



Aircraft stay grounded as dense fog heavily obscured the lone runway at Dhaka airport yesterday morning. Flight operations were suspended for over an hour due to the condition. The situation eventually improved in the afternoon and planes started taking off and landing while the runway remained lit up as a precautionary measure, inset. PHOTO: ANISUR RAHMAN

A much needed upgrade

Mosquito Control Department to conduct research on vectors

HELEMUL ALAM

With the aim to curb the mosquito population, the government is set to modernise the Mosquito Control Department.

This department will carry out research on vectors and plans to manage them accordingly. These planning and research outcomes will be provided to all city corporations, districts, upazilas and union parishads, Local Government Division sources said.

It will take around five months to complete the required upgradation, they said.

A meeting -- comprising all stakeholders and experts -- will be held shortly to take the final decision on it, said an official of the LGD.

A taskforce comprising relevant experts will also be formed to provide necessary guidelines on existing works for completing the enhancement of the department, a draft proposal suggests.

According to experts, as dengue fever has already spread across the country, a nationally integrated vector control guideline and research centre have become imperative to bring diseases like dengue under control.

Experts said there is no integrated vector control research centre and guideline in the country to conduct research work on vectors that spread diseases.

There are some guidelines for some vector borne diseases like malaria and kala-azar but integrated vector management guideline is very essential, they said.

"A national vector control guideline and its proper implementation are necessary to control Aedes mosquito population sustainably," said Prof Kabirul Bashar, an entomologist of Jahangirnagar University.

He said a separate institute to curb the spread of mosquitoes is also very important.

Prof Bashar said at the vector control research centre (VCRC) they will conduct research work and regularly share updated information to authorities concerned.

Not only mosquitoes, the VCRC will carry out research on all kinds of vectors like sun fly (which spreads kala-azar) and bed bug, he said.

Prof Bashar said there is no national research centre in Bangladesh to carry out studies on insects that spread different diseases.

"A complete research centre is extremely important considering the current situation," he said.

Mosquito Control Department -- which can play a vital role in research and planning after being modernised -- is currently in a shabby state.

"Dhaka Mosquito Control Scheme was established in order to eradicate malaria at the time. It was a vibrant organisation with a strong workforce and played an effective role in keeping the mosquito population

under control," said Giasuddin, storekeeper of the department.

Some 338 contingency workers, appointed under the mosquito control scheme, were regularised under the ministry of health in 1972, he said. Back then, extensive work -- including conducting drive against mosquitoes, their larvae and breeding grounds, along with research work related to mosquito control activities in Dhaka -- were carried out.

However, once the department was brought under the Local Government, Rural Development and Cooperatives Ministry in 1981-1982, and subsequently under the direct purview of Dhaka City Corporation, it lost the essence it was empowered for.

A recent survey conducted by the Institute of Epidemiology, Disease Control and Research (IEDCR) recently has found the presence of Aedes albopictus outside Dhaka.

The IEDCR survey, which was completed last month, was carried out in Barishal, Meherpur and Kushtia. According to the final survey report, in Gangni of Meherpur there were 44.5 percent Aedes albopictus and one percent Aegypti.

In Kushtia's Chatrapara, there was 65 percent albopictus and no Aedes aegypti.

Though normally, Aedes aegypti is responsible for spreading dengue in urban areas, albopictus are spreading dengue outside the cities, experts said.

According to experts, as dengue fever has already spread across the country, a nationally integrated vector control guideline and research centre have become imperative to bring diseases like dengue under control.

Prof Meerjady Sabrina Flora, director of IEDCR, said, "We have to focus on destroying the breeding sources [of the mosquitoes] across the country and it will have to be done in a sustainable manner."

It is not a one-off issue and Aedes in our country is now endemic -- for which, yearlong efforts will have to be undertaken, she said.

Prevalence of Aedes albopictus is higher in rural areas, though both aegypti and albopictus breed in clean water.

"So, we have to identify places and apply insecticide accordingly to kill mosquitoes and larvae," she added.

Stories of struggle and success at BYLC Youth Carnival 2019

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Due to scarcity of information, Osama Bin Noor found it hard to look for opportunities that could match his ambition as a student.

This prompted him to act. In 2012, he opened a Facebook page and started posting links of higher education opportunities available at home and abroad.

His friends also started to contribute by sharing links and soon the page took off.

Gathering courage from the success, he and his friends developed a website and named it "Youth Opportunities".

It is now one of the largest online platforms in the country for seeking opportunities.

Anyone, especially students, can get necessary information regarding higher education, job-related opportunities, competitions, conferences and fellowships from the platform.

Osama said, "What I felt [back then] was that Bangladesh has an overwhelmingly young population and the youth should know what opportunities are out there for them."

He was sharing his thoughts at a plenary session of "BYLC Youth Carnival 2019" yesterday.

The session, titled "Stories of Hope and

Action", gathered young and successful entrepreneurs on one platform to speak.

At the session, BD Assistant co-founder Umma Kulsum said the youth should acquire self-esteem and confidence to be successful.

Consistency and timeliness is key in this regard. Chalking out day-to-day plans and executing them on time is essential for success, she said.

BD Assistant is a Rangpur-based organisation that works for developing skills among school dropouts, she added.

Speaking at the same session, YY Ventures founder and managing director Shazeem M Khairul Islam said trust in co-workers is essential for achieving collective goal. In addition to this, one needs to have a clear understanding of what he or she is going to do.

Young people should discuss their thoughts and ideas with others, especially those who are more experienced, he added.

Wedding Diary Founder and CEO Prito Reza moderated the session.

"BYLC Youth Carnival 2019" is an initiative of Bangladesh Youth Leadership Center (BYLC). The two-day carnival kicked off yesterday at the capital's Government College of Physical

Education. BYLC organised the carnival with support from Manusher Jonno Foundation and UKaid.

Plenary sessions, workshops, problem-solving sessions, film screenings, and exhibitions are highlights of the carnival. Some 8,000 youths from all over the country have registered for the event.

Addressing the opening ceremony yesterday, BYLC Governing Board Chairperson Akhter Matin Chaudhury said BYLC's main objective is to make the youth aware of the principles of leadership and provide them with training and educate them to this end.

A good leader is one who is able to balance between highest levels of nobility, said Sudipto Mukherjee, UNDP country director in Bangladesh, adding a leader has to be competent and humble.

Speaking at the ceremony, Youth and Sports Ministry Secretary Akhter Hossain said about one third of the country's population are youths. It is a great advantage for Bangladesh. It is thus important to work for the youths because they possess the best potential, he said.

Alongside government initiatives, non-

SEE PAGE 4 COL 1

Chief justice stresses coordination among state organs

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

There is no alternative to coordination of three organs of the state for greater interest of the nation, in making economic progress and for continuation of overall development, said Chief Justice Syed Mahmud Hossain yesterday.

"Friendly relations among the three organs -- legislative, executive and judiciary -- are essential for strengthening and flourishing of democracy and the rule of law," he said.

He made the remarks while speaking as chief guest at the 34th annual conference of Bangladesh Ain Samity at Science Annex Bhaban of Dhaka University.

He said the role of the judiciary is very vital in the democratic government system.

Terming the lawyers "social engineers", CJ Syed Mahmud Hossain said, "Judges, lawyers, and students of law have a very important role in establishing justice."

He said the roles of judges, lawyers, teachers and students of law, human rights groups, civil society, and volunteer organisations are very important in establishing the rule of law and protecting fundamental rights of the people.

The members of Bangladesh Ain Samity are proving themselves in national and international arenas through their professional excellence, he said, adding that they have played a vital role in building the country and its overall progress.

Attorney General Mahbubey Alam, the CJ's wife Samina Khaleque, Bangladesh Ain Samity's outgoing president Advocate AKM Afzal Ul-Munir and its outgoing general secretary Superintendent of Police Mohammad Mahfuzur Rahman Al-Mamun, among others, spoke at the programme.



Right, Awami League mayoral aspirant Atiqul Islam submits his nomination form for the election to Dhaka North City Corporation at party president's Dhanmondi office yesterday. BNP's Tabith Awal submitted his at the party office in Naya Paltan the same day.



PHOTO: COLLECTED



National Professor Anisuzzaman and Foreign Minister AK Abdul Momen, among many others, attended Sir Fazle Hasan Abed's qulkhwani yesterday. PHOTO: COURTESY

A lifetime of lifting people out of poverty

Noted personalities recall Sir Fazle Hasan Abed's contributions

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Each of the organisations founded by Sir Fazle Hasan Abed is dedicated to the welfare of people, said National Professor Anisuzzaman yesterday.

"His [Sir Abed] immense contribution is launching a philanthropic organisation, and to support that endeavour he founded several others," Prof Anisuzzaman said at the qulkhwani of Sir Abed -- founder of Brac, one of the world's leading development organisations.

While commemorating his great contribution to society, Prof Anisuzzaman further said, "Despite being showered with major honours and recognition at home and abroad, he remained modest till the end."

Sir Abed's qulkhwani was held at Gulshan Central Mosque after Asr prayers, according to a press release.

Nobel laureate Dr Muhammad Yunus, Foreign Minister AK Abdul Momen, eminent jurist Dr Kamal Hossain, former finance minister AMA Muhith, renowned

SEE PAGE 4 COL 1

Don't hold 'manipulated polls'

Oikya Nap President Pankaj Bhattacharya to govt

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Veteran politician and freedom fighter Pankaj Bhattacharya yesterday asked whether citizens can exercise their voting rights during the tenure of the current government, under which several "controversial" polls have been held.

Speaking at a rally in front of National Museum in the capital, the Oikya Nap president also told the government not to arrange any such election in the future that is "controlled by its administration".

Civic platform Sammito Samajik Andolon (SSA) and Anandan, a cultural organisation, jointly arranged the event as part of their Victory Day celebration.

"We fought the Liberation War to break free from the then communal Pakistan and form a non-communal Bangladesh. But could we stick to that path?" wondered Pankaj.

"We separated from Pakistan to establish people's right to vote, but can people freely

exercise that right at present?" he asked.

"I warn the government not to arrange any manipulated vote in future," he added.

The senior politician also said the country is moving forward fast in terms of economy, but the fact remains that inequality and gap among the rich and poor are also increasing simultaneously -- contradicting the spirit of Liberation War.

"We must now ponder whether this type of development is necessary for the people," he said.

Noted cultural personality Laila Hasan said the anti-liberation and communal forces are trying to rise once again in the country. Youths of the nation will have to remain cautious and resist these forces, she said.

"We tried to build the country imbued with the spirit of Liberation War, but unfortunately we failed. Now it's your turn. We are giving you [youths] the

SEE PAGE 4 COL 4