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Stopping brain drain difficult, but 'controllable'

PM tells JS
STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina yesterday acknowledged that stopping "brain drain" in this era of globalisation is a difficult task but her government has kept it at a "controlled level".

"Brain drain is taking place in all underdeveloped and developing countries. However, due to the dedication, sincerity and various effective measures taken by the government, the country's brain drain is

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Water hyacinth drapes the Buriganga, making it difficult for boats to ply. Heaps of plastic illegally dumped on the riverbanks further afflict the waterbody. The photo was taken yesterday in the capital's Kamrangirchar.

PHOTO: AMRAN HOSSAIN

Curtailing EC power will hinder democratic process

Shujan on amendment to RPO
STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The latest amendment to the Representation of the People Order, reducing the Election Commission's power to cancel polls, will "put fair elections and democratic process at risk", said Shushashoner Jonno Nagorik (Shujan) yesterday.

In a statement, the civil society platform also said the amendment passed by the parliament on Tuesday will make the commission "a powerless institution to conduct free and fair elections".

"So far, the Election Commission has not achieved the trust of all political parties and organisations. Through this amendment to the RPO, it will fall in more crisis," the statement read.

Expressing concern over the move, Shujan strongly "opposed" such initiatives and called on authorities to return the power of EC to stop voting at any time after announcement of election schedule.

Currently, the EC can postpone an election at any stage if it thinks that it will not be able to hold a lawful election due to irregularities or malpractices after announcement of election schedule.

The amended RPO stipulates that the EC can suspend the results of only those (one or more) polling stations where irregularities have been reported. It can cancel the results and hold new elections at those centres concerned following investigations.

Another provision of the amended RPO allows

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MJF condemns torture of house help
Demands fair probe, punishment for perpetrators

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Manusher Jonno Foundation yesterday directed the authorities concerned to take legal action against perpetrators, following the torture of an 11-year-old house help in Sylhet.

The organisation, in a statement, called for an impartial investigation into the incident and demanded appropriate punishment for the accused.

According to the organisation, four more such cases occurred between January and May this year. All the victims were aged between 7 and 11 years.

Despite the identification of the perpetrators being evident, there is almost no instance of their conviction, the statement read.

MJF strongly urged

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BOTCHED C-SECTION
HC asks Dr Mili to surrender in four weeks

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The High Court yesterday refused to grant anticipatory bail to Central Hospital's physician Begum Maksuda Farida Akhter Mili in a case filed on charge of negligence of duty during a C-section that led to the deaths of a newborn and her mother.

The newborn of Mahbuba Akter Akhi died while she was undergoing C-section in the hospital on June 10. Akhi, 25, who was taken to LabAid Hospital and had been on life support there, died on June 18.

The HC also ordered Maksuda to surrender before the chief metropolitan magistrate's court in Dhaka in four weeks.

The HC also asked the law enforcers not to harass or arrest her (Maksuda) during this time.

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COMBATING DENGUE

More proactive measures needed

Say health minister, DSCC mayor

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

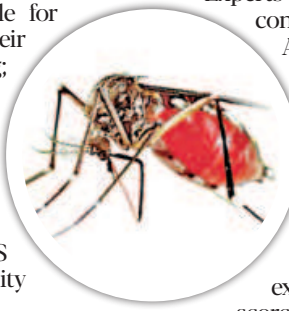
As the number of dengue patients continues to rise rapidly, and fatalities soar, authorities are urging each other for more proactive measures.

Health Minister Zahid Maleque, addressing a programme yesterday, called upon all relevant authorities, including city corporations, to intensify efforts in eliminating the breeding grounds of Aedes mosquitoes.

"I would urge those responsible for mosquito control to enhance their activities as many [people] are dying; many are being infected. We have kept providing healthcare service; [but] hospitals are reaching capacity."

DSCC Mayor Sheikh Fazle Noor Taposh, in another event, voiced his concerns and asked the DGHS to focus more on reducing mortality rates.

"The quality and scope of medical services should be increased more. The pre-treatment facilities should be ensured so that a patient does not go into critical condition. Only then the death rates will be reduced."



Meanwhile, the mounting number of dengue cases and fatalities remains a grave concern. According to DGHS, one dengue patient died while 584 were hospitalised in the last 24 hours till yesterday morning.

On Tuesday, the country witnessed the highest number of dengue deaths this year, with five fatalities. The total number of deaths in dengue rose to 62 while number of cases stands at 10,482.

Experts continue to urge the authorities to conduct drives identifying hot spots of Aedes mosquitoes as soon as possible.

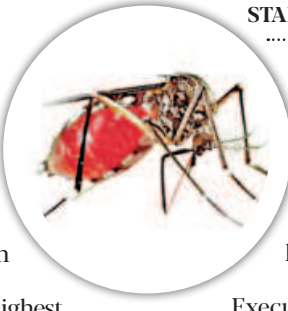
Meanwhile, the DSCC mayor urged people to assist them in combating dengue. "If you give us information, our mosquito control workers will reach there within 15 minutes."

Taposh acknowledged that dengue had emerged earlier than expected this year, even during scorching heat, and emphasised the need to expand dengue control activities.

Saying that dengue cannot be eradicated entirely, the mayor said, "If you compare the data and statistics with developed countries, then you will see that we are in a good position."

DNCC deploys drones

STAFF CORRESPONDENT



Dhaka North City Corporation has deployed drones to identify mosquito breeding sites, especially on rooftop gardens of houses.

DNCC Chief Executive Officer Selim Reza launched the survey programme in Mohammadpur area around 11:00am yesterday morning to identify accumulated water on rooftops.

He said a month-long programme to expedite the ongoing fight against Aedes mosquitoes will start on July 8.

Over the next four days, five separate drones will be utilised to survey the rooftops of every house.

Reza explained that due to the close proximity of houses in the city, conducting surveys by physically visiting each roof is not feasible.

"Instead, by utilising drones, it becomes possible to survey rooftops within an approximately two-kilometre area from a single location and the rooftops of houses across the entire city will be surveyed using the five drones," he added.

PADMA BRIDGE
Automatic toll collection starts on trial basis

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Munshiganj

Automatic toll collection from moving vehicles, known as the Electric Toll Collection System (ETCS), started on a trial basis at the Padma Bridge yesterday.

This experimental toll collection started at one booth at both ends of the Padma Bridge at 10:30am using the Radio Frequency Identification (RFID) system.



Any registered vehicle in front of the toll plaza will be detected by a camera and toll will be collected automatically. Once the prescribed toll is collected, the automatic barrier will be raised and the balance will be displayed on the screen.

Md Manjur Hossain, secretary of Bridges Division, inaugurated the experimental programme.

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HIGHLIGHTING ACHIEVEMENTS
AL to hold month-long events in Sept

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Ahead of the upcoming national election, the ruling Awami League will conduct a month-long programme to highlight the government's "successes and achievements" in the last fifteen and a half years before people.

The decision was taken in a joint meeting held by AL's Dhaka city (north and south) units and its associate organisations at the party's Gulistan headquarters in the capital.

Programme schedule for the mourning month of August was also decided at the meeting, two AL central leaders told The Daily Star.

Wishing anonymity, a joint general secretary of the party said, "We will carry out countrywide mass-campaigns only after the month of mourning is over."

Besides, the ruling party leaders asked the presidents and general secretaries of three associate fronts to immediately form their full-fledged committees.

Prior to the meeting, AL General Secretary Obaidul Quader said BNP is now busy with complaining to foreigners.

"The election is three or four months away... But the BNP and its like-minded parties are not going to the voters, instead they are looking at the foreigners... They are daydreaming," said Quader while briefing reporters.

Mentionable, the ruling AL has been holding "counter programmes" for the last couple of months since BNP started series of anti-government rallies from December 10 last year.



Dayaganj City Corporation Market, which houses shops and residents, has been in a dilapidated condition for a long time. According to locals, the building needs urgent repairs but the authorities concerned continue to turn a blind eye to the situation. Inset, plasters have fallen off the building's ceiling in many places, which locals said have already injured a few.

PHOTO: AMRAN HOSSAIN