



## Take steps to curb seasonal diseases: PMO

BSS, Dhaka

The Prime Minister's Office (PMO) yesterday issued a set of directives to the authorities concerned for taking necessary measures to address seasonal diseases in summer and monsoon and ensuring smooth services for people during the upcoming Ramadan.

The directives came from a high-level meeting held at the PMO with Prime Minister's Principal Secretary Dr Ahmad Kaikaus in the chair.

The meeting instructed the Health Services Division to take measures for preventing seasonal diseases -- including dengue and chikungunya.

It also asked the Local Government Division (LGD) to eliminate mosquitoes -- including Aedes, Culex and Anopheles -- by procuring

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## WHAT'S THE HUDDLE FOR?

These street vendors sell snacks and water when vehicles are stuck in traffic or red light. But when the car engines start, they take a break from work to play ludo on a smartphone. Squatting on the footpath with their stock on the side, the vendors enjoy a small respite from their daily grind. The photos were taken yesterday.

PHOTO: PRABIR DAS

# Metro rail to get special police unit

MOHAMMAD JAMIL KHAN

The government is planning to form a separate police unit to ensure security at metro rail stations which are currently under construction.

A proposal for a 809-member unit, "Mass Rapid Transit (MRT) Police Force" was approved by the home ministry in March last year. According to the proposal, submitted by Police Headquarters, a total of 104 police outposts will be set up in each stoppage of metro rail.

The home ministry sent the proposal to public administration ministry for its approval of the unit with the mentioned manpower, according to officials.

"The proposal is now pending with public administration ministry," SM Aktaruzzaman, additional DIG (O&M) of Police Headquarters (PHQ), told The Daily Star recently.

Asked about the necessity of setting up police outposts in each stoppage, he said there will be ATM booths, equipment, and small stores in each station.

The new unit will ensure that the establishment remains safe alongside the people passing through, added the police official.

Police Headquarters' initial proposal to the home ministry demanded a manpower of 1,039 officials for the MRT police force.

Following the proposal, the ministry held a meeting on July 16 last year.

Presided over by Additional

Secretary (Police & NTMC) of Public Security Division, the meeting approved a manpower of 809 people, and decided that a Deputy Inspector General (DIG) rank officer will be appointed chief of the unit, said ministry sources.

Afterwards a forwarding letter was

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sent to the public administration ministry on November 12 last year and now it's pending for approval.

Construction work of six metro rail lines is underway at the capital with the government aiming to complete it by 2030.

The six lines will create a 128.74km

metro rail network, which will have 104 stations -- 53 underground and 51 elevated, according to Dhaka Mass Transit Company Limited.

Additional DIG Aktaruzzaman said initially they had submitted a proposal to the ministry in 2018 demanding an increase in manpower of the existing railway police force.

"But Dhaka Mass Rapid Transit Development Project's director wanted a separate police unit for its maintenance. They pursued the higher authorities in this regard," said Aktaruzzaman.

Besides that, the secretary of ministry of the road transport and bridges also sent a letter to the secretary of home ministry requesting formation of a separate MRT police unit on December 19, 2018.

As metro rail is a novel concept in the country and a high profile transit project, a special unit is necessary to maintain order, said police officials.

"The prime minister was also interested in the formation of a special MRT police unit and we are hopeful we'll get the approval soon," said Aktaruzzaman.

But it will still take some time to get the unit functioning, as a new unit also needs a law and curriculum, he added.

The MRT police unit proposal also includes setting up sub-headquarters in each of the metro rail depot and sub-office at interchange spots.

Among the manpower, the unit

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## SAGAR-RUNI MURDER HC drops petition from hearing list

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A High Court bench yesterday dropped from its hearing list a petition filed by Tanvir Rahman, seeking cancellation of trial proceeding against him in journalist couple Sagar Sarowar and Meherun Runi murder case.

The bench of Justice M Enayetur Rahim and Justice Md Mostafizur Rahman passed the order as Deputy Attorney General Amit Talukdar raised questions on the jurisdiction of this bench over hearing the matter.

DAG Amit told the bench that it has jurisdiction over dealing with the writ petition, but the petition of

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## WASH FACILITIES IN 4 DISTRICTS

# 98pc healthcare centres lacking, says govt study

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

In a government study conducted in Kushtia, Jhenidah, Khulna and Jashore, it was found that over 98 percent healthcare centres in the districts have no proper water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) facilities.

Unveiled yesterday, the report is based on Directorate General of Health Services' survey in the districts. The study found that 100 percent of surveyed healthcare facilities in Kushtia, Jhenidah, Khulna and Gazipur and 98 percent healthcare facilities in Jashore and Benapole have fallen in "level 1".

"Level 1 indicates that access to WASH within these healthcare facilities is very limited or non-existent," said the study.

"In these facilities at level-1, human faeces are contained within a pit or tank, but that tank remains accessible to human and animal (insect, rodent etc) contact," it added.

Public health expert Dr Abu Jamil

Faisal presented the keynote paper at the consultation workshop held at a hotel in the capital.

National Technical Committee, Directorate General of Health Services, and Dutch development organisation SNV jointly organised the programme.

Though Bangladesh has made significant progress in the development of its healthcare system, there are very few initiatives to improve WASH, said Faisal.

Access to WASH facilities in healthcare is a fundamental component of Universal Health Coverage (UHC) and underpins the delivery of safe, quality health services for all.

According to the findings of the study, only one healthcare facility in Gazipur falls in the highest level-4, which indicates that it has hand washing station with running water from a tap, and is located within an accessible distance from the point of healthcare.

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