

Dengue cases cross 19,000 mark

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

With 637 new cases, the total number of dengue patients crossed 19,000-mark yesterday. According to the Dhaka Directorate General of Health Services (DGHS), a total of 19,283 dengue patients were hospitalised till 8:00am while the number of total deaths this year is 63.



Among the death cases, 31 are in Dhaka, 20 in Cox's Bazar, six in Chattogram, five in Barishal and one in Narsingdhi. A total of 2,333 dengue patients are still undergoing treatment and 16,887 have been released from hospitals so far.

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 DNCC and 11.75 percent of homes under DSCC.



Once meant for the beautification of the city, the overlooked and ignored Panthakunja Park turns more and more of an eyesore as days pass. The perimeter of the place has been turned into a trash stand, so much so that even a commode was spotted there yesterday.

PHOTO: PALASH KHAN

Funding gap major predicament

Say speakers on achieving SDGs

DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT

Uncertainty looms large over achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) because of the funding gap in the aftermath of the Covid-19 pandemic and the Russia-Ukraine war that is causing an economic downturn.

Therefore, the global community must revisit ways to achieve the SDGs in the changed global context.

Bangladeshi ministers and academics made these observations at a seminar on "Bangladesh's journey to SDGs: from negotiations to implementation" yesterday, organised by the Department of International Relations, Dhaka University (DU) in collaboration with the Foreign Service Academy.

"Given the current global context, I am not very optimistic about achieving the SDGs unless the developed countries meet the funding gap and ensure technology transfer," said Foreign Minister AK Abdul Momen.



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AK ABDUL MOMEN
Foreign Minister

He said achieving the SDGs requires \$5-\$11 trillion a year, but only 3 percent of the required amount is met now. This is affecting infrastructure development and supply chains.

Momen said Bangladesh urged the UN General Assembly President to organise a high-level dialogue on how to achieve the SDGs and another on South-South Cooperation.

State Minister for Planning Dr Shamsul Alam said the OECD (Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development) countries are pledged-bound to provide 0.7 percent of their gross national income for the poor countries, but it is now only 0.2 percent. Bangladesh has notably achieved the Millennium Development Goals and has formulated policies and strategies in line with the SDGs. However, the projected slow economic growth globally has created uncertainty over SDGs, he said.

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The administration's promotion problem

Top tier officials keep getting perks while ministries, divisions can't fill lower-level posts

MAHBUBUR RAHMAN KHAN

Wholesale promotions at the top level of the civil bureaucracy are leading to an imbalanced administration. This is negatively impacting performance and frustrating other government officials.

Experts termed such promotions a waste of public money and resources.

For example, the public administration ministry, the supervisory authority of government officials, carried out its last fiscal activities by assigning seniors to the work of juniors.

A 2021-22 report of the ministry shows that seven additional secretaries were appointed to joint-secretary posts, while 22 joint secretaries did deputy secretaries' jobs, and nine deputy secretaries carried out the role of senior assistant secretaries.

Although these officials have been promoted and are getting salaries according to their new posts, they still do the jobs of junior officials.

The report depicts the picture of a public administration fattened with influential bureaucrats at the top and a sparse number of juniors in the lower tier.

"Promotions should be given for the interest of the state, not of any individual," said former cabinet secretary Ali Imam Majumder.

Termining it a bad practice, he said this phenomenon is pervasive in all government organisations, including police and universities. "It depicts an imbalance in governance. It spreads to every

	SANCTIONED POSTS	APPOINTED OFFICIALS
Additional secretary	3	13
Joint secretary	6	20
Deputy secretary	26	47

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sector."

The report says against three sanctioned posts of additional secretary, the ministry had appointed 13. There were 20 joint secretaries against six sanctioned posts. Against the 26 approved posts, there were 47 deputy secretaries.

Meanwhile, there were 67 approved posts of assistant and senior assistant secretaries, but the ministry could only fill up 26 posts. Of the 26, interestingly, nine are deputy secretaries performing the role of senior assistant secretary.

The scenario is, however, different for officials who belong to grade 9 and above in the ministry. Against the 48 posts, the ministry could fill up only 23, according to the report.

This scenario of imbalance is not only exclusive to the ministry.

The situation is almost similar for other government departments and organisations.

There are now 105 additional secretaries (grade-2) against 308 posts, with 203 in-situ promotions in all ministries and divisions, according to the 2021 statistics of civil officers and staff, which was published in June.

In-situ officials continue to hold the same office and perform the same duties as before, but hold higher positions and get higher pay, raising questions about the promotion at the expense of taxpayers' money.

There are 507 joint secretaries against 427 sanctioned posts, and 171 deputy secretaries against 152 approved posts in all ministries.

The number of in-situ officials has risen because wholesale

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No proof of 'unethical activities' found

Probe body on allegations against BCL leaders at Eden College

DU CORRESPONDENT

The probe body, formed over the "untoward incident" that took place on Eden Mohila College campus, did not find any proof of the allegation of blackmailing students into carrying out unethical activities made against leaders of BCL unit at Eden College in Dhaka.

"The probe committee did not find any authenticity of the allegation. The college administration will take necessary steps following due procedure regarding clashes between the students and allegations of dormitory seat trading," reads a press release of the institution signed by its principal Supriya Bhattacharjee.

On September 25, the authorities of Eden Mohila College formed a four member inquiry committee to investigate the recent clashes among BCL leaders and activists of the college unit and other allegations raised against BCL leaders.

The members of the committee were Prof Mohammad Ziaul Haque, Prof Kazi Atiquzzaman, Prof Sufia Akhter and Prof Meherunnesa.

Talking to The Daily Star, Supriya Bhattacharjee said, "This allegation [forcing students into unethical activities] was our main focus while investigating. But the members of the committee did not find any evidence regarding the allegation. Even those who raised the allegations changed their stance."

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'I realised my mistake'

Says youth who left home to join militant group; 4 'missing' youths among 7 held

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

He had left home along with seven youths of Cumilla to join the newly-formed militant group "Jamatul Ansar Fil Hindal Sharqiya". But at one point, he realised his mistake.

Sartaz Islam alias Niloy (22), who was persuaded into militancy by his cousin, escaped from Patuakhali during "hijrat" and returned home.

In Islam, hijrat generally means "to give up one's own land" or "to migrate from one place to another place" mostly for the sake of faith.

At a press briefing yesterday, Rapid Action Battalion disclosed the information about arresting seven people, including four youths who went missing from their homes in Cumilla and elsewhere. They were suspected to have ties with radical groups.

Sartaz was present at the Rab media centre. He told reporters, "I was in hijrat for four to five days. Eventually, I came to realise that I was on the wrong path. Before doing anything, we should know about the consequences. Don't make mistakes like mine."

The recruits received physical and organisational training in remote char areas. So far, 15 to 20 people have joined the new group.

Sartaz was one of the eight young men who went missing in Cumilla on August 23. He returned to his Kalyanpur home on September 1.

"Later, Rab took him into custody. Following interrogation, the law enforcers came to know details of others," Commander Khandaker Al Moin, director of Rab's legal and media wing, told the briefing.

In CCTV footage of different locations, four youths were seen leaving Cumilla with bags. They were also traced to a residential hotel in Cumilla and Chandpur Railway Station.

The youths had left their homes to join the newly-formed militant group, said the Rab official.

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30 gold bars found inside dustbin at Dhaka airport

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Customs officials recovered 30 gold bars, weighing around 3.5kg, from a dustbin in Dhaka's Hazrat Shahjalal International Airport yesterday morning.

The bars wrapped in scotch tape -- were found near Bay-12 around 9:30 a.m., said a custom official.

According to him, the gold is worth around Tk 3.5 crore.

Customs officials suspected that the bars were smuggled from abroad and kept in the bin to be taken out from the airport at a convenient time.

"We are investigating the matter," he added.



Rethink strategy for better negotiation

Speakers tell workshop ahead of COP-27

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Bangladesh needs to change its strategy to strengthen negotiation for funds committed by the developed countries and showcase the impacts of climate change in the coming Conference of Parties (COP-27) to be held in November, speakers told a workshop yesterday.

The workshop titled "Capacity-Building and Strategy Workshop: Facilitating media engagement at COP-27 and beyond" was organised by Centre for Research and Policy Development (CRPD) at Brac Centre Inn in Mohakhali.

Shaheen Anam, executive director of Manusher Jonno Foundation (MJF), said climate change became a reality within decades.

"Those who are responsible for



PHOTO: COLLECTED

climate change are not exempted from its impacts -- like droughts, wildfires and heatwaves in the western countries. Though the talk to reduce carbon emission is ongoing, we are not in the right direction," she said.

Mentioning the intensity,

aggression and frequency of the natural calamity driven by climate change, she underscored the need to rethink the strategy the country currently has for better negotiation in COP-27.

"We have to create awareness regarding climate change and

wage a youth movement like Greta Thunberg. We must include the issue in our educational system. We all have our responsibilities to combat the greatest threat faced by the planet," said Shaheen Anam.

Lawmaker Shamim Haider Patwary of Gaibandha-1, who attended COP-26, said the country's negotiators lack negotiation skills when it comes to leading the bargain on an important global platform.

"Thousand of sessions are scheduled to be held in COP-27. The government must prepare a minimum of 1,000 delegates to attend every session so that we can highlight the sufferings we are going through due to climate change," he said.

"The government should

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	Fazr	Juma	Asr	Maghrib	Esha
Azan	4-45	12-30	4-15	5-53	7-30
Jamaat	5-20	1-15	4-30	5-56	8-00

SOURCE: ISLAMIC FOUNDATION

OBITUARY



Mrs. Zaheda Chowdhury (Bulbul Chowdhury) daughter of Late Mr. Abdur Rahim Chowdhury, passed away peacefully on October 4, 2022. She was 83 years old. She left behind her son, two grandchildren, two brothers, two sisters and a host of relatives, friends and well-wishers.

Bulbul Chowdhury was the Assistant Principal of Sher E Bangla Balika Mahavidyalaya, Hatkhola Road, Dhaka. She was extremely passionate about shaping young girls to be educated, independent women. She herself was a force to be reckoned with. At 16, upon the death of her parents, she took on the role of the family's matriarch, and brought up seven of her younger siblings, all of whom went on to be accomplished adults. Her family is forever grateful for her sacrifice and dedication.

She accomplished many things in her life but she will always be remembered for her welcoming smile, warmth and love of life.

Her qulkhani will be held on Friday, October 7, 2022 at baad Magreb at Road # 101, House # 9, Gulshan, Dhaka. Her relatives, friends and well-wishers are requested to pray for the salvation of her departed soul.