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PROPER PICTORIAL WARNING ON PACKET

88pc tobacco products sold flouting law: study

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Majority of tobacco companies, mostly bidi and smokeless variety manufacturers, do not follow tobacco control act properly while providing pictorial health warning on packets, found a study.

Tobacco Control and Research Cell (TCRC) of Dhaka International University in association with Bangladesh Tamak Birodhi Jote, a coalition of anti-tobacco organisations, conducted the study through surveying 437 samples of tobacco products from December 2018 to March

In 2013, considering pictorial health warning [a set of gruesome images on the impacts of tobacco an effective tool to discourage tobacco usage, the government introduced such mechanism while amending the tobacco control act.

The warning has been made mandatory for all types of tobacco packaging since 2016 under some parameters like it should cover 50 percent of a packet, should be printed on both sides and the pictures have to be changed every three months.

However, TCRC study found that 88 percent of tobacco products are marketed without proper pictorial health warning as per Smoking and Tobacco Products Usage (Control) Act. The study also said majority

about dengue outbreak

of the companies provide such warnings, though in a neglectful manner.

None of the bidi packets follow the act properly while very few jorda and gul packets [one and four percent] are sold as per guideline. The study also said 41 percent cigarette packets have proper packaging.

TCRC collected samples such as cigarette, bidi, jorda and gul of different brands from eight districts including Naogaon, Faridpur and Bhola. The findings were unveiled at a press conference at Bangladesh Medical Association (BMA) auditorium in Dhaka yesterday.

"It is frustrating to find that only a few tobacco products are using pictorial warnings properly. Tobacco companies display the warning, but in a neglectful manner," said Farhana Zaman Liza, one of the lead researchers.

Citing the findings, she said though the percentage of providing such warning has been increasing gradually, the rate of following the act properly is decreasing.

Farhana, project officer of TCRC, identified poor quality and various types of packaging as major reasons behind bidi manufacturers flouting the law.

To ensure proper implementation of the act, the study suggested that the government SEE PAGE 4 COL 1



Jaywalking on the Kazi Nazrul Islam Avenue has resumed, as road dividers have been removed for construction of metro rail at the Farmgate intersection. Ignoring nearby footbridges, pedestrians are taking the riskier option. The photo was taken yesterday. PHOTO: SK ENAMUL HAQ

Obaidul Quader urges high-ups

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Awami League General Secretary Obaidul Quader yesterday urged the high-ups concerned of the government to not talk too much about the dengue outbreak.

"Instead of just talking, we will work. These are sensitive times; too much talking can bring bad results for the country," he said during a cleanliness campaign of Awami League to control dengue outbreak at the capital's Farmgate. Quader, also the road transport and bridges minister,

also urged countrymen to celebrate Eid with caution, and warned that a vested quarter is trying to create panic so that people do not visit their homes during the Eid vacation.

Quader said Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina has directed the authorities to make the country free of dengue. The government has taken it as a challenge.

Responding to BNP's claims that the government has failed to contain the outbreak, he said, "Some people who can't find anything to do are now calling for declaring the situation an epidemic or an emergency.

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Don't talk too much' Urban sprawl to blame

Say experts about mosquito menace

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Urban specialists yesterday blamed urbanisation, unplanned waste mismanagement, climate change and negligence of the authorities concerned behind this year's dengue outbreak. They said around 21,235 cases of dengue

had been reported in last seven months, and the number may continue to rise until proper initiatives are taken. They said this while speaking at a

dialogue on "Dengue, public health and our urban development plan" at Bangladesh Institute of Planners (BIP) in Dhaka. Dr Adil Mohammed Khan, general

secretary of BIP, said though the two city corporation mayors initiate plans for a healthy Dhaka, they do not give adequate effort for their proper implementation.

"Providing public health services and primary healthcare is a legitimate

responsibility of the city authorities as per Local Government (City Corporation) (Amended) Act- 2009," Dr Khan mentioned.

He said dengue outbreak has taken an alarming turn this year. In 2008, none out of 6,110 people infected with dengue died; but in 2018, 26 people died out of 10,148 dengue patients. This year, the death toll has already increased alarmingly, he added.

The BIP general secretary claimed this referring to a report of Directorate General of Health Services (DGHS).

He said almost 50 percent of world's population is leaving under dengue threat due to the current environmental disorder and Dhaka is the most vulnerable.

Ongoing mega projects, environmental mismanagement, unplanned buildings, poor healthcare in remote villages, lack of government surveillance on hospitals and SEE PAGE 4 COL 3

'Govt more dangerous than dengue'

Says Gayeshwar

UNB, Dhaka

BNP senior leader Gayeshwar Chandra Roy yesterday alleged that the current government "is more dangerous than dengue" as it has involvement with many incidents of killing, enforced disappearances and repression on women.

"The death toll in dengue is much lower than the number of people who've been killed, forcefully disappeared and number of women who have been repressed by

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Govt 'failed' to tackle dengue situation

Says GM Quader

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Jatiya Party Chairman GM Quader yesterday said the government has totally failed to tackle the outbreak of dengue, the mosquito-borne disease which has now spread across the country.

He said this while distributing relief goods among flood victims at Pachgachi College in Kurigram Sadar upazila.

Quader, who became the party chairman after the death of his brother and former president HM Ershad last month, said, "People of Dhaka are panicked. People are dying of dengue fever. It is the government's responsibility to protect the people, but the government has failed to ease out the panic."

About the ongoing flood in different parts of the country, Quader called upon the government to make a permanent list of flood-affected people to distribute relief materials among them every year.

"The relief items would be distributed among flood

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A part of this footpath on Kemal Ataturk Avenue in Banani has caved in a while back, yet it remains unnoticed by the authorities concerned. More bricks and slabs are coming apart day by day in other sections of the sidewalk as well. Delay in repair works would only make it more dangerous. The photo was taken recently.

Info minister to class at DU

DU CORRESPONDENT

Information Minister Dr Hasan Mahmud is set to begin his stint as a part-time teacher at Dhaka University (DU), starting today.

Mahmud, also an environmentalist, will conduct a course titled "Evolution and Earth's Biosphere" at DU's oceanography department, said an information ministry press release.

The minister obtained his graduate and

post-graduate degrees in chemistry from

Chittagong University in 1987 and 1989 respectively. He completed his master's on human ecology at Belgium Bridge University in Brussels, and another master's on

international politics at Université Libre de Bruxelles. Afterwards, he received his PhD from Limburg University of Belgium on

environmental chemistry. This is not Hasan Mahmud's first foray into teaching. He has also taught environmental science and Bangladesh studies at Jahangirnagar University, East West University and North South University.

HAJJ MANAGEMENT

teach oceanography Irregularities to be dealt with iron hand: president

UNB, Dhaka

President Abdul Hamid yesterday said negligence, irregularities and corruption in hajj management must be dealt with an iron hand.

"Over 95 percent hajj pilgrims travel to Saudi Arabia through hajj agencies. Past experiences show that many agencies don't live up to their promises of providing pilgrims with various facilities once they reach Makkah-Madina. As a result, the pilgrims have to face untold sufferings," he said.

The president was addressing a dinner event hosted for Hajj Ulema-Mashayekh team at the Darbar Hall of Bangabhaban in the evening.

Abdul Hamid said when hajj pilgrims face any problem in Saudi Arabia, the government has to intervene in the issue. "Such activities tarnish the country's image. Such fraudulence with pilgrims is not expected."

He, however, acknowledged huge contributions of private agencies in hajj management.

Mentioning that hajj management has so far been completed smoothly this year, president Hamid expressed hopes that other hajj activities will be done well too. He urged everyone concerned to remain alert in this regard.

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