

Dengue claims another life

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

At least one more dengue patient died while 184 were hospitalised in the last 24 hours till 8am yesterday, according to the Directorate General of Health Services (DGHS).

With the new cases, a total of 4,857 were diagnosed during the current month out of a total 22,870 infected. Of the total infected, 3,290 are from outside Dhaka.

According to the DGHS, 89 people have died of dengue infection in the country this year.

Twelve people died in July while 34 have died in August, 23 in September and 15 in October so far, DGHS data shows.

Among the deaths, 82 have died in Dhaka division.

Though most of the patients who were hospitalised have so far been released, 864 are still undergoing treatment at hospitals in Dhaka, and 153 outside the capital, DGHS data shows.



This city can make you pay for the most minute of choices. On its way from Square Hospital at Panthapath to Adabar, this CNG auto-rickshaw -- carrying a child and his parent -- took a detour through the Bijay Sarani yesterday noon. But as luck would have it, they ended up spending an hour and 20 minutes on this avenue alone. Stuck under the grueling mid-day sun amid a concoction of smog, sound, and smell, time suddenly ground to a tedious halt for this young boy.

PHOTO: RASHED SHUMON

'They want to cash in on religion'

Says LGRD minister about those behind communal attacks

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Pointing out that a quarter is trying to create anarchy in the country by abusing religion, Local Government, Rural Development and Cooperatives (LGRD) Minister Tazul Islam yesterday said people who had put the Quran at the temple were also involved in vandalism.

"They want to do politics by cashing in on religion," he said, calling upon people of all religions to unite and prevent fanaticism.

The LGRD minister said this at a workshop on "Implementation of Delta Plan-2100 and Involving Local Government Organisations in Developing Climate Tolerant City", organised by DeltaCAP and the Netherlands' IHE Delft at the capital's Spectra Convention Center, reads a press release.

"Be it for short or long term, all projects must be sustainable and productive. They should be completed within the timeline," he said. "We take many projects, but deadlines are extended regularly, which is very unfortunate."

To avail modern facilities, people move to cities. It is not possible to prevent rural people from going to towns, unless the facilities are ensured in villages, he observed.

The Delta Plan-2100 is a long-term strategy adopted for management of flood, river erosion and waste among other reasons, he said.

Among others, Head of Mission of Netherlands Anne van Leeuwen and LGRD Senior Secretary Helal Uddin Ahmed were present at the event.

Create more opportunities for migrant workers

Expatriates' Welfare Minister Imran Ahmad urges UAE

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Expatriates' Welfare Minister Imran Ahmad has called upon his counterpart in the United Arab Emirates to create more employment opportunities for Bangladeshi migrant workers in the gulf country.

Ahmad made the call during a bilateral meeting with the UAE's Human Resources and Emiratization Minister Dr Abdulrahman Abdulmannan Al Awar in Dubai on Tuesday, says a press release of the expatriates' welfare ministry issued yesterday.

Ahmad is on a visit to the UAE to attend the ongoing minister-level Abu Dhabi Dialogue, says the release.

During the meeting with Al Awar, Ahmad also urged the gulf country to set a wage structure for Bangladeshi migrant workers currently working there.

He also thanked the UAE for opening up its labour market for Bangladeshi workers.

In his response, the UAE human resources minister assured that his country will consider the gradual launching of employment visas in all the emirates of the gulf country.

At the meeting, both ministers also discussed various issues of mutual interest.

Bangladesh Ambassador to the UAE Mohammed Abu Zafar, among others, attended the meeting, added the press release.

'Climate change a child rights issue'

Children urge policymakers to raise their demand at COP26 conference

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

"Bring our appeal with you when you travel to Glasgow. Climate change is a child rights issue."

This was the message from a group of children and teenagers who yesterday called on the country's leaders to address climate change as a child rights issue ahead of the COP26 Climate Change Conference in Glasgow, UK, on October 31.

The group handed the "Children's Climate Declaration" over to the Minister of Environment, Forest



PHOTO: COURTESY

DEMANDS

- Protect children from impacts of climate change
- Reduce greenhouse emissions
- Increase investment in education
- Involve children in policies that impact their future

and Climate Change Shahab Uddin, Speaker of the Jatiya Sangsad Shirin Sharmin Chaudhury and other parliamentarians during an event organised by Unicef Bangladesh at the LD Hall of the Jatiya Sangsad.

The declaration was prepared in November 2020 at the first-ever children's climate summit, where over one million children participated through Unicef-supported Generation Parliament initiative by Bangladesh Debate Federation (BDF).

It urges the government to protect children against the impacts of climate change, reduce pollution and greenhouse gas emissions, increase investments in education, training and a green economy, and consult children on policies that impact their future.

"Climate change threatens our

survival, well-being and future. We are asking you to stand up for the children of this country and do more to fight it," said 13-year-old Kaba Kaushin Arisha, while handing over the declaration on behalf of the children who participated in the 2020 Summit.

"Unless we act now and act together, we will reach a point of no return. This is our call to you, and to COP26."

"It is important to include children's views on climate change in the global agenda of COP26, and Bangladesh can lead the global platform in this matter," said Shirin

Sharmin Chaudhury.

"We will continue working with and for children -- for a better, safer, greener Bangladesh," said Shahab Uddin, who is part of official delegation from Bangladesh to COP26.

Sheldon Yet, Unicef representative to Bangladesh, said, "Children in Bangladesh are not responsible for the climate crisis, yet they face its most severe impacts, paying the highest price."

"Unicef stands with children in Bangladesh in their appeal for intergenerational solidarity."

Unicef's first-ever Children's Climate Risk Index (CCRI 2021) found that children in Bangladesh are among the world's most vulnerable to climate change, ranking Bangladesh as the 15th country in terms of its risks and impacts on children.

The index estimates that one in three children in Bangladesh, nearly 20 million children, bear the brunt of climate change every day.

Awami League MP Shamsul Haque Tuku, also president of parliamentary caucus on child rights, presided over the event, while AL MPs Aroma Dutta and Tanvir Shakil Joy spoke, among others.

JS session to begin Nov 14

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The 15th session of the 11th Jatiya Sangsad is set to begin from November 14, a press release of the parliament secretariat said yesterday.

"The session will be held from 4pm at the Parliament Complex at Sher-e-Bangla Nagar," it said.

Exercising the power bestowed upon him as per the Clause (1) of Article 72 (1) of the constitution, President Abdul Hamid convened the session.

Before commencing house proceedings on the day, the Parliamentary Business Advisory Committee is likely to hold a meeting, with Speaker Shirin Sharmin Chaudhury in the chair, to fix the duration and agendas of the session.

The 14th session of the parliament was prorogued on September 16, starting on September 1 with a total of seven sittings following all necessary health guidelines amid the pandemic.

Trees fall victim to SCC development work



In the alleys of Shahjalal Upashahar area, logs were seen lying on the ground, amid the ongoing development work. But chopping down so many trees was not enough, as the city corporation marked many more trees to fell, left. These photos were taken recently.

PHOTO: SHEIKH NASTIR

DWOHA CHOWDHURY, Sylhet

Despite widespread criticism of cutting trees in the name of development, at least 200 trees were chopped down in the last couple of weeks at Sylhet city's Shahjalal Upashahar area.

The trees were cut down in different alleys, with no clearance from the Forest Department, and the local councillor sold them without holding an auction, which is against the law.

On top of that, Sylhet City Corporation asked for clearance from the Forest Department to cut more than a hundred trees standing tall by the area's main road for development work.

On October 20, environmentalists saved a decade-old tree from being chopped down by the corporation in Chowhatta area. Last month, authorities cut down at least five old trees on the city's Electric Supply Road.

On May 18, The Daily Star published a story titled "The green cost of development", which delved into tree felling by the corporation.

- At least 200 trees felled in last few weeks
- City corporation wants to cut 100 more
- SCC says they cut 332 trees for dev work in last 5yrs; data shows 873 were felled

In the report, SCC said it felled 332 trees in the last five years, while data showed that at least 873 trees were cut down. Even now, the corporation keeps on felling trees.

Visiting Shahjalal Upashahar recently, this correspondent found remains of the felled trees lying on the ground, while most of the timber had been carried away.

Development work, which includes expanding streets and constructing proper drainage, is ongoing there.

Aftab Chowdhury, a member of the district committee for forest, environment and climate change, said, "Many locals and I planted these trees back in the 90s. Each of them is worth around Tk 1 lakh."

"This is a clear violation of all existing laws," said Aftab, who had received a "Prime Minister

Award" for planting trees. "I have filed a written complaint regarding this unlawful act to the ministry concerned and Forest Department."

In conversation, Saleh Ahmed Shalim, the local councillor, admitted to felling the trees without clearance and selling them without holding an auction.

"The actual number of felled trees will be between 20 and 25, and their price is not as much as the locals are claiming. If I waited for permission, the development project would have gotten delayed," he said, adding that he donated the money he got from selling the trees to local mosques.

He, however, could not say how much money was donated.

According to forest rules, any authority or individual must apply to the Divisional Forest Office for clearance to fell trees, and the office only gives permission if it is absolutely necessary.

The city corporation on October 17 lodged an application to the forest office, seeking permission to cut down trees on the main road,

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Bring culprits to book

Demands Swachip on recent communal attacks

DU CORRESPONDENT

Swadhinata Chikitsak Parishad (Swachip), a pro-Awami League doctors' organisation, at a rally yesterday urged citizens to be united against communal forces and defeat them.

They alleged BNP instigated the recent communal attacks in the country.

The rally was organised by Swachip, under the banner of "Sampriti Somabesh", against communal violence in front of the capital's National Museum.

Swachip Secretary General Prof Mohammad Abdul Aziz; Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujib Medical University Vice Chancellor Prof Sharfuddin Ahmed; the university's proctor Habibur Rahman; Shaheed Suhrawardy Medical College Director Prof Md Khalilur Rahman; AL Organising Secretary Ahmed Hossain; and Sirajganj-2 lawmaker Habibe Millat also spoke at the rally.

Protests called off at Rabindra univ

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Pabna

Agitating students of Rabindra University have withdrawn their protests following assurance from the administration.

According to Md Rawshan Alam, proctor in charge of the university, students withdrew their protest on Tuesday night after a fruitful meeting with the vice-chancellor and other members of the administration.

Nazmul Hasan Papan, spokesperson for the students, said the VC assured them of fulfilling their logical demands.

"Legal action will be taken against the accused teacher, the VC promised during the meeting," said Papan.

The protest was withdrawn based on the authority's assurance that the issue will be solved within

20 working days (November 28), he added.

Papan also mentioned that as the academic future of the students has been at risk due to the closure of classes and exams during the agitation, most of them now want to return to classes.

"We have requested the administration to resume academic procedures," he said.

"Academic activities were suspended considering the situation, but classes and exams will resume at the soonest following decision from the syndicate," said the proctor in charge.

The students had been continuing protests, demanding removal of Farhana Yeasmin, former chairperson of cultural heritage and Bangladesh

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Before the humdrum of the day begins, some have always preferred to read their newspaper from neighbourhood walls on their way to work. Whether it is an issue of affordability or the comfort of familiarity it brings, this age-old practice is yet to fade from many areas in the capital, even in the times of near-unbridled digital access. This photo was taken from Purana Paltan area yesterday.

PHOTO: PALASH KHAN