Nabi has been given posting as DIG Sylhet Range while KMP Commissioner (current charge) Minur Rahman Chowdhury has been made the DIG (current charge) of the Police Headquarters and DIG Helal Uddin Badri given posting as KMP Commissioner.

Superintendent of Police (SP) of Narayanganj Sibgat Ullah has been transferred as AIG at the Police Headquarters. He was replaced by SP of Naogaon Sarder Nurul Amin. Assistant Inspector General (AIG) of Police Headquarters Rejaul Karim has been transferred as SP of Habiganj and Additional SP of Netrakona Mofazzal Hossain posted as SP (current charge) of Naogaon.



A mobile court team raided the office of RS Drinking Water at Badda in the city yesterday only to find the company is marketing bottled water after collecting water from Wasa pipeline directly. The team also arrested two people and fined the company Tk 50,000.

SEXUAL HARASSMENT AT DU

Probe body formed

DU CORRESPONDENT

Dhaka University (DU) authorities on Tuesday night formed a probe committee to investigate the incident of sexual harassment of a female student of Psychology Department by a teacher of the same department.

The five-member committee headed by DU Treasurer Prof Syed Abul Kalam Azad was asked to submit its report within 15 working days.

Earlier on April 10, the student along with her father submitted a memorandum to the university authorities accusing the teacher of sexual harassment.

Meanwhile, "Students against repression", a platform mainly formed by the left-leaning student organisations, at a press conference yesterday demanded proper investigation into the incident and urged the authorities to conduct the investigation neutrally.

They also demanded formulation of anti-sexual harassment rules and formation of a complaint cell at the university to avoid recurrence of such incidents.

The students alleged that a fanatical group is trying to use this sensitive issue to create an unstable situation on the campus.

Gulam Kibria Shaheem, Luvna Tabassum and Habib Imran Jani spoke at the press conference at Madhu's Canteen.

Fake electronic items worth Tk 50 lakh seized

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Rapid Action Battalion (Rab) yesterday seized fake electronic items worth over Tk 50 lakh from a storehouse at Nawabpur in the city and arrested the owner of the fake company.

Meanwhile, another Rab team unearthed four fake mineral water factories, a biscuit factory and a herbal company and realised Tk 2.50 lakh as fine from the company owners in Badda area.

Rab-10 officials said they recovered the electronic items from the storage of Tunni Electronics located on the fourth floor of Al-Nur Electric Market at Nawabpur.

Arrested Nurul Amin had been importing the items without labels

from China and later marketing these items using the labels and packets of other famous companies.

Flight Lt Mahub-un-Nabi said they launched the drive at 3:00pm and it was going on till filing of this report at 9:30pm.

During another drive, Rab-1 led by a magistrate unearthed four fake mineral water factories -- RS Drinking Water, Rifaat Pure Drinking Water, Oman Power Drinking Water and Super Power Drinking Water -- and realised Tk 2.05 lakh in fines from the factory owners.

Besides, the Rab members also fined fake Rahela Bread and Biscuit Factory and fake Mamta Herbal Tk 20,000 and Tk 25,000 respectively.

Man dies in rooftop fall in city

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A Bangladeshi-born US citizen succumbed to his injuries early yesterday after he fell down from the rooftop of his three-storey building at Mohammadpur in the city on Tuesday night.

Abu Taher Chowdhury, 49, was found lying in an unconscious condition inside the boundary of a neighbouring residence at Mohammadia Housing Ltd at 10:30pm.

He was rushed to Dhaka Medical College Hospital (DMCH) where he died at about 2:00am.

Abu Taher had been staying in America along with his family members for years while his brother-in-law Ziauddin was taking care of the building.

DU employees protest teacher's misbehaviour

DU CORRESPONDENT

Employees and officials of Dhaka University (DU) yesterday staged a demonstration inside the registrar building for five hours demanding punishment to a university teacher for misbehaving with a group of employees.

Several hundreds of employees, mainly working at registrar building, took out processions at corridors of the building in several phases since morning and held a protest rally in front of the vice chancellor's (VC) office room.

They claimed that Associate Prof ATM Abdullah Shafee of Peace and Conflict Studies Department misbehaved with a group of employees of administrative unit of the registrar's office on Tuesday.

While talking to The Daily Star, Dr Shafee dismissed the allegations as false and said, "While I asked to give my necessary papers, the concerned employees asked me to give a written application. When I inquired whether there is a rule in 1973 ordinance that a teacher has to give a written application, they rather failed to give me proper answer."

"Without informing me, the VC formed a probe committee through syndicate," he said questioning the rationality of the probe committee.

He alleged that taking advantage of the issue, the employees are trying to resume their previously banned guestroom rent process in their residential quarters to outsiders and meet their other illegal demands.

Pro-VC Prof AFM Yusuf Haider said, "A huge number of files will be piled up if they do not join their work. So, I called on them to halt their work abstention programme."

Special drive on to nab illegal arms holders: DMP

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A special drive is underway to nab illegal arms holders following some shooting incidents in the capital in the last several days.

This was stated by Dhaka Metropolitan Police (DMP) Commissioner Naim Ahmed at a news briefing yesterday following the arrest of a brilliant youth for possessing a foreign revolver.

He urged all guardians to look after their sons closely so that their talented kids are not spoiled due to bad company.

Apart from the talent-turn criminal Aki Mahmud Babu alias Dano Babu, 28, police also arrested three suspected criminals with two more firearms and ammunition from Badda on Tuesday night.

Acting on a tip-off, police raided a North Badda house at around 10:00pm and arrested Babu, an accomplice of infamous criminal Jisan, and one Marif, 19, and recovered a US-made revolver and six bullets from their possession.

Babu, son of a retired army corporal, told reporters that a rule

Detective Branch (DB) office that he used to keep the firearms of Jisan.

Jisan's hit men - Siraj, Chanchal and Kawser - used to collect the firearms from him before any operation and returned them to him after the operation, he added.

Babu said he had never met Jisan, who is now hiding in India.

"Most of the time, I carried the firearms of Siraj who is an active member of Jisan's shooting team," said Babu who passed MBA from AUB in 2006.

He passed the SSC examination in 1998 with star marks from Government Science College, HSC

18th anniversary of Fatickchhari, Ctg Post held

The 18th founding anniversary of monthly Fatickchhari and Weekly Chittagong Post, and a reception to distinguished personalities were held at the Chittagong Club auditorium in Chittagong recently, says a press release.

Mass Education and Cultural Affairs Adviser Rasheda K Chowdhury attended the programme as the chief guest.

Chittagong Post's Chairman of the Editorial Board SM Abdul Hai presided over the programme while the daily Samakal Editor Abed Khan and Chittagong Unnayan Kartipakha Chairman Engr Shah Mohammad Akther Hossain were present as special guests.

Fourteen distinguished personalities of Chittagong were accorded the reception and awards were also given to them.

They are Biplobi Binod Bihari Chowdhury, Md Aktel Salahuddin Kashem Khan, Prof Dr Robiul Hossain, Journalist Mesbahuddin Zangi, former information secretary Didarul Anwar, social worker Kamrun Malek, Additional Secretary Mohammed Shahjahan, Joint Secretary Mesbahuddin Ahmed, Bangla Academy Director General Prof Syed Mohammad Shahed, Rangamati District Council Chairman Prof Dr Manik Lal Dewan, Chittagong Education Board Chairman Prof Muhammad Yusuf, Golam Hossain, the Dainik Purbakon, founder late Yusuf Chowdhury, Elite Paint Founder Chairman late Siraj Uddin Ahmed.



Mesbahuddin Zangi, publisher and member of advisory council of monthly Toitomboor, receives a crest from Mass Education and Cultural Affairs Adviser Rasheda K Chowdhury at a reception ceremony at Chittagong Club auditorium in the port city recently.

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Mark Sander from the University of East London's [UEL] School of Law will be delivering presentations, conducting interviews and making SPOT OFFERS for qualified students as outlined below:

DHAKA & CHITTAGONG: 19th - 21st May, 2008

DHAKA : Monday, 19 th May	DHAKA : Tuesday, 20 th May	CHITTAGONG: Wednesday, 21 st May
Time : 11.00am - 5.00pm	Time : 11.00am - 5.00pm	Time : 11.00am - 5.00pm
Venue : British Council 5 Fuller Road, Dhaka.	Venue : UEL Regional Office, Bangladesh	Venue : British Council 77/A East Nasirabad (behind Chittagong Shopping Complex) Chittagong

SPOT ADMISSIONS

For further details and to make appointments for interviews, please contact:

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