

Dengue spike rings caution

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

At least 17 dengue patients were hospitalised in different hospitals across the country yesterday, indicating a rising trend.

According to Directorate General of Health Services (DGHS), along with the 17 new cases, 46 dengue patients have been hospitalised since the beginning of June.

The total number of dengue patients this year stands at 398.

61 dengue patients are still undergoing treatment.

Experts suggested that city corporations should take extensive measures immediately to control Aedes mosquitoes, as they are expecting a major outbreak.

A pre-monsoon survey conducted by DGHS between March 23 and April 4 found three DSCC wards to be at "high risk".

It also found 10 wards to be at a "medium risk" of an outbreak.

Nine wards in DNCC are at "medium risk".



Owing to the construction work of Dhaka Elevated Expressway, the road near Tejgaon rail-crossing has been in a terrible condition. Even after a drizzle, muddy puddles cover the entirety of the path, as many parts of the road have been excavated. As a result, it is now a daunting task to cross this road. This photo was taken yesterday.

PHOTO: ANISUR RAHMAN

NOT OPEN FOR ALL

Gulistan's Shaheed Matiur Park now requires Tk 10 to enter, to the dismay of residents

HELEMUL ALAM

Hoping to spend some quality time with his family, Mohram Ali recently took his three children to Shaheed Matiur Park at the capital's Gulistan. But after reaching the entrance, the family got confused and eventually disheartened.

The four were intercepted by a security guard, who wanted Tk 40 for entry tickets, Tk 10 for each of them. For the family, buying tickets to enter a public, open park was unheard of, and in fact, this is not the common practice. "I didn't think they would ask for money to enter the park. It's not fair. A



park should be open for all, without any entry fee," said Mohram.

This correspondent talked to several others in the area, and they all had similar complaints.

For the last three months, people have been buying tickets to enter the park. The question is, why? When Dhanmondi Lake, Ramna Park and Chandrima Udyan are free to enter for all, how logical is it to charge visitors of Shaheed Matiur Park?

Three months back, Dhaka South City Corporation (DSCC) leased the park out to a firm, which is now maintaining the park and taking Tk 10 as entrance fee from each visitor.

The leaseholder has set up multiple rides inside, and a few will be installed soon.

Under the project "Jalsabujer Dhaka", taken in 2017 to renovate 19 parks and 12 playgrounds in DSCC areas, many parks



have already been opened. The aim of the project, which was prepared by 70 architects, was to make parks and playgrounds beautiful, green and open.

But by excluding a large part of the population with the ticketing system, how open can a park be?

Earlier, DSCC renovated Shaheed

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ADIL MOHAMMAD KHAN
Former general secretary of Bangladesh Institute of Planners

Matiur Park, spending Tk 9 crore, and opened it to the public in 2020. As part of renovation works, it removed the iron fencing and lowered boundary walls to give the place an open look and ensure easy access.

But in less than a year, the corporation fenced the park boundary again, spending around Tk 80 lakh,

to "protect it from floating people", according to officials.

The latter decision went against the concept of keeping the park open from all sides -- a concept the corporation is following to renovate the other parks and playgrounds.

Md Rafiq Azam, principal architect of Shatotto, who was the project's team leader, said the decision to introduce ticketing system was made without his knowledge. If people have to pay to enter a park, then society will no longer be based on welfare. Everything will operate like a business, he said.

"We want open spaces, playgrounds, parks, ponds and ghats to be free for all visitors. This is the ideal picture of a welfare-based society. But unfortunately, we are not seeing that now," he added.

Iqbal Habib, joint secretary of Bangladesh Poribesh Andolon, said DSCC is to provide public amenities and services using taxes.

Leaseholders "extorting money" by using public spaces is unjust and unreasonable, he said.

Adil Mohammad Khan, former general secretary of Bangladesh Institute of Planners, said the nature of a park, udyan or public space totally changes if a ticketing system is

introduced.

Residents are already suffering from a dearth of such spaces. So, there is no scope of restricting the public through ticketing system, he said.

"Parks or playgrounds should not be leased out with the excuse of ensuring proper maintenance. But unfortunately, we are witnessing such developments," he added.

He mentioned that although what the authorities are doing is technically legal, it is an unethical practice, as it will deprive people's right to access open spaces.

Contacted, DSCC Ward-13 councillor Md Enamul Haque said the decision was taken by the city corporation, and he has nothing to say.

The situation is challenging, as floating people and others dirty up the park. And so, it was leased out for proper maintenance, he said.

On the bright side, the park is actually being properly maintained, as premises are clean, and the atmosphere is pleasant for visitors.

Contacted, leaseholder Md Oli Ullah, proprietor of Oli Enterprise, said they have taken the park on lease for a year on November 26, 2021.

They have leased it for Tk 20 lakh and already set up some rides, he said. According to DSCC's decision, the firm is not allowed to take more than Tk 10 from a visitor.

The number of visitors is still low, as many do not enter due to the ticketing system, but around 500 visitors go to the park daily on average, he said.

Contacted, DSCC Chief Executive Officer Farid Ahmed said the corporation took the decision only for locations that have rides and playing equipment. "We have also set up rides in a few places, like Kalabagan, where we are introducing a ticketing system."

Farid said they do not have the workforce to maintain the park, and so they leased it out.

A joyride that ended too soon

Five killed in road accident

AGENCIES

Five people were killed and a man was injured in a head-on collision between a lorry and an auto-rickshaw on Dhaka-Mawa highway near Keraniganj, on the outskirts of the capital, in the early hours of yesterday.

The deceased were identified as auto-rickshaw driver Md Tamal (18), Jonayed Hossain Jihad (23), Nahid Hossain Fahim (21), Md Samad (21) and Jony Miah (26).

The injured person is Ahad (22).

The accident occurred around 12:30am when five friends, workers of a factory in Hasanabad area, were on their way to visit Padma Bridge in an auto-rickshaw, said Mohammad Shah, officer-in-charge (OC) of Hasara police station.

The auto-rickshaw collided with a lorry in Teghoria area suddenly, leaving four inside the auto-rickshaw dead on the spot, said Hasara Highway Police in-charge Alfar Hossain.

The wounded were taken to Mitford Hospital, where the on-duty doctor declared Jony Miah dead.

Police seized the lorry, but its driver and helper managed to flee.

A case has been filed with South Keraniganj police station in this regard.

DU admission test begins with 'Ga' unit

No untoward incident reported



The premises of Dhaka University were flooded with admission-seekers and their guardians yesterday.

PHOTO: PALASH KHAN

DU CORRESPONDENT

The admission test of Dhaka University (DU) for 2021-2022 academic session began with "Ga" (C) unit, under business studies faculty, across the country yesterday.

The exam started at 11:00am and continued till 12:30pm at eight universities in divisional cities, said a press release issued by DU public relations office.

A total of 30,719 students applied for 930 seats.

The venues were Dhaka University, Rajshahi University, Chittagong University, Khulna University, Barisal University, Begum Rokeya University, Bangladesh Agricultural University, and Shahjalal University of Science and Technology in Sylhet.

DU Vice Chancellor Prof Md Akhtaruzzaman, Pro-VC (Administration) Prof Muhammad Samad and Pro-VC (Academic) Prof ASM Maksud Kamal, among others, visited the exam centre at the faculty building.

The VC expressed satisfaction, as the exam was held in a fair and peaceful atmosphere.

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PRAYER
TIMING
JUNE 4



	Fazr	Zohr	Asr	Maghrib	Esha
Azan	4-05	12-45	5-00	6-45	8-15
Jamaat	4-40	1-15	5-15	6-50	8-45

SOURCE: ISLAMIC FOUNDATION

Rice traders fined Tk 3.23 lakh

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The food ministry yesterday fined rice millers and traders Tk 3.23 lakh for doing business without licence and hoarding rice in four divisions of the country.

A case was also filed against a miller, Nargis Auto Mill, in Bogura's Sherpur.

The price of both fine and coarse rice shot up by Tk 4 per kilo on June 1, and the food ministry launched drives against illegal rice hoarders across the country, says Trading Corporation of Bangladesh (TCB).

Several teams of the food ministry and department led the drive yesterday in seven divisions. No drive was carried out in Mymensingh, said Kamal Hossain, public relations officer of the ministry.

Two traders of the capital's Rampura and Banasree were fined Tk 9,000 for doing business without a food grain licence, while another trader of Hazaribagh was fined Tk 5,000 for the same charge.

Mobile courts fined some unlicensed traders of Shantinagar and Fakirapool Tk 30,000.

In Savar, two traders were fined Tk 30,000 due to anomalies in selling and buying receipts.

In Brahmanbaria and Natore, three traders were fined Tk 65,000 for hoarding and using plastic bags. Another trader in Natore was fined Tk 30,000 for hoarding rice and operating without licence.

On Thursday, the mobile courts fined rice millers and

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GOLD TRADER'S MURDER

Four give confessional statements

BSS, Dhaka

Four accused in a case lodged over the murder of gold trader Anup Baul yesterday gave confessional statements before court.

The four are Anup's business partner Nayan Mondal, his cousin Ripon Mondal, Pijush Karati and Dilip Chandra Roy.

PBI produced them before the court of Dhaka Senior Judicial Magistrate Meshkat Shukrana. The court then recorded their statements and sent them to jail.

Anup went missing from Munshiganj's Sirajdikhan area on January 4. PBI arrested the four on June 1, after recovering Anup's body.



On the 12th anniversary of the Nimtoli fire tragedy yesterday, wreaths were placed on a memorial in the area, in remembrance of the deceased. In 2010, the incident shocked the entire nation with its magnitude of losses, taking 117 lives. However, such incidents have not stopped. The Nimtoli tragedy was followed by multiple other incidents, including the Chawkbazar fire in 2019. Although many steps and reforms were promised to put an end to such occurrences, no significant change has taken place.

PHOTO: STAR