Mosquito menace likely to be back

*Time to learn from mistakes made last year and take steps to take preventive measures early on this year, including a community driven approach*

**New Delhi, 25 April, 2017**: According to statistics, the mosquito container index (the percentage of water-holding containers infested with larvae or pupae) in Delhi is over 5% and had crossed 40% last year. Any index above 5% requires a community integrated cluster approach to reduce mosquito density together with effective anti-larval measures. Cases of dengue and chikungunya have started in the capital already. Unfortunately, no alert has been issued and in sporadic cases, no surgical strikes have been attempted openly in selected breeding places.

It is a fact that we have collectively failed last year in controlling the mosquito menace and consequently, the mosquito menace is back this year. Speaking on the issue, **Padma Shri Awardee Dr K K Aggarwal, National President Indian Medical Association (IMA) and President Heart Care Foundation of India (HCFI) and Dr RN Tandon – Honorary Secretary General IMA in a joint statement**, said "There is a need for a paradigm shift in our thinking. We need to over report and act in time. There is no point acting when the cases have started. However, even this year, cases have started without alerts and involvement of private sector. This is again a collective failure of Municipal Corporation, Delhi Government, Central Government, LG office, Medical Associations, CSR departments, Media, NGOs, and private sector. It’s time for all of us to convert last year's biggest failure of controlling the mosquito menace into success this year."

Another point to consider is that last year, about 3 lakh mosquito repellent impregnated mosquito nets were distributed by MCD but most were not available to actual patients. The very purpose of notification is lost if the disease is not notified within hours of even suspecting a diagnosis of Chikungunya. Therefore, all suspected cases must be reported without waiting to confirm the diagnosis.

**Adding further, Dr K K Aggarwal, said**, "This problem requires a community approach involving 100% of the society speaking about dengue. Every premise must write that their premises are mosquito-free. When you are invited to somebody’s place, you should ask 'I hope your premises are
mosquito-free’ and when you invite somebody, write 'Welcome to my house and it is mosquito-free. One should be alert every day. It should be a part of your routine. You do not clean your premises once a week. Make it a habit to look for the breeding places.'

The outdoor Aedes mosquito cannot be ignored. The entire campaign up till now has been focused on a day biter, wearing long sleeves shirt and pants during the day, and using night mosquito nets. However, precautions need to be taken throughout the day as the mosquitoes only recognize the light and not whether it is day or night. The fact that the mosquitoes only breed in clear water also needs to be re-learnt. It is true that disease spreading mosquitoes do not make noise but the ‘noise-producing’ nuisance mosquitoes unless addressed will not create a public movement.

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About IMA: Indian Medical Association is the only representative, national voluntary organization of Doctors of Modern Scientific System of Medicine, which looks after the interest of doctors as well as the well being of the community at large. It has its Headquarter in Delhi and State / Terr. Branches in 30 States and Union Territories. It has over 2, 60,000 doctors as its members through more than 1765 active local branches spread across the country.

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