

Staff Reporter

Health Ministers from 11 countries of Southeast Asia Region will meet here on September 9-12 to discuss key health issues facing by the region.

The 32nd meeting of Health Ministers of the region will begin on September 9, according to a WHO SEARO press release issued from its New Delhi office on Monday.

Millions of people in the Southeast Asia Region are at risk from dengue, malaria, lymphatic filariasis and kala-azar. Most of these diseases are either preventable or curable, and the ministers will look at a more comprehensive and inter-sectoral approach for their prevention, control and elimination.

The Health Ministers' Meeting is a forum for exchange of views and for discussion on health issues important to the region. It fosters cooperation among member states and helps forge bilateral and multi-country cooperation in the field of health.

Bangladesh Health Minister Mohammed Nasim will host the event, where discussions will be held on finding ways to address vector-borne diseases. It is expected to adopt the 'Dhaka Declaration' on this issue.

Globally, one billion people are estimated to be infected from vector-borne diseases, and over a million die from them each year.

This meeting will be followed by the 67th session of WHO Regional Committee for South-East Asia. The Regional Committee is a statutory body comprising the member states of the region, which convenes once a year to review progress and regional implications of the World Health Assembly resolutions.

Dr Margaret Chan, WHO Director-General, and Dr Poonam Khetrapal Singh, Regional Director for South-East Asia, will be present with WHO experts at both the meetings.