

More dengue patients crowd city hospitals

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The onset of monsoon is bringing more Dengue patients to different city hospitals and clinics.

Till 6:00pm yesterday evening a total of 1485 people, including 38 newly admitted patients during the last 24 hours, have been diagnosed for Dengue fever in various city hospitals and clinics.

The total number of Dengue-infected patients now under treatment in different city hospitals and clinics stands at 233 as of yesterday.

Although the number of deaths from the disease is far less than previous years, unofficially the total number of people who died from Dengue Haemorrhagic Fever (DHF) and

Dengue Shock Syndrome (DSS) stands at five since June this year. A total of 205 people died from both types of the mosquito-borne viral fever since 2000.

Doctors treating dengue patients said this season most dengue patients are suffering from classical dengue, which has virtually no risks like internal bleeding and body fluid loss.

According to hospital sources, a few people suffered from the DHF and DSS this season.

A leading entomologist, on condition of anonymity, said transmission of the disease would continue this season as recurring rain has greatly favoured Aedes mosquitoes to lay eggs mostly in containers and flowerpots close to households.

Seeking anonymity, a physician of Dhaka Medical College Hospital yesterday said, "Many people already infected with the dengue virus may have been infected without falling sick. However, if they are infected with a different type of the four identical but distinct from one another virus, they may suffer deadly illness like the DHF."

Spraying of insecticide in and around the households in the capital has slowed down largely due to the deluge in many of the worst affected areas.

"We have enough larvicide and adulticide, but our spray hands are unable to reach many areas due to floodwaters," said a senior official of Dhaka City Corporation.



PHOTO: STAR

PINNING HOPES ON CROPS: Farmers plant rice seedlings in farmlands in Fulchhari upazila in Gaibandha after the fury of floods that devastated acres of croplands eased in the northern district.

BSF, Indian criminals kill 297 in 4 yrs

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

As many as 297 Bangladeshis were killed inside Bangladesh territory by Indian armed hoodlums and Border Security Force (BSF) in the last four years, said a survey of Odhikar, a coalition for human rights.

The survey is made to public at a time when top officials of the BSF and Bangladesh Rifles (BDR) are holding a three-day conference started Tuesday in Comilla to improve law and order along the border.

The survey, which was carried out on basis of reports of national dailies, said Indian criminals and BSF violated human rights in 1,585 incidents from July 1, 2003 to July 31 this year.

The incidents including murders, abduction and snatching repeatedly took place in the north and southeastern border areas following intrusion of the BSF and Indian criminals into Bangladesh.

Most of the victims were innocent peasants killed by the BSF and criminals, the survey said.

During the same span of time, 37 people went missing, 407 people

SEE PAGE 11 COL 2

Man shot dead, businessman hurt in Mirpur

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Unknown assailants gunned down an unidentified youth while another gang shot and wounded a businessman in the capital's Mirpur area yesterday.

Four criminals forced the unidentified youth, aged around 30, to Road No. 2, Block-D of Mirpur Section-2 amid heavy downpour at around 4:30pm and shot him in the head point blank, police said.

Police admitted the man to Dhaka Medical College Hospital where doctors declared him dead.

However, police failed to arrest any of the murderers till 7:30pm.

In the other incident, criminals shot and injured businessman Atiqul Islam Rony at around 10:30am.

A gang of three encircled Rony, 35, soon after he reached his packaging factory at West Kazipara and shot him in his left hand, an officer of Mirpur Police Station quoted a witness as saying.

He was undergoing treatment at Orthopaedic hospital, he added.

The motive behind the attack could not be known immediately.

16,000km road, 285km rly links flood wrecked

STAR REPORT

The on-going flooding is feared to have already damaged about 16,000km of national road network and 285kms of railway tracks, dealing a severe blow to the economy.

Nearly 20,000 meters of bridges and culverts also have been destroyed, according to primary estimates of the Local Government Engineering Division and some other organisations. The actual extent of flood damage could be ascertained once floodwaters recede completely, but a colossal fund might require to put the communication network back on functional stage, authorities feared.

The transportation of passengers and goods face great deal of danger every day in many city and rural areas as some 13,000km roads are totally damaged and 42,485km partially, says the Food and Disaster Management Department.

Initial survey shows 10,000km rural

roads, and 3,494 bridges and culverts have been totally or partially damaged. The most affected communication systems are in Sylhet, Sunamganj, Habiganj, Moulvibazar, Jamalpur, Mymensingh, Netrokona, Kishoreganj, Sirajganj, Tangail, Manikganj, Munshiganj, Narsinghdi, Dhaka, Narayanganj, Shariatpur, Pabna, Gaibandha, Kurigram, Bogra, Naogaon, Barisal, Comilla, Chandpur and Kusthia.

The flooding, heaviest since Bangladesh's worst-ever floods in 1998, also caused vast damage to the communication system in the capital. The Dhaka City Corporation (DCC) has already found damage to 492.80km roads and 32.70km footpaths, repairing of which might cost at least Tk 500 crore. But the DCC has no budget for the unscheduled repair.

Engineers of different departments fear that total cost for repair to national communication network might be far

more than what has been allocated in the present ADP (Annual Development Program).

As the floodwaters continue to recede, the government and the donor agencies are now busy assessing damages. According to a preliminary information, the estimated cost for temporary and permanent rehabilitation of the damaged railway network alone is Tk 120 crore.

The World Bank is waiting for the government report on actual damage and the cost required for rehabilitation. The World Bank (WB), Asian Development Bank (ADB), Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) and Department of Fund for International Development (DFID) would jointly give assistance to avoid any repetition in aid to repair communication system.

A top World Bank official said the

SEE PAGE 11 COL 8

Teenage girl detained for 1yr sanstrial

COURT CORRESPONDENT

A 14-year-old girl held under Section 54 of the Criminal Procedure Code (CrPC) has been detained in jail without trial for more than one year.

Police arrested Shama Nishat on July 20 last year in the house of her foster mother, Rahatunnesa, on Road 6/A, Dhanmondi, Dhaka, after Rahat had filed a general diary with Dhanmondi Police Station accusing Nishat of trying to kill her with a boti (kitchen machete).

The next day police produced Nishat before a court that put her in jail custody.

The law dictates that if the investigation officer (IO) does not press specific charge against one arrested under Section 54, the arrestee has to be set free.

But, the teenage girl is still languishing in prison, although the IO of the case, Police Sub-inspector Abdul Mannan Munshi, has not submitted any charge-sheet despite repeated instructions of the Chief Metropolitan Magistrate's Court of Dhaka to do so.

SEE PAGE 11 COL 6

Aman withers in parched lands

District agriculture offices still hopeful to meet production target

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Broadcast Aman plants in some districts are withering because of heat amid a drought-like situation at a time when most regions are reeling from devastating monsoon flooding.

District offices of the Department of Agriculture Extension (DAE) said farmers in Jessore, Lalmonirhat, Rangpur and Gaibandha feared crop failures because of the unfavourable weather system.

"The situation is not unusual in Bangladesh," said Arzumand Habib, deputy director of the meteorological office. "Some districts unaffected by the flooding are lacking rain. The drought-like situation has parched the land and will affect farmers like the floods."

But the monitoring section of the DAE is yet to estimate the losses caused

by the weather.

Farmers in eight upazilas in Jessore have been irrigating their farmlands with about 5,000 deep and shallow tube-wells and power pumps to scrape through the trying time.

Putting on a brave face, the district agriculture offices said it was confident of brining 1,28,100 hectares under Aman cultivation and achieve the production target.

Fissures cover a large swathe of farmlands in the wake of the recession of floodwaters in Lalmonirhat.

Local agriculture office said Aman plants on 3,000 hectares in Aditmari, Kaliganj, Hatibandha and Patgram upazilas were damaged by the drought-like weather.

The worst affected areas are Hajiganj and Bhelabari of Aditmari upazila,

Lohakuchi, Goral and Chandrapur of Kaliganj upazila and Doikhawa of Hatibandha upazila.

After the recession of floodwaters, farmers sowed Aman seeds with high hopes investing their last resources, but the sun parched their fields with a vengeance, agriculture officials said.

The Rangpur agriculture office said rice plants in 500 hectares in the district were now drooping.

"Although farmers have been operating 120 pumps to irrigate their stony rice paddies, the district is likely to achieve 85 percent of farming target," an official source said.

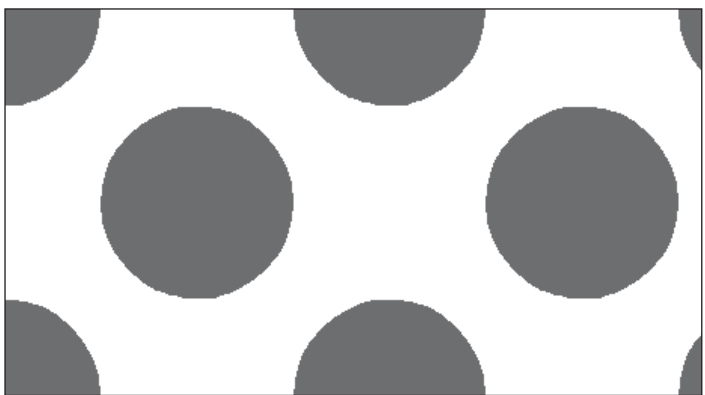
An official of the monitoring section of the DAE said they were yet to determine the drought loss.

"We are busy with post floods rehabilitation of farmers."



PHOTO: STAR

Flood victims line storage pots to get relief from motor parts vendors, who distribute cooked rice at the Bangla Bazaar Girls High School every day.



TAX CASE AGAINST ERSHAD Special court to give verdict today

COURT CORRESPONDENT

A special court today announces verdict in an income tax corruption case against former president HM Ershad.

According to sources, Judge Rezaul Karim Khan of the Special Court for Dhaka Division pronounces the verdict at 11:30am.

Earlier, the prosecution and

SEE PAGE 11 COL 6

EC delegation chief visits flood-hit Sirajganj today

UNB, Dhaka

Ambassador Esko Kentschynskyj, head of the delegation of European Commission (EC) to Bangladesh, will visit the flood-hit areas in Sirajganj today.

During his visit, Esko Kentschynskyj will be accompanied by AR Maryon, head of International Federation of the R

SEE PAGE 11 COL 6

Prayer Timing August 5		
	Azan	Jamaat
Fair	4-20	4-55
Zohr	12-45	1-15
Asr	5-00	5-15
Maghrib	6-47	6-50
Esha	8-15	8-45
Source: Islamic Foundation		

Rab nabs top Ctg criminals with AK-47

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

Members of the Rapid Action Battalion (Rab) arrested two top-notch criminals and their three accomplices in the city on Tuesday night and recovered one AK-47 assault gun, one double-barrel gun and 44 bullets from their possession.

The arrestee are Yeakub Ali alias Babul, 30, Forkan Uddin alias Shipon, 29, Nasir Uddin alias

Badsha, 28, Ahsanul Karim alias Zainal, 28, and Mohammad Jahangir Alam alias Jahangir, 44.

Of them, Yeakub is the leader of Babul Bahini, a fatikchhari based criminal gang, and forkan is the leader of another criminal group based in Nazirhat of Fatikchhari upazila.

Being tipped-off, Rab members raided city's Chawak Bazar and its

SEE PAGE 11 COL 5

Oil prices hit new record

AGENCIES, London

Oil prices notched up fresh record highs yesterday, shuddering world financial markets and fanning concern that consistently high prices are denting global economic growth.

Brent crude rose 35 cents to \$40.99 a barrel, its highest level since London's International Petroleum Exchange launched trading in Brent futures in 1988, before edging back to \$40.86. US crude struck \$44.30 a barrel, 15 cents up from Tuesday's settlement and the highest since oil futures were launched on the New York Mercantile Exchange in 1983.

"The oil price is of course a con-

cern," said Germany's Finance Minister Hans Eichel. "It could slow economic growth."

Oil prices have risen by more than one-third since the end of 2003 on worries that accelerating global demand has left supplies tightly stretched with little leeway for disruption. Some analysts fear that the relentless rise could take prices above \$50 a barrel, with more damaging repercussions for the global economy.

Allowing for inflation, prices are near the level hit during the 1973 oil embargo and just over half those during the oil price shock that followed the 1979 Iranian revolution.

SEE PAGE 11 COL 4

14 Iraqis killed in Mosul violence

Six foreign hostages in Iraq released

AGENCIES, Baghdad/Mosul

At least 14 Iraqis were killed and 26 wounded in a roadside bomb blast and fierce clashes between Iraqi police and insurgents in the main northern city of Mosul, medics and police said.

"The hospital received 12 bodies, including two women, and 26 injured, most of them civilians," said a doctor at Mosul's Medical City hospital, after the violent clashes broke out between insurgents and police.

The fighting erupted at around midday (0800 GMT) yesterday southwest of Mosul on the west bank of the Tigris River amid the sound of loud explosions and heavy gunfire, an AFP correspondent said. At least five bridges were cut off.

Earlier a man and a woman were killed when a roadside bomb exploded in the path of a US military convoy, police said.

"The bomb went off at 10:35 am

SEE PAGE 11 COL 7

ANN website takes new shape

ANN, Bangkok

The website of the world's largest news-sharing network Asia News Network (ANN) has adopted a new look to reflect the changing times.

The ANN at www.asianews-net.net offers insightful commentaries, news and views as well as handy information like weather, currency exchange and stock markets. The site will also post special features on events that affect Asians.

It has been specially designed to be user-friendly and live up to the modern buzzline one should have all the news he or she need with just a click on the mouse.

SEE PAGE 11 COL 7



PHOTO: STAR

Litter covers a stretch of Fakirerpool Bazaar Road in Dhaka, threatening to choke the sewerage system. But Dhaka City Corporation appears indifferent to lax cleanliness, considered a trigger for malaria and dengue outbreaks.