# Dengue spreading faster nationwide

Some 1,250 infected outside Dhaka

STAR REPORT

The number of dengue infected patients in different districts is increasing alarmingly, indicating that the disease is quickly spreading across the country.

Over 1,250 dengue patients have been identified in Chattogram, Feni, Dinajpur, Mymensingh, Kishoreganj, Brahmanbaria, Narsingdi, Nilphamari, Tangail, Barishal, Jhenaidah, Khulna, Pabna and Bogura.

Most of the patients had been to Dhaka before they were diagnosed with dengue, health officials said. In Feni, officials have so far

diagnosed 147 patients. Only four of them had not travelled to Dhaka recently, said Civil Surgeon Hayutuzzaman.

Hospital, Registrar Partho Protim Debnath said dengue patients were increasing by the day. "We are diagnosis. struggling to accommodate them. We also need more dengue detection

districts can detect and treat dengue story.

Extra charges

clearing and forwarding agents not

to pay the new charges, creating

uncertainty over timely shipment of

Salam said the hike would increase

export costs and have a negative impact

on the country's readymade garments

industries. He added that they would

not pay any additional charge until the

tariff committee formed by the shipping

Chattogram Customs Clearing and

Forwarding Agents Association General

Secretary Altaf Hossain told The Daily

Star yesterday that the association's

members had already been directed not

to pay any additional charges to ICDs

Due to the latest increase in the 12

types of service charges for landing,

stuffing, labour, documentation and

lifting, among others, the cost of total

exports and imports would rise by

around Tk 150 crore annually, industry

According to the revised charges,

for a 20 feet export container package

(stuffing), costs increased by 25 percent

from Tk 3,600 to Tk 4,500; per tonne

landing charges rose by 25 percent from

Tk 180 to Tk 225 and per carton labour

charges increased by 50 percent from Tk

ICDs' service charges have now gone up

Almost 90 percent of export goods are

stuffed into containers at the 19 private

ICDs, also known as off-docks, located

in and around the port city, before

shipment through the Chattogram port.

containers are sent from the port to

the ICDs, from where the goods are

BICDA on February 28 issued a

Owners say the increased costs are a

result of devaluation of local currency

against the US dollar and a rise in

overheads such as fuel, labour and

In its February 28 circular, the BICDA

said a committee of the Chattogram

Port Authority (CPA) in a 2016 report

said that the ICDs' operational and

other related costs had increased by

42 percent between 2011 and 2015,

and so the charges should have been

BICDA President Nurul Qayyum

Khan said upon insistence from the

stakeholders and requests by the CPA,

they had agreed to an increase of 20

assured us that the charges would be

increased by another 20 percent after a

year," he said, adding that almost two

years had passed since the deadline for

the second review of the tariffs.

"The then CPA chairman had also

circular increasing 12 types of tariffs by

20 to 25 percent on average.

equipment maintenance.

raised accordingly.

percent only.

ENDLESS COMMITTEES,

UNWAVERING DEADLOCKS

Another 21 percent of the import

For a 20-feet export container the

FROM PAGE 1

many export cargoes.

ministry makes a decision.

against export containers.

insiders say.

3 to Tk 4.50.

delivered.

by Tk 2,000 on average.

But in Barishal city, neither the state-run Sher-e-Bangla Medical College Hospital nor any private clinics has received any dengue virus detection kit.

The Mymensingh Medical College Hospital and M Abdur Rahim Medical College Hospital in Dinajpur have started round-the-clock dengue diagnosis service. Health officials in Mymensingh

said they had supplied NS1 kits, needed for dengue diagnosis, to 11 upazila health complexes in the district.

Officials at most government hospitals in metropolitan cities claimed that they were equipped to treat dengue patients.

Meanwhile, health rights activists At Khulna Medical College in Chattogram alleged that many private clinics were charging their people exorbitant sums for

Our correspondents from Chattogram, Dinajpur, Mymensingh, Kishoreganj, Brahmanbaria, Narsingdi, With a few exceptions, most Nilphamari, Barishal, Jhenidah, Khulna, government hospitals in the Pabna and Bogura contributed to the



Farmers trying to salvage raw jute in an inundated char area of Bogura's Sariakandi upazila a couple of days ago. The district administration says the recent floods have damaged jute on around 10,500 hectares of land in Bogura.

PHOTO: MOSTAFA SHABUJ

# Import insecticide immediately

FROM PAGE 1

Private hospitals can do the same on humanitarian ground, said the HC bench of Justice Tariq Ul Hakim and Justice Md Shohrowardi.

The court will hold a further hearing on the matter on August 18 when it reopens after Eid vacation.

Earlier in the day, the HC summoned LGRD Secretary Helal Uddin Ahmed to appear before it and clarify as to who is responsible for

Counsels for both the city corporations say the responsibility lies with the government.

But Helal told the court that the city corporation authorities were tasked insecticide from China.

The court said the existing insecticide was not working and that import of effective insecticide was being delayed due to bureaucratic

The secretary said the government cannot import the insecticide as it issued licence to a company to do the job.

government, being the licensing authority, cannot go for the import

Helal later told the court the insecticide would be imported from a Chinese private firm, and the lot of work throughout the year. government cannot import directly from private entities.

arrived, they will run a lab test. And if the test finds nothing harmful, they will import the insecticide in 14 working days. **TRYING OUR BEST'** 

said once the sample insecticides

Amid concerns over a further spread of the disease, DSCC Mayor Sayeed Khokon said they were trying their best to control the outbreak by the first week of next month. "Efforts are on to prevent the

mosquito-borne disease and we are trying our best," the mayor told journalists at the health ministry yesterday. Citing a DGHS survey, he said, 10

wards of the DSCC were now free from dengue. The wards are 14, 15, 18, 22, 23, 29, 35, 42, 55 and 56. "If Aedes mosquitos are found

there again, we will take necessary steps," he said.

Contacted, Prof Dr ABM Abdullah said it was difficult to announce a particular area dengue-free.

"You can drive out mosquitos from a certain area, but there is no guarantee that they will not return to that place the next day," said Prof Abdullah, former dean and head of medicine at the Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujib Medical University.

Khokon's counterpart in the north Atiqul Islam said destroying the source of Aedes mosquito required a

deputy mayor and acting panel and reply to all questions form

Ghosh to help Bangladesh tackle the outbreak. Ghosh is expected to arrive on

Sunday, he said. Over the last few years, Kolkata City

population. About importing mosquito repellent, he said they would do so in

Health Minister Zahid Maleque, who is under fire for going to Malaysia on a family trip amid the dengue outbreak, yesterday avoided questions from journalists.

conference to brief journalists on the latest situation.

short and returned home yesterday.

He kept mum when journalists asked him about his trip when he went

programme at the ministry with the two mayors, experts and high government officials.

about his family trip during a national

Health Secretary Asadul Islam said the minister would hold a

### India wants

Mujibur Rahman.

Hasina directs

"I've already given various

Hasina, also AL president, said,

The PM made the comments while

She said Bangladesh had lost all

after the assassination of Father of

the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh

FROM PAGE 1

informed the matter to the civil aviation ministry, it asked the foreign ministry to seek a detailed technical proposal and sketch map from India," he told The

the ground on which it will be used, he said, adding that the civil aviation ministry was yet to receive any response. Once India submits the technical proposal, the civil aviation ministry

check whether Bangladesh's laws have any provision to allow any other country to use Bangladeshi land, he said. Contacted, Home Asaduzzaman Khan Kamal said he

"But my opinion is why should I give any Bangladeshi land to India? There

should be no question about it," he told

newspaper The Economic Times

historically been underdeveloped, the

"The state government had already

provided 72 acres of land to the AAI for construction of the new terminal building, runway and other necessary infrastructure," he said.

passengers per year, The Economic Times reported. Asked about the matter, Dhaka University International Relations' Prof Dr Imtiaz Ahmed said there were some airports that fall on the borders of two or even three countries. One of them,

for example, is Geneva International Airport situated both in Switzerland and France. "However, the context of South Asia is not comparable to that of

Europe. It is because of the structures of immigration, currency and politics," he told The Daily Star.

There are the questions of sovereignty, security and political implications, he

He, however, said if Bangladesh is to provide the land for the Agartala airport, its government must address the issues of security, sovereignty and commercial

"We need to see if both Bangladesh and India can jointly handle the

airport," he said. Dr Rozana Rashid, associate professor of international relations at Dhaka University, said though Bangladesh and India are good friends, a good number of Bangladeshi people have some level

of anti-India sentiments. "The government needs to be very cautious before taking any decision

meanwhile, said if it benefits people and the country economically and tradewise, allowing India to use Bangladesh's land for the purpose can be beneficial. But, sovereignty and security issues must be addressed, he said.

operational costs and the rates being charged by the depots resulted in the ICDs struggling to maintain operational efficiency, he said, adding that they were forced to revise the tariffs to save the BGMEA First Vice President MA The depots had earlier announced

The disparity in the increase in

the new charges would be effective from April 1, but postponed the decision following requests from the shipping ministry and the CPA. Insiders claim the request for postponement came from exporters, importers and freight forwarders, among others. The shipping ministry on April 1

this year formed an 11-member tariff committee headed by Shipping Ministry Joint Secretary Abdus Sattar Sheikh and held a meeting on the same day. The BICDA president said it was the

first meeting which came three years after the ICD Policy was formulated in June 2016. The tariff committee held three

meetings and formed another 13-member committee. The new committee, headed by Chattogram Port Authority (CPA) Member (Harbour and Marine) Captain M Shafiul Bari, then formed a sub-committee headed by CPA Assistant Terminal Manager (ATM) Ashraful Islam to work on the same issue.

"In several meetings of these committees, our voice was suppressed since we are the only service provider whereas the majority members are service takers," said Khan, adding that the issue of fixing ICD tariffs was delayed as the service takers always opposed any raise in the charges.

On July 25, BICDA President Nurul Qayyum Khan in a letter sent to the shipping ministry secretary stated that they waited for the ministry's steps in reviewing the charges, but the lack of progress led to the depots realise the newly revised tariffs.

Khan said since April, nothing had come of the committees formed by the shipping ministry and CPA to review tariffs.

Quoting the shipping ministry secretary, Bangladesh Freight Forwarders Association (BAFFA) Director Kabir Ahmed, who was present at the yesterday's meeting, said the committee would submit its report soon.

In yesterday's meeting, the issue of the ICD policy was also brought up and it was argued that ICDs cannot alone revise its charges.

Bangladesh Freight Forwarders Association (BAFFA) Director Kabir Ahmed said the ministry secretary who chaired the meeting urged BICDA not to enhance the tariffs since a committee

was working to fix those. He said BICDA could increase tariffs but should wait for the committee's

The 19 ICDs handled around 6.15 lakh TEUs (twenty-foot equivalent units) of export containers, 2.86 lakh TEUs import containers and 5.87 lakh TEUs empty containers in 2018-2019 fiscal year.

### 6 Ansar al Islam men indicted

US-based Bangladeshi blogger Avijit killing and rented a flat on Elephant Roy was murdered near the Teacher- Road to execute it. Student Centre of Dhaka University by a gang of assailants in an attack that also

left his wife severely wounded. Avijit's father Prof Ajay Roy filed the murder case against unidentified assailants with Shahbagh Police Station.

According to the charge sheet submitted to the court on March 14, banned militant outfit Ansar Al Islam targeted Avijit for his writings, especially for his books Obisshahser Dorshon (The Philosophy of Disbelief) and Biswasher Virus (The Virus of Faith).

According to counterterrorism officials, the intelligence wing of the militant outfit collected information from Avijit's friends, publishers and other sources about his possible date of return to Bangladesh.

After Avijit came to Dhaka during

the book fair in 2015, they planned the

The militants followed Avijit for several days before killing him on Dhaka University campus on February 26. Four people directly took part in the killing while others stayed nearby. Zia was present at the scene, they said.

During the investigation, Mozammel, Sohel and Arafat had separately made confessional statements before magistrates.

found investigators Though involvement of 12 people in the killing, six were left out of the charge sheet as details of five of them could not be known and the 6th suspect Mukul Rana, who was allegedly the operation commander of the murder, was killed in a "gunfight" with detectives in the Capital's Khilgaon area on June 19, 2016.

importing mosquito insecticide.

with the job and that the government had already allocated funds and provided manpower for importing the

tangle.

The court wondered why the

The two city corporation lawyers

Different private diagnostic centres in Dhaka city are also facing the pressure of pathology tests,

especially NS1 test, due to the huge

number of people suspected to have

the disease. Panic-stricken people are also rushing to hospitals to be tested for dengue, adding to the pressure hospitals and diagnostic centres are

Director of Shaheed Suhrawardy Medical College Hospital Uttam Kumar Barua said that when the disease outbreak had just begun, they had to conduct around 300 to 400

"But over the week or so, especially once the test was made free, we are having to conduct over a 1000 tests

He said only six lab technicians are working round the clock in rotation to conduct the tests. "We have already requested the health ministry to provide 15 more lab technicians so that they can handle such a pressure."

and some other public hospitals were also struggling to conduct the tests and deliver their reports on time.

patients be if they got their reports Uddin said there was a manpower shortage in the DMCH pathology department, which was causing the delay as the number of patients Sheikh Hasina," he said. suspected with dengue is huge.

DENGUE IN ALL DISTRICTS

Abdur Rashid, officer-in-charge of dead. Firoza was later shifted to DMCH. Sajib had long been stalking the Hatirjheel Police Station, said police

beating him up. He was later taken to DMCH for treatment.

arrested Sajib in March after Dulal filed a case against him on charge of sexually harassing his daughter.

He was released from jail on bail after a month, the OC said.

After wreaking havoc across the capital, dengue has now spread to all 64 districts of the country, which is a cause for countrywide alarm. A record 19,513 people have been infected till yesterday, including

3,464 outside Dhaka, the Directorate

General of Health Services (DGHS)

said, adding that 1,712 new dengue

cases were reported at hospitals in

the last 24 hours since 8:00am on Wednesday. Meanwhile, two dengue patients died in Suhrawardy Hospital and Mitford Hospital yesterday and the day before, with the death toll rising to at least 46 this year, according to

However, the DGHS put the death toll at 14.

#### 'NOT OUT OF CONTROL'

different hospital sources.

Awami League General Secretary Obaidul Quader yesterday said the prevailing dengue situation is alarming and difficult to deal with, but not yet out of control.

He made the remarks while delivering a speech at a photo show organised by Bangladesh Awami Jubo League, marking the Month of Mourning, at the Bangladesh Shilpakala Academy in the city, reports UNB. "We've taken this as a challenge.

We'll confront the situation under the leadership of Prime Minister Quader said there is nothing

"But they are trying their best," he unique in dengue cases in Bangladesh as it has spread in many other countries of the world.

## Father killed at daughter's wedding

leaving them critically injured," said Alamgir Hossain, brother-in-law of Dulal.

FROM PAGE 1

The two were rushed to the nearby Insaf Barakah Kidney & General Hospital, where doctors declared Dulal

girl, Alamgir told The Daily Star.

Guests at the wedding caught Sajib and handed him over to police after

Corporation has been working round the year to control Aedes mosquito

a "very short time", but did not give any date. MINISTER MUM

He also cancelled his planned press

Facing criticism over his failure to control the outbreak, he cut his trip

to inaugurate the 100-bed dengue unit at the Mitford Hospital in the capital. Later the minister attended a

There too he avoided all questions

He said they have invited Kolkata press conference in a day or two mayor of the health department Atin journalists.

# Long queues at pathology labs

FROM PAGE 1 "Why are you taking so long to deliver the blood test reports? We are not being able to start any treatment. The doctors have only prescribed paracetamol to my son who has been suffering from high fever for three

days," she continued. While they had to wait for a couple of hours in queue on Wednesday just to get the tests done, Ali, still suffering from high fever, has not yet received the reports -- even a day later.

Another patient with high fever, Nazrul Islam, had gone to the hospital, complying with advice from doctors to get a dengue detection test as soon as the body temperature rose.

"A doctor of the hospital asked me to get two tests done -- CBC and NS1 -- and to meet him after the tests," said Nazrul, adding that the doctor prescribed only paracetamol until

However, Nazrul had to wait in line for two hours in the hospital's pathology lab just to get a blood test. He then waited for two days for the results, which generally takes five to six hours. "I am lucky that I was not

diagnosed with dengue, but imagine

what would the condition of dengue

after two days," he said. During a visit to the hospital yesterday afternoon, many anxious guardians and patients were seen near the pathology lab, many of them shouting at the staffers due to the delay.

dengue tests a day.

Dhaka Medical College Hospital DMCH Assistant Director Nasir

Daily Star yesterday. The detail proposal should explain exactly where and how India wants the land, how much land is required and

will sit with the foreign ministry to

India and that any decision in this regard would come from the prime minister.

The Daily Star. The Airport Authority of India (AAI) had undertaken a Rs 438 crore project to upgrade the Agartala airport, which is renamed as Maharaja Bir Bikram Airport, to international standards by providing world-class facilities, Indian

reported on June 18. Expansion and upgradation of Maharaja Bir Bikram Airport is part of AAIs Rs 3,400 crore projects for the upgradation of various airports in the Indian northeastern region that has

newspaper said. Tripura Transport and Tourism Minister Pranajit Singha Roy said following the completion of the project, flights between Agartala and Dhaka, as well as other Bangladeshi cities like Chattogram and Sylhet, would be

operated.

According to AAI officials, the Agartala airport, which is located 20 km north of the capital city of Agartala, sits just along the Bangladesh border. It handled on an average nine lakh

viability.

about the matter," she said. Aviation expert Kazi Wahedul Alam,

However, the terms and conditions of exactly how it is going to happen must be very clear so that it does not lead to any problem in future, he added.

Minister knew about one such proposal from