

DENGUE FEVER WHO SAID WHAT



HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE MINISTER ZAHID MALEQUE.

"Why such a huge number of dengue patients are there in our country? My simple answer is the spread of mosquitoes, spread of Aedes mosquitoes. These [Aedes] mosquitoes are healthy and sophisticated."

"Somehow we could not control the mosquito population. The mosquito population and the Rohingya population are growing at the same pace."



DHAKA SOUTH CITY CORPORATION MAYOR SAYEED KHOKON

"Dengue situation is under control in the country and it is better than that of the Philippines, Thailand, and Indonesia."

"I urge city dwellers to remain alert, but not panic."

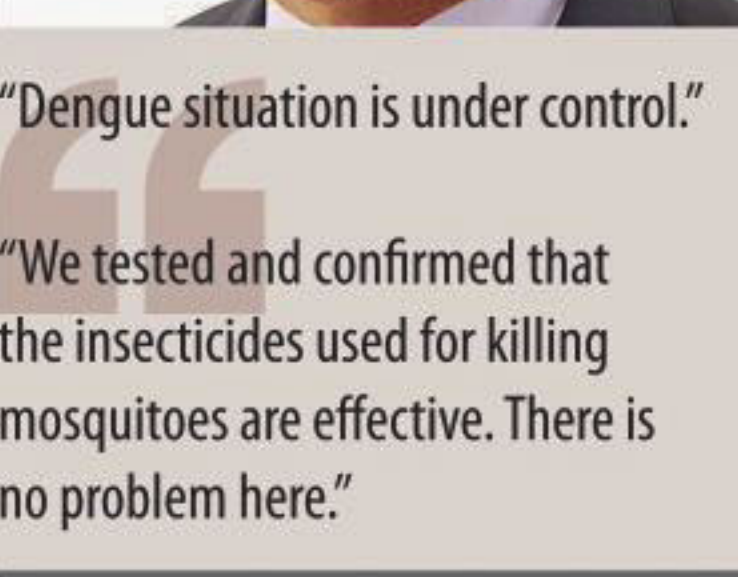
"There is no need to panic over the dengue situation."

DHAKA SOUTH CITY CORPORATION MAYOR SAYEED KHOKON



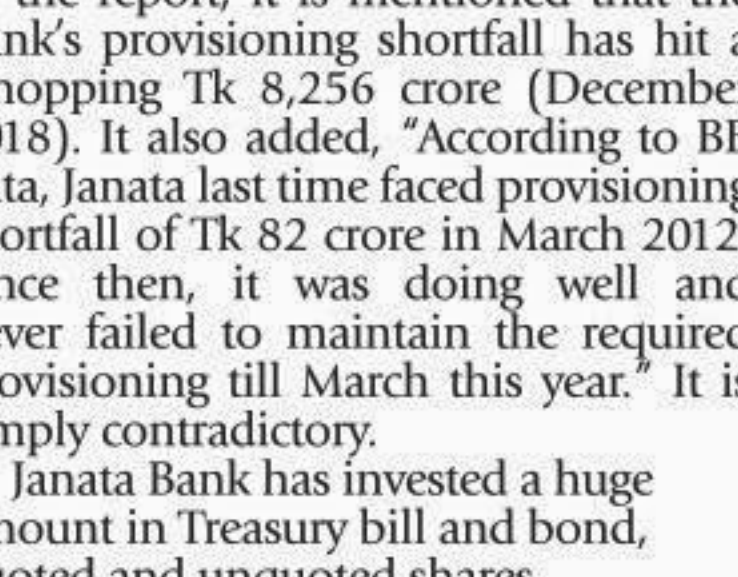
ROAD TRANSPORT AND BRIDGES MINISTER OBAIDUL QUADER

"People are worried about dengue. All of us should talk responsibly, and perform our duties properly."



ROAD TRANSPORT AND BRIDGES MINISTER OBAIDUL QUADER

"Dengue situation is alarming in Bangladesh, but not out of control."



EDWIN SALVADOR, WHO ACTING COUNTRY REPRESENTATIVE FOR BANGLADESH.

"Dengue situation is under control."

"We tested and confirmed that the insecticides used for killing mosquitoes are effective. There is no problem here."

LGRD MINISTER TAZUL ISLAM



"Mosquito insecticides are not ineffective; mosquitoes have become stronger than in the past. That's why insecticides are now working."

"There are rumours about number of dengue patients like child kidnapping."

"The information that three lakh people are suffering from dengue is completely imaginary and confusing. We will give a fitting reply by controlling dengue."

"Dengue situation is under control in the country and it is better than that of the Philippines, Thailand, and Indonesia."

"I urge city dwellers to remain alert, but not panic."

"There is no need to panic over the dengue situation."

DHAKA SOUTH CITY CORPORATION MAYOR SAYEED KHOKON



"There are a lot of mosquitoes at the ERD office [in Agargaon]. I have been bitten twice – once affected by chikungunya and then dengue. I am not going there anymore out of fear."

FINANCE MINISTER AHM MOSTAFA KAMAL.



"The Awami League imported the lethal dengue fever in the country in 1997. Dengue fever has been spreading since."

BNP SENIOR SECRETARY GENERAL RIZVI AHMED

Dengue spreads to 50 dists

FROM PAGE 1
Kishoreganj and Narayanganj in Dhaka division; Chattogram, Feni, Cumilla, Chandpur, Brahmanbaria, Lakshimpur, Noakhali, Cox's Bazar, Khagrachhari, and Rangamati in Chattogram division; Khulna, Kushtia, Jashore, Jhenidah, Bagerhat, Satkhira, and Chuadanga in Khulna division; Rajshahi, Bogura, Pabna, Sirajganj, Naogaon, Chapainawabganj and Natore in Rajshahi division; Rangpur, Lalmonirhat, Kurigram, Gaibandha, Nilphamari, Dinajpur, Panchagarh, and Thakurgaon in Rangpur division; Barishal, Patuakhali, Bhola, Pirojpur, and Jhalakathi in Barishal division; and Sylhet in Sylhet division.

CITY SCHOOLS
With little faith in the anti-mosquito drives of city corporations, schools in the capital have intensified measures to prevent mosquitoes and dengue. Some even opted to pay staffers of city corporations to fumigate their compounds regularly.

Despite the measures, some guardians have stopped sending their children to schools.

At the Sher-e-Bangla Nagar Government Boys' High School, there is an open drain filled with stagnant water that could be a breeding ground for Aedes mosquitoes, which carries and spreads the dengue virus. There is an under-construction building inside the compound as well.

"We are all worried. You see an open drain and under-construction building here," said parent Julia Ferdous when The Daily Star correspondent visited the school yesterday afternoon.

The school in Agargaon has around 2,300 students.

Teacher Doly Devi said the school authorities were trying their best to keep the drain and the construction site clean by scattering bleaching powder, and pouring kerosene. They also spray mosquito repellents as Dhaka North City Corporation was not conducting anti-mosquito drives regularly.

"We have notified students of what to do to be safe," she said, adding that students' attendance has slightly dropped.

At the gate of Monipur High School and College in Sheorapara, packets of crisps and biscuits were littered, which could contain rainwater and help breed mosquitoes.

A few parents waiting for their children there said some parents were not sending their children to school.

The school authorities did not allow The Daily Star correspondent to enter the school compound and Assistant Head Teacher Aklash Ahmed refused to make any comments.

Construction materials, especially bamboo, were seen stacked here and there inside Rajdhani High School.

Head Teacher Mozammel Huq Miah said contractors had removed most of the materials. The remaining stuff would be moved soon.

He said school attendance had dropped by 10 percent.

"City corporation men fumigate once a week. Given the current situation, they should do it at least twice a week," he said.

Tejgaon Government High School has not been holding classes on the ground floor for a couple of weeks. A student of class VI of the school died of dengue on June 21.

"In the last two days, we sent four students home as they were suffering from fever," said Head Teacher Shahrin Khan Rupa.

Teachers said during assemblies, they try to make students aware of dengue and have circulated leaflets among them.

At Udayan Higher Secondary School, many classes had 30 to 40 percent students absent, Jahura Begum, a teacher of the school said.

Many parents have expressed concern and requested the school

authorities to close the school for some time.

ENGLISH-MEDIUM SCHOOLS
Sunnydale, a reputed English-medium school, opened in the second week of this month after the summer break. The school has been pouring kerosene in surrounding drains and every morning staffers spray anti-mosquito aerosol in all classrooms before letting students in, said Yasmeen Habib, vice principal of the school's senior section.

Just before twilight, incense is burnt to keep mosquitoes away.

She said the school pays city corporation staffers to fumigate the school twice a week.

Four-five students were diagnosed with dengue and they are now at home. "We are doing what we can. But this will not stop mosquitoes from biting us."

Parents need to be aware of how to prevent dengue as well, the vice principal said.

Sunbeams, in Dhanmondi, stopped allowing students to play outside during breaks and game classes about three weeks ago. There is an in-school doctor too.

The school has also been paying city corporation staffers to fumigate its compound thrice a week for the last three weeks, said Shamim Ahmed, of the school management.

"Parents have become aware. They are sending children with anti-mosquito patches or mosquito-repellent cream," said Shamima Mainuddin, head of the junior section of the school.

As Shamima was speaking to The Daily Star correspondent, the grandparent of a student suggested that students be asked to wear full-sleeved shirts and long trousers.

The school immediately notified all parents via text that students should wear casuals until further notice. For boys full-sleeved shirts or T-shirts and girls full-sleeved dresses with tights.

"Please ensure that children use mosquito repellent/patch before coming to school," Sunbeams asked the parents.

Asked about allegations of irregular drives and taking money for services, Dhaka North City Corporation Chief Health Officer Brig Gen Mominur Rahman Mamun said, "We have heard of money being paid for fumigations. But the problem is when city corporation staffers go to schools in the morning, they are not allowed to enter. And when they go in the afternoon, schools are closed."

If the schools let the authorities know the convenient time, Mamun said, "Staffers will go and deliver the service."

HC DIRECTIVE
The High Court yesterday asked the government to monitor if private hospitals and diagnostic centres were charging patients more than the government-set fees for dengue tests.

The court passed the suo moto order after Deputy Attorney General ABM Abdullah-Al Mahmud Bashar and Supreme Court lawyer Mustaque Ahmed Chowdhury told the court that the government had fixed specific fees for dengue tests.

Meanwhile, DGHS Director (Hospital) Aminul Hasan said 10 monitoring teams of the directorate inspected 23 private hospitals and diagnostic centres and found that most of them were charging the fees set by the government.

However, Directorate of National Consumer Rights Protection fined two diagnostic centres Tk 1 lakh for overcharging, said Manjur Mohammad Shahriar, deputy director (Dhaka division) of the DNCRP.

He said they fined Ibn Sina and Popular Diagnostic Centre in Dhanmondi Tk 50,000 each.

BOY'S DEATH ON FERRY Shipping ministry forms committee to probe it

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The shipping ministry yesterday formed a probe committee to investigate the death of a critically injured boy on a ferry, which was kept waiting for three hours at Kathalbari terminal for a top government official on Thursday night.

In a press release, the ministry said necessary action would be taken after submission of the report, which will be due within seven working days.

The two-member committee consists of Joint Secretary Shahnawaz Dilruba Khan as head and Deputy Secretary Shah Habibur Rahman Hakim as member. According to the press release, Bangladesh Inland Water Transport Corporation (BIWTC), the ferry operator, usually provides emergency service to ambulances.

Meanwhile, non-government organisation Road Safety Foundation yesterday demanded a judicial inquiry into the incident and exemplary punishment for those responsible.

Thirteen-year-old Titash Ghosh, a sixth grader of Kalia Pilot Secondary School in Narail, was injured in a motorbike accident in Narail on Wednesday evening.

A day later, the doctors of a Khulna hospital referred him to Dhaka Medical College Hospital for an emergency operation.

The family was carrying the boy by ambulance to Dhaka and arrived at Kathalbari terminal in Madaripur around 8:00pm on Thursday. A ferry called "Ferry Cumilla" was already at the pontoon but it had its gate closed and was not loading vehicles.

After the family members learnt that the ferry would be delayed because of an additional secretary, they pleaded to the authorities concerned repeatedly to start the vessel but to no avail. The ambulance was committed to the pontoon and could not go back and take another ferry because of queues of vehicles around it.

Finally around 10:20pm, the ferry started loading vehicles after the authorities learnt that the high official was close to the terminal. Around 11:00pm, the official arrived and the ferry started moving. Titash died on the ferry after some time, the family said.

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Dhaka hands over Japanese foreign minister arrives in the capital

Scheduled to visit Rohingya camps today

STAR REPORT

Japanese Foreign Minister Taro Kono arrived in Dhaka last night on a three-day visit, which is expected to focus on the Rohingya issue.

The minister is scheduled to visit the Rohingya camps in Cox's Bazar today and talk to the members of Rohingya community to get an overview of the situation.

Later, he is scheduled to hold a bilateral meeting with his Bangladeshi counterpart AK Abdul Momen in the capital.

Apart from the Rohingya issue, other matters related to further strengthening Bangladesh-Japan ties would also be discussed during the meeting between the two foreign ministers, reported BSS, quoting officials concerned.

It is expected that Kono's Rohingya-focused visit will help expedite the ongoing efforts of commencing safe repatriation of Rohingyas to Myanmar, a foreign ministry official said.

The Japanese foreign minister will also visit Bangabandhu Memorial Museum in Dhanmondi to pay homage to Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman.

He will leave Bangladesh on Wednesday.

Human Rights Watch, meanwhile, has urged Japan's foreign minister to raise critical human rights issues during his visit to Bangladesh and Myanmar between July 29 and August 3.

Also, he should urge Myanmar to adopt all necessary measures in Rakhine State to allow the safe, dignified, and voluntary return of Rohingya refugees under international supervision to their places of origin; and ensure equal access to citizenship, freedom of movement, nondiscrimination in access to services, and access to livelihoods for returning refugees.

Some 750,000 Rohingyas fled atrocities in Myanmar's Rakhine State after August 25, 2017. In clashes between the Myanmar army and the Arakan Army since early this year, thousands more were displaced.

"While in Myanmar, Foreign Minister Kono should urge the government to ensure that humanitarian agencies, human rights groups, and independent media have access to Rohingyas and other at-risk minorities," said Kanae Doi, HRW Japan director.

In a letter to the minister dated July 26, the global rights watchdog said, "Foreign Minister Kono should press the Bangladeshi government about arrests under its draconian digital security laws and online censorship that is stifling peaceful criticism and dissent."

It said in Myanmar, Kono should urge Aung San Suu Kyi's government to end institutionalised discrimination against the Rohingyas by amending the 1982 Citizenship Law, which facilitated gross human rights violations.

"Japan should use its international standing as a rights-respecting democracy to promote the human rights of everyone in Bangladesh and Myanmar," Doi said.

Union of CNG auto-rickshaw drivers seek raise in fare

TUHIN SHUBHRA ADHIKARY

Although most of the CNG-run auto-rickshaws operate in the capital without following metered fare, a drivers' organisation now demands hiking the fare in line with the increased prices of gas and daily essentials.

Dhaka Auto-rickshaw Workers Union yesterday wrote a letter to the road transport and bridges minister in this regard. However, it did not mention any rate for the hiked fare.

Hanif Khokon, general secretary of the union, said a 10-member committee determines the fare of CNG-run auto-rickshaws. He hoped it would fix a new fare considering all relevant issues.

Led by the chairman of Bangladesh Road Transport Authority (BRTA), the committee has representatives from transport owners, workers, and the Directorate of National Consumer Rights Protection, said Hanif, also a member of the body.

The union took the move around a month after the energy regulator decided to increase gas prices from July 1. Under the revised gas tariff, the price of Compressed Natural Gas (CNG) has been increased by 7.5 percent.

The letter said the government hiked gas prices four times since September 2015, but the fare of CNG-run auto-rickshaws was last increased in November 2015.

At that time, the fare for travelling first two kilometres was hiked to Tk 40 from Tk 25. The rate for travelling each km next was fixed at Tk 12 and the waiting charge was fixed at Tk 2 per minute.

Previously, the rate was Tk 25 for SEE PAGE 13 COL 3

Rejoinder, our reply

FROM PAGE 1

In the report, it is mentioned that the bank's provisioning shortfall has hit a whopping Tk 8,256 crore (December 2018). It also added, "According to BB data, Janata last time faced provisioning shortfall of Tk 82 crore in March 2012. Since then, it was doing well and never failed to maintain the required provisioning till March this year." It is simply contradictory.

Janata Bank has invested a huge amount in Treasury bill and bond, quoted and unquoted shares. Currently, the investment is around Tk 18,000 crore. It always maintains excess CRR (cash reserve ratio) and SLR (statutory liquidity ratio) with the Bangladesh Bank. Its nostro account balance always remains robust.

Janata has been lending money on call and short notices to other banks. More importantly, the lender is continuously opening LCs (letters of credit) amounting to millions of dollars for BPC (Bangladesh Petroleum Corporation), BCIC (Bangladesh Chemical Industries Corporation), BADC (Bangladesh Agricultural Development Corporation), DGDP (Directorate General of Defence Purchase) and Petrobangla and making payment of all the foreign bills in time.

The comments made by renowned financial sector experts are being followed to some extent. Though

corporate governance failure is very much common in most of the sectors, nothing like that has happened to Janata Bank that the bank should go to the extent of liquidation. The bank is very much regular in paying its liabilities in time. Even it paid hundreds of crores (of taka) for a single transaction both in national and international business. So, the depositors' money with Janata Bank is very much safe and secured.

OUR REPLY
Janata Bank did not contradict any point in the report. The Daily Star ran the report based on a Janata Bank letter to the central bank on June 19 this year.

We did not mention in the report that Janata's provisioning shortfall was Tk 8,256 crore as of December 2018. The Tk 8,256-crore figure was mentioned as Janata's provisioning shortfall in its June 19 letter to the central bank.

Janata's provisioning shortfall skyrocketed in recent months due to a rise in its nonperforming loans that stood at Tk 21,410 crore or 44 percent of its total loans as of March this year. And this happened because of a few big defaulters, including AnonTex and Crescent Group.

Our report also contains comments from the managing director of Janata Bank.

We stand by our report.