

3 more die of dengue

97 hospitalised in 24hrs till yesterday morning

STAR REPORT

Three people died of dengue and 97 others were hospitalised across the country in the last 24 hours till yesterday morning.

With the latest deaths, all in Dhaka, the total number of deaths in dengue rose to 16 this year, according to the Directorate General of Health Services.

With the new cases, the total number of dengue this year rose to 2,376, of whom 682 are from outside Dhaka.

Some 387 dengue patients are still undergoing treatment at hospitals.

A total of 1,973 dengue patients were released from hospitals during the period.

Total number of deaths in dengue was 281 last year while the total number of cases was 62,382, of whom 23,162 were outside Dhaka, according to the DGHS.

Mob beats, stabs youth over FB post, 10 cops hurt

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A shopkeeper was beaten and stabbed by a mob in front of Police Staff College in the capital's Mirpur-13 yesterday for allegedly hurting religious sentiments.

A team of Kafrul Police Station rescued and sent him to Dhaka Medical College Hospital around 9:45pm, said Saddam Hossain, sub-inspector of the police station.

"Someone hacked my Facebook profile and shared a derogatory comment on religion. I was viciously beaten and stabbed by locals," said the victim.

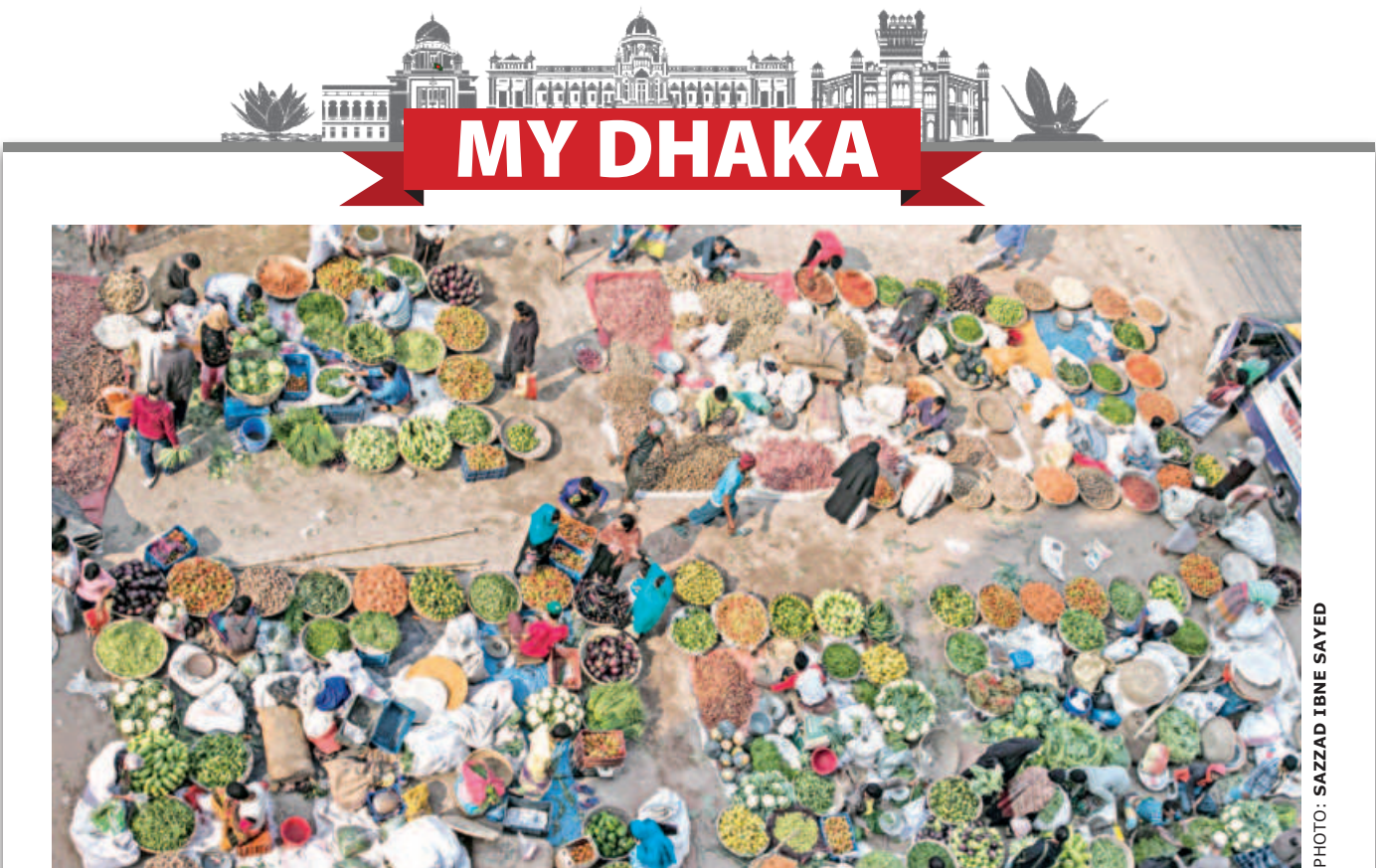
At least 10 policemen were injured while trying to rescue the victim, said Kamrul Islam, inspector (investigation) of Kafrul Police Station.

A group of people went to the victim's shop around 7:30pm, pulled him out and started assaulting him. Local councillor Jamal Mostafa, rushed to the spot to protect him but he also faced the mob's wrath.

After they were rescued, the mob grew larger and people started throwing bricks and other objects at police, the inspector said.

Chases and counter-chases between police and the mob lasted until around 10:00pm, said Khandakar Mahid Uddin, additional commissioner of Dhaka Metropolitan Police.

Three people were detained , Kamrul said.



Meradia kitchen market, next to Banasree, brings together buyers and sellers with its fresh produce.

Dhaka's bustling FARMER'S MARKET

RBR

Urban villages around Dhaka are pockets of areas that have gotten cramped amidst the rapidly rising city. One finds them in Uttara Residential Area (3rd Phase) – an extension to the Uttara Model Town, Purbachal, and Beribandh areas. Many residents of these places grow their own produce



and often sell them in nearby bazaars. That is how the farmer's market notion got popularised in the outskirts of the city.

When the Purbachal Expressway was under construction and the area was popularly known as 300 feet or Baluchar, there was a popular farmer's market, the Neela Market. The main attraction was that you got fresh vegetables and fish from the villages nearby, and many of the vendors there were the actual producers of these agro products. The market got demolished

once the expressway construction commenced.

The reason why a farmer's market is sought after in Dhaka is simply because of the fresh produce available there. It makes you willing to pay a higher price and travel halfway around the city to grab a basket of these seasonal vegetables.

And all for the reason that the products found in farmer's markets are organic and pesticide free. How much of that is true is debatable but the vegetables are indeed grown in the backyard of the seller's homestead.

One such market is Meradia Haat, beside Banasree, which brings together buyers and sellers with its fresh produce. While not the same as a traditional rural haat, the centenarian bazaar still brings back memories of a village haat for those who are blessed to have seen one.

Besides Meradia, the most recent favourite is Bou Bazar, a farmer's market found a little farther from

the roundabout of the metro rail in Uttara 3rd phase. Young wives, old mothers, and shrewd men all sit with their assorted seasonal vegetables and attract throngs of Dhakaites looking for fresh produce.

A young girl draped in an overused sari, with sindoor on the hair parting, was vending a basket full of helencha shaak, also known as buffalo spinach, for just a meagre Tk 50. An old lady was seen selling the rare dumur, or cluster fig. A chirpy couple was selling duck eggs and half-ripe mangoes from the tree in their backyard. The assortment of vegetables and rare finds were aplenty. There was invariably the snack van selling hot peyajju, beguni, and gurer jilapi.

Amid the hustle and bustle, children were having fun too. They were seen playing around their mothers.

The sellers at these farmer's markets are not regular vegetable vendors; they are suburb dwellers or migrants who want to live the life they left in their villages. They go for random farming according to their needs and sell off the excess for some extra income.

I found the mood and ambience at Bou Bazar subdued. A light wind was cooling off the humid evening, the sky was like an orange marmalade; as a bystander, the entire panoramic view of the market filled my heart with a kind of adoration for the hardworking men and women of Dhaka.

4 witnesses give depositions in case against Arav

COURT CORRESPONDENT

Four more prosecution witnesses gave their depositions before a Dhaka court yesterday against Robiul Islam alias Arav Khan and nine others in a case filed over the killing of Special Branch (SB) Inspector Mamun Imran Khan in July 2018.

The witnesses are Arifur Rahman, an inspector of the Detective Branch of police; DB Sub-Inspectors Shah Alam and Md Rubel Hossain and Assistant Sub-Inspector Md Enamul.

Judge Faisal Atiq Bin Kader of Dhaka's First Additional Metropolitan Sessions Judge's Court recorded their statements in the courtroom.

Later, the defence for all the accused cross-examined the witnesses on different points.

The court then fixed June 18 for the next hearing of the case.

Ex-SP Babul gets HC bail in DSA case

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The High Court yesterday granted permanent bail to former superintendent of police Babul Akter in a case filed under the Digital Security Act.

Police Bureau of Investigation (PBI) Chattogram Metro's Superintendent of Police Naima Sultana filed the case with Kulshi Police Station on October 17 last year against four people including Babul and expatriate journalist Ilias Hossain on charges of making false and derogatory statements about her in a video uploaded on social media.

Babul's brother Habibur Rahman Labu and his father Abdul Wadud Miah were the other two accused in the case.

In her complaint, Naima alleged, "In order to implement an unknown agenda, a 42:21-minutes-long video was made with false statements and uploaded on YouTube."

BRTC, BUET to do study for expansion of Dhaka airport runway

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The government has appointed BRTC and BUET as consultants for carrying out a detailed feasibility study and cost estimate for the expansion of the runway of Dhaka airport from 10,500 feet to 12,000 feet.

State Minister for Civil Aviation M Mahbub Ali yesterday told this in parliament in reply to a query from Awami League MP Kazim Uddin Ahmed from Mymensingh-11.

The junior minister, however, didn't elaborate in this regard.

Mahbub Ali said, Bangladesh hosted around 20 lakh foreign tourists in the last five years and earned around Tk 12,788 crore in foreign exchange.

The state minister said tourism industry is a prospectus sector and the government has declared this industry as thrust sector considering the importance of this industry and to attract domestic and foreign tourists.

Mahbub Ali also said the government has taken various measures to establish new tourist centres in the country.

Not improving anytime soon

FROM PAGE 1

Meanwhile, business association leaders have started complaining that production at the factories all over the country is being interrupted.

To make matters worse, coal shortage will see the 1,320MW Payra power plant, the country's largest, completely shut down tonight for at least 25 days. This will widen the gap between supply and demand and effectively cause more power cuts.

Production at one of its two units was suspended on May 25. Power cuts have been more frequent since then.

To get its shipment of coal, the Payra authorities must open Letters of Credit (L/C), which they have not done yet.

"LCs will be opened by this week. But it will take at least 20-25 more days for the shipment to arrive," Shah Abdul Haseeb, superintendent engineer at the plant, told The Daily Star.

PDB officials say they have plans to operate several "unutilised" plants in Khulna and Barishal regions to increase production.

"A new coal-based power plant will start operation from this week, and we will import more electricity from India's Adani power," said PDB member SM Wazed Ali Sardar.

"We are taking measures to prevent

	GAS	FURNACE OIL/LAND DIESEL	COAL	IMPORT
CAPACITY	11039	7116	3360	1160
AVERAGE PRODUCTION IN LAST 7 DAYS	6538	3818	2258	1016

the situation from deteriorating any further," he added.

Adani Power has recently been supplying more than its commissioned capacity of 750MW. It supplied over 1,000MW yesterday.

Besides, Chattogram's SS power plant is going to supply to the national grid from this week, said the PDB member, adding that these would somewhat fill the gap created by the shut down of Payra plant.

However, energy expert Prof M Shamsul Alam said there was no logic behind the claim. "The government has power plants, but it doesn't analyse

how much coal or fuel will be needed over a certain period. That's why they blame the dollar crisis one moment, and talk about another crisis the next.

"It is not acceptable that the new power plants will fill the gap left by another power plant. They will only increase generation capacity, which often remains unutilised.

The country has been producing and importing around 11,500MW during daytime peak hours and around 13,500MW during evening peak for the last couple of weeks.

The total generation capacity is 23,370MW. Over the last couple of months, around 2,500MW capacity remained offline for maintenance and around 4,500MW for fuel crisis.

Yesterday, Dhaka's two power distribution companies were short of 570MW, which left the city dwellers with three to four hours of outages.

Nasrul Hamid yesterday said the ministry had been trying for the last two months to ensure uninterrupted supply of coal, gas and fuel to the plants, but it failed because LCs were not opened on time.

Payra, Barapukuria and some other power plants are running at half their capacities because of shortages of coal, gas, and fuel, he said.

New US visa policy sparks friction

FROM PAGE 1

Maizbhandari, Communist Kendro Convener Wazedul Islam and Ganatantri Party General Secretary Shahadat Hossain spoke.

Hanif told the meeting that Hasina's response to the new US visa policy was strategic and that the government was working to resolve this diplomatically.

Leaders of left-leaning parties, Dilip Barua, Wazedul Islam, and Shahadat Hossain, welcomed Hasina's response and said Bangladesh should not give into US pressure.

The premier on Saturday said there is no point in fretting over who will not give visas or who will impose sanctions.

Dilip said China came up with good offers for Bangladesh and the government should consider those.

Menon said the US visa policy was an ominous sign for Bangladesh and the

government should not take it lightly.

Responding to the left-leaning leaders, Amu said they should think twice before making such comments and asked them what would happen if the US imposed a ban on the country's garment products, said sources.

Maizbhandari said the government should take the issue seriously and Australia, Canada, the UK, EU countries, and Japan may follow suit.

He also said the policy was not introduced to bring the BNP to power but to remove Hasina and the AL government, sources said.

The leaders also criticised the current power supply situation and price-hike of essentials and said both would have adverse impacts on the alliance in the general elections.

They were also critical of the government's proposal to levy a

minimum income tax of Tk 2,000 even on those without taxable income and the 15 percent VAT on ballpoint pens.

The alliance leaders came down heavily on Foreign Minister Abdul Momen and State Minister for Power Nasrul Hamid for "their irresponsible statements", meeting insiders said. Menon expressed disappointment over the AL delaying the process of seat sharing with partner rs.

He said the AL has started its election campaign but the partners are in the dark about their next course.

He demanded an immediate meeting with the AL chief.

Talking to reporters afterwards, Amu termed the US visa policy ill-motivated and unwarranted. He said they think people who want to foil the election might use the policy as a tool.

Plastic most lethal among all waste

FROM PAGE 1

Another study, carried out in 2020 by the Environmental and Social Development Organisation (ESDO), found that 87,000 tonnes of Single Use Plastics (SUPs) are produced in the country every year. Of the SUPs, 96 percent contained food or personal care products.

That year, the High Court issued a directive to ban the use of SUPs in coastal areas, including in hotels, motels, and restaurants.

But the Department of Environment could neither comply with the court order nor properly enforce the ban on polythene shopping bags over the last 20 years.

In the Roadmap for Sustainable Plastic Management for Bangladesh, the World Bank recommended Bangladesh recycles 50 percent of all the plastic it uses by 2025, and 80 percent by 2030.

The roadmap also outlines phasing out 90 percent SUPs by 2026.

Today is World Environment Day. This year the theme is "Beat Plastic Pollution".

Prof Ijaz Hossain, former dean of the Engineering Faculty at Buett, told The Daily Star that every day about 24,000 tonnes of waste is generated in the country and 10 percent (2,400 tonnes) of it comes from plastics.

Referring to a study carried out by Waste Concern, he said most of the recycled waste are PET (PolyEthylene Terephthalate) bottles as they have market value.

"In plastic recycling, we face two kinds of problems. One is household source segregation and another is littering. In household source segregation, the plastic gets mixed with other garbage making it difficult to sort them out. If source segregation could be done properly, plastic waste collection would increase," he said.

HOPE IN RECYCLING

However, there is a silver lining with some large conglomerates coming forward to recycle various wastes with innovative technologies.

The country's steel manufacturing pioneer BSRM has recently launched a technology to turn the slag that comes from the metal casting and refining process into brick.

BSRM produces 0.12 million tonnes of slags a year, which is 33 percent of all slag produced by the steel industry. The remaining 77 percent of slag ends up in roadside ditches, canals or rivers.

Now BSRM's slag-turned-brick has made its way into road construction.

Tapan Sengupta, deputy managing



director of BSRM, told The Daily Star that the slag is successfully replacing the brick and stone chips used in road construction, including road dividers, pavements, and the loadbearing layers (sub-base aggregate) under roads.

BSRM converts all its slag into reusable products.

Recently, the introduction of the technology earned them the SDG Brand Champion Award-2023 given by Bangladesh Brand Forum.

Tapan said they came up with the technology as a part of their commitment to protect the environment. It will encourage others in the steel industry to follow suit.

The Roads and Highways Department in 2020 recommended the use of slag-turned-brick chips as sub-base aggregate.

Kamruzzaman Kamal, director (marketing) of PRAN-RFL Group, told The Daily Star that they have 10 mega collection centres of plastic across the country with direct engagement of 2,000 people.

Another 4,000 people are indirectly involved in plastic waste collection. They recycle 40,000 tonnes a year.

Ta Duy Tung, managing director of Coca-Cola Bangladesh, said plastic waste management has become a huge issue globally and the availability of Coca-Cola beverages in recycled PET bottles is in support of a circular economy in Bangladesh.

To achieve this, it is critical we have enough supply of food-grade recycled plastic to meet demand.

"This is why together with our bottling partners, the Coca-Cola system in Bangladesh is investing in the collection and recycling of PET plastic bottles. It is our ambition to help collect and recycle the equivalent of all the plastic bottles we bring to the market," he said.

Shamima Rahman, director (corporate affairs) at Unilever Bangladesh Ltd, told The Daily Star that they were prioritising the recycling of SUPs and multilayer plastics.

"Unilever managed to collect 7,000 tonnes of plastic in Chattogram since June last year and reached one million people through awareness programmes and ensured improved livelihood for 2,000 waste workers by encouraging them to collect plastic waste," she added.

Mohammad Mohasin, head of supply chain at Walton Group, told The Daily Star that they recycled 12,000 tonnes of plastic waste a year. Usually, they turned the waste into plastic tiles for their own use.