

Dengue claims another life

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

At least 265 new dengue patients were hospitalised in 24 hours till 8am yesterday, while one person died of the infection.

According to Directorate General of Health Services (DGHS), among the new cases, 51 of the patients are from outside Dhaka.

With the new cases, a total of 6,911 were diagnosed during this month, out of a total of 9,569 infected this year.

Of the total infected, 721 are from outside Dhaka.

At least 2,286 patients were hospitalised in July, 272 in June, while 43 were infected in May, according to DGHS.

According to DGHS, with the new death, a total of 41 people have died of dengue in the country this year, and all of them died between July and August. Twelve people died in July, while 29 have died in August so far.

Though most of the patients who were hospitalised have so far been released, 1,111 are still undergoing treatment at hospitals in Dhaka, and 144 are receiving treatment outside the capital, DGHS data shows.

Amid the rise in dengue cases, the government on August 23 dedicated six hospitals for treating dengue patients. However, only two hospitals had started treatment till Friday.

The hospitals are: Sir Salimullah Medical College Hospital, Shaheed Ahsan Ullah Master General Hospital in Tongi; Railway General Hospital at Kamalapur, 20-bed Aminbazar Govt Hospital, Lalkuthi Hospital in Mirpur, and 31-bed Kamrangirchar Hospital.

Besides the dedicated hospitals, authorities have instructed some other public facilities, including Shaheed Suhrawardy Medical College and Hospital, Dhaka Medical College and Hospital and Mugda Medical College and Hospital, to provide dengue treatment.



Death toll 41

29 died in Aug so far,
12 in July265 more hospitalised
yesterday

Covid-infected Mim Akhter was already reeling by the time she was brought to Dhaka Medical College Hospital's Covid unit all the way from Narayanganj's Sonargaon upazila on Friday. As her condition deteriorated, she needed to be put into an ICU bed, but DMCH was all out of it. So her relatives rushed her to an ambulance yesterday and set out to find a bed in any private hospital that might have one. PHOTO: ANISUR RAHMAN

No Taliban, militants in country

Says home minister

BSS, Dhaka

Home Minister

Asaduzzaman

Khan Kamal

yesterday said

there is no

existence of

Taliban and militants in

Bangladesh.

"Some miscreants are

appearing in different

names to create anarchy

in the country," the

minister told reporters at

a programme in Baishmile

area of Savar.

There are many small

groups in the country. But

they have no capacity to

create chaos, the minister

said.

"Bangladesh is a country

of peace. Taliban have come

to power in Afghanistan

and Kabul is located far

from Bangladesh. So it has

no effect in Bangladesh,"

Asaduzzaman added.

Among others, State

Minister for Disaster

Management and Relief

Md Enamur Rahman and

Savar Upazila Nirbahi

Officer Md Mazharul Islam

were also present at the

programme.



Writer Sheikh Abdul Hakim passes away

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Renowned author and translator Sheikh Abdul Hakim passed away at his Madartek residence in Dhaka yesterday afternoon.

Hakim breathed his last around 1pm, his daughter Sazia Hakim told The Daily Star.

"My father was suffering from breathing problems. We were planning to shift him to a hospital..." she said.

Abdul Hakim was born in 1946 in Hooghly district of West Bengal, India.

He had been ghostwriting for Sheba Prakashani for around four decades. After forty years of collaboration, the partnership ended when Hakim claimed the ownership of the write-up by seeking decision from copyright office last year.

Abdul Hakim, who penned the popular spy novel "Masud Rana" as a ghostwriter, won the copyright lawsuit in June that year. He was awarded copyright to his 260 books previously belonging to Qazi Anwar Hossen.

Copyright for another 50 books of Kuasha Series was also granted to him by copyright office.

Vaccination

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Processing Zones Authority (BEPZA), told The Daily Star, "Earlier, vaccination programmes were started in five other EPZs, including Mongla EPZ, Ishwardi EPZ, Cumilla EPZ, Uttara EPZ, and Adjamjee EPZ."

"We are yet to start in the factories of Dhaka EPZ due to the excessive number of workers there. But we plan to start soon," she added.

ASSAULT ON JOURNALIST IN TANGAIL

Rights groups demand fair probe

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Several indigenous rights groups have demanded a fair investigation into the alleged assault on a journalist in Tangail.

While being on the job, journalist Prince Edward Mansang, who is from the Garo community, was tied to a tree and beaten up by alleged supporters of a union parishad chairperson in Madhupur upazila on August 18.

Terming the incident "barbaric and a human rights violation", the groups, under the banner "Bikkhubdho Socheton Nagarik Samaj" (outraged, concerned citizens), demanded justice and exemplary punishment at a human chain in the capital's Shahbagh on Friday.

According to a press release issued by them on August 18, the same day of the incident, Mansang went to Arankhola Union Parishad to collect news on two children who were missing beside Chairperson Abdur Rahim's house.

As Mansang wrote a story

on corruption involving the chairperson earlier, Rahim and his men assaulted him, and a video of the incident surfaced on social media. Later, Rahim filed a case against Mansang, accusing him of robbery, said the release.

Dhaka Wangala Celebration Committee Chief (Banani zone) Subhajit Sangma, said, "The incident is a violation of human rights."

Garo Students Union President (Dhaka unit) Swatirtho Chiran said, "These are barbaric acts. This is an abuse of power by the chairperson."

Bangladesh Garo Chhatra Sangathan President (Dhaka unit) Patrick Chisim said, "The chairperson barred him from exercising his right. Indigenous people face similar discrimination and injustice."

Indigenous Youth Forum President Ananta Dhamai also spoke at the programme.

The union parishad chairperson could not be contacted for comments.

Reopen educational

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Participants also criticised a speech of Road Transport Minister Obaidul Quader, where he said that he is fearing possible "instability" in educational institutions after they are reopened.

Selim Bhuiyan, the forum's convener, said the true intention behind not reopening the institutes can be found in Quader's speech.

"The government has no goodwill to reopen schools and colleges. That's why they are saying they will reopen after completing the vaccination programme. If they actually wanted that, the programme for students would already be completed,"

he said.

If educational institutions are not reopened in September, they will go for a united and massive movement, he added.

Participants brought placards stating "We don't want auto-pass; we want classes and exams", and "The light will come, if institutes reopen".

Mahmudur Rahman Manna, convener of Nagorik Oikko, said the government is saying it will bring crores of vaccine doses, but only four percent of Bangladesh's population have been vaccinated so far.

"If authorities thought about educational institutes, it would have been no big deal for them to vaccinate all students, as 37

lakh doses are needed.

But they didn't want to reopen in fear of anti-government movements," Manna added.

BNP vice-chairperson and journalist Shaukat Mahmood, former Dhaka University Central Students' Union vice president Khairul Kabir Khokon, BNP leader Moazzem Hossain Alal, and Jatiyatabadi Muktijoddha Dal president Ishtiyak Aziz Ulfat also spoke at the event.

On March 17, 2020, the government closed all educational institutions due to the Covid-19 outbreak.

The closure led to cancellation of exams and left academic calendars in disarray.

Website launched

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"Whenever he had the opportunity, he would take pictures with his camera, keep theatre tickets and brochures, and scan letters. He used to say, one day none of these will exist. We will all depart, only memories will remain," remembered Simeen Rahman.

Now that he is gone, she finally understands why he used to place so much importance on memories, she said.

"I hope this website will inspire not only those who know him, but also others who do not know him," she added, hoping that his life will motivate future generations,

particularly young entrepreneurs.

Prothom Alo editor Matur Rahman said, "Latifur Rahman was our chairman. He is still with us."

"It was his dream that Bangladesh would be a truly democratic state. He believed in the role of a strong and independent media to make it possible. And that's why he was so passionate about The Daily Star and Prothom Alo. He inspired us through and through," he added.

The website is a reflection of the tremendous love and admiration Latifur Rahman inspired in us, the Prothom Alo editor said.

"We will uphold the ideals, goals and ethics of Latifur Rahman in our work and it will be reflected in all that we do," he added.

In 2017, Transcom Beverages Limited received PepsiCo's "Global Bottler of the Year 2016 Award". A video clip of a speech by Latifur Rahman in that programme and a documentary on Latifur Rahman's grandson Faraaz Ayaaz Hossain, "Chhotu", were screened at the programme yesterday.

Latifur Rahman's grandson Zariaf Ayaat Hossain and other officials and employees of Transcom Group and Mediastar Limited were present at the virtual event.

'Diving' project drowns

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Asked why the DPP was revised, he claimed that many of the facilities such as tugboats, pontoons and jetties were already available.

"That's why, we excluded those in the DPP," he added.

He said he did not know the reason behind the delay in recruitment of divers.

"The finance ministry refused the proposal to appoint six divers in a district. We will write to them again for appointing at least three in a district," he said.

'MONEY AT RISK'

On June 18, 2019, the fire service signed an agreement with Khulna Shipyard Limited for 14 heavy duty rescue boats worth Tk 19.99 crore.

According to the agreement, they were supposed to deliver the products within June 17, 2020. But they failed to deliver the boats as of August 20 this year.

According to the agreement, 95 percent of the money has been paid in advance by the fire service authorities. The audit department said the fire service has put the money at risk.

Hossain, however, claimed that they have played by the book.

"We can pay the government

organisations in advance. We have already inspected the boats and they need some modification... also, some equipment has to be brought from abroad," he said.

But not only these heavy-duty boats, the fire service didn't get 14 light-duty boats from abroad either, even after the project period expired.

The IMED report said they fixed the timeframe to get the boats after the project implementing period was over, which was contrary to purchase planning.

Asked, the project director said they purchased those from Malaysia, but couldn't find any big ships to bring them from there. They would be able to do so by next February, he hoped.

About the expired warranty of equipment, he said they purchased the equipment in last year's June-July and they have two years' warranty. "We hope to complete the project within that period," he said.

Asked, Dr Gazi Md Saifuzzaman, chief of IMED Monitoring & Evaluation (Sector-1), said they start monitoring projects as per their internal jurisdiction.

"If we find some errors, we give recommendations or observations to the project implementing authorities.

We wait for their response for a certain period and then we inform the ministry concerned for further action," he added.

According to experts, introducing a diving unit in every fire station is an apt decision. However, adequate manpower, training and proper equipment is crucial in this regard.

"With more trained personnel and modern equipment, we would get better results," Dr Aminur Rahman, deputy executive director of Center for Injury Prevention and Research Bangladesh (CIPRB).

"In case of waterway accidents or flood, immediate response from fire service is vital, which could help save more lives. If they have proper equipment along with skilled divers, it would be of great help during a crisis," he said.

Contacted, Brig Gen Md Sazzad Hussain, director general of Fire Service and Civil Defense Directorate, told The Daily Star that they are expecting to get the boats in November.

He also said, "In case of drowning incidents, respond time is crucial. If we have enough manpower and equipment, and if we can respond quickly, the number of deaths by drowning will definitely reduce."

5 members of vehicle theft gang held

STAR REPORT

Rab claimed to have arrested five members of a vehicle theft gang, including its mastermind, during a raid in Narayanganj yesterday.

The arrestees are Azim Uddin (38), Rafique Ullah (26), Md Selim (50), Kamrul Hasan (26) and Omar Faruk (25), said Rab.

During the raid at Fatullah, Rab seized three stolen pick-up vans, an auto-rickshaw, a pistol, one bullet, and four sharp weapons from their possession, said Commander Khandaker Al Moin, director of Rab's legal and media wing, during a press briefing at Rab media centre in Dhaka yesterday.

The gang, which has at least 20 members, has stolen more than 100 vehicles in the last four to five years, he added.

Migrant deaths

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Qatar authorities have failed to investigate the deaths of thousands of migrant workers over the past decade, despite evidence of links between premature deaths and unsafe working conditions, Amnesty said in a news release on Wednesday, marking the report's unveiling.

The report said of the six migrant workers, four were aged 34 when they died.

Mohammad Kauchar Khan, 34, a plasterer on a construction site, was found dead in his bed by his co-workers on November 15, 2017.

Security guard Yam Bahadur Rana, whose job involved long hours sitting in the sun, died suddenly at work on February 22, 2020.

Construction worker Suman collapsed and died at the end of a long shift in temperatures that had reached 38°C.

Tul Bahadur Gharti died in his sleep on May 28, 2020 after working outdoors for around 10 hours in temperatures of up to 39°C.

Pipe fitter on a project in the desert, Sujun Miah, 32, was found unresponsive by workmates in bed on September 24, 2020.

Truck driver Manjur Kha Pathan, 40, had been working 12 to 13 hours a day. He collapsed in his accommodation on February 9, 2021 and died before the ambulance arrived.

The report said while the time elapsed means it may now be difficult to prove whether each death was a direct result of their working conditions, all of them were regularly exposed to dangerous temperatures at work, and in every case Qatar failed to investigate their deaths or provide an opportunity for their families to be compensated.

It said the deaths of the six migrant

workers highlight the personal tragedies for them and their families back home in Bangladesh or Nepal, as well as Qatar's failures relating to their deaths.

"They also symbolise the tragedies of so many others who went to Qatar to provide a better future for their families but came back in a coffin, and whose deaths remain unexplained," said the report.

One of the most well-documented and foreseeable risks to workers' life and health in Qatar is exposure to extreme heat and humidity, the report said.

However, between 2007 and May 2021, Qatar's main measure in place to try and mitigate such risks was a directive prohibiting outdoor work between 11:00 and 13:00 in the summer months, between June 15 and August 31.

UNEXPLAINED DEATHS

The death certificates of 15 out of the 18 cases reviewed by Amnesty International provided no information about the underlying causes of death, attributing the cause of death to "acute cardio respiratory failure due to natural causes", "acute heart failure natural causes", "heart failure unspecified" and "acute respiratory failure due to natural causes", the report said.

Dr David Bailey, a leading pathologist and member of the World Health Organisation (WHO) Working Group on death certification, told Amnesty International, "These are phrases that should not be included on a death certificate without a further qualification explaining the underlying cause."

"Essentially, everyone dies of respiratory or cardiac failure in the end and the phrases are meaningless without an explanation of a reason why."

"Natural causes" is not a sufficient explanation."

Bangabandhu's foreign policy

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and anything that disrupts global security, peace, and development, he added.

During the event, the foreign minister launched a book published by BIIS on Bangabandhu titled "Bangabandhu and Bangladesh: An Epic of a Nation's Emergence and Emancipation".

State Minister for Planning Dr Samsul Alam was the special guest while BIIS

chairman ambassador M Fazlul Karim presided over the event.

BIIS director general Maj Gen Md Emdad Ul Bari delivered the welcome remarks while Bangabandhu Chair Professor of Dhaka University Dr Atiur Rahman and Bangabandhu Chair Professor of Bangladesh University of Professionals Dr Syed Anwar Husain presented two separate papers.



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