

## Dengue death toll rises to 50

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Two more dengue patients died in 24 hours till yesterday morning, raising this year's death toll from the mosquito-borne disease to 50.

The number of dengue cases also crossed 13,000 with 125 new patients admitted to different hospitals across the country yesterday, according to the Directorate General of Health Services (DGHS).

Among the death cases, 23 are in Dhaka, 18 in Cox's Bazar, four in Barishal and five in Chattogram.

A total of 1,514 dengue patients are still undergoing treatment while 11,436 have been released from hospitals.

A monsoon survey of the DGHS, conducted between August 11 and 23, found the presence of Aedes mosquitoes in 13.4 percent of houses under Dhaka

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Thousands gather in front of BNP's Nayapaltan central office yesterday to attend the first namaz-e-janaza of Jubo Dal activist Shahidul Islam Shaon. Shaon (27) was injured during a clash between BNP men and police in Munshiganj on Wednesday. He passed away on Thursday night.

PHOTO: PALASH KHAN

## 'Pritom's arrest an example of govt misrule'

Nagorik Oikya convener Manna tells protest rally

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The government is killing people and putting them in jail one after another because it cannot control the price hike of essentials and ensure people's rights, Nagorik Oikya Convener Mahmudur Rahman Manna said yesterday.

"Whenever people speak the truth, [the government] tries to take action against them. Pritom's arrest under the DSA and putting him in jail is an example of the government's misrule," Manna said, addressing a protest rally in the capital's Shahbagh.

Left-leaning organisation Rashtra Sangskar Andolan organised the rally, demanding the release of its leader Pritom Das and repeal of the Digital Security Act.

Police arrested Pritom on September 4 in a case filed under the DSA by a Bangladesh Chhatra League activist for allegedly hurting religious sentiments. Referring to recent killings of BNP activists during police firing in different parts of the country, he said they were killed for protesting the recent price hike of food items.

Manna claimed the present government came to power without the people's vote. "As a result, it does not have to be accountable and which is why it can put whoever it wants in jail."

Biplobi Workers Party General Secretary Saiful Haque said the current government should be removed first for the DSA to be repealed.

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## Three killed in road accidents

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Three people were killed and another was injured in three separate road accidents in the capital during the last two days.

In Basabo, a woman was run over by an unidentified vehicle as she tried to cross a road around 10:30pm on Thursday, said Faruk Hossain, sub-inspector of Sabujbagh Police Station.

Locals took Morium Begum (38) to Mugda General Hospital from where she was transferred to Dhaka Medical College Hospital. She died there around midnight.

Morium — who was from Jamalpur's Islampur — used to live in Dakkhinkhan area.

In Hazaribagh, Feroza Begum (50), a house help, was killed after being hit by a motorcycle in front of Boubazar Balur Math around 2:30pm yesterday.

Sujan, son of the deceased, said the accident happened while his mother was crossing a road.

One of the victim's relatives took her to DMCH where the doctors declared her dead around 4:15pm, said Bachchu Mia, in-charge of DMCH Police Outpost.

Feroza lived with her husband and children in Boubazar Balur Math area of Hazaribagh.

Meanwhile, a man was

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# TIKTOK STAYS

### Ministry dismisses JS body's request to shut the platform in Bangladesh

MOHAMMAD JAMIL KHAN and RASHIDUL HASAN

Ministry of Posts, Telecommunications and Information Technology has recently dismissed a parliamentary standing committee's recommendation for closing down TikTok in the country.

The Parliamentary Standing Committee on Home Affairs sent a proposal to the ministry on August 16, requesting it to shut down the video-sharing platform at the quickest possible time for what they claimed was the platform's use in "spreading misinformation and hate speech".

Later in a meeting on August 25, the JS body discussed the proposal.

Brig Gen Ziaul Ahsan, director general of National Telecommunication Monitoring Centre (NTMC), informed the meeting that young internet users spend 80 percent of their screen time on TikTok, according to the working paper of the meeting.

The app is being used for negative purposes like spreading false information, hate speech, and taking out a personal vendetta, said the DG.

He also mentioned that all information relating to the misuse of the app has been sent to BTRC, along with the request to shut it down.

The parliamentary watchdog then asked the home ministry to take necessary steps corresponding with the ministries concerned, said the working paper.

However, the ministry has turned down the request.

Posts and Telecommunications Minister Mustafiz Jabbar said the request was turned down following instructions from the ICT advisor to the prime minister.

"The advisor instructed us not to shut down the platform," Jabbar told The Daily



**We have to educate youths about using these apps in a better way by addressing and removing the negative aspects. If we shut down the app, there will always be another alternation.**

Tanvir Hassan Zoha  
IT expert

**What we need is a specific regulation policy to monitor and operate such apps.**

Tasmiah Nuhia Ahmed  
SC advocate

**We work closely with the government to reinforce the safety of our platform users, where our Bangladeshi community can inspire creativity and spread joy.**

A TikTok spokesperson

Star.

"If any negative or harmful content is found in TikTok, we report it to the app authority to remove it from the platform," he added.

Meanwhile, law enforcers believe TikTok is used as a preferred tool for criminals to carry out different types of crimes.

Citing examples, they said they identified a syndicate that targets teenage or school-going girls on TikTok and befriends them.

The girls are then lured in with promises of TikTok stardom and invited to meet-ups. Once they agree and come over, they fall victim to sexual harassment. There are rape victims among them as well. On multiple occasions, the crimes were recorded on camera by the perpetrators, they added.

At least 30 people were arrested in less than a year on charges of rape, extortion, burglary, and human trafficking using the platform, according to the police database.

The database showed that at least 20 arrestees were involved in trafficking syndicates who lured young girls on TikTok.

IT experts, however, believe shutting down an application is not the solution to such crimes.

"Steps can be taken to remove the harmful contents, but not the app," Tanvir Hassan Zoha, an IT expert, told The Daily Star.

"We have no recreation centres and playgrounds for our younger citizens to spend their free time healthily. Social media is all they are left with as sources of recreation and entertainment."

"We have to educate them about using these apps in a better way by addressing and removing the negative aspects. If we shut down the app, there will always be another alternative," he added.

Echoing Tanvir, Tasmiah Nuhia Ahmed, an advocate at the Supreme Court, said, "We

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## UP chairman turned scammer

### Man dupes MP, police officials by selling same car multiple times

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Zakir Hossain (43), chairman of Manikachar Union Parishad of Meghna in Cumilla, used to take money from different people to get them cars at a low price directly from the port. After that, he would make an agreement with the owner on renting the car and keep it with him.

He would sell the same car or rent them to other people with the same registration number by showing fake documents. Many would fail to identify the trick as he never handed the cars over to those he sold them to.

In this way, Zakir cheated a huge amount of money from around 300 people. Among them,

**After acquiring a huge amount of wealth, he made his way to Cumilla's local Jubo League. He eventually contested in the UP elections and became the chairman, while running his scams simultaneously.**

there are lawmakers, deputy inspector general of police, superintendent of police and people from various walks of society.

The detective branch of police came up with the information after arresting Zakir from Cumilla's Meghna area on Thursday, following a case filed with Mugda Police Station in Dhaka.

At a press conference at DMP Media Centre, Additional Commissioner of DB Mohammad Harun Or Rashid said Zakir used to take the full amount to buy the car from different people but used to buy it with a down payment.

He used to pay the money properly for a few months, following the agreement about the rent.

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## To boldly climb where no one has climbed before

### Bangladesh, Nepal joint expedition to scale unconquered Himalayan peak

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

An eight-member team of Bangladeshi and Nepali mountaineers will attempt to scale a 21,443 feet peak named Dogari Himal in Nepal, which has so far been unconquered, in a bid to celebrate the golden jubilee of Bangladesh-Nepal friendship.

The team includes four Bangladeshi mountaineers and will be led by MA Mohit who has climbed the Everest twice. The Nepal team will be led by Mingma Gyaie Sherpa, said members of the team at a press conference held at Jatiya Press Club yesterday.

Three members of the Bangladeshi group will leave for Nepal on October 3 while the fourth member Ikramul Hasan Shakeel will join at Kathmandu from his ongoing trekking of the Great Himalayan Trail.

Mountaineers of the two countries are expected to summit the peak in 28 days.

Addressing the event, economist and chairperson of Brac Dr Hossain Zillur Rahman said, "Sports is not only medium of entertainment, it can also help develop our spiritual, moral and ethical values. We should think about rebranding sports so that it can highlight the country in the global arena."

Nepalese envoy to Bangladesh Ghanshyam Bhandari expressed hope that this initiative will help strengthen

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# Shobar Dhaka, an app (not) for all

DIPAN NANDY

To make access to citizen services easier, Dhaka North City Corporation launched a mobile app called "Shobar Dhaka" in January last year.

Through it, residents of DNCC can lodge complaints related to eight citizen services.

From January 2021 to September 13, 2022, DNCC received a total of 1,78,947 complaints about eight civic services, including roads, street lights, and street lamps. Of them, 86,910 complaints were about mosquitoes.

An analysis of the data shows that the

Launched: January 2021
Total complaints: 1,78,947
Solved issues: 1,49,989
In-process: 28,958
Solution rate: 83pc

least number of complaints are about public toilets, 65 to be exact. Moreover, DNCC received 16,089 complaints related to roads, 39,626 related to garbage, 5,873 related to street lights, 1,049 related to sewage problems, 1,850 related to illegal construction and 869 on waterlogging.

COMPLAINTS	PERCENTAGE
Mosquito	48.56pc
Waste	22.14pc
Holding Tax	14.85pc
Road issues	8.99pc
Street light	3.28pc
Illegal construction	1.03pc
Sewerage	0.58pc
Waterlogging	0.48pc

According to DNCC data, 83 percent of the total complaints have been resolved. A total of 86,411 complaints about mosquitoes have been resolved, which is 99 percent of the total complaints.

Of the 65 complaints related to public toilets, 48 have been resolved. On the other hand, 1,850 complaints related to illegal installations were remedied, while 419 remain unresolved.

According to DNCC officials, once a user logs into the app using his or her phone number, they can select one of the eight citizen services from it and write about their issues.

They can also upload a picture related to that problem.

Afterwards, DNCC will look into the issue and get back to the complainant.

Besides, one can call the national helplines (999, 333) through it. There's also an emergency alert feature for women and children, officials added.

Anik Roy, a resident of ward-II (Kalyanpur), said, "The biggest problem with customer care in our country is waiting on the phone for a long time, wasting both time and money. But the service I got from Shobar Dhaka was much better in this regard. When I complained about the street lights, it was resolved within a short time."

Meanwhile, residents of the newly-added 18 wards in DNCC remain unable to report their grievances on the app yet, said DNCC sources.

Munna Mia, a resident of Ward 42 (Beraid), one of the newly added wards, said, "We are deprived of all such services. We heard about the app but are unable to use it and get our numerous problems solved."

These 18 wards were added to DNCC in 2016.

"Service employees have not been appointed in these wards yet. Hence, residents of these wards have been unable to lodge complaints using the app, even though they are the ones with bigger problems," said a DNCC official.

"We mainly get complaints related to vandalism, water supply, and road encroachment in the app. Some wards need some long-term projects to solve

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