



WITH TODAY'S ISSUE

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Dengue cases hit 9-yr high

Little effort to prevent spread of the deadly disease; more than 1,900 infected in 9 months of this year

PORIMOL PALMA

At least 1,930 dengue cases were reported in the last nine months, the highest in nine years, but the authorities are apparently slow in taking measures to prevent spread of the viral disease.

In 2006, a total of 2,200 people suffered from dengue. The number ranged from 375 to 1,749 a year between 2007 and 2014, according to the Directorate General of Health Services (DGHS).

Ninety-three people died of the disease in 2000. But casualties dropped in the following years, as more doctors and nurses were trained to handle dengue patients, said DGHS officials.

This year, at least four people died of dengue in the capital where most of the dengue cases have been reported.

Medical experts say intermittent rains and high temperature and humidity create the ideal breeding conditions for Aedes mosquitoes that transmit the virus for which there is no vaccine or specific medication.

Dr Saif Ullah Munshi, associate professor of virology at Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujib Medical University, feared that dengue cases may continue to rise throughout this month.

"However, things are likely to improve once the

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PHOTO: STAR

Sourav, 10, shot allegedly by a ruling party lawmaker from Gaibandha, is undergoing treatment at Rangpur Medical College Hospital yesterday. Two bullets tore through his right leg and one through the left.

Boy shot 'by MP'

Alleges family; the lawmaker denies

STAR REPORT

A 10-year-old boy was shot allegedly by a ruling party lawmaker at Sundarganj of Gaibandha early yesterday.

Sourav Mia, 10, of Gopalcharan village was undergoing treatment at Rangpur Medical College Hospital (RMCH) with bullet wounds in both legs.

Manzurul Islam Liton, Awami League lawmaker from Gaibandha-1, shot the boy for no reason, victim's family alleged.

The MP, however, denied the allegation.

The incident took place at Brac Intersection in Gopalcharan around 6:00am.

According to the victim's family, Sourav went for a walk with his uncle Shahjahan Ali. The MP was then returning to his home in Bamandanga from Sundarganj and stopped his car at the intersection.

"When he saw us, he in a hand gesture called me," Sourav's uncle told the media. "But I got scared and started running away from there."

The lawmaker got angry at this and started firing at him from his personal gun,

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UGC OFFICIAL'S DEATH IN CUSTODY

Tortured or not?

Family members 'saw injury marks' on his body at morgue; Rab maintains it was heart attack



PHOTO: STAR

Wife of Omar Siraj breaks down in tears at the DMCH.

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Family members of UGC official Omar Siraj, who died in Rab custody on Thursday, alleged that he was subjected to torture and they saw injury marks on his body at the morgue of Dhaka Medical College.

The Rapid Action Battalion, however, denies the allegation and claims Siraj died from heart attack.

Siraj, 32, an assistant director of University Grants Commission (UGC), was arrested on September 18 for his suspected involvement in question paper leak of medical college admission and job recruitment tests. He was on a two-day remand from Wednesday.

Sohel Mahmud, assistant professor of forensic medicine department at DMC,

after an autopsy said they were still not in a position to reach a conclusion.

"We have collected heart samples for test at histopathology department. We will submit the final report after verifying everything," he told The Daily Star.

Morgue sources, however, told this newspaper that there were injury marks on the body. Asked what might have caused those wounds, they declined to say anything.

Ashrafal Islam Ashraf, elder brother of Siraj, said the family heard about his death from Rab-4 at Thursday midnight. They could see the body at the morgue in the morning.

Talking to the media at the medical college, the family members, including the wife of Siraj, said they met him several times after his arrest and he was in good

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COMMENTARY

A murder and an 'Alert'

We'll fight terrorism with all our strength

MAHFUZ ANAM

No murder is acceptable, and if the victim is an innocent foreigner who had come to Bangladesh to serve a good cause, it becomes even more reprehensible. When we think about how randomly Cesare Tavella was killed and how his death relates to nothing that he had done, said, or written, when we see that he had not instigated others to do anything and that he was killed simply because he was a foreigner and because he happened to be where he was and at the time that he was, our sorrow becomes unbearable. The sheer injustice

of it all forces us to question what sort of a person or group could carry out such an inhuman deed. Every one of us must condemn this act from the very core of our hearts and harbour nothing but contempt for any thoughts that may try to even remotely justify such an action.

It is needless to mention that Bangladesh was caught totally unawares by this dastardly act. There is no history of foreigners being killed in Bangladesh (except the case of a Saudi Embassy functionary in 2012 and the attempt on the British High Commissioner to Bangladesh, Anwar

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'I couldn't save my mother'

A Hajj pilgrim's account of stampede in Mina

BELAL HOSSAIN BIPOB

The scene of the stampede that left hundreds of Hajj pilgrims dead in Saudi Arabia still haunts Shamim Ahmed, 45.

He does not know how to get over the shock: his 65-year old mother Firoza Khanom died in front of his own eyes.

"She died while I was carrying her upon my shoulder. I had to witness her miserable death," Shamim, a resident of Merul Badda of Dhaka, told The Daily Star yesterday.

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Firoza Khanom

GSP cancelled illogically

Says PM in interview with Voice of America

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina yesterday said the USA's suspension of trade privileges for Bangladesh was illogical.

It was up to the US to decide whether it would reinstate the facilities for Bangladesh under the Generalised System of Preferences (GSP), she said in an interview with the Voice of America at Bangladesh Permanent Mission to the United Nations in New York.

On the GSP suspension and Bangladesh's ties with the US, the PM said, "We have friendship with all and malice towards none. We don't know why they suspended the GSP. They set 16 conditions and we have met those."

It was illogical on the USA's part to set so many conditions because Bangladesh used to enjoy the GSP facilities for only a handful of products, she said.

"We have been able to raise our exports to \$32 billion despite the USA's suspension of GSP facilities."

She also touched on other issues such as the country's growth, curbing terrorism and the role of the opposition.

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TAVELLA MURDER

No headway in probe

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Five days have passed but the investigators are yet to make any headway in the probe into the murder of Italian aid worker Cesare Tavella.

Yesterday, officials of the Detective Branch (DB) of police said their investigation so far had not found any evidence of personal or professional enmity that could be the murder motive.

They said they were trying to find out whether the murder had any militant links.

An 11-member DB team, headed by a deputy commissioner, was providing assistance to the investigators, they added.

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PHOTO: ANISUR RAHMAN

People returning from their Eid holidays wait for buses at Mawa around 1:00pm yesterday after crossing the Padma. The passengers had to wait for hours in the scorching heat as there were not enough buses to take them to the capital.

Misuse of icddr,b's name in product promotion

It has come to icddr,b's attention that the Drinkit Water Purifier machine by Durable Plastic Ltd, PRAN-RFL Group is currently being promoted with the claim that it has been tested by icddr,b.

icddr,b would like to state that it does not endorse any commercial products, including the Drinkit Water Purifier.

icddr,b has not been involved with the product—Drinkit Water Purifier—at any stage. Any claim to the contrary is both misleading and an infringement of icddr,b's legal rights.

For more information please contact: Ferdaus Rahman, Head of Regulatory and Legal Affairs, icddr,b

