

Cholera breaks out in city

Breaches in Wasa supply lines largely to blame

ZYMA ISLAM and MOUDUD AHMED SUJAN

A cholera outbreak seems to have returned to the city and is being transmitted by the Wasa water supply system.

So far, the worst affected area is Dakshinkhan, with Jatrabari trailing right behind. Other top areas include Mohammadpur, Sabujbagh and Mirpur.

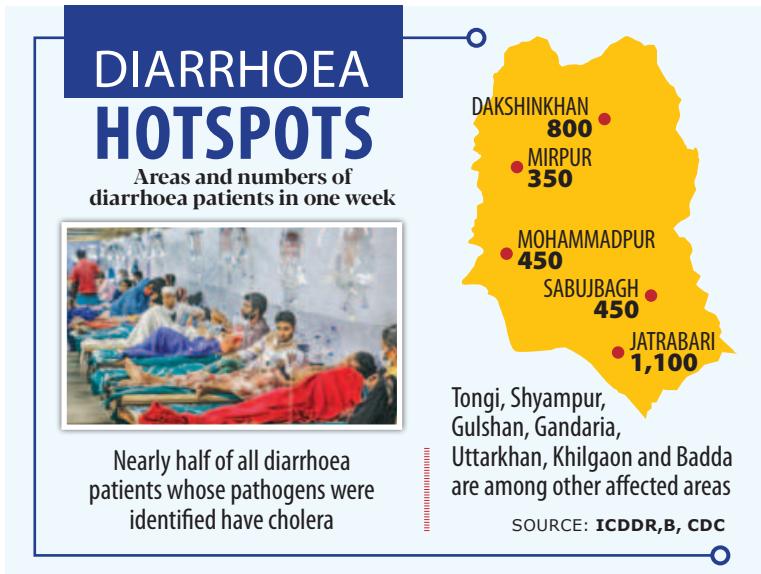
"In my 36-year long career, I have never seen so many diarrhoea patients," said Dr Tahmeed Ahmed, executive director of International Centre for Diarrhoeal Disease Research, Bangladesh (icddr,b).

"I would call this an outbreak."

The 350-bed hospital has been seeing three times more inpatients coming in daily, while tents strung up on the premises are having to house the rest -- a vast majority of whom should be able to go home within 24 hours.

"About 23 percent of all the diarrhoea patients coming in were found to be infected with the bacteria called *vibrio cholerae*," said Dr Md Nazmul Islam, line director of Communicable Disease Control department of the Directorate General of Health Services, citing figures from March 8 to 15.

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BANGLADESHI JOURNO, ENGINEER Now in custody of Libyan authorities

SHARIFUL HASAN

Bangladeshi journalist Zahidur Rahman and expatriate engineer Saiful Islam Tipu, who went missing in Tripoli on March 23, are now in the "safe custody" of the Libyan authorities.

The Bangladesh embassy in Libya said it was trying to get them released but couldn't confirm when and how that would be done.

Speaking to The Daily Star last night, Zahidur's son Farhan Asif Rahman said State Minister for Disaster Management and Relief Md Enamur Rahman told them in the evening that his father was in the custody of the Libyan authorities.

Earlier, the Libyan authorities communicated it to the embassy, said Farhan, a third-year student at a private university.

Zahidur, a special correspondent of private TV channel NTV, is also a director of Enam Medical College Hospital in Savar, on the outskirts of the capital. Enamur is the founding chairman of the private hospital.

Major General SM Shamim Uz Zaman, Bangladesh ambassador to Libya, has confirmed the development.

He told The Daily Star last night, "We are in constant contact with

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