

Physicians sell time at high prices: activists

People-oriented healthcare system demanded

Staff Correspondent

HEALTH experts and activists on Thursday urged the government to develop a people oriented healthcare system for building a healthy nation.

They said a healthy nation will also ensure better productivity to benefit the economy.

Addressing the conference as the chair, Policy Research for Development Alternative managing director Farhad Mazhar pointed out that ethics practised by medical healthcare providers were decaying fast and that the physicians, like other businessmen, were selling their time at a very high price.

The experts demanded for people oriented healthcare system at the inaugural session of health rights conference 2016, organised by Sasthya Andolon, a network of NGOs and civic organisations, at AKM Gias Uddin Milki Auditorium at Khamarbari in the capital.

The conference aimed at discussing the type of existing healthcare for the common people, understanding its status and reviewing the policy initiatives.

It was attended by physicians, health workers, green activists, women development activists and labour representatives from across 15 districts of the country.

Addressing the conference as the chief guest, Ganasasthya Kendra founder Zafrullah Chowdhury emphasised on the need for reforming the health education sector completely to make it people oriented.

He said prime minister Sheikh Hasina had pledged to expand the time of the interns to two years from the existing one year, but nothing followed that vow.

He urged the PM to implement her pledge and to send interns to rural areas, at the union level and let them stay there for at least six months.

'This is how they themselves would then discover the spirit of the Liberation War, required nutrition level of the common people, adequate nutritious food by spending less money, class divisions in the society and learn patriotism,' he said.

He urged the government to ensure that the physicians are paying attention to the patients ade-

quately while hearing their problems.

Zafrullah also stressed the need for introducing general practitioner system in the rural areas to reduce pressure on the secondary and tertiary level hospitals as the hospitals would then get only the referral patients.

Farhad Mazhar, also a writer, columnist, poet, and human rights activist, said the specialised hospitals focuses on treating the diseases that are more profitable to the physicians, clinics and hospital owners.

Farhad said there is no initiative to ensure primary healthcare in the country.

Citing that there is a close relation between agriculture, health and nutrition, he said the agricultural policy and technology used in the country's farm sector were threat for public health.

He stressed the need for reducing use of chemical fertilizers, pesticides and other harmful chemicals to ensure better health of the citizens.

Writer Syed Abul Maksud and Sasthya Andolon joint convener Farida Akhter also spoke.