

ANTI-MOSQUITO DRIVE DNCC fines house owners Tk 1.55 lakh

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Dhaka North City Corporation (DNCC) yesterday found Aedes larvae in 91 houses and establishments during the first day of the 10-day "combing operation" to destroy breeding grounds of mosquitoes.

The operation began in all the 54 wards under the city corporation simultaneously to protect city dwellers from the menace.

The DNCC team visited at least 12,619 houses and establishments during the drive and found Aedes mosquito larvae, carrier of dengue and chikungunya, in 131 of those, said an official of DNCC.

Stagnant water and breeding ground of the mosquito were found at 8,764 establishments including houses and under construction buildings in the city area.

During the operation, DNCC mobile courts also fined owners of 12 houses Tk 1.55 lakh.

The drive will continue from 10am to 1pm every day except Friday, dividing a ward into ten sectors and

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THE OLD MAN AND THE MARSH... Every monsoon, low-lying land in Baishitla area on the outskirts of Sylhet city get inundated, and fish of all sizes swim into the freshwater from overflowing ponds. It is at this time of year that Ahmad Miya brings out his bamboo angling rods, puts bait on the hook, and sits motionless for hours by the waterbody, almost as if in meditation. The 75-year-old says this has been his annual routine without fail for 40-odd years, and even though there aren't nearly as many fish as there used to be, his habit remains unchanged.

PHOTO: SHEIKH NASIR

Drug traders rear head as movement restrictions ease

MOHAMMAD JAMIL KHAN

The pandemic is leaving an adverse impact on almost every sector, but when it comes to drug smuggling, Covid-19 has just been a reason to come up with newer, more innovative ideas and techniques.

During the government-induced shutdown, top dealers have reserved narcotics at bordering districts after smuggling those from neighbouring countries Myanmar and India.

At the time, they tried to send small consignments to different districts from the border areas using emergency product carrying service.

Since the shutdown has been relaxed, the smugglers are becoming more and more active, according to law enforcers and sources among narcotics dealers.

In April, when the shutdown was in full force and movement was heavily restricted, only 81 cases were filed on narcotics charge and 88 people got arrested across the country, shows a database of the Department of Narcotics Control (DNC).

But when the shutdown was relaxed during Eid in May, around 480 cases were filed and 519 people were arrested by DNC.

Before the shutdown, around 1,677 cases were filed against 171 people in January, 1,767 cases filed against 1,840 people in February and 1,412 cases were filed against 1,468 people in March by the DNC, shows the database.

Data from police headquarters show, number of narcotics cases have started to increase in May after the shutdown relaxed. Around 7,625 narcotics cases were filed across the country in March.

However, only 1,640 narcotics-related cases were filed in April, while the figure increased to 2,465 for the month of May.

Khorshid Alam, assistant director of DNC, told The Daily Star that narcotics dealings had slowed down due to the heavy restriction on movement during April.

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Rigorous community engagement a must to fight Covid-19

Speakers tell discussion

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Speakers at an online dialogue yesterday stressed the need for rigorous involvement of local communities in fighting coronavirus spread across the country.

Bangladesh chapter of The Hunger Project, a global charitable organisation committed to sustainable end of world hunger, organised the virtual dialogue on "Coronavirus Resilient Villages: Interactions with Community Volunteers", said a press release.

Addressing the dialogue, noted public health expert Prof M Muzaherul Huq said, "Fighting coronavirus is not possible without the community's involvement."

He said works needed to be executed properly after involving communities in the containment initiatives.

Those who developed mild Covid-19 symptoms have to be isolated at home while those with moderate symptoms should be shifted to upazila health complexes, he added.

Referring to a method followed in India's Kerala, The Hunger Project Country Director Badiul Alam Majumdar said authorities there achieved success in fighting the virus and reasons for the success was local government's role and community involvement.

He said at the beginning of the coronavirus spread, "rapid responder" teams headed by elected members were formed at each ward under village panchayat, a form of local government system in India.

Health workers, volunteers and panchayat staffers were included in the teams. Broadly, the team members worked on three fronts-- communication, coordination and community involvement, he said.

As part of communication, they generated awareness among people about hand washing, health guidelines, use of face masks and necessity of social distancing, he added.

Badiul, also a noted good governance campaigner, said volunteers under The Hunger Project in Bangladesh were working on various grounds in fighting the pandemic involving local communities.

A two-wheeled blessing

Bicycle sales boom as many choose it to commute maintaining physical distancing

HELEMUL ALAM and SHAHEEN MOLLAH

Every day, Rubel Hossain, a staffer at Bangladesh Water Development Board, would get ready and keep on waiting for a bus to reach his Motijheel office from his Keraniganj residence. But the pandemic has changed his lifestyle, maybe for the better, as he started commuting on his bicycle for the last few weeks.

"Due to increased bus fare and lack of social distancing on public transport, I bought the bicycle to commute every day," he said. And his bike solved both these problems, as he now commutes for free, and that too while being away from people.

Rashidul Islam, a resident of Nawabpur's Taherbagh, who bought his bike for Tk 8,200 from Old Dhaka, said, "It takes only 30 minutes to reach Keraniganj's Jinjira from the capital's Nawabpur on the two-wheeler, which would take around two hours by bus or boat."

Since he started commuting like this, life has become easy and smooth, although there are risks of accidents as there is no dedicated cycling lane, he said.

It is not only Rubel and Rashidul, many Dhaka city residents have bought these trusty two-wheelers to make them their main mode of transport, as it is faster, saves money and allows riders to maintain social distancing.

With increased demand, bicycle sales have also gone up by 10-15 percent at the capital's Bongshal, the main retail hub for cycles in the country, said local traders.

Earlier, demand for children's bicycles was huge, but since the pandemic, large quantities of bicycles were sold to adults,

especially in May, they said.

But this craze has not only taken over the capital; across the country, demand has also increased.

Mosharraf Hossain, an NGO sales representative, recently purchased his bicycle for Tk 16,500 from Bongshal for commuting.

"I used bus and rickshaw for moving from place to place with my product samples, but now, I can travel on my bike, which will save me around Tk 250 every day," said Mosharraf, who goes to his Shahjadpur office from Hazaribagh and then to different areas.

Saiful Islam, owner of Kashfian Enterprise in Bogshal, said bicycles from Bangladesh, India and China are available there, but the Chinese ones are in high demand.

He said a huge number of residents purchased bicycles in May. Demand has slightly dropped in the capital but still good across the country.

Prices of Indian and Chinese bicycles have increased by around Tk 1,000, but prices of local ones did not change, he further said. The lowest priced bike was Tk 6,500, while the highest was Tk 25,000, he added.

According to traders at Bongshal and Kazi Alauddin Road, 70 percent of demand is fulfilled by imported bicycles, especially from India and China, and the rest by the local industry. There are around 200 bicycle shops (both wholesale and retail) in the two areas.

Joyrul Abedin, chief operating officer of RFL Bike Industry, which manufactures

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ANIMAL SACRIFICE FOR EID-UL-AZHA

Experts suggest following Saudi Arabian model

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Speakers at an online press conference yesterday urged authorities to arrange animal sacrifice during upcoming Eid-ul-Azha in the country under a system followed in Saudi Arabia, to avoid environmental and health hazards.

Recently, the country's health experts warned that slaughtering animals in open spaces during the festival may increase the risk of coronavirus infection. Islamic clerics have also urged a change in festival traditions to prevent further spread of the virus.

During yesterday's press conference, arranged jointly by Poribesh Bachao Andolon (Poba) and Sadaqah Foundation USA, Saudi Arabia-based researcher Shaikh Ismail Hossain Makki said each year over 12 lakh animals are sacrificed during Hajj, according to a press release.

"Some 16,000 employees work round-the-clock at government slaughterhouses to process animals, and that method could be followed in Bangladesh as well," he said.

In Mecca, devotees first ensure their purchase of sacrificial animal via a slip. Later, government authorities purchase the animal under its own management, then arranges the slaughter and distribution of meat, he said.

"That option is there if people want to see the process of sacrifice and wish to collect meat," he said.

If animal sacrifice in Bangladesh is arranged following this method, then it can benefit both devotees and the government, he added.

Poba Chairman Abu Naser Khan said people have to be sure that their sacrificial animals are not ill and harmful for public health.

Organisers urged the government to immediately finalise separate rules for animal slaughter management and municipality solid waste management under the environment ministry. They also urged to ensure everyone involved in meat processing during Eid-ul-Azha remains safe from infectious disease.

CU campus goes under lockdown for 14 days

Seven Covid-19 cases detected at university premises in 24hrs

UNB, Ctg

The authorities of Chittagong University (CU) have put the campus under 14-day lockdown to prevent the spread of coronavirus.

Confirming that matter yesterday, Registrar Prof SM Monirul Hasan said the decision was taken at an emergency meeting of the syndicate members with Vice Chancellor Prof Dr Shirin Akhter.

He said CU is under lockdown for 14 days from July 4-18 due to rapid transmission of coronavirus on the campus.

In the last 24 hours, seven coronavirus cases have been detected on the campus, according to sources.

During the lockdown period, all emergency administrative activities of the university will be conducted from the office of the Institute of Fine Arts, situated off-campus in Chattogram city.

WATERWAYS ACCIDENTS

153 killed, 84 injured in six months

Say two organisatins

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

At least 153 people were killed and 84 other injured in 106 waterways' accidents in the last six months, two non-government organisations said.

Besides, 22 people went missing in those accidents between January and June, according to National Committee to Protect Shipping, Roads & Railways (NCPSSRR) and Green Club of Bangladesh.

The number of such accidents has increased compared to the same period last year, when 71 people were killed in 76 accidents, it said.

The organisation prepared the report on the basis of news in 24 national and 10 regional dailies and nine online news portals, said a press release.

Of the six months this year, the highest 59 people were killed in 26 accidents in June.

At least 34 people died after the Mayur-2 launch hit and sank a relatively smaller launch Morning Bird in Buriganga on June 29.

Ashis Kumar Dey, general secretary of NCPSSRR, said although the number of launch accidents has reduced lately, but accidents of trawlers and other small-size vessels are going on.

The main reason behind it is lack of proper monitoring, huge number of illegal vessels and unskilled masters and drivers, said the statement.



The capital's Mayor Annisul Huq Road has seemingly reverted to a truck stand. The late mayor had fought long and hard to rid the place, previously called Satrasta-Tejgaon Railgate Road, of illegal parking. Transport workers from Tejgaon Truck Terminal had heavily resisted the initiative, but in the end, Annisul persisted, and the road was named after him for his contributions. But his efforts might go in vain, as lack of monitoring is allowing trucks to occupy more than half the road again. This photo was taken recently.

PHOTO: PALASH KHAN

6 die with Covid-19 symptoms in Cumilla Medical College Hospital

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Cumilla

Six people have died with Covid-19 symptoms over the last twenty four hours in Cumilla.

All of the deceased were admitted to Cumilla Medical College Hospital (CuMCH) with shortness of breath, cold and fever, said hospital officials.

Dr Istiaque, assistant surgeon at the hospital, said, "Out of the six, three died in ICU while the others died in isolation facilities between 8am on Friday to 8am on Saturday."

Two of them were female. They were all between 50 and 75 years old."

The deceased are Lutfunnesa (62) from Gopalganj, Jamal Uddin (53) from Cumilla, Nazma Rahman (50) from Chandpur, Basudeb (72) from Chandpur, Abdul Khalek (60) from Cumilla, and Abdul Karim (75) from Cumilla. Lutfunnesa, Jamal, and Nazma died in ICU.

As of yesterday, there are 116 patients admitted at the Corona Unit of CuMCH. Of them, 34 have tested positive while the rest are suspected Covid-19 patients, according to hospital sources.

In the 24 hours between Friday 8am to Saturday 8am, 17 patients have been newly admitted while 11 were discharged, added Dr Istiaque.

With these six deaths, a total of 173 patients have died at the hospital since April.

The hospital has so far seen 869 admissions, of whom 583 patients were discharged after recovery.