

Focus on confidence building: experts

Urge govt to finalise emergency plan for coronavirus outbreak

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Although the government is working to prevent the novel coronavirus in the country, their approach is lacking in case the virus turns into a pandemic, speakers at a discussion said yesterday.

Urging the government to plan for the future with equal focus on both urban and rural areas, they also stressed intensive crisis communication to grow people's trust and awareness.

"The government's preparation is definitely not negligible, but the question is whether they followed the right approach," said Prof Muzaherul Huq, founder of Public Health Foundation of Bangladesh, in the discussion arranged by Doctors for Health and Environment at Jatiya Press Club in Dhaka.

Pointing to different measures like home care and cyclical special teams for clinical care during emergency, this former South East Asia Advisor of World Health Organization (WHO) said, "There is a need for advanced preparation for emergency. The [government's] plan is in very early stage. The work should be made speedy."

Sources said staffers of the Directorate General of Health Services (DGHS) are currently preparing the emergency action plan.

"The problem is the government wants to do everything alone," he said, raising question why coronavirus test facility is only Institute of Epidemiology Disease Control and Research (IEDCR) centric.

Currently, IEDCR is the lone organisation that has the facility and authority to test suspected coronavirus cases in the country.

Prof Dr Sania Tahmina, additional director of DGHS, SEE PAGE 4 COL 5

We are suffering from unawareness and over-awareness... the government should work on building confidence among people.

Dr Rashid-E-Mahbub

DNCC ANTI-MOSQUITO DRIVES

Special measures for risk-prone wards



A worker of Dhaka North City Corporation sprays insecticide at an abandoned car park in Mirpur. DNCC yesterday inaugurated an initiative to take special anti-mosquito measures in five risk-prone wards. PHOTO: COLLECTED

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

In light of a recent survey, Dhaka North City Corporation (DNCC) will be taking special measures at certain wards under the corporation which are at greater risk of mosquito proliferation.

DNCC's health officer yesterday inaugurated the initiative in Mirpur's Paikpara under ward-12.

According to DNCC officials, a recently published survey of Directorate General of Health

Services (DGHS) shows that several wards under both city corporations are at risk of mosquito proliferation. Of them, DNCC has five risk-prone wards: 1, 12, 16, 20 and 31.

Considering the survey, DNCC will ramp up their monitoring and anti-mosquito drives in these five wards to keep the number of mosquitoes in check round the year.

"Our men use hand-sprays and fogging machines in two shifts -- in the morning and evening. With this initiative, they'll search

for mosquitoes and their breeding grounds and will work to raise awareness among people outside the two shifts," said Ward-12 Councillor Md Iqbal Hossain Titu.

While inaugurating the initiative at 11am, DNCC Health Officer Brig Gen Mominur Rahman Mamun said, "Keep your buildings and adjacent areas clean. City corporation's vehicles will collect your waste, so please don't throw them here and there. Also, don't let water in small

SEE PAGE 4 COL 2

'Women, rivers not safe in country'

Speakers call for national unity against violence, injustice

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Speakers at a discussion yesterday said a national unity is required to fight against aggression in different tiers of the society including that in the economic sector.

The discussion was held as part of the first convention of "National Committee against Fascism and Imperialism" at Gonoshasthaya Kendra in the capital.

Addressing the event, the committee Chairman Badruddin Umar said the industry sector is an important component for the country's development but it is heavily dependent on foreign investment.

He alleged that the present government has turned into a "fascist one" and the ruling party men have indulged in theft and looting, which is barring the country's development.

Inaugurating the convention, Selina Akhter, mother of martyred physician Shamsul Alam Khan Milon, said, "Women and rivers are not safe in the country."

She said incidents of rape and violence against women have reached an alarming stage at present.

Leftist politician Mubinal Haider Chowdhury said now youths have become demoralised and alleged that the authorities are "helping" young people earn money in an unethical way.


Saiful Haque, general secretary of Revolutionary Workers Party of Bangladesh, alleged that the ruling Awami League has taken a stand to snatch away people's voting rights.

Condemning the ongoing spate of clashes in the Indian capital New Delhi, Saiful said they will protest if Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi attend Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman's birth centenary celebration programmes in Dhaka.

Jatiya Gono Front leader Tipu Biswas urged countrymen to be united and wage a movement, saying incidents of disappearance, killing and violence against small ethnic groups have increased alarmingly.

Prof Akmal Hossain, convener of the convention preparation committee, also spoke at the discussion.

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