

SEASONAL ROTAVIRUS, NIPAH VIRUS

Scientists urge good hygiene, proper nutrition

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Although there is no prediction for outbreak of the seasonal rotavirus, and Nipah virus infection, scientists yesterday urged people to maintain good hygiene and proper nutrition to tackle these.

The common concept is these viral diseases are cold-borne, but cold has no role except creating positive environment for such virus cultivation, scientists of Institute of Epidemiology, Disease Control and Research (IEDCR) said at a discussion with journalists at its office in Dhaka.

They stressed on maintaining preventive measures like regularly washing hands -- especially after sneezing and using toilet, ensuring proper nutrition, and not drinking raw date juice.

"We hope there would be no outbreak of rotavirus [and Nipah] this year. However, there is seasonal risk. So, awareness is important in this case," said Prof Meerjady Sabrina Flora, director of IEDCR, while talking to journalists.

At the programme, Dr ASM Alamgir, principal scientific officer of IEDCR, gave a presentation on the common scenario of infectious diseases during winter in the country.

Besides, Dr Manjur Hossain Khan, assistant professor of virology at IEDCR, and Dr Sharmin Sultana, senior scientific officer at the institute, presented two research papers on rotavirus and Nipah virus respectively.

They said there is no probability of rotavirus-induced diarrhoea and life-threatening Nipah virus infection.

During winter, 30-50 percent adults and 60-80 percent children suffer from common cold caused by over 200 types of virus. These viruses usually spread through sneezing and coughing.

IEDCR also warned doctors and people not to use antibiotics for common cold, as antibiotics are not effective in these cases. About rotavirus, Prof Manjur said, "Rotavirus-related diarrhoea outbreak stays at peak from November to February in the country because of low temperatures. This virus is risky, especially for children aged between six and 24 months. Maintaining hygiene is the key to staying safe."

The virus is responsible for 24 percent of hospital admissions for diarrhoea in children aged between three and 24 months, he mentioned in his presentation.

About Nipah virus, Dr Sharmin Sultana

5 ARAB COUNTRIES

Petition seeks ban on sending female workers

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A writ petition has been filed with the High Court, seeking its directive on the authorities concerned for not sending female workers to five Middle Eastern countries without ensuring their legal rights and protection.

The five countries are Saudi Arabia, Jordan, Iraq, Lebanon and Syria.

Razia Khatun, a resident of Cox's Bazar, whose son became a victim of human trafficking, recently submitted the petition to the HC.

The petition also sought its order on the government to form a tribunal under the Prevention and Suppression of Human Trafficking Act, 2012 in order to penalise traffickers.

Writ petitioner's lawyer Advocate Zaman Akhter Bulbul told The Daily Star that there is a law in

WORLD TOILET DAY 2019

53 public toilets for a city of 2 crore people



PHOTO: PRABIR DAS

Ensuring clean and accessible sanitation is a core part of Sustainable Development Goals.

MD FOISAL AHMED

Just a few years ago, clean public toilets with modern facilities were a pipe dream in Dhaka. The few toilets located across the capital were dingy stalls with no facility to wash hands, let alone special arrangements for women and persons with disability.

However, ensuring clean and accessible sanitation is a core part of Sustainable Development Goal-6. Today is World Toilet Day, initiated to inspire action to tackle the global sanitation crisis and reach SDG-6 by 2030.

The sanitation situation in Dhaka has improved since 2014, after city authorities set up the first "Good Public Toilet" or GPT (with sink, mirror, waste bin, etc) at Gabtoli Bus Terminal with assistance from the Bangladesh chapter of WaterAid.

Since then, the two city corporations have built 53 GPTs -- 28 in south and 25 in north Dhaka. But the initiative brought little respite to this city of two crore.

Anannya Rahman, a social worker, said, "Hygienic environment inside a toilet is a

necessity -- particularly for women and children. The city corporation has built women-friendly toilets but they are very few in number. Women often have to go long hours without using toilet when outside."

Theatre artist Rimu Siddique said she hardly drinks water when she is not home, as she fears that she may not find a clean, accessible toilet.

"Drinking less water can cause kidney complications. Holding urine for a long time is one of the key causes of urinary tract infection and women are more prone to it," said Dr Tuhin Binte Halim of Railway General Hospital.

According to a recent survey by Bhumijo, a social enterprise working on urban sanitation, 80 percent of women in Dhaka avoid drinking water before leaving home.

Abolishing the practice of open defecation is a key focus of SDG-6, where a provision stresses "paying special attention to the needs of women and girls and those in vulnerable situations."

Given the current situation, it seems that the country is not

on track towards reaching this particular SDG, opines Ziaur Rahman, a senior project officer at Work for a Better Bangladesh Trust.

"For a population of two crore, 53 public toilets are not enough. Slum dwellers are using unhygienic toilets and children are still often defecating in open spaces, thus contaminating water and soil," he told The Daily Star.

Women need to use the toilet at least four times a day, he said citing a research by his organisation.

"One has to pay Tk 5-10 for using public toilets. For an insolvent woman, it is difficult to pay every time she uses the toilet. Moreover, women cannot use overcrowded toilets frequented by men."

Raju Basak, project manager at WaterAid, said, "City corporations have built toilets suitable for women and persons with disability. But there should be more."

Dr Tariq Bin Yousuf, chief urban planner at Dhaka North City Corporation, said, "We have the plan and budget to build more public toilets but there is scarcity of land. We are trying our best to resolve this issue."

NOT GIVING CERTIFIED COPY OF ORDER

HC summons Executive Magistrate Sarwoer Alam

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The High Court yesterday summoned Executive Magistrate Sarwoer Alam to appear before it on December 1 for not giving the certified copy of an order -- of a mobile court he had conducted -- to a convict in the last four months.

A mobile court of Rapid Action Battalion, led by Sarwoer Alam, sentenced Md Mizan Miah -- manager of a cattle feed producing factory named Topu Enterprise at Siddhirganj in Narayanganj -- to one year's imprisonment under the Fish Feed and Animal Feed Act 2010 on July 18 this year.

Mizan Miah, who was sent to jail the same day, applied to the office of Narayanganj District Magistrate on July 21 and October 15 for the certified copy of the mobile court's conviction order so that he can appeal to the higher authorities concerned against the conviction and sentence, but he was not given the copy.

Yesterday, the HC also issued a rule asking Sarwoer Alam and other officials concerned to explain in seven days why their inaction to provide the certified copy to Mizan Miah should not be declared illegal and why

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'Not possible to be with Oli Ahmed any more'

Faction of LDP leaders announce new committee

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A faction of Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) leaders yesterday announced a seven-member coordination committee, dropping its President Oli Ahmed.

Party's former Joint Secretary General Shahdat Hossain Selim made the announcement at a press conference at Jatiya Press Club.

Former whip of parliament and LDP presidium member Abdul Karim Abbasi has been made president of the new committee while Selim is its member secretary.

"It's not possible to be involved with Oli Ahmed in politics any more. That's why we have formed a seven-member coordination committee led by Abdul Karim Abbasi. I've been made its member secretary," said Selim.

He said the coordination committee will decide on the next course of action through discussions with party leaders and activists.

On October 9, Oli Ahmed formed a 203-member new committee of LDP, dropping Abbasi and Selim.

Abbasi was the presidium member while Selim joint secretary general in the party's previous committee.

Selim said Oli Ahmed formed Jatiya Muktimoncho just to create confusion over the release of BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia.

"We want to strengthen the nationalist force and for that there is no necessity of Muktimoncho," he said.

He also said that he regrets forming LDP after leaving BNP.

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'Kidney care at low cost'

Gonoshasthaya, Renal Assoc to hold int'l seminar

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Considering the risk factor of kidney-related diseases and to increase capacity for providing proper treatment to patients, a two-day conference on nephrology will be held in the capital.

The international seminar will be held on November 29-30, with the theme -- "Quality renal care at an affordable cost".

Prof Brig Gen (retd) Mamun Mostafi, chairman of the conference organising committee, made the announcement at a press conference at Gonoshasthaya Nagar Hospital yesterday.

They are holding the seminar to introduce modern treatment facilities at an affordable cost to people from all walks of life, he said.

Prof Mostafi said over 300 participants including kidney experts from home and abroad will take part in the event. Gonoshasthaya hospital and Bangladesh Renal Association will arrange the conference, the first of its kind.

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AVIJIT MURDER CASE

2 witnesses testify

JNU CORRESPONDENT

Prosecution witness Mohammad Salim yesterday told a Dhaka court that he saw two injured people lying on the ground while on his way to Teacher-Student Centre (TSC) of Dhaka University on February 26, 2015.

Salim, who sells water at the gate area of Shabbagh Police Station, said he saw that the fingers of one injured had been cut off.

Another prosecution witness Md Nurul Islam, a constable of police, told the court that a police team led by Sub-inspector Subrata Halder identified the corpse of Avijit Roy with the help of his [Avijit] relatives in the morgue of Dhaka Medical College on February 27, 2015.

Then Subrata made an inquest report and handed over Avijit's dead body to his relatives, he said.

Judge Md Majibur Rahman of the Anti-Terrorism Special Tribunal of Dhaka recorded the duo's statements in the writer-blogger Avijit Roy murder case.

Four accused -- Mozammel Hossain Siam, Abu Siddiq Sohel, Arafat Rahman Siam and Shafur Rahman Farabi -- were produced before the tribunal during yesterday's hearing.

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Nowfel smells a rat

Deputy minister says parent involved with BNP instigating Buet students

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Deputy Education Minister Mohibul Hassan Chowdhury Nowfel yesterday alleged that a parent, involved with pro-BNP lawyers' association or BNP politics, was instigating Buet students to continue their protests.

"I don't want to name names. But we have specific information that the parent involved with Jatiyatabadi Ainjibi Forum or BNP politics is giving direction to his offspring [a student of Buet] so that the protests can continue," he said.

The deputy minister was speaking at a press conference on the overall situation of Buet at International Mother Language Institute in the capital.

"A parent is encouraging and instigating his child. What kind of guardianship is this?" he said, warning that they will arrest the parent in due time.

Nowfel said a heinous murder took place in Buet and law enforcement agencies took all-out measures following the directives of Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina.

He questioned the rationale of the protests when the accused in the case were arrested and a charge sheet was submitted. "What kind of anarchy is this? ...By raising demands to expel them [accused]?" he asked.

Abrar Fahad, a second-year student of Electrical and Electronic Engineering department, was beaten to death by a group of Chhatra League men at Buet's Sher-e-Bangla Hall between the night of October 6 and early hours of October 7.

The incident triggered a firestorm of protests on campuses across the country. Many took to social media to demand justice for Abrar.

Police have arrested 21 accused so far.

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