

Get tested for dengue before leaving city

Doctors urge holidaymakers going to village homes for Eid

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Eminent doctors yesterday called upon city dwellers to remain extra-cautious while celebrating Eid-ul-Azha outside Dhaka, as they feared that the disease may spread in rural areas during the upcoming vacation.

They suggested all holidaymakers from Dhaka as well as other cities -- particularly those who have contracted any kind of fever or cough -- to get tested for dengue immediately before leaving for their village

Terming the current dengue outbreak "close to an epidemic situation", they urged the government to strengthen its mosquito control programme and carry out the activities in rural areas before and during the Eid vacation, set to begin next week.

They made the suggestions at a press conference on dengue prevention, organised by Doctors for Health and Environment (DHEN), a voluntary organisation of doctors, at Bangladesh Shishu Kalyan Parishad auditorium in the

Prof Quazi Rakibul Islam, general secretary of the organisation, said the Aedes mosquito-borne viral disease has already spread to all 64 districts -- mostly urban areas -- of the country.

"In the meantime, several lakh people will leave Dhaka to celebrate Eid and many of them may carry the virus. We suspect that the rural people will be at risk of getting infected," he added.

Prof Rakibul, also the head of paediatrics department at Greenlife Medical College, said several anthropologists and doctors warned the government about the dengue outbreak much earlier and suggested to take steps, but the authorities did not pay any head.

"As a result, thousands of people are now infected with the disease. A number of them have died already. And the situation has gone out of control," he said.

In a written statement, the doctor also demanded punishment for those responsible for the failure in mosquito control. Echoing Rakibul, Prof Rashid-E-

Mahbub, former president of Bangladesh Medical Association (BMA), said dengue fever has spread across the country due to negligence. "All of us have to take responsibility...

The government is playing a blame game, which is unexpected. Now, we need to solve two problems -- treat dengue patients and control the mosquitoes," he added. Prof Rashid also said the training which

the government has provided to doctors is only Dhaka based. But now, the disease has spread across the country, so the authorities have to change their plans. He demanded providing dengue

diagnosis services free of cost at all hospitals in the country. Asked whether the outbreak has turned

into an epidemic, DHEN President SEE PAGE 4 COL 3

Jailed for love

HC grants bail to Harijan man convicted in kidnapping case filed by upper caste in-laws STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The High Court has observed that there is no bar in the law of the land to the marriage between a groom and a bride of higher and lower castes.

However, difference between the castes in society is a reality, the HC bench of Justice M Enayetur Rahim and Justice Md Mostafizur Rahman said.

The bench came up with the observation on Thursday while hearing a bail appeal filed by one Tushar Das, a member of Harijan community (marginalised or low-caste Hindu) in Shariatpur. Tushar was convicted and sentenced to 14 years' imprisonment by a lower court in a case

filed on charge of kidnapping his wife Shusmita Debnath Aditi, member of a Brahman family. There is an apprehension of making

families isolated from society if they allow marriage between members of higher and lower classes. But, the law of the land is different, the court said.

Justice Rahim said it cannot be ignored that the caste issue persists in society. "It needs to be considered that if the father of a daughter accepts her marriage to a man from another caste, his family might be shunned by society."

After hearing the bail petition, the HC bench granted bail to Tushar Das in the SEE PAGE 4 COL 3

Taps run dry in MADHYA BADDA

Residents suffering from water crisis for over two years

| MATHEWS CHIRAN |

For more than two years, residents of Madhya Badda have been enduring water crisis.

The situation persists particularly in Post Office Road area, one of the densely populated parts of Badda, where over 2,000 people live.

The crisis became acute in the last couple of months due to irregular supply and flow of water in pipeline, said locals.

Post Office Road is on the east of Pragati Sarani and those who live nearby get water from Water Supply and Sewerage Authority (Wasa), though not frequently. Wasa supplies the water from its treatment plant in Sayedabad.

But further the Post Office Road goes, scarcer the supply gets. "We have to constantly think

about saving water. There are days we have to choose between using water for cooking and taking a shower," Nodi Akhtar, a housewife, told The Daily Star recently. Desperate, residents have

started to harvest rainwater. Many also fetch water from nearby areas. Md Jahangir, a private service

holder, said, "Sometimes, people don't want to share water with us. Can we really blame them?" "Even in this humid weather,

I cannot take a shower before going to work or after returning home. I have to constantly think about saving water," said a frustrated Jahangir. Carrying containers filled with water from other areas and

are also taking a toll on locals. Many complained of back pain and numbness in lower limbs. Md Nuruzzaman, an elderly resident, said, "There are times we get water from the supply

line, if we're lucky, in the dead

climbing stairs on a daily basis



of night. We are literally passing sleepless nights to get water. This entire Madhya Badda. has been going on since before Ramadan.

According to locals, they have been complaining about the issue to the councillor and Wasa officials, but to no avail.

Wasa officials said there is scarcity of water in the Sayedabad pipeline and the supply is not

A long queue of buckets in front of a mosque on Post Office Road. PHOTO: COLLECTED adequate enough to reach the

In addition, unlike nearby areas, Post Office Road does not have a station to pump out groundwater. Residents said if

have to depend on supply water from Sayedabad plant. Contacted, Executive Engineer Emranul Islam

Wasa installs one, they will not

Wasa's MODS Zone-8 (Natun Bazar) said, "Madhya Badda needs a water pump station." The crisis becomes acute in dry season as water flow in Sayedabad pipeline weakens, he added.

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Asked when Wasa will install a water pump, he said they are ready to set up one but there is no open space left in the area. Also, acquiring land for that purpose is not Wasa's responsibility. If the local representative can provide a piece of land, Wasa can proceed with its plan, he added.

Among the 18 new wards of Dhaka North City Corporation, Madhya Badda fell under ward-37 after this year's councillor election. The current councillor is

Jahangir Alam. Contacted, Jahangir said he would talk about the issue in person. But he turned out to be difficult to reach. This

correspondent went to his office on DIT Road multiple times; he was not there. The councillor finally

answered his phone after many attempts. He said they are trying to find an open space to install a pump

station with Wasa's help. "We have spoken to Wasa officials about the crisis," he said.

He also added that they have found a piece of land and some parts of it is khas (governmentowned) land. "However, a local claims ownership and we're looking into the matter to determine which part of the land belongs to the government so that we can set up a water pump there."

He said they will be able to finish the process within a month.

PRABIR DAS

Adding to the list of unique safety measures undertaken by bikers, a father strapped his son to his waist using a scarf. The photo was taken from Paribagh yesterday.

Effective insecticide arriving soon

Quader urges all to remain patient

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Awami League General Secretary Obaidu Quader yesterday called upon people to remain calm, saying that the process of bringing effective insecticide to eliminate Aedes mosquitoes is underway. Quader, also road transport and bridges

minister, made the call while addressing a dengue prevention programme in front of AL's central office on Bangabandhu Avenue. "We are consulting with experts so that

no ineffective insecticide enters the country. Please, have a little patience," Quader said. The Awami League leader also called upon people to come forward to tackle the

dengue crisis through united efforts. Responding to a query on whether the dengue fever has taken an epidemic turn in the country, Quader said, "We cannot deny the reality that dengue has spread all

over the country. We have taken the issue

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina has also called upon people from all walks of life SEE PAGE 4 COL 5

seriously."

Bangladesh set an example of failure in dengue prevention

Manna calls the West Bengal situation a success STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Nagorik Oikya yesterday slammed the government's negligence in preventing dengue outbreak, easing the sufferings of flood affected people, stopping rape and food adulteration.

"All districts of the country are currently gripped by dengue fever and the death toll has risen alarmingly, but the health minister and both mayors of the Dhaka city corporations are deceiving people -- without taking any effective measures against mosquitoes," said the party convener Mahmudur Rahman Manna.

Speaking at a press conference in the capital's Jatiya Press Club, he claimed that the insecticide currently being used to kill mosquitoes is not effective.

"Ineffective insecticide has been bought only to provide unfair privileges to a company, though various newspapers in the last two-three years published reports about it," he said, adding that the authorities concerned are yet to import effective insecticide.

Citing the prime minister's directive on dengue, he said, "If the prime minister directive is needed in such a case, then there is no moral right for the two mayors of Dhaka and the health minister as well as others concerned to hold their posts."

He said that neighbouring West Bengal has set a good example of preventing dengue fever while Bangladesh has set an example of failure in the case.

"Rather, the government is illogically blaming opposition parties to cover their negligence," he claimed. Manna demanded free treatment for dengue patients and regular anti-

mosquito operations in every union across the country.

Citing severe sufferings of flood affected people in the country, he said some 120 persons have died due to the government's failure to SEE PAGE 4 COL 5

DHAKA TODAY

STUDY CIRCLE

Political Economy of Bangladesh Organiser: Banglar Pathshala Venue: RC Majumder Auditorium, University of Dhaka Time: 11am

SESSION

Learn From the Chevening Scholars Organiser: Youth Opportunities Venue: Janata Tower, Karwan Bazar Time: 12pm

DISCUSSION

Time: 11am

Dengue, Public Health & Our Urban Planning

Organiser: Bangladesh Institute of **Planners**

Venue: Planners Tower, Bangla Motor

Our Responsibilities to Prevent Rumours Venue: VIP Lounge,

Jatiya Press Club

Time: 3pm

DISCUSSION

DEMONSTRATION Demanding solutions for dengue **Organiser: Revolutionary Workers** Party of Bangladesh Venue: Jatiya Press Club Time: 4pm

CONFERENCE Communication Summit

Organiser: Bangladesh **Brand Forum** Venue: Le Meridien Dhaka Time: 9am

Stalker confesses to killing bride's father

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A murder case was filed early yesterday against the stalker who stabbed the father of a bride to death and seriously injured her mother in the capital's Moghbazar on Thursday. Sujon Mia, brother of the bride, filed the case with

Hatirjheel Police Station, accusing Sajib Ahmed Rokey. Rokey was caught after stabbing Dulal Mia and his

wife Firoza Khatun at their daughter's wedding at a local community centre. He confessed to killing Dulal and stabbing his wife

before a Dhaka court yesterday. After recording his confessional statement, the court sent him to jail, said investigation officer of the case, Sub-inspector Abdur Rouf. The IO said Rokey admitted to them that he carried

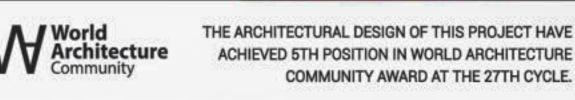
out the attack as the family did not want to marry their daughter off to him. Meanwhile, the condition of Firoza, who has been

undergoing treatment at Dhaka Medical College Hospital, is still critical. Sujon said his mother needed four bags of blood yesterday.

"I'm at a loss about whether I should bury my father or SEE PAGE 4 COL 1







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