

'Global warming pose risk of cholera outbreak in Bangladesh'

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Speakers talk on climate change in Bangladesh on Monday, January 8, 2018; at the inaugural day of the 4th Annual Gobeshona Conference for Research on Climate Change in Bangladesh, organized by International Centre for Climate Change and Development at the Independent University in Dhaka Mahmud Hossain Opu/Dhaka Tribune

Global warming caused by climate change might influence the transmission dynamic of cholera.

The challenge of a possible cholera outbreak is facing Bangladesh as the climate-induced warming of the earth induces the growth for algae and bacteria, experts have observed.

The temperature rise in Bangladesh will make possible the growth for various algae and bacteria, leading to more cholera cases in the country, said Dr Md Sirajul Islam, emeritus scientist of International Centre for Diarrhoeal Disease Research, Bangladesh (ICDDR,B) at an international conference in Dhaka yesterday.

Global warming caused by climate change might influence the transmission dynamic of cholera, he added.

The environmental microbiologist came up with the observation during his presentation on water treatment as an adaptation option to climate change-induced waterborne diseases. It was part of a session, titled "Health and Migration," of the inaugural day of the 4th Annual Gobeshona Conference for Research on Climate Change in Bangladesh (Gobeshona 4), organised by the International Centre for Climate Change and Development (ICCCAD).

The four-day conference is being held at Independent University, Bangladesh (IUB).

Another presentation by Mohammad Mahbubur Rahman, a fellow of Gobeshona Young Researchers Program-2017, noted that growth in the urban population caused by internal migration can cause further issues such as increased contamination of water.

Earlier, during the inaugural session, Executive Director of Bangladesh Centre for Advanced Studies (BCAS) Dr Atiq Rahman emphasized taking up quality research on climate science for higher adaptability to the threats of global warming.

"Ten years ago, nobody believed solar energy would be possible, but the solar industry in Bangladesh has since gone to become one of the biggest in the world. It's necessary to connect climate science researchers to the policymakers and recognise that the private sector also plays an important role. But their focus is split between people, planet and profit," Atiq observed.

Vice-chancellor of IUB, Dr M Omar Rahman said that research required for innovative solutions to complex problems.

“Developing countries face a problem of not having a culture of research and lacking the infrastructure of research. Often thought the way we teach young researchers is quite archaic,” said Dr M Omar Rahman.

The inaugural session’s keynote speaker, Institute for Research into Superdiversity (IRIS) Research Fellow Dr Alice Baillat Elsa Helene, said that Bangladesh, on the one hand, is depicted as one of the most vulnerable countries to climate change, and, on the other hand, as one of the champions of adaptations.

Terming Bangladesh as “Weak Power Climate Leader,” Dr Alice Baillat Elsa Helene said, “The concept of weak power pushes us to change our perception of vulnerable countries that are far from being only victims, but also active players of the fight against climate change.”

“Bangladesh has been the first least developed country to frame a comprehensive climate change strategy and action plan, national climate fund in 2009,” she said, adding that vulnerability has been a fertile ground for innovation and experimentation where Bangladesh has acquired a “first mover advantage” in being the first to develop adaptation and disaster risk reduction policies.

In the opening speech of the inauguration programme, Director of ICCCAD, Dr Saleemul Huq, introduced Gobeshona as a knowledge-based platform, and explained how it brings together scientists, researchers and policymakers.

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