

Expand treatment facilities for kidney patients

Experts tell roundtable

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Raising awareness about kidney disease and expanding treatment facilities, especially kidney transplant, are vital to save lives of many patients, medical experts said at a roundtable yesterday.

There are about 1.8 crore kidney patients in the country and kidneys of 30,000 patients have already been damaged, they said, adding that the number of patients has doubled in the last ten years.

The Prothom Alo organised the roundtable titled 'Kidney disease and transplant: Bangladesh perspective' at its office in the city.

The experts suggested creating a fund immediately with donations from well-off people and organisations and introducing health insurance for all, as the treatment of kidney disease is too expensive.

Mentioning that there is an acute shortage of kidney donors in the country, the experts said it is time to collect kidneys from deceased donors, which is now a common practice in many countries.

Media has an important role to play in increasing awareness about the disease, they said.

President of Kidney Foundation Prof Dr Harun-Ur-Rashid said around 60

percent of people do not know that they are suffering from diabetes, high blood pressure or kidney diseases.

He said kidney disease remains silent for a long time and when the symptoms appear, 70-80 percent of the kidneys got damaged.

Dr Harun said that although the kidney transplant is expensive, it gives a new lease of life to the patient.

There are 43 dialysis centres and eight transplantation centres in the country where around 3,000 to 5,000 new patients can be treated, he said, adding that the remaining died without treatment.

The number of patients who underwent kidney transplant is 800. Of them, 500 patients have had surgeries in the country, Dr Harun said. Around 90-92 percent of patients live one year after transplant while 78-80 percent live five years and 52-55 percent live ten years after the surgery.

Every person after the age of 40 should have his or her kidneys checked at least once a year, he added.

Dr AKM Anwarul Islam, a professor of urology department at Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujib Medical University (BSMMU), said the media has a vital role to play in raising awareness about the disease, as it can be prevented if diagnosed at early stage.

Dr Habibur Rahman, assistant professor of nephrology department at BSMMU, said that despite shortage of manpower and inadequate facilities, the success rate for kidney transplant at Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujib Medical University Hospital (BSMMUH) is almost equal to that in other countries.

Mentioning that BSMMUH only takes Tk 1 lakh for kidney transplant, he said there is no need for kidney patients to go abroad for the treatment.

"We have many patients in the queue but our capacity is quite low," he said and called for increasing treatment facilities immediately.

Prof Rafiqul Alam, chairman of nephrology department of BSMMU, suggested framing a regulation for use of drugs to reduce drug-induced kidney diseases.

Dr Firoz Khan, director of Kidney and Urology Institute, said they do not take any fee for kidney transplant and there are many dedicated kidney surgeons in the institute.

Prof Jamanul Haque Bhuiyan, Dr Quazi Rafiqul Abedin, Popular Pharma Chief Executive Officer Dr Pinaki Bhattacharya, and Prothom Alo Editor Matiuur Rahman, Joint Editor Abdul Qayyum and its health page editor Iqbal Kabir also spoke.



Members of civil society form a human chain in front of the National Press Club in the city yesterday protesting June 27 hartal called by opposition BNP and demanding its withdrawal by June 10.

Judicial probe into Satkhira Rab incident demanded

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Ain o Salish Kendra (ASK) yesterday demanded a judicial investigation into the incident of confinement of Rapid Action Battalion (Rab) men in Satkhira.

Agitating villagers of Natuadanga in Sadar upazila of Satkhira confined a Rab team to a house for over five hours on Saturday for allegedly trying to implicate a local businessman in an illegal arms possession case.

In a statement, ASK expressed deep concern over the incident.

"Although Rab has taken initiatives to launch a departmental investigation, we fear that the probe won't be impartial if one of the parties involved conducts the investigation," the statement said.

"For the past few days, we are observing that questions are being raised about the impartiality of Rab. Even the police have raised questions about the investigation by Rab into the killing of Sub-Inspector Gautam Roy," ASK said.

Since the establishment of Rab in 2004, questions have been raised about its activities like 'crossfire', 'encounter', and 'shoot in self-defence', the statement added.

'Engage youths in productive activities'

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Speakers at a meeting yesterday emphasised engaging youths in productive activities to ensure the country's peace, security and progress.

They were speaking at the inaugural ceremony of the two-day regional mid-term review meeting of commonwealth youth programme held at a city hotel.

Apart from the host Bangladesh, government officials from the ministries concerned of Brunei, India, Malaysia, the Maldives, Pakistan, Sri Lanka and Singapore took part in the meeting.

They exchanged views of their respective countries on different initiatives to increase the employment of the countries' youths.

They will prepare a set of recommendations to develop the sector at the concluding day of the ceremony.

Mahinda Aluthgamage, deputy minister for youth affairs of Sri Lanka, as a special guest said his country is considering involving the youth in the development process.

Hundreds of youths in Sri Lanka earlier demonstrated demanding employment which is a major concern of the government.

Speaking as the chief guest, Ahad Ali Sarkar, state minister for youth and sports, said the ministry is providing trainings on computer, internet, website hosting and other technical training through the ICT van to empower the youths in remote areas across the country.

He also said the government is trying to reduce the unemployment to less than 15 percent of total population.

Fatiha Serour, director of youth affairs division at the Commonwealth Secretariat, said the target to achieve the Millennium Development Goals would not be possible without involving the youths in the productive activities.

The United Nations declared July 2010 to July 2011 as an International Youth Year.

So, the commonwealth youth programme is also celebrating the year, Fatiha said.

AL Advisory Council meets today

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Advisory Council of the ruling Awami League (AL) will hold its first meeting today after eight months of its formation on July 30 last year.

Prime Minister Hasina and AL President Sheikh Hasina will preside over the meeting at her official residence Gono Bhaban at 7:00pm.

Hasina nominated party stalwarts Amir Hossain Amu, Abdur Razzak, Tofail Ahmed, Suranjit Sengupta and Abdul Jalil among 20 advisory council members.

She, however, is yet to nominate 21 other members in the 41-member Advisory Council that works as the think-tank of the party as per the AL constitution.

The council gives the party advice and directions on various issues and conduct research, evaluation and observational works on the political, economic or social issues. It also provides information, data and statistics from time to time to help make party speech, issue statements and comments and publish publications.

Appeal for help

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Manikganj

Farhana Jubaidi Selina, mother of a five-year-old boy, has long been suffering from breast cancer.

Selina, 38, who worked at computer, NFP and research department of Brac from 1997 to 2000, underwent treatment at Cancer Centre Welfare Home and Research Institute in Kolkata and at Ahsania Mission Cancer and General Hospital.

Her doctors advised her to go to Madras or Singapore for better treatment, which involves around Tk 50 lakh, but it is not possible for her family to afford such an expensive treatment.

Her husband Zahidul Islam Jewel, a small businessman, has already sold out all their properties to continue her treatment.

Her family even could not afford chemotherapy and radiotherapy treatment for Selina for the last two years. She is now fighting for life in her father's house at Bewtha Road in Manikganj.

Selina has appealed to generous people to extend a helping hand to save her life. Contributions can be sent to Zahidul Islam Jewel, Savings Account No. 002168576, Sonali Bank Limited, Manikganj Branch. For details, please call on 01720-940169.



Discussants at a roundtable on 'Kidney disease and transplant' organised by the Prothom Alo at its office in the city yesterday.

Aila crisis left to deepen

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not be repaired include Shora-9 and Chakbara in Gabura of Shyamnagar, Char Number Koira, Pabna and Dakshin Bedkashi in Koira and Nalian in Dakope. Embankments in Jaliakhali in Dakope and Gainbari in Koira got destroyed after repairing, locals say.

The WDB in a press release yesterday said of the 47 polders in Khulna, Satkhira and Bagerhat, 41 were freed of saline water. Polder is a low-lying tract of land enclosed by embankments that forms an artificial hydrological entity, meaning it has no connection with outside water other than through manually-operated devices.

Repair work also did not last, as contractors did not follow WDB-set design, locals say. However, WDB officials are constructing around the damaged embankments to protect the localities.

With sluggish nature of WDB work, the government in mid-March called army to accelerate repairing of the breaches.

WDB Superintendent Engineer in Khulna Giasuddin Ahmed, however, said it was late in inviting tenders because initially the government waited for foreign funding in vain.

"Therefore, we finally invited tenders with government funding," he told The Daily Star yesterday.

PAST NEGLIGENCE

The embankments were constructed in the 1960s and '70s to save the localities and arable land from saline river water. However, with the shrimp cultivation booming in the late eighties, shrimp farmers created holes and installed sluice gates in the embankments to pump salt waters into the hatcheries that weakened the embankments ultimately allowing large collapse during the catastrophe.

NOT DECLARING EMERGENCY ABLUNDER

"The government didn't declare emergency in Aila-hit areas though it had more devastating effects than cyclone Sidr," said Ashke-el-Elahi, member secretary of Aila-affected Embankment Construction People's Movement Committee.

If emergency was declared, the government efforts would have been to anyhow manage

repairing of the embankments, Elahi observed.

However, the local government has started repairing the dams with the help of the people.

"Thirty-kilometre embankments in six most affected unions were repaired in a month," he said, adding, people repaired embankments under Food for Work, Vulnerable Group Feeding and 40-day Employment Generation Programme.

Because of monsoon larger points could not be repaired, he noted.

WDB INDIFFERENCE

When people were struggling to repair the embankments, WDB for the first time on July 10 revealed a plan to repair 210-kilometre embankment by November. It had no plan to build any ring dykes.

In September it cancelled the plan saying it was making a larger plan, which will be implemented by December, said Hasan Mehedi, member secretary of Aila-affected Solidarity Platform.

Disaster Management Minister Abdur Razzaque also visited the area in September and said the embankments would be repaired by December and Tk 71 crore had been allocated for it.

"But we noticed until early November WDB did not invite tenders. After our demonstration, WDB said under new plan it will repair 19 points of embankments and build 38 kilometres ring dykes," Mehedi said.

The WDB finally invited tenders in mid-November.

By this time the breaches on the embankments widened enormously. As a result, the July estimation made in the cost became invalid in November and no contractors submitted tenders until first week of December.

The WDB again invited tenders that drew limited response until late December. In that line WDB gave work orders on February 2 to complete building of the ring dykes by March 17 and embankments on 19 points by March 30.

"We doubted the implementation because by late January the river started rising," Mehedi said. Until February 12, no contractors started work.

The WDB even said it would cancel work orders if contractors

did not start working by February 28. However, it did not take any action against those who failed to comply with, said Elahi.

On March 2 when Food Minister Abdur Razzaque visited Khulna, WDB officials presented progress report of the work, which was not correct because contractors' report was presented without verification, alleged Mehedi.

The minister in a meeting at Khulna Circuit House also warned of action against WDB officials if the work could not be completed in time.

"By this time, contractors started leasing the work to sub-contractors, many of whom are leaders of the ruling party's student and youth wings," Mehedi said.

In some cases, a contractor leased works to 10 sub-contractors, he said, adding that consequently the work quality remained very poor. Base of the embankments, which is supposed to be 35 feet, was confined only to 53 feet, its width became six feet instead of eight feet, and height eight feet in place of 13.5 feet, he said.

As per WDB design, a certain portion of the embankments should have adequate sandbags, but in most cases this was not followed. Rather, sub-contractors used Gol leaves and straw, and used sandbags only at some visible points for eyewash, he said.

Both Mehedi and Elahi said some WDB officials and some local politicians benefited from the irregularities in repairing process. They also waited for monsoon because that is a good time to dodge work and make money, they said.

Giasuddin of WDB said there are "influential contractors". Besides, in the present public procurement rules, there is a rule that the contractors should be given 28 days before cancelling work orders if any irregularities or negligence are found.

Also, WDB did not find adequate strength of contractors to do the job, which they found risky, especially when water was rising in the rivers, he said. This rule needs to be changed so that, if necessary, WDB could cancel work orders promptly and do better work, he said.

MONITORING SYSTEM NGO Fed suggestions to Bureau soon

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

NGO Federation, an apex body of more than 500 NGOs, will give its opinion and suggestions regarding the proposed NGO monitoring mechanism to the NGO Affairs Bureau shortly for consideration before its implementation.

The Federation is now in the process of discussing the issue with its members to make suggestions, it said in a statement on Sunday.

"Effective monitoring of any programme or project is certainly welcome," it added.

To share with the stakeholders, the NGO Affairs Bureau has sent the proposed simplification of Foreign Donation or Contribution Forms (FD or FC Forms) and the monitoring mechanism to the Federation for comments.

Obituary

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

Mostafa Khatun, mother of BNP-backed mayoral candidate in Chittagong City Corporation (CCC) election M Manjur Alam, passed away due to old age complications at her North Kattoli residence in the port city yesterday at the age of 82.

Mostafa Khatun, wife of late Abdul Hakim, left behind her four sons, one daughter and a host of relatives and admirers to mourn her death.

She was laid to rest at her family graveyard at North Kattoli after namaz-e-janaza at Mostafa-Hakim Degree College ground after Zohr prayers.


Immediate past CCC mayor and Awami League-backed mayoral candidate ABM Mohiuddin Chowdhury, BNP Vice-chairman Abdullah AL Noman and many BNP and AL leaders attended the janaza.

Raushan Akhter

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Raushan Akhter, mother of senior reporter of Shaptahik 2000 Khandaker Tajuddin, passed away on Saturday at the age of 77, says a press release.

She left behind her husband Khondaker Daliluddin, eight sons and four daughters. She was buried at her family graveyard in Magura.



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Construction of Corporate Head Office Building Notice for Pre-qualification of Civil Contractors

Eastern Bank Limited authority intends to commence the construction of its Corporate Head Office Building at 100 Gulshan Avenue, Gulshan Model Town, Dhaka, on a chunk of 26,268 katha land. The proposed building shall have 14 storied superstructures above ground along with 4 basement floors for Parking and other services.

Applications are hereby invited from the reputed Bangladeshi construction companies/ Contractors for the Pre-qualification for the construction of Eastern Bank Limited Corporate Head Office Building Project.

Minimum Eligibility of the Bidders intend to apply for the Pre-qualification:

- i. Construction Firms having minimum 10 (ten) years working experience, who have successfully completed at least one (one) twelve storied/ commercial building (not apartment building) with minimum 2 (two) level basement for car park and with a minimum area of 500 Sq. Meter per floor including water supply, sanitation, plumbing, internal electrification works valuing minimum BD Taka 120.00 (hundred twenty) million under a single contract within last ten years under Government/ Semi-government Office/ Bank/ Insurance/ Corporate Houses/ NGO.
- ii. Average yearly Turnover of BD Taka 100.00 (one hundred) million from construction business in the last 3 years.

Interested Construction companies are requested to collect the Pre-qualification Documents from the Office of the Vice President, Engineering, EBL, Jiban Bima Bhaban, 10, Dilkusha C/A, Dhaka 1000, from 30 May 2010 to 14 June 2010 during office hours (10:00 AM to 5:00 PM) by providing the following instruments:

- a. Formal request for issuing Pre-qualification Documents in the company's letterhead along with non-refundable cash payment or pay order of Tk. 10,000/- (Taka ten thousand only) in favour of Eastern Bank Limited.
- b. Registration and track record of last 10 years in buildings construction and Documentary Evidences of the eligibility of the participating Bidder in reference to the Pre-qualification Requirements mentioned under i. to ii. in paragraph 3 above.

Pre-qualification, duly filled in prescribed format shall be received in the office of the Vice President, Engineering, EBL, at the address mentioned in paragraph 5, on all working days up to 15 June 2010.

The Bidders who have records of litigation, delaying the work due to increase in material price and also have record of injury, accidents including the death of workers or personnel at site due to inappropriate safety practice need not to apply for the pre-qualification.

The management of Eastern Bank Limited reserves the right to accept or reject any or all the applications without assigning any reason whatsoever.