

**DENGUE ALERT**

# Govt brushes aside epidemic claim

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Health Minister Dr Khandaker Mosharaf Hossain yesterday claimed that dengue did not turn epidemic.

The minister's statement made at a press briefing came as a contrast to the statement earlier this week by a senior consultant of the World Health Organisation (WHO).

The minister was highly critical of the role by the media in focusing on medical intervention rather than preventive measures.

"In 2000, we experienced the worst dengue outbreak with 5,555 people hospitalised and 93 deaths. Experts never termed it epidemic. Why should we call it epidemic when we have only about 3,000 people infected and 36 dead this year?"

The minister criticised the press for creating panic by 'overplaying the need for platelets for dengue treatment'.

Most attendants to patients rush to private and government blood centres for platelets, which, he said, was completely unnecessary.

"From July 1 to August 22 this year, 2,817 units of platelets have been supplied and 2,836 people hospitalised, with most suffering from classical dengue, not dengue haemorrhagic fever (DHF). So, platelet in the majority of the cases was needless," the minister explained.

The minister expressed satisfaction with the measures so far taken by the health directorate to deal with dengue.

However, he fell short of admitting that the directorate lacks adequate trained doctors and nurses to manage dengue cases for which a meeting with the Army Medical Corps was held.

Mayor Sadeque Hossain Khoka who also addressed the press

briefing at the PID conference room said the situation was under control and the Dhaka City Corporation (DCC) had adequate insecticides.

"The DCC is ready for battle...I'm determined to win it at any cost," the mayor vowed.

"This year, we have mobilised our maximum strength on the clean-

liness drive and we have allocated Tk 18 lakh for it. We have enough insecticide. We are now using Malathion, recommended by the WHO and registered in Bangladesh."

The mayor said, "We don't need

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PHOTO: STAR

Members of the army medical corps examine a child dengue patient at the city's Mohanagar General Hospital yesterday.

# Torture on Chhabi Rani Govt medical team sees no mark of injury

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Khulna

The Chhabi Rani Mondol episode has taken a new turn as the government-formed five-member medical team after thorough check-up and tests found no mark of injury in her body or any other symptom that may

risk her life.

Dr Israil Biswas who headed the team yesterday submitted its report to Khulna Medical College Principal Dr. Zafarullah, who will submit it to higher authorities concerned. Dr. Zafarullah is also a member of the team.

Talking to newsmen at the KMCH Dr. Biswas said all necessary medical tests have been completed. She is quite okay and out of danger. As per X-ray and ultrasonography reports, there is no mark of injury in any part of her body, said Dr. Biswas, Associate Professor and a senior consultant surgeon at KMCH.

Bagerhat district BNP president MAH Selim MP and other members of the medical team were present when Dr. zafarullah was talking to newsmen.

Three other members of the medical team are KMCH Professor of Medicine Dr Nazmul Ahsan,

Gynaecologist Dr Shamsunnahar Lucky and head of the Orthopaedic Department Dr Syed Mohammad Elias.

Dr Biswas said there is no reason for Chhabi Rabi to stay at KMCH for any more treatment. The bleeding is due to her menstruation and not for any other reason as we have got from thorough medical check-up, Dr Biswas said.

He further said that the only problem with her is that she is suffering from mental shock due to cutting of her locks of hair by the abductors. Reports of urine, blood and stool tests show that there is no symptom of any disease, Dr Biswas said.

Home Minister Altaf Hossain Chowdhury was informed yesterday morning about the latest condition of Chhabi Rani. The home minister talked to superintendent of KMCH Dr

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# JCD cadres go on rampage in N'ganj: 8 held

OUR CORRESPONDENT, N'ganj

Armed cadres belonging to JCD leader Zakir Khan went on the rampage in the town yesterday and on Monday night protesting the arrest of Irin Khan, wife of JCD leader Zakir Khan.

They put up barricades on roads at different points in Misrair and Chashara areas and ransacked several shops.

Police said they held Irin Khan in a bid to know the whereabouts of her husband.

On Monday night, at least 15 armed cadres of JCD opened blank shots at Golachipa and Railway Gate points in the town and damaged a BRTC double-decker bus. They ransacked roadside shops and looted money in cash and goods from those shops.

Another group of JCD put up barricades at different points in Chashara area the same night. They also blocked traffic on Narayanganj-Munshiganj road and damaged passenger buses.

On receiving information, police rushed to the spot and arrested eight JCD cadres. They are Faisal, Islam, Akhter Alam, Mahmud Titu, Didar, Monir and Shafiq.

At 6 am yesterday, the JCD cadres again put up barricades at Chashara point and in Rail Gate area, disrupting traffic for two hours. Police cleared the barricades at about 8 am.

The same gang opened blank shots from a double-decker BRTC bus at Ukilpara and damaged a BRTC bus at about 1 pm.

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# Schoolboy abducted in Kushtia

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Kushtia

A schoolboy was abducted by an armed gang from village Dairampur under Kumarkhali upazila of the district on Monday night.

The boy was identified as Rakesh, 13, a student of Class VI. Sources said a gang of 15 allegedly belonging to the Biplobi Communist Party (BCP) stormed into the house of Gobinda, a local trader, at about 8.30 pm and abducted his son Rakesh at gunpoint.

Later, the cadres of the outlawed party sent a message to Govinda demanding Tk five lakh for his son's release.

Police could not rescue the victim till filing of this report.

# Notification by Delhi on 40 duty-free items

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

New Delhi has issued a notification to provide duty-free access of 40 Bangladeshi products under 16 categories by the Indian government during the three-day secretary level trade talks in Dhaka this April.

A press release of the High Commission of India said last night that the notification will be effective from August 20 this year. "This was conveyed to the Bangladesh authorities by Yashwant Sinha, the External Affairs Minister of India during his recent visit to Dhaka," it said.

However, Bangladesh does not produce most of the 40 items that India agreed to allow free access.

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# One more dies of dengue

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

One dengue patient died and 87 others were admitted to different hospitals in the city yesterday.

The dead was identified as Firoz Ahmed, 30, who died at the Shaheed Suhrawardi Hospital yesterday at 8:00am.

The number of deaths from dengue now stands at 37 and people hospitalised at 3323.

# Uttara Bank MD resigns

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Managing Director (MD) of Uttara Bank Ltd. M Aminuzzaman resigned yesterday over alleged irregularities in loan disbursement.

The board of directors at an emergency meeting yesterday accepted Aminuzzaman's resignation and made senior deputy managing director Shamsuddin Ahmed the acting MD.

# Trial of double murder case begins

COURT CORRESPONDENT

Trial of the sensational double murder case began at the Third Additional Metropolitan Sessions Judge's Court, Dhaka, yesterday.

The first prosecution witness in the case and father of the victims, Syed Amzad Hossain, gave his deposition in the court and he was cross-examined by defence lawyers.

Judge Mollah Mostafa Kamal then adjourned the hearing till 11 am today.

Two brothers - Syed Asfaq Hossain alias Jewel, 27 and Syed Mohammad Ali alias Ribel, 23- were called out by their Noor Jahan Road residence in Mohammadpur area of the city by 'top listed criminal' Kamal Pasha at about 8:00 am on May 5, 2000. Then he shot them dead at nearby Lalmitia.

In his deposition yesterday, Amzad Hossain gave a detailed description of the incident. An emotional and often sobbing Amzad told the court that his two sons were called out of his residence at about 8:00 am on May 5, 2000 by Pasha. "At about 10 am, my daugh

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# McKinnon tells Hasina C'wealth teams to monitor entire future polls process

UNB, Dhaka

Visiting Commonwealth Secretary General Donald C McKinnon has said opposition has a vital role to play in Parliament for achieving the desired result.

"Without opposition the parliament cannot be an active or effective one," he said during a meeting with Opposition Leader Sheikh Hasina here yesterday.

During the meeting at Sudha Sadan, McKinnon said the more the opposition would be allowed to speak, the more the parliament and the parliamentary democracy would be benefited.

Briefing newsmen about the outcome of the meeting, Opposition Leader's Political Secretary Saber Hossain Chowdhury said both the leaders shared the view that the

entire electoral process should be monitored during the elections, not only on the day of election.

McKinnon said that in future, keeping this view in mind, they would send observer teams to Bangladesh and other countries to observe the total election process.

He informed that a Commonwealth team is going to monitor the coming elections in Pakistan.

The Commonwealth official said they give special importance to the role of the Speaker. Speaker must be neutral. When a person becomes the Speaker of Parliament, he must be free from party affiliation and act impartially for the growth of democracy; he should follow the rules of procedure.

During the hour-long meeting, the former prime minister men-

tioned the steps taken by her government for strengthening democracy and parliamentary process in the country.

Mentioning her long struggle for establishing democracy and voting rights of the people, she said Prime Minister's question hour session was introduced in parliament and standing committees were headed by MPs, not by ministers, for ensuring accountability and transparency.

Hasina said her party had worked for the institutionalisation of democracy and mentioned that every institution of the government - police, civil administration and others - should be given equal emphasis.

If any institution of the government is undermined then it

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PHOTO: STAR

Panic-stricken villagers of Sarongodia in Sreepur Upazila, Magura flee their homes following Monday's clash between rival armed groups of the ruling party.

# Villagers fleeing Sarongodia fearing clash

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Magura

More people were seen leaving homes at Sarongodia village in Sreepur upazila yesterday fearing fresh clash between political rivals belonging to the ruling party and rampage.

On Saturday night, at least 20 people were injured in clashes between supporters of Sreepur thana Jubo Dal President Ashrafur Islam Nalim and local BNP leader Mushfiqur Rahman Kanon over establishing supremacy in the area.

During a visit to the village yesterday, some villagers said armed people took cows from the houses of two villagers earlier on the day. About 10 thousand bundles of jute kept under water for rotting in Unikandir Beel (waterbody) were taken away by rivals, they said.

On information, ASI Aslam Ali

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# Local enterprises lose competitive edge

Survey blames organised crime, sagging public confidence

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Organised crimes and people's flagging confidence in political leadership have blunted the competitive edge of enterprises in Bangladesh, says the Global Competitiveness Report (GCR) 2002 now under preparation.

The survey was conducted on 71 companies with more than Tk 10 crore in assets. The highest 43.7 per cent representation to the survey was from manufacturing enterprises.

The Centre for Policy Dialogue (CPD) is working on the GCR-2002 as local partner.

Presenting the survey report to

be included in the GCR-2002, CPD Executive Director Dr Debapriya Bhattacharya yesterday said the projected success and potential in various sectors might not be achieved unless the government gives serious attentions to some microeconomic issues.

Bangladesh did well in handling macroeconomic issues, though, he said.

In the previous GCR prepared by the World Economic Forum, Bangladesh ranked 71st out of 75 countries around the world due to many negative factors. Bangladesh included in the survey in 2001 was followed by Paraguay, Nicaragua

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PHOTO: STAR

Family members offer fateha at the mazaar of National Poet Kazi Nazrul Islam in the city on his 26th death anniversary yesterday.

# BNP divisional reps meeting begins today

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The ruling BNP's division-wise representatives meeting which was deferred thrice is finally going to begin in the city today.

The process begins with grassroots level leaders of the party and its front organisations in Chittagong Division holding a day-long meeting with party chief and Prime Minister Khaleda Zia in the chair at the Prodan Montri Bhaban (formerly Ganabhaban).

Nearly 900 representatives from all district, municipality and thana units of the party will attend the meeting aimed at bringing dynamism within the party and expanding its network down to the grassroots level, party sources said.

All members of the BNP Standing Committee and vice presidents and joint secretaries

general of the party will also attend the meeting that begins at 10 am. Besides, members of the National Executive Committee of BNP who are from Chittagong Division, ministers, MPs and ministers-in-charge of the districts in the division will be present.

President, first vice president, general secretary and organising secretary of Chittagong city unit and all district units and president, general secretary and organising secretary of all municipality and thana units of the party in Chittagong Division will take part in the meeting.

Moreover, president and general secretary of all front organisations will attend it.

Khaleda Zia will give the inaugural address at the meeting. BNP Secretary General and LGRD and

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