



Dengue claims two more lives

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

At least two more dengue patients died while 152 were hospitalised in the last 24 hours till 8am yesterday of whom 44 are from outside Dhaka, according to the Directorate General of Health Services (DGHS). With the new cases, a total of 5,312 were diagnosed during the running month out of a total 23,509 infected. Of the total infected, 3,372 are from outside Dhaka.

At least 7,841 were diagnosed in September, 7,698 were diagnosed in August, 2,286 patients were hospitalised in July, 272 in June while 43 were infected in May and the rest from January to April, according to the DGHS. Ninety-one people have died of dengue in the country this year. Twelve people have died in July, 34 in August, 23 in September and 22 in October so far.

Among the deaths, 84 have died in Dhaka, two in Chattogram and Khulna and one each in Rajshahi, Mymensingh and Barisal.

Ferry rescue not faring well

Unable to salvage it, BIWTA now considering to sell the vessel as cost of rescue outweighs scrap value; owners of sunken vehicles demand compensation

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Manikganj

Bangladesh Inland Water Transport Authority (BIWTA) is now considering selling the tilted Shah Amanat ferry, since the cost of the rescue operation may be higher than its value after rescue.

A BIWTA official, seeking anonymity, said they may sell the ferry -- that tipped over with 18 vehicles near Manikganj's Paturia terminal on Wednesday -- in auction, as hiring private rescue vessels, at a much higher cost, is now a possibility.

This is because the two BIWTA rescue vessels -- Hamza and Rustam -- weigh a combined 120 tonnes (both weighing 60 tonnes each), while the tilted ferry stands at 280 tonnes.

AT A GLANCE

Ferry tipped onto its side Wednesday

All 18 vehicles salvaged as of yesterday

Cost of ferry salvage may be higher than value after rescue

280-tonne ferry outweighs BIWTA rescue vessels

Private vessels may be required to pull it out

Owners of sunken vehicles demand compensation



BIWTA rescue vessel Rustam pulling a covered-van out of water. This was one of the four vehicles that were kept on the banks of Padma in a half-sunken state after primary rescue. Inset, owners of the 18 sunken vehicles staged a demo in the ghat area, demanding compensation and quick handover of their vehicles.

PHOTO: STAR

Talking to The Daily Star, operation lead BIWTA Director (Rescue) Fazlur Rahman said since they do not have the capacity to rescue the sunken ferry, they may have to hire private vessels to do it. Zillur Rahman, deputy general manager (commerce)

of Bangladesh Inland Water Transport Corporation's Aricha regional office, said, "It all depends on the high officials. After rescuing the sunken vehicles, we will wait for their decision." Meanwhile, all 18 of the sunken vehicles -- that includes trucks,

covered vans, and motorcycles -- have been pulled out of water as of yesterday night, said Fazlur.

On the fourth day of the rescue operation yesterday, the remaining three motorcycles and two covered vans were rescued by the BIWTA rescue vessel Hamza.

Meanwhile, another rescue vessel, Rustam, has completed rescuing four trucks and a covered van, all of which were kept in a half-sunken state on the banks of the Padma after primary rescue.

Firoj Kabir, OC of Shivalaya Police Station, said they are in the process of handing over the rescued vehicles to their owners.

OWNERS DEMAND COMPENSATION

Yesterday also saw owners of the 18 sunken vehicles form a human chain at the ghat area around noon, demanding compensation for the incident.

They urged the government and the prime minister to intervene in this regard, saying that they had to incur heavy losses due to BIWTA's failure to ensure safety of the ferry. Harun-ur-Rashid, owner of two covered vans that sunk, said, "I bought the vans with my life savings. They are the prime source of income for my family. Why will we suffer due to BIWTA's errors?"

Shahid-uz-Zaman, owner of another sunken covered van, also demanded compensation for the damage, while asking for the police to handover their vehicles so that they can try to repair them.

However, as this seems unlikely, he said they might have to sell them as scraps.

Still unsure about number of dropped out students

Says Dipu Moni

UNB, Chandpur

The number of students who have dropped out during the school closure could not be ascertained yet, said Education Minister Dipu Moni yesterday.

"We're receiving assignments from over 90 percent of students. That means they've not dropped out. Many parents are still not sending their children to schools out of fear, and that is why the presence of students in schools is not 100 percent," she said.

The minister said this while speaking at a programme at Chandpur town's Shilpakala Academy, marking Community Policing Day.

The number of students in schools will increase if the Covid situation improves further. Schools will buzz with their presence yet again, she said.

During the closure of schools, many girl students were married off, she said. "We've instructed teachers to take steps to bring back those students to schools."

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From 'Kabuliwala' to the fall of Kabul

ULAB hosts two-day colloquium on Afghanistan

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

It is crucial for neighbouring countries and global citizens to think about what the issues prevailing in Afghanistan represent and how the crisis there can be dealt with effectively.

Himadri Lahiri, professor of English at Netaji Subhas Open University (NSOU), India, made this observation yesterday in his keynote speech at the two-day international virtual colloquium titled "From 'Kabuliwala' to the Fall of Kabul: Afghanistan in Popular Imagination", organised by the Department of English and Humanities at University of Liberal Arts Bangladesh (ULAB).

The event began with three Afghan women from a refugee camp

in the United States sharing their experiences.

Samira Panahi spoke about her escape from Kabul while under the terrorising rule of the Taliban. "At one point," Samira recalls, "We heard bomb explosions in the area we had been waiting in only an hour ago."

Khadija Monis talked about how she ended up in different countries after the collapse of Kabul under the Taliban. She managed to extract letters from a number of women in the US refugee camp who tell a similar story of woe, of leaving their family, their children behind in Afghanistan. She shared the drastic measures the women of Kabul were being forced to take, like marrying men significantly older than them to escape rape and

torture in the hands of the Taliban.

Mina Mushtaq stated that she fled from her beloved country on August 28 as the daughter of an artist whose life remains at risk due to "his work, ethnicity, culture, and heredity." Reading from her father's letter, Mina conveyed, "The Taliban considers [it] [...] permissible to shed my blood and destroy my works."

Acting Vice Chancellor and Dean of School of Arts and Humanities at ULAB Prof Shamsad Mortuza, in his speech, said, "As a liberal arts-centric university, we do not want to confine ourselves to text alone... It is also important for us to humanise these accounts, like that of Tagore's 'Kabuliwala', the countless others that

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Star journos receive best reporting awards



Jamil Khan Rafiul Islam
STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Two journalists of The Daily Star got Best Reporting Award 2020 announced by Bangladesh Crime Reporters Association (CRAB) yesterday.

They were awarded in different categories.

Mohammad Jamil Khan won the award for best investigative report

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Kaaoo kaaoo kah-ow!

RU zoology professor spots new species of owl on campus



PHOTO: SALEH REZA

ANWAR ALI, Rajshahi

On October 13, Rajshahi University's zoology department's Prof Aminuzzaman Md Saleh Reza went out on a morning walk on the campus.

This was supposed to be no different from his usual morning ritual, but upon hearing a peculiar bird-call, Prof Reza suddenly stumbled onto history-making territory.

The bird in question turned out to be a Jungle Owlet, a new species of owl spotted for the first time in the country.

"When I heard its call, I knew it sounded like nothing I've heard before," Prof Reza told The Daily Star yesterday.

He started tracing the source of the call, and discovered the caller sitting on a mango tree near Paris Road.

"It was a squat little owl with dense lines all over the body, lacking the false eyes on the back of the head possessed by many other species of owlets," he said.

The bird called in bursts of loud hollow trills, comparable to barbets, as well as a mellow "kaaoo-kaaoo-kah-ow!"

He went on to photograph it and

posted images on bird identification groups and listed for identification on bird watch databases.

Once bird researchers, formally known as ornithologists, saw the photos, they couldn't believe it. They asked the professor to provide more photographs and recordings of the bird's call.

Soon after, Prof Reza set out in search of the bird again. After finding it, he managed to record its call and by October 27, finished collecting all the required photographs.

Finally, the species was confirmed. Scientific name *Glaucidium radiatum*, the Jungle Owlet is a forest species, found in densely wooded areas, he told The Daily Star.

Reports of hearing its calls have circulated in the country since 1951, but there had been no documented sighting, until now.

The owlets are most active at dawn and dusk on the mango and Gogon Sirish trees on RU's Paris road, Prof Saleh Reza said. He believes they have been living in the area all along.

The sighting was confirmed by noted national and international

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BNP can criticise govt because of democracy

Says Quader

Bss, Dhaka

Awami League General Secretary Obaidul Quader yesterday said BNP is still able to do politics in the country, as the ruling Awami League (AL) has the ability to tolerate it.

"That BNP can criticise the government in various ways shows that there's democracy in the country," he said.

Quader, also road transport and bridges minister, was speaking at a press conference in his residence.

"Awami League did not retaliate even after assassination of the Father of the Nation and his family members in 1975 and the August 21 grenade

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It's anarchy everywhere

Claims Fakhrul

UNB, Dhaka

BNP Secretary General Mirza Fakhrul Islam yesterday said anarchy has been prevailing in all sectors for lack of good governance in the country.

"Seventeen files have gone missing from the health ministry's Medical Education and Family Welfare Division, and a general diary has been filed with Shahbagh Police Station in this connection. This is the condition of the current governing system," he said.

The BNP leader remarked an extreme level of anarchy is present everywhere, not only in the health sector, as ruling party leaders' main goal is to make money.

Fakhrul made the remarks while



PHOTO: STAR

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Empower youth to fight climate change

Say speakers at roundtable

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Sanowar, a youngster from Austomir Char of Kurigram's Chilmari upazila, had to move house over 12 times in the last 20 years, due to devastating floods and river erosion.

Sraboni Rakhaine, a young lady from Patuakhali's Rangabali island, said they did not have access to drinking water all the time. Most students of the island drop out of school due to frequent cyclones and other natural disasters.

Like Sanowar and Sraboni, many who are from five climate-vulnerable districts -- Khulna, Barguna, Patuakhali, Kurigram and Sunamganj -- shared their stories of how their lives have been affected by the impacts of climate change at a roundtable conference titled "Youth Engagement in Climate Action in Bangladesh".

The conference was held yesterday at national Bangla daily Prothom Alo's office and was organised by Local Government Initiative on Climate Change (LoGIC) Project, which is a joint collaborative initiative between the Bangladesh government, European Union, Sweden, United Nations Capital Development Fund and United Nations Development Program (UNDP).

Abdul Qayyum, associate editor of Prothom Alo,

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'Dispose of cases quickly'

Law minister stresses need for Alternative Dispute Resolution

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Law Minister Anisul Huq yesterday stressed the need for the Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) to quickly dispose of cases.

If the ADR system -- in which cases are settled through compromise outside the court -- can be used successfully in the country, the backlog of cases will be reduced, he said.

As chief guest, he was addressing a seminar on "Covid-19's impact on dispute disposal in the virtual world", organised by Bangladesh International Arbitration Centre (BIAC) marking its 10th founding anniversary at a city hotel.

BIAC Chairman Mahabur Rahman

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A RISKY ENDEAVOUR... The end of every month marks a busy time for those shifting address inside the capital. Over the years, it has become something of a norm for movers to overload vehicles to carry household items from one location to another, while seating load-workers on top of them. This photo was taken from Manik Miah Avenue yesterday.

PHOTO: RASHED SHUMON

Informant stabbed dead

Police say he was killed for helping nab a drug peddler

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A man was stabbed to death for helping police arrest a drug peddler in Dhaka's Rampura area, said law enforcers.

Alamgir Hossain (32), a police informant, was stabbed in Boubazar area around 7:30pm on Friday, said police and relatives. "He was rushed to the National Institute of Cardiovascular Diseases. Later, he was shifted to Dhaka Medical College Hospital where doctors declared him dead around 3:15 am today," said Sub-inspector Mohidul Islam of Rampura Police Station.

"The miscreants also cut two tendons of his legs," he added.

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Four killed in road accidents

STAR REPORT

Four people were killed and another was injured in road accidents in two districts yesterday, according to reports from our correspondent and a news agency.

In Manikganj, two people died as an ambulance fell into a ditch beside Hemayetpur-Manikganj regional highway in Kalibari area, reports our local correspondent.

Fire service sources said the ambulance was carrying five people. It had started for Faridpur from Dhaka's Gabtoli bus terminal.

When the vehicle reached Kalibari around 3am, its driver lost his control over the steering, they said.

Identities of the deceased could not be confirmed immediately.

On information from locals, a team of Fire Service and Civil Defence rushed to the spot and recovered the bodies from inside the ambulance, said Golam Azad Khan, superintendent of police in Manikganj.

In Cumilla, at least two persons died and one was injured in a collision between a microbus and a lorry in Katherpull area under Chandina upazila, reports UNB. The deceased were identified as Ibrahim, son of Abdul Malek from Bhatgaon village in Manoharganj upazila; and Towhidul Islam, son of Kamal Hossain from Laksham upazila.

Moynamoti Highway Police Station Officer-in-Charge

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