

Three more succumb to dengue



Death toll **45**

3 died in Sept so far

30 in Aug, **12** in July

295 more hospitalised yesterday

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Three more people died of dengue, while 295 more dengue patients were hospitalised in the last 24 hours till 8am yesterday.

According to Directorate General of Health Services (DGHS), among the new cases, 45 infections were diagnosed outside Dhaka.

A total of 7,698 were diagnosed in August, out of 10,651 infections this year. Of the total infected people, 882 are from

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Jurain regularly wears a dawn-like atmosphere in the afternoon these days. As one of the neighbourhoods hit hardest by dengue, its streets are being fogged heavily by DSCC staffers. However, locals said this tenacity was missing even a week ago, suspecting the continued rise in dengue cases to have set some alarms off for the city authorities. These photos were taken on Tuesday.

PHOTO: RASHED SHUMON

Fire service to get major overhaul

SHARIFUL ISLAM

The government is all set to increase manpower and other capacities of Fire Service and Civil Defense to modernise the service-oriented organisation in the wake of growing demand.

As part of the move, the Fire Service and Civil Defense Directorate has already proposed an organogram to the home ministry for approval, increasing its manpower to 31,169 from existing 13,130.

Construction of a training academy modeled on such institutions in developed countries is underway, while 56 types of

equipment including modern vehicles, pumps and rescue instruments are being purchased at a cost of Tk 223.38 crore, said officials.

"We are working to reshape and modernise the fire service in line with the prime minister's vision 2030 and 2040," Brig Gen Sazzad Hussain, director general of the fire service, told The Daily Star.

The new organogram proposed to upgrade the post of Director General (DG) of fire service to grade-1 and appoint a major general for the post. Now a brigadier general is serving as the DG of the organisation.

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AT A GLANCE

Number of fire stations at present: **148**; manpower: **13,130**

Proposed number: **457**; manpower: **31,169**

NEW TRAINING ACADEMY

To be built at Gazaria, Munshiganj

Total Land: **100.92** acres
Allocated money: Tk **223.38**cr

Tk **248.21**cr worth equipment purchased



KUMUDINI A trailblazer in healthcare charity

MD SHAHNAWAZ KHAN CHANDAN

When Covid-19 patients are spending hundreds of thousands of taka to get treatment at hospitals and clinics, a hospital in Mirzapur -- a small town in Tangail district -- has been providing free treatment for all Covid-19 patients since May last year.

All the Covid-19 patients in this hospital can have free bed, free oxygen therapy, free check-up and free food throughout their stay.

This is no other than martyred philanthropist Ranada Prashad Shaha's Kumudini Hospital.

Animesh Bhowmick, assistant general manager of Kumudini Hospital, said, "We do not take any charge for general bed and oxygen therapy from Covid-19 patients. They have to spend Tk 3,000-4,000 per day for ICU beds, whereas in other hospitals the cost is more than Tk 30,000 per day."

"We also do antigen tests for these patients free of cost. And, for RT-PCR test we collect samples and send them to the government designated testing facilities at a cost of Tk 100

per sample. So, these patients can get all the services under one roof at this hospital," he said.

Thanks to these services, Kumudini Hospital has become one of the most popular healthcare providers in the region.

However, the hospital's name is linked to a tragic incident.

In 1903, seven-year-old Ranada Prasad Shaha saw his mother, Kumudini Devi dying from post-natal tetanus, as she could not be taken to a hospital, which was miles away from Mirzapur, then a remote village.

This tragedy inspired Shaha, who later became one of the wealthiest businessmen in Bengal, to dedicate his life for the welfare of the poor and sick and for empowering women.

He committed all of his property and savings to build Kumudini Welfare Trust of Bengal (KWTFB), which is now one of Bangladesh's biggest charitable organisations dedicatedly working for medical services, education and women's empowerment.

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Dr Saleheen Qadri no more

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Prof Dr Syed Saleheen Qadri, scientific coordinator of Institute for Developing Science and Health Initiatives (ideSHi) and husband of renowned scientist Dr Firdausi Qadri, passed away early yesterday.

The retired professor of Biochemistry and Molecular Biology department of Dhaka University breathed his last around 4:30am at Universal Medical College and Hospital in Dhaka,

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Beware of fake Covid testing booths

3 held over forging health ministry's approval to conduct tests across country

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Police yesterday arrested three officials of an organisation that exists only on paper, TKS Healthcare Service, over forging documents that showed the health ministry's approval to collect samples and conduct Covid-19 antigen tests.

They spent Tk 2,500 to create the fake approval document and were planning to set up over 100 booths across the country, take Tk 2 lakh from local representatives in advance, and thus, swindle several crores of taka in the process, detectives said, following the arrest.

TKS Managing Director Abdullah Al Amin, Chairperson Abdul Hasan Tusher and Marketing Manager Shaheen Mia were held from Dhaka and Jhalakhati districts.

The gang faked the signature of Jakia Parveen, deputy secretary of health ministry, to prepare a fake permission document, Harun-or-Rashid, joint commissioner (DB-

North), told a press briefing at DMP media centre yesterday.

DB officials said the arrestees set up a temporary office at Farmgate on July 11 and appealed to the health ministry to get approval for conducting antigen tests.

In the application, they mentioned that they had arrangements to conduct Covid-19 tests at 4,562 unions, with around 5,126 frontline fighters.

In actuality, they had no such arrangements, and they knew their application would be rejected. Therefore, they made a fake approval document, the DB official said, quoting the arrestees.

They had a plan to swindle around Tk 5 crore in the process, DB officials said.

Having no actual credentials or experience in healthcare, they appointed various people as upazila coordinators and field officers in Dhaka and Jhalakati districts and defrauded people.

Capt Nawshad to be laid to rest today

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The body of Capt Nawshad Ataul Quaiyum, a pilot of Biman Bangladesh Airlines, will be flown to Dhaka from Nagpur, India this morning.

Carrying the body, a flight is scheduled to land at Hazrat Shahjalal International Airport at 8:30am, Tahera Khondoker, deputy general manager, public relations, Biman, told The Daily Star.

Tahera said a Dhaka-bound flight from Doha will bring the body with a stopover at Dr Babasaheb Ambedkar International Airport in Nagpur, Maharashtra.

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Since May last year, Kumudini Hospital in Tangail has been providing free treatment for all Covid-19 patients. Inset, the hospital's parent organisation is aiming to build a global-standard medical research centre and hospital -- Kumudini International Institute of Medical Sciences and Cancer Research -- in Narayanganj.

PHOTO: COURTESY

Extortionists, victim both arrested!

Arrestees include two 'journos', a wanted accused in Hallmark scam case, says Rab

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Posing as journalists, two people blackmailed a wanted accused in the Hallmark scam case -- they held him hostage at a hotel, and tried to extort money from him.

But their ploy ultimately failed when a team of Rab-1 conducted a raid at the hotel and rescued the victim, Abdul Maleque, before arresting him for being a wanted accused in the scam case.

The incident played out on Wednesday. Along with Maleque, Rab arrested two extortionists -- Ekbal Hosen Chowdhury and Amirul Islam, who introduced themselves as senior staff reporter of Amar Praner Bangladesh and Khilkhet correspondent of Asian Television respectively.

A fugitive in the Hallmark case, Abdul Maleque is the managing director of Nakshi

Knit Composite.

Rab also recovered a video camera, a television microphone, two bank cheques worth Tk 95 lakh, Tk 5.05 lakh cash, and three stamp papers from their possession, said Commander Khandaker Al Moin, director of Legal and Media Wing of Rab, at a press briefing at its media centre in Karwan Bazar yesterday.

"The arrestees claimed to work for the so-called newspaper and private TV channel. But when we contacted their authorities, we were told the two had been fired for similar criminal activities," the Rab official said.

Replying to a query, Commander Moin said they will investigate whether the employers -- including the owners and editors -- of the news media in question have any involvement in the crime.

Rab said they received a complaint on

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DHAKA UNIVERSITY Students, teachers to undergo drug test

DU CORRESPONDENT

Dhaka University (DU) authorities have decided that all of its students, teachers and officers shall undergo drug tests, in an effort to identify those who abuse drugs.

On Tuesday, DU syndicate formed a seven-member committee to set a policy for testing.

Pro Vice-Chancellor (Academic) Prof ASM Maksud Kamal confirmed the matter to The Daily Star.

He said, "We took the initiative after getting instructions from the education ministry to identify students and teachers who abuse drugs."

"The [seven-member] committee will look into how testing will be conducted and what facilities will be needed at the university," he added.

Earlier in 2019, the Parliamentary Standing Committee on the Ministry of Home Affairs proposed introducing drug tests at government establishments and educational institutions.

Contacted, DU Vice Chancellor Prof Md Akhtaruzzam told The Daily Star, "It is a great initiative, as we are trying to uproot drugs from our society."

"It's not possible to keep everybody in check without an institutional initiative," he said.

News portal launched by police

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The relationship between police and the media should be institutionalised, said Inspector General of Police Benazir Ahmed yesterday.

From that prospective, Bangladesh Police has launched a news portal to highlight the law enforcers' achievements in home and abroad, said the IGP.

"In the news portal, police will follow the golden rules of journalism," he said.

The police chief was addressing the inaugural ceremony of their news portal -- news.police.gov.bd -- at the Police Headquarters (PHQ).

In response to a journalist's query regarding whether the portal will cover police personnel's good deeds and bad

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BNP observes 43rd founding anniversary

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

BNP yesterday observed its 43rd founding anniversary.

Marking the day, party's secretary general Mirza Fakhrul Islam Alamgir and other senior leaders -- including Mirza Abbas, Nazrul Islam Khan and Amanullah Aman -- placed floral wreaths at the party founder Ziaur Rahman's grave in the capital's Chandrima Udyan.

Speaking with journalists there, Fakhrul said they will wage movement against the present "undemocratic" government to restore democracy in the country.

"False cases have been filed against 35 lakh people, more than 500 party leaders and activists have been abducted and more than a thousand were killed. Even after that the party is still on strong footing," Fakhrul said.

He said after the assassination of Ziaur Rahman, all thought that the party will cease to exist but his successor Khaleda Zia fought against autocratic regime and established democracy in the country.

"This government came to power illegally and sent our leader to jail in false cases," he said.

He also alleged that party leaders and activists were barred from coming to Zia's graveyard. "It is nothing but fascism." When asked about the ruling party leaders' statements that Ziaur Rahman's body is not in the graveyard, Fakhrul said it is tough to answer such questions as they have no merit.

The party was founded on September 1, 1978, by late president Ziaur Rahman with a 19-point programme designed to build a "self-reliant" Bangladesh.

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BNP secretary general Mirza Fakhrul Islam Alamgir along with party leaders placed a floral wreath at the party founder Ziaur Rahman's grave in the capital's Chandrima Udyan yesterday, marking its 43rd founding anniversary.

PHOTO: COLLECTED