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## Declare 'public health emergency' over dengue

**Urge experts; situation not serious yet, say health officials**

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The country is currently facing a "public health emergency" as dengue has already spread to 63 districts, said health experts at a seminar yesterday.

Addressing a seminar organised by Bangladesh Medical Association (BMA) at Mudda Medical College Hospital in Dhaka, they described the situation as "concerning" because the cases of dengue and deaths have been rising every single day.

The health officials in a press conference yesterday termed the situation "alarming", but they claimed that it has not yet reached the status of a public health emergency.

Presenting a keynote at the BMA event, Dr Mushtaq Hussain, consultant at the Institute of Epidemiology, Disease Control and Research (IEDCR), said people are now being infected with all the four strains (Den 1, 2, 3, and 4) of the dengue virus.

"It has been a continuing public health emergency, which is a matter of national concern," said Dr Mushtaq Hussain, who is also a member of the executive committee of the BMA.

"Unplanned urbanisation, high population density, and unhygienic environment in rural and urban areas have made the dengue outbreak worse," he added.

While presenting another keynote, Dr Syed Atiqul

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**Nazmul Hassan new navy chief**

UNB, Dhaka



The government appointed Rear Admiral M Nazmul Hassan as chief of Bangladesh Navy yesterday.

He will take over the duty on July 24 after being promoted to vice rear admiral, said an ISPR bulletin.

Nazmul will be replacing the incumbent Rear Admiral M Shaheen Iqbal.

**Eriko gets custody of her two children**

COURT CORRESPONDENT

The Dhaka District Judge's Court yesterday upheld the family court verdict that allowed Eriko Nakano, a Japanese citizen, to have custody of her two children.

Judge AHM Habibur Rahman Bhuiyan dismissed the appeal filed by their father, Bangladesh-born US citizen Imran Sharif.

Imran filed the appeal challenging the family court verdict that dismissed the case filed by him in February

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## A school for mothers

**Joint initiative of MJF, Women Without Borders helping women become agents of positive change**

TAHIRA SHAMSI UTSA

"I did not know of ways to access my basic civil rights like having a national identity card or filing for a birth certificate," said Rani Akter, a homemaker and mother of three currently living in the capital's Mohammadpur.

The 38-year-old had to rely on her husband not just for economic support but for very basic official work as she had always lived in an isolated and controlled environment in her home.

However, Rani transformed into a well-aware mother as soon as she started going to MotherSchools, a joint initiative of Manusher Jonno Foundation (MJF) and Women



Over 900 mothers have graduated from the school so far. However, the initiative looks to reach more families, especially the marginalised ones, to make a significant positive change in the long run. PHOTO: COLLECTED

TAHIRA SHAMSI UTSA

was informed of the initiative by another mother in her area.

Since its inception, the project has worked to educate mothers from different social backgrounds and nurture them into becoming agents of positive change in the society.

Under this initiative, trainers of Community Participation and Development (CPD) conduct sessions on weekends (Fridays and Saturdays) from 3:00pm to 6:00pm in 25 wards of both Dhaka north and south city corporations.

The course modules comprise of awareness-related lectures and activities on child development, empowerment, openness,

psychological security, identities, motherhood, self-esteem, emotional competency, security, psycho-social development, fostering healthy parent-child relations, spotting early warning signs of radicalisation and ways of preventing it.

Each student must attend 10 sessions over the course of five months, followed by an assessment test on the eleventh visit, in order to graduate.

Most parents, especially those from marginalised backgrounds, are unaware of the importance of ensuring a safe and rich environment when raising a child.

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## Step down right away

**Fakhrul asks Hasina**

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

BNP Secretary General Mirza Fakhrul Islam Alamgir yesterday said the country's people want the prime minister to step down from power.

"We don't care what the foreigners say, the country's people want your resignation. Our one-point demand is your removal. Step down from office and pave the way for conducting the election freely and fairly under a non-party interim government. If you don't do so, the decision will be taken on the street," he said.

Fakhrul made the remarks while addressing a rally organised by Bangladesh Jatiyatabadi



BNP Secretary General Mirza Fakhrul Islam Alamgir addressing a rally in Chattogram city's Kazir Dewri area yesterday. The party held the programme to press home their one-point demand -- resignation of the Awami League government.

PHOTO: RAJIB RAIHAN

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Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina awarding scholarship to a student at the national council of principals of colleges affiliated under the National University yesterday. The event was held at the Bangabandhu International Conference Centre in the capital.

PHOTO: PID

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**We need to diversify education**

**PM tells national council of principals**

UNB, Dhaka

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina yesterday underlined the need for diversifying the education system to transform the country into Smart Bangladesh by 2041.

"We need smart, skilled manpower, smart economy, smart government and smart society. We want to build Bangladesh this way. The utmost need is to diversify the education system," she said.

The prime minister was addressing the national council of principals of the colleges affiliated under the National University and the scholarship distributing ceremony 2023 at the Bangabandhu International Conference Centre.

Hasina said her government wants to build the young generation as skilled manpower.

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## KHALEDA CASES

**Hearing on charge framing August 20**

COURT CORRESPONDENT

A Dhaka court yesterday set August 20 for hearing on charge framing against BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia in 11 cases.

Judge Md Asaduzzaman of Dhaka Metropolitan Sessions Judge's Court adjourned the hearing and set the new date, said Dhaka Metropolitan Additional Public Prosecutor Tapash Kumar Pal.

The adjournment came following petitions submitted by the defence, citing various reasons.

Khaleda, who is out of jail following an executive order from the government, is now unwell and taking treatment at her Gulshan residence.

Among the 11 cases, 10 were filed in the first three months of 2015 over arson attacks, while the other one was filed with a Dhaka court on charge of making seditious comments on freedom fighters and martyrs of the Liberation War.

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## ELECTRIC TRAIN SERVICE

**Railway to start feasibility study after 8 years**

**Signs deal with Turkish company**

### HOW THE SYSTEM WORKS

A railway electric traction system supplies electric power to locomotives, so, trains do not require any onboard fuel. An overhead electricity line has to be installed along the railway track to transmit energy.

### AT A GLANCE

Study project cost

Tk 15.07cr

Deadline Aug 2024

Selected section

N'ganj-Dhaka-Ctg;

Tongi-Joydebpur

### BENEFITS

Electrification will cut

35pc operation cost

Decrease 30-50pc

maintenance cost

Lessen carbon

emission by 20-30pc



STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Bangladesh Railway (BR) yesterday hired a Turkish company to carry out feasibility study aiming to introduce electric train service for the first time in the country.

Turkish Engineering Consulting and Contracting Company (Tumas) will also prepare a detailed design on Narayanganj-Dhaka-Chattogram and Tongi-Joydebpur railway sections (total 348.16km).

The firm will get Tk 13.74 crore (\$1 = Tk 109) to do the works within 12 months and they are expected to start the works next month, Project Director Habibur Rahman told this newspaper yesterday.

The development came more than eight years after BR took the initiative and over seven years after Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina gave the directive to introduce the system, which is considered cost-effective and environment-friendly.

Under the system, a railway electric traction system supplies electric power to locomotives, and so, trains do not require any onboard fuel. An overhead electricity line has to be installed along the railway track to transmit energy.

Currently, BR operates diesel-powered trains on its 3,093-kilometre railway network.

Transport experts and BR officials said although initial investment for electric trains is relatively

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**BNP wants power without joining polls Says Quader**

BSS, Dhaka

Awami League General Secretary Obaidul Quader yesterday said BNP's politics has reached the edge of destruction.

"The BNP's politics, not the country, has reached the brink of destruction today," he said in a message issued in response to the statements of BNP leaders that the country is standing on the edge of crisis.

Quader, also the road transport and bridges minister, said BNP has been spreading falsehood and propaganda since its inception. SEE PAGE 4 COL 6

