

Univ teacher first dengue death this yr

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The country witnessed the first death from dengue this year yesterday, when a university teacher succumbed to the disease.

Sayedna Nasrin Bably, an assistant professor of history at Jagannath University and wife of Deputy Attorney General Abdullah Al Mahmud Bashar, died around 4am at a private hospital in Dhaka, DAG Bashar said in a Facebook post.

Another DAG, AKM Amin Uddin Manik, told The Daily Star that Sayeeda was admitted to the hospital with high fever on June 20. She was shifted to the ICU, after her condition deteriorated. Later, she was put on life support, DAG Amin said.

According to Directorate General of Health Services data, 29 dengue patients were hospitalised till 8am yesterday. A total of 565 dengue patients have been admitted to hospitals since January, of which 32 were hospitalised outside Dhaka.

Among the patients, 131 are now undergoing treatment, while 434 have recovered.

Last year, 1,01,354 cases were recorded in Bangladesh, and at least 179 people diagnosed with the mosquito-borne disease died.



Gauranga Ghosh used to bring milk from Nawabganj and sell it to sweet shops in Old Dhaka for Tk 65 a kg to make a living, but with the ongoing lockdown, shops are closed. He is now forced to sell the milk from a van to residents of the area for a lower price. The photo was taken yesterday from Shakhari Bazar area.

PHOTO: PALASH KHAN

SAUDI, KUWAIT-BOUND WORKERS Quest for a Pfizer jab

Aspiring migrants make arduous journey to capital amid lockdown

JAMIL MAHMUD

When Rustom Ali received a text message on Tuesday afternoon confirming his Pfizer vaccination date and venue, he was at home in Cox's Bazar, about 400 kilometers away from the vaccination centre in the capital.

Thinking about the lockdown situation and that he needed to be at Dhaka Medical College Hospital on time, Rustom along with five other aspirant migrant workers from his area headed for Dhaka that evening. He and the others had obtained new employment visas of Saudi Arabia.

Rustom (49), said they took a CNG-run auto rickshaw from Matarbari of Maheshkhali and reached Badarkhali of Chakaria. From there, they took another CNG-run auto-rickshaw and reached near Chattogram city.

In Chattogram, they joined four to six other aspirant migrant workers and all of them headed for Dhaka in a rented bus at night. Yesterday, Rustom and others had the first dose of Pfizer at DMCH.

"I was in desperate need of the vaccine," Rustom said, adding getting two doses of Pfizer will help him save about Tk 70,000 which is required for hotel quarantine bill in Saudi Arabia for non-vaccinated foreigners.

Rustom said as he could not pay hotel quarantine fee, he earlier missed a flight in June, hoping he can get the second dose dated on August 5 at DMCH before flying to Saudi Arabia.

To get the Pfizer vaccine, migrant workers -- especially those from distant parts of the country -- are having to endure challenging journey overnight to reach Dhaka, since public transport is not available amid the nationwide lockdown.

Eligible migrant workers can get Pfizer only at seven centres in the capital since the vaccine is not available outside Dhaka due to absence of storage facility, according to health officials.

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Road crashes killed 398 in June: report

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

At least 398 people were killed and 423 were injured in 327 road accidents in the last month, said Roads Safety Foundation.

Of the victims, 329, which is 82.66 percent of the total deaths, were between 18 and 65 years old, the most productive segment of the population, it said.

Of the total accidents, the highest 37.93 percent involved motorcycles, which killed 151 persons.

Youngsters, including those who are underage, often drive motorcycles recklessly, causing road accidents, it said, adding that a comprehensive measure is required to control road crashes.

The organisation prepared the report

compiling media reports, said a press release. Faulty vehicles, reckless driving, operation of slow-moving vehicles on highways, violation of rules by road users were among the reasons behind road crashes, it said.

In June, there were some restrictions on operation of public transport. Despite that, more than 13 people were killed every day, which is alarming, the organisation said.

Analysing the road crashes, the organisation said 35.16 percent of accidents took place on national highways, 38.83 percent on regional highways, while rest in district and city roads.

A total of 522 vehicles were involved in road crashes, of which 142 were bikes, 101 three-wheelers, 87 trucks and 63 buses.

Two arrested with 'magic mushroom'

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Rapid Action Battalion yesterday arrested two youths with "magic mushroom", a psychedelic drug, from the capital's Hatirjheel area.

The arrestees are -- Nagib Hasan Arnab (25) who works at a university in Canada, and Taifur Rashid Jahid (24), a private university student in Bangladesh.

"In May 2021, Nagib brought the magic mushrooms bar from Canada in a bid to sell it in Bangladesh. Later Nagib and Taifur sold those bars to different places at a good price," Commander Khandaker Al Moin, Rab's Legal and Media wing director, told a press briefing at Rab media centre yesterday.

Rab seized five bars of magic mushrooms, containing 120 slices, and two bottles of foreign liquor from their possession. Each of the bars contains 2,500 mg psilocybin [magic mushrooms].

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COUNTRYWIDE 'STRICT LOCKDOWN' More people, vehicles out and about on seventh day

STAR REPORT

On the seventh day of the government's "strict lockdown", pressure of vehicles and public movement increased in the capital as well as in different districts yesterday.

Private cars, rickshaws, auto-rickshaws and motorbikes were seen dominating the streets, though operation of public transport remained shut.

Vehicles were even seen stuck at different traffic signals, including those at Asadgate, Panthapath, Kalyanpur, Mohammadpur, Malibagh, Kakrail and Mirpur areas.

Many people were seen walking due to shortage of transport options.

Pressure of vehicles and public movement forced law enforcers to put extra effort to deal with the situation.

In Dhaka metropolitan area, police arrested 1,102 people for violating the lockdown. Besides, 245 were fined Tk 1,71,980, and 804 vehicles were fined Tk

18,68,500 yesterday, said Iftekharul Islam, additional deputy commissioner (media) of Dhaka Metropolitan Police.

As banks, industrial factories and other emergency services are open, public movement is rising. But police have taken a tough stance against those who come out without proper reason, he said.

Along with law enforcers, people's representatives at different spots conducted awareness campaigns.

A man on behalf of a local ward councillor was seen delivering awareness messages at the capital's North Circular Road area yesterday noon.

Sultan Miah, who sells fruits at the capital's Hatirpool area, said, "I've no alternative but to come out, because I've to earn a living selling fruits. But I noticed many here roam around the streets without any reason."

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'Mass media enjoys optimum freedom'

Info minister tells virtual session

BSS, Dhaka

Mass media in Bangladesh enjoys optimum freedom, more than in many other countries, Information and Broadcasting Minister Dr Hasan Mahmud said yesterday.

"Mass media here enjoys more freedom than in many other countries across the globe. We are a role model for many developing nations," he said while unveiling a book title 'Anashwar Bangabandhu' virtually from his official residence in the city's Minto Road.

The Press Information Department (PID) compiled the book marking the birth centenary of Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman.

State Minister for Information and Broadcasting Dr Murad Hasan, Secretary Md Mokbul Hossain, Principal Information Officer Surath Kumar Sarker, and officials of PID also took part in the virtual session.

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Neo-JMB training members in bomb-making, says CTTC

MOHAMMAD JAMIL KHAN

Militant outfit Neo-JMB is now providing online training to its members about making Improvised Explosive Devices (IED).

Their plan is to make every member expert in making bombs; they have already made a manual for it and are sending to members, according to officials of counter terrorism and transnational crime (CTTC) unit.

Officials claimed to have learned the information while tracking some activities of , Sabbir Hossain (26), the outfit's military wing commander of Mymensingh region unit.

Source says the outfit, which had been languishing for last couple of years, is again trying to re-organise under the lead of new Ameer Mahadi Hasan Jon.

Jon is now operating activities from Turkey, according to a recent intelligence report.

Rahmat Ullah Chowdhury, additional deputy commissioner of the CTTC unit, told this

newspaper, "Neo-JMB is trying to re-organise again and they are now giving focus on making IEDs."

"Every member of the outfit is trying to become proficient in making bombs. We have received some information and drives are underway to arrest the operatives," he added.

Investigators says Sabbir and another youth of the outfit -- Forkan -- are providing training about making the IED. Their plan is to attack law enforcers again, they said.

As a part of it, in May of this year, the outfit planted a remote-controlled IED in front of a police outpost in Narayanganj. However, the Bomb Disposal Unit (BDU) of CTTC managed to diffuse it, according to officials.

In the manual, the outfit is providing training to members on how to make an IEDs spending just Tk 2,000. They are collecting bomb-making material from open source and making the explosives at home.

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Throughout the first week of lockdown, army personnel assisted law enforcement agencies in disposing their duties. This photo was taken from Mujijartek area, an entry point to port city Chattogram, yesterday.

PHOTO: RAJIB RAIHAN

ECONOMIC RECOVERY Investment in WASH urgent for Covid-19 response: WaterAid

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Developing economies like Bangladesh will be boosted by millions of dollars in water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) over the next two decades if clean water, toilets and hygiene are brought to everyone, said a report published by WaterAid yesterday.

Investment in WASH by governments, businesses and international donors is essential for public health response to Covid-19, for economic recovery and a core element of future pandemic preparedness plans, said the report of the international aid agency.

The report was published after the UK government slashed bilateral funding for overseas WASH projects by more than 80 percent.

The report, titled "Mission Critical: invest in water, sanitation and hygiene for a healthy and green economic recovery", shows that investment in water and sanitation infrastructure meets the criteria for a strong "green" economic stimulus investment.

The global report, that highlighted case studies of WASH investments in Ethiopia and Bangladesh, show significant health and time-saving benefits, especially for women and girls and marginalised groups.

"Providing access to improved sanitation facilities in schools benefits adolescent girls in particular," said the report.

It stressed that in 2020, Bangladesh experienced flood damages costing around \$476 million in repairs and reduced WASH benefits which could have been potentially saved by spending about \$90 million in building resilience.

Saline intrusion from coastal flooding threatens long-term supply of safe water; affecting 20 million people each year and leading to negative health outcomes, said the report.

Hasin Jahan, country director of WaterAid Bangladesh, said, "Investing in WASH can unlock economic opportunities and health savings at relatively low cost. The investment can also address key objectives of stimulus spending post-Covid and can build resilience to increasing climate risks."

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