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Rising dengue cases call for urgent action

Health officials ring alarm over hospital situation

HELEMUL ALAM and SHAHEEN MOLLAH

With the number of dengue cases soaring every day across the country, hospitals especially those in the capital are struggling to deal with the patients, health officials say while experts suggest immediate steps to control Aedes mosquitoes.

According to the data of Directorate General of Health Services (DGHS), at least 857 new dengue patients were hospitalised across the country in 24 hours till yesterday morning, which is this year's daily highest.

Two patients also died yesterday, taking this year's dengue death toll to 96, the third annual highest since the first outbreak of dengue in the country in 2000.

"We are struggling with dengue patients every day due to the surge in cases since last week," said HM Nazmul Ahsan, associate professor at Shaheed Suhrawardy Medical College Hospital.

"Now we have to send back some patients from the hospital due to scarcity of seats."

The dedicated ward for dengue patients in this major public hospital has already been filled up and the authorities have arranged some extra beds but that's still not enough against the demand, he added.

According to Secretary of Health Services Division Anwar Hossain Hawlader, the number of dengue patients is surpassing the capacity of all public hospitals in Dhaka, and the situation may go out of control if it is not checked immediately.

"The dengue cases are breaking all records, stretching the hospitals to their limit. There is no bed left vacant for dengue patients in the city's public hospitals," Anwar said while briefing reporters at the health directorate.

"But we cannot refuse services to anyone. We have to manage somehow," he said, adding that the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare Affairs does not want any crisis like in 2019.

A total of 1,01,354 dengue cases, the annual highest, were recorded that year when the death toll was 179.

The secretary said all hospitals have to introduce separate units for dengue patients and ensure the supply of necessary fluids. They have also asked the city corporations to conduct drives in the dengue hotspots.

Ashrafal Alam, assistant director of the country's top public healthcare facility Dhaka Medical College Hospital, said the number of dengue patients is rising every day though the "situation is still not at danger level".

Mohammad Ali Habib, deputy director of Sir Salimullah Medical College Hospital, said though the number of dengue patients is increasing, they did not open any

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DEATH TOLL

96



An elderly man places a shopping bag on the road in the capital's Palashi to keep a spot in a queue for buying rice and flour from an OMS truck at subsidised prices. The truck arrives around 9:30am, but people, including women, from low-income families start lining up as early as 5:00am every working day. Each person can buy a maximum 5kg rice at Tk 30 per kg and a 2kg packet of flour at Tk 43. The photo was taken around 8:30am yesterday.

PHOTO: FIROZ AHMED

BUSINESS

Improve quality of services

Bangladesh needs to improve the quality of infrastructures and services, raise efficiency in the banking sector, train workforce, lift competitiveness and ensure accountability in all spheres to advance to the next stage of economic development, economists said yesterday.

STORY ON B1

73pc crimes went unreported in 2018

Finds a survey commissioned by police

SHARIFUL ISLAM

Seventy-three percent victims of various crimes committed in 2018 never reported those to cops, reveals a survey commissioned by Bangladesh Police.

The major reasons behind such a grim finding include difficulties in filing cases; hassles of calling police and appearing before courts; expenses for police and legal services, and police's reluctance to cooperate.

The survey, first of its kind in Bangladesh, was carried out on 1,246 respondents from 70 wards of all 12 city corporations and Bogura and Tangail municipalities.

About 83 percent victims think police should be held accountable for their actions, while 85 percent said police have to be free from political bias.

A team of researchers, led by Md Omar Faruk, professor of criminology and police science at Mawlana Bhashani Science and Technology University, conducted the survey titled "Crime Victimisation Survey in Selected

Urban Areas of Bangladesh". The study results were submitted to the Police Headquarters early this month.

The other reasons behind such a high percentage of unreported crimes are victims considering the crimes insignificant and not worth reporting; police's bias towards offenders and inefficiency in nabbing the lawbreakers; and people's lack of trust in the criminal justice system, the study said.

Out of the total 1,246 respondents, 1,100 came up with a rough calculation about the cost of crime. The average cost of a crime was over Tk 3.35 lakh. The total cost of crimes for the 1,100 respondents was about Tk 36.93 crore.

These are calculated in terms of property loss, medical cost, legal service fees, income loss, productivity loss, relocation cost, and any other cost incurred by the victims.

According to the study, 55 percent victims were not satisfied at all with police support. However, 26 percent were moderately satisfied

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Stop war, stop politics over food: Hasina



AGENCIES

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina yesterday once again called for stopping the Russia-Ukraine war, blaming the conflict for disrupting the global food supplies leading to increased cost of food.

She made the appeal in a keynote speech at the five-day World Food Forum 2022 at the headquarters of the Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO) in Rome, Italy, reports UNB.

The theme of this year's WFF (October 17-21) is "Healthy Diets, Healthy Planet".

Speaking virtually from the Gono Bhaban, Hasina said over 800 million people or 10 percent of the world's

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Still clueless why I've been sent into retirement

Says immediate past info secy

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Clueless about the reasons behind his forced retirement, the immediate past information secretary, Mokbul Hossain,

said he was not given any chance to defend himself.

"Even a death row convict gets an opportunity to defend himself ... I would have been happy if I had known the reasons for my forced retirement," he said in an emotion-choked voice, wiping away tears with a paper napkin.

While working in his office at the Secretariat on Sunday, Mokbul learnt that he had been sent into retirement in "public interest". Yesterday, he came to the office

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'A special win' for Scotland

AFP, Hobart

George Munsey's unbeaten half-century and some inspired bowling helped Scotland thrash two-time Twenty20 World Cup champions West Indies by 42 runs in another big upset on Monday.

The shock result comes a day after Namibia hammered Asia Cup winners Sri Lanka in the tournament opener in Australia.

Munsey's 53-ball 66 laced with nine boundaries steered Scotland to 160-5 after being put in to bat first in the opening round match in Hobart.

Left-arm spinner Mark Watt led the bowling charge to bundle out West Indies, winners of the title in 2012 and 2016, for 118 in 18.3 overs.

Minnows Scotland are on course for a second straight Super 12 place after achieving the feat last year.

"Obviously it is a special win for us. Took a lot of work and has given us belief," said Scotland

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Scotland players celebrate the dismissal of West Indies captain Nicholas Pooran during their 42-run win in a T20 World Cup match at Bellerive Oval in Hobart on Monday. Batting first, the Scots scored 160 for five before getting the two-time champions bundled out for 118 runs.

PHOTO: AFP

ZILLA PARISHAD CHAIR

AL-backed candidates take 48

Party rebels win 9

MOHIUDDIN ALAMGIR and ASHIK ABDULLAH APU

The ruling Awami League backed chairman candidates lost in the zilla parishad polls in 11 districts yesterday.

They failed to win despite the fact that majority of the electorates, elected representatives of local government bodies, are from the ruling party.

The Election Commission yesterday announced the unofficial results of 59 zilla parishad polls. The results include 34 posts of chairman. The rest of the 25 chairmen, all backed by the AL, were elected unopposed.

All members and reserved members of Bhola and Feni zilla parishads were also elected uncontested.

The AL-backed chairman candidates suffered defeats at the hands of their party rebels in nine districts -- Narsingdi, Sunamganj, Faridpur, Cox's Bazar, Jhenidah, Sherpur, Patuakhali, Chandpur, and Rangpur, report our district correspondents.

In Dinajpur and Panchagarh, the ruling party favourites lost to a candidate backed by the Jatiya Party and an independent.

About 60,866 elected representatives of local government bodies -- upazila parishad, union parishad, municipality and city corporation -- are the electorates in the zilla parishad polls.

A voter voted for a chairman, one member from each upazila and women members equivalent to one-third of the number of total members, including the chairman.

In total, AL favourites won chairman polls to 48 zilla parishads out of 59.

Meanwhile, Chief Election Commission Kazi Habibur Awal said they were satisfied with the election environment

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