



Conjoined twins separated after mega surgery

AFP, Dhaka

Bangladeshi twins who were joined at the head were recovering yesterday after Hungarian surgeons performed a marathon 30-hour operation to separate their skulls and brains.

The three-year-old twins, named Rabeya and Rukaya, suffered from a rare embryological disorder affecting an estimated one in every five to six million births.

They were "stable after the final separation," said Andras Csokay, a neurosurgeon with the Action for Defenceless People Foundation (ADPF) that organised the 35-strong Hungarian surgical team.

After the separation at Dhaka's Combined Military Hospital, Csokay's team began to cover the wound area with soft tissues generated by a tissue expansion process carried out in Hungary.

Rafiqul Islam, the father of the twins, was relieved and overjoyed.

"The doctors have separated my babies. I have seen them with my own eyes. They are now fine," said Islam, a teacher from the rural northwestern district of Pabna.

He praised the doctors and added: "I hope my daughters will fully recover and grow up healthy and have a normal life."

Before the surgery doctors had said there was only a 50 percent chance of the twins surviving.

According to ADPF, only a handful of operations to separate twins joined at the head have been successful.

The Hungarian charity was set up in 2002 by Csokay and plastic surgeon Gergely Pataki to provide free surgery to poor people in Hungary and abroad.

Islam and his wife approached the group for help in 2017.

In the first surgery phase in Bangladesh last year, the shared blood vessels of the twins' brains were separated in a 14-hour operation.

Then in a second six-month-long phase beginning in January, Rabeya and Rukaya moved to Budapest where doctors inserted an implant system to expand the scalp and soft tissue in their heads.

More than 40 plastic surgery interventions took place to fill the expanders, change the bandages and to perform laser and regenerative wound treatment.

ADPF has performed around 500 reconstructive surgery operations in Asia and Africa, including for Rohingya Muslim refugees in Bangladesh.

Oli urges SC to free Khaleda

UNB, Dhaka

Liberal Democratic Party President Oli Ahmed yesterday urged the Supreme Court to grant bail to BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia considering her age and contributions to the country.

"I request the judges of the Supreme Court to immediately release Khaleda Zia [on bail] for treatment considering her age, contributions and her husband Ziaur Rahman's contributions to the country," he said.

Oli Ahmed, who floated a new political platform -- Jatiya Mukti Manchah -- in a bid to free Khaleda and "restore" democracy in June, made the remarks at his office in Dhaka's Karwan Bazar.

Oli called upon the leaders and activists of BNP and Jatiya Mukti Mancha to get organised and be vocal to have Khaleda freed.

He urged the people to take to the streets with peaceful programmes like rallies and processions to mount pressure on the government to release Khaleda and hold fresh and fair national election.

Bir Bikram Oli said they would arrange a programme in Dhaka on August 6 discussing the country's overall situation.

Senior leaders of Kalyan Party, Jagpa and NDP were present at the press conference.

Oli's Mukti Mancha is formed consisting LDP, Kalyan Party, Jatiya Ganatantrik Party (Jagpa), Bangladesh Khelafat Majlish and Democratic National Movement.



A father with his daughters on the floor of the overcrowded Shaheed Suhrawardy Medical College Hospital yesterday. The girls have been in the hospital with dengue for the last five days.

PHOTO: PALASH KHAN

Experts wary of next three months

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"It was learnt in May last year that adulticides used for killing mosquitoes were not working and its cumulative effect has come this year," he said.

Prof Mahmudur said the number of Aedes mosquitoes found increased every year before but this year, all records were broken.

"Aedes mosquitoes breed in relatively clean water in and outside houses so we have to focus on those places,"

Since there is no effective insecticide, priority must be given on other methods, like destroying the breeding grounds, Prof Mahmudur said.

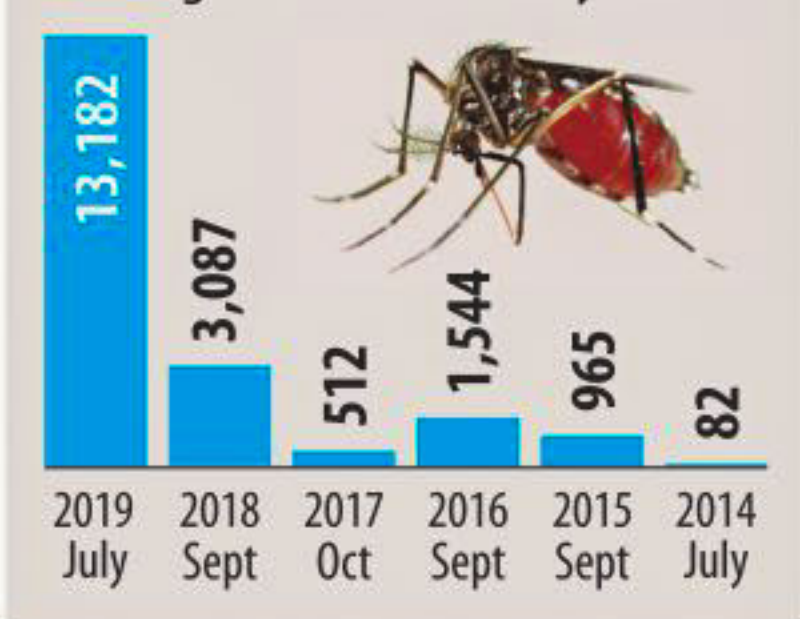
Micro planning like forming volunteer groups at local levels to encourage households to destroy the breeding grounds inside houses is important, he said, adding that city corporations would have to destroy the breeding grounds outside the houses.

Building awareness is very important, he said, adding, "If we fail to destroy the transmission chain, the situation will not improve ..."

Dengue patients must be kept under mosquito nets, he said.

Echoing him, Prof Kabirul Basar of Jahangirnagar University said community-based drives to destroy containers or pots where Aedes

Months that saw highest number of dengue cases in last 6 years



mosquitoes breed are important.

"We should not depend on city corporations entirely ... community leaders will have to take initiatives and purchase fumigators and sprays to destroy the mosquitoes and keep their own areas mosquito free," the entomologist said.

Without community drives, the situation would be hard to handle, he said.

"We in our Jahangirnagar University Housing Society bought fumigators and handheld sprays," he said.

"It is a war against Aedes mosquitoes and communities will have to unite

and participate ...," he said.

INFECTIONS EXCEED 21,000

A record 21,235 people have been diagnosed with dengue this year, including 3,464 outside Dhaka, the DGHS said.

In the 24 hours until Friday 8:00am, 1,687 new dengue cases have been reported.

Two pregnant women died in Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujib Medical University Hospital in Dhaka on Wednesday and yesterday while three people died in Mitford Hospital, in Noakhali, and Faridpur.

Maliha Mahfuz Anya, who was undergoing treatment at the Intensive Care Unit of the BSMMU, died around 2:30am yesterday, BSMMU Director Brig Gen AK Mahbubul Haque said.

Another pregnant woman Farjana died Wednesday morning while she was receiving treatment at the hospital, he added.

Railway employee Mosharraf Hossain Raju, 30, died yesterday after being diagnosed with dengue at a Noakhali hospital.

Anwar Hossain, 40, a human rights activist of Munshiganj died at Mitford Hospital.

Sharmin, 22, died at Faridpur Medical College Hospital on

Thursday, said Kamda Prashad Saha, superintendent of Fardipur Medical College Hospital.

According to sources in hospitals, at least 50 people have died of dengue this year. The DGHS, however, puts the figure at 14.

DNCC MAYOR Dhaka North City Corporation (DNCC) Mayor Atiqul Islam yesterday said a sample of insecticide would be brought from abroad in a day or two.

While addressing a programme in the capital's Uttara yesterday, he said, "From now on, we will be able to buy the pesticides to kill the mosquitoes. The quality of the chemical would be ensured by the authorities concerned of the government."

He said complying with the High Court directives, the chemical would be tested for effectiveness and then imported as soon as possible.

The High Court yesterday directed the two city corporations in Dhaka to import effective insecticides to eliminate mosquitoes from the capital.

It asked the government to support the city corporations after a dispute brewed between the two parties over who would bring in the insecticides.

Teacher held for molesting student in Bogura

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Bogura

An assistant teacher was arrested yesterday afternoon for allegedly molesting a 12-year-old female student during a class in Bogura's Shajahanpur.

The accused, Abdul Majid, a maths teacher in RRMU High School in the upazila, was held from the district's Sherpur upazila, said police.

The arrest came hours after the girl's father filed a case with Shajahanpur Police Station under the Women and Children Repression Prevention Act.

According to the case statement, Abdul Majid, 50, molested the girl on July 27 when she was sitting in the first row during a maths class at the school.

Following the incident, the girl's mother submitted a written complaint against him to the school's headmaster, it said.

Contacted, Jamal Uddin Khandakar, the headteacher, said their primary enquiry found Abdul Majid guilty. Based on that, the accused teacher was suspended.

Jamal also said the victim was not their student. She had failed in her primary terminal exams and was allowed to attend classes at the request of her parents.

Azim Uddin, officer-in-charge of Shajahanpur Police Station, said a district court sent the accused to jail yesterday.

Double trouble

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not afford. He earns no more than Tk 700 a day.

The hospital authorities said Idris might have to spend Tk 10,000 more for medical tests, food and other things during Rabbi's stay in the hospital.

Rabbi's mother Laily Begum said they had already spent over Tk 3,000 by that time for medical tests, medicines and transportation.

"We could no way arrange that much money. So we took him to Dhaka Medical College Hospital hoping to get a bed there."

The DMCH was, however, absolutely flooded with dengue patients, she recalled, adding, "We had no other option but to return home."

The next day, her son's condition worsened and at one point, he fainted. "I was so scared. For a moment, I thought I would lose him forever. It would not have happened had my son received treatment right away."

On Wednesday, they managed to get a bed on the corridor of Shaheed Suhrawardy Medical College Hospital.

Sitting on the bed yesterday, Rabbi was eating some grapes with brief pauses. With a cannula inserted into his left hand, he looked fragile.

Laily, despite being devastated for having passed sleepless nights by her son, was happy that Rabbi was recovering. She thanked the doctors there.

"This is the first time my son is eating something since he caught a fever on Monday," Laily said sitting next to him.

She said they had already spent well over Tk 7,000 for the treatment. "We took nearly a loan of Tk 10,000 from our neighbours. I don't know how we will pay the money back," she added.

Like them, many others, especially those from the low income group, were going through similar situation. For them dengue has come as a double blow: both physically and financially.

At a time when the country's public hospitals are grappling with a record number of dengue cases, these people can't afford to get treatment at private hospitals.

Take the case of six-year-old Rahim Kha for another example.

Lying on another bed on the public hospital's corridor, the boy, who lost his father five years ago, was recovering from dengue.

His mother said he was diagnosed with the mosquito-borne disease after they came to visit one of their relatives in Mirpur from Pirojpur.

Later, Rahim had been admitted to a clinic for two days.

"For those two days, the bills jumped to over Tk 6,000. I borrowed the money from my brother and had my son released from the clinic immediately," she said.

"I don't earn anything. I had to bring my son here," she said, adding, "I've already spent a hefty sum. I will have to spend my land to pay the money back."

Eid-ul-Azha

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son Ismail, who willingly submitted to the will of his father to please Allah.

But the Almighty in His benign mercy spared Hazrat Ismail (AS) and instead sent a ram to be sacrificed.