

Dengue claims two more lives

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Two more dengue patients died while at least 177 were hospitalised in the last 24 hours till 8am yesterday. Of them 46 are from outside Dhaka, according to the Directorate General of Health Services (DGHS).

With the new cases, the total number of dengue cases crossed the 24,000 mark. A total of 465 patients were diagnosed during the running month out of total 24,120 infected.

Ninety-four people died of dengue in the country this year. Twelve died in July while 34 in August, 23 in September, 22 in October and three in November so far.

Among the deaths, 86 died in Dhaka, two in Chattogram, two each in Khulna and Mymensingh, and one each in Rajshahi and Barishal. This is the second highest number of dengue deaths in the country since the first outbreak in 2000. The highest 179 died in 2019 and 93 in 2000.



Working at scary heights without adequate safety gears is a recurring problem of the construction sector. It's all the more dangerous when a worker is sent out to repair the arched top of a foot overbridge with no safety precautions. This photo was taken yesterday from the capital's Paribagh area.

PHOTO: PALASH KHAN

Jail Killing Day

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"This should be our promise on Jail Killing Day," the president said.

In her message, the prime minister urged people of the country to build a poverty-free, happy and peaceful Bangladesh as dreamt by Bangabandhu.

Meanwhile, Awami League and its associate bodies as well as different organisations observed the day in a befitting manner through daylong programmes, reports BSS.

In the morning, AL senior leaders placed wreaths at the portrait of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman at Dhanmondi-32 and at the graves of the four leaders.

Later, a discussion was held at AL central office on Bangabandhu Avenue.

TIB concerned over

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not take part in the pledge made by 124 countries "frustrating".

He said as per the forest department's estimate, about 2.87 lakh acres of forest lands, including 1.38 lakh acres of reserve forests, have been grabbed. Even the Sundarbans, which is known as a "natural protector", is under threat due to various

reckless government and private initiatives.

"We expect Bangladesh will strengthen efforts to ensure sufficient and timely financing in conserving and reclaiming forestlands by 2030, including stopping use of coal to reduce carbon emission," he added. Iftekharuzzaman also said deforestation in Bangladesh will put livelihood of about 1.9 million in danger.

EU to remain steadfast

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Whiteley said Myanmar military does not have any interest in garment factories in Myanmar and the women and garment workers benefit from the industry a bit like Bangladesh. "So, what we don't want to do is to impose measures that punish the innocent people of Myanmar who already suffered a great deal as a result of recent events in Myanmar," he said.

The envoy made it clear that any step to address the economic and financial ties has to take into account the human cost.

Appreciating Bangladesh's generosity in hosting over 1.1 million Rohingyas, the Ambassador said the whole world was moved when Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina said they are feeding over 160 million people of Bangladesh and they can also feed the Rohingyas. "It's very moving and humane statement."

The envoy said they are doing all they can

in the EU to put pressure on Myanmar but the situation in Myanmar is very difficult which is evolving all the time as they no longer have a civilian in the government.

He said they have put three rounds of sanctions on Myanmar targeting dozens of individuals and economic entities. Accountability is the key issue as crimes against humanity have taken place and they are putting a lot of support to that end.

Last week, European Commissioner for Humanitarian Aid and Crisis Management Janez Lenarcic visited Bangladesh and shed light on the Rohingya crisis and the prospect of their return to Myanmar.

Lenarcic said the EU will do its part and has decided to increase their humanitarian assistance by additional 12 million euro of which 10 million euro for the Rohingyas and host community in Bangladesh while 2 million Euros will go to Myanmar for displaced people in Rakhine State.

Bhairab in peril

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According to Water Development Board (WDB), an integrated flood protection project was started in Khulna city in 1993-94, with the financial assistance of Asian Development Bank (ADB).

The project included a 3.5 km alternative embankment along Jaikhan ghat, Roosevelt Jetty ghat, Sadar Hospital ghat, and Ansar Flour Mill. But due to the ceaseless grabbing of Bhairab, the entire embankment is left in a vulnerable state.

Mahfuzur Rahman Mukul, Khulna divisional coordinator of Bangladesh Environmental Lawyers Association, said, "WDB, Bangladesh Inland Water Transport Authority (BIWTA), KCC, district administration, and police [Khulna Metropolitan Police and Khulna district police] need to work together to save the river from grabbers and polluters."

Contacted, Abdur Razzaque, deputy director of BIWTA Khulna, said, "Some influential people have built several establishments, including concrete structures, occupying both sides of the rivers from Labonchhara to BIWTA ghat."

"We've already identified 1,274 structures," he added. "We will soon start a drive to demolish them, with the assistance of the district administration."

"The district administration will file a case against these grabbers first, after which we will get down to work," he added.

Contacted, Saifur Rahman Khan, director of Khulna's Department of Environment (DoE), said, "DoE is firmly determined to take action against the polluters. We've already conducted many drives and investigated the allegations against them. We've sent our findings to the higher authorities for enforcement."

Not one event

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but visiting the premises, this correspondent saw worse.

Lying unused for a decade-and-a-half, everything, from its fans to bathroom-ware, is worn-out and beyond function.

The centre stage has broken down, while the floor tiles have also started to come off.

Far from the polish and shine of a pristine community centre, the entire complex feels damp and dirty.

It used to be worse, but is now perhaps in a slightly better condition after being allocated as a player's camp ahead of the Mayor Cup Football Tournament last year. Today, its only use is as a sleeping ground for two janitors.

When this correspondent visited the building yesterday, he was greeted with the smell and humdrum of the kitchen market. Entering the premises, one can see its elevator doors in shambles, with no elevator inside.

The third floor is faring a little better, thanks to the ward councillor's office being used as a mass vaccination programme centre.

Unsurprisingly, locals aren't exactly aware that the community centre even exists.

Talking to The Daily Star, local Sultan M Salahuddin said, "All I know is that the building has a kitchen market and the councillor's office. To be honest, I'm only getting to know of the community centre from you."

"Shegunbagicha is home to a lot of people. Due to the lack of a community centre, we spend Tk 1-1.5 lakh to hold programmes outside the area. If we had our own community space, we could do so for much cheaper," he said.

Asked, ward councillor Farid Uddin Ahmed Ratan, who took office back in 2015, said, "We've sent letter after letter [to the authorities concerned], but to no avail. We're told renovation works will start soon every time, but it still hasn't."

"Since this community centre wasn't operational, we took up plans for a new one. We even got budget allocations, but couldn't see it through due to not finding suitable land."

Talking to The Daily Star, DSCC Social Welfare and Slum Development Officer Akand Mohammad Faisal Uddin said, "After a long 15 years' closure, we're moving plans to get it off the ground soon."

"We couldn't launch it without a gas supply and elevator. But now that our engineering department has taken up renovation plans, we're hoping works can start from next week," he said.

Project to preserve SM Sultan's artworks

DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT

A cultural preservation project on SM Sultan's artworks was inaugurated at the capital's Bengal Shilpalay at Dhanmondi on Tuesday.

US Ambassador Earl Miller and Director General of Bangla Academy Mohammad Nurul Huda inaugurated the three-year initiative, funded through the US government's Ambassadors Fund for Cultural Preservation (AFCP), according to a US Embassy statement.

It will support study, analysis, and restoration of the largest collection of paintings by one of Bangladesh's most celebrated artists. It will also train young Bangladeshi conservation professionals on sustainable conservation techniques.

Miller also presented a ceremonial plaque to Bengal Foundation Director General Luva Nahid Chowdhury.

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Former bKash

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before magistrates, mentioned that Tanvir was their associate in the crimes. In association with Tanvir, the fraud gang swindled Tk 4.48 lakh from two bKash agents including complainant Rasel, said the case statement.

Tanvir joined bKash as territory officer in 2012. He used to provide agents' and customers' information to the fraud gang, CID said.

Meanwhile, bKash in a statement said accused Tanvir Siraji was no more with them. "Tanvir Siraji has been terminated on disciplinary ground in September 2021," mentioned the statement.

"bKash has been cooperating with law enforcers," it added.

Still hoping

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should be prioritised. It recommended increasing efforts to address specific needs of persons with disabilities through targeted allocation of resources, such as training more doctors and nurses and setting up washbasins for those in wheelchairs.

BIDS director-general Dr Binayak Sen moderated the event.

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