



DENGUE OUTBREAK Four more die, 1,503 hospitalised

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Four dengue patients died while 1,503 were hospitalised in the last 24 hours until 8:00am today, according to the Directorate General of Health Services.

One of the deceased was a woman, aged 60, from Barguna district. The others -- aged 18, 58 and 60 -- were all from Dhaka.

This data, however, does not contain any updates on deaths or hospital admissions from Mugda Medical College Hospital and 24 other private hospitals in Dhaka.

With this, the number of deaths from the mosquito-borne disease this year rose to 229 and the number of hospital admissions to 44,205.

Of them, a total of 35,300 have recovered from the viral fever and 8,676 are undergoing treatment at different hospitals across the country.

The age distribution of dengue patients showed that people in the 21-25 age group were the worst affected, followed by the 26-30 group.

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Attendants of child dengue patients at Dhaka Shishu Hospital put up mosquito nets to sleep in the parking area of the healthcare facility, as there is a lack of space for them inside. Many of them have come from distant corners of the country and are scared of catching the viral disease themselves. The photo was taken around 5:00am yesterday.

PHOTO: ANISUR RAHMAN

ROAD TO RALLIES

Smooth for AL activists, bumpy for BNP ones

STAR REPORT

BNP supporters had to go through police check points one after another before they could make it to their rally in the capital's Nayapaltan yesterday.

From Thursday evening to yesterday afternoon, police stopped vehicles entering the city and asked people why they were going there.

Police in uniform and plainclothes even checked people's phones to see their political affiliations and detained those who turned out to be BNP supporters.

BNP activists who came to the rally from different districts said they had to lie to the police about the purpose of their visit to the city.

Police detained at least 68 people at several check points in Savar and 30 in Gazipur. Munshiganj Jubo Dal General Secretary Masud Rana 50-60 others were detained at the entrance to Dhaka.

People suffered as there was a scarcity of public transport in the capital and the adjacent cities.

At Chashara intersection of Narayanganj yesterday morning, Amirul Islam said, "My wife and I must visit a doctor at the Institute of Child and Mother Health in Dhaka's Matuail. But we have not seen a bus in half an hour. Now we may have to hire an autorickshaw for a lot of money."

Police set up multiple check points in Abdullapur, Amin Bazar, Gabtoli, Basila, Savar, Keraniganj, Kanchpur, Signboard, Mouchak, Tarabo, Bhulta, Pagla, Chandra, Singair, and on Dhaka-Tangail and Dhaka-Mymensingh highways.

Boat services across the Buriganga in Keraniganj remained suspended from dawn to dusk.

At Amin Bazar, our Savar correspondent saw that buses and trucks full of people chanting pro-Awami

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Ancient Roman cargo ship found on bottom of Mediterranean

REUTERS, Rome

The wreck of an ancient Roman cargo ship from more than 2,000 years ago has been found off the coast near Rome, the arts squad of Italy's Carabinieri police said yesterday.

The ship was located off the port of Civitavecchia, about 80 kilometres (50 miles) north-west of the Italian capital, on a sandy seabed at a depth of about 160 metres (525 ft), a statement said.

The vessel, estimated to be more than 20 metres long and dating from the 1st or 2nd century BC, was carrying hundreds of amphorae -- a type of ancient Roman jar -- that were mostly found intact.

"The exceptional discovery is an important example of the shipwreck of a Roman ship facing the perils of the sea in an attempt to reach the coast, and bears witness to old maritime trading routes," the Carabinieri said.

TUHIN SHUBHIRA ADHIKARY

Though the country's road infrastructure saw much progress over the last decade, some of the major elements that could ensure road safety remain largely ignored, leaving roads still as anarchic and unsafe as ever before, experts and campaigners said.

They added that the main obstacle to bringing discipline on the roads is an "unholy nexus among the political and influential groups that allow the anarchy to persist for years for their own benefits".

As a result, too many people are still killed on the roads every day.

Against this backdrop, friends and families will observe today the death anniversary of Dia Khanam Mim and Abdul Karim Rajib, students of Shaheed Ramiz Uddin Cantonment College.

In 2018, the two students were killed after being run over by a speeding bus, which was racing with another, in the capital's Kurmitola, sparking an unprecedented movement across the country for safe roads.

Speaking to this correspondent yesterday, Dia's father Jahangir Fakir said, "The situation hasn't changed much since then [2018]. We want the number of road crashes to come down significantly."

The protests were able to provoke the authorities to take some actions.

In the face of demonstrations, the Road

Transport Act-2018 was hastily passed in parliament and had clauses to ensure stringent punishments for traffic law violators, while the Prime Minister's Office issued 17 directives with regard to road safety.

The following year, a high-powered taskforce, headed by the home minister, was formed to curb road crashes and deaths.

However, relevant data shows that the



situation has instead deteriorated.

According to media reports collected by Bangladesh Jatri Kalyan Samity, a passenger welfare platform, around 9,951 people were killed in 6,749 road crashes last year, while 7,221 were killed in 5,514 crashes in 2018.

Transport expert Prof Hadiuzzaman said the government has made major infrastructural progress in the transport sector and many roads have been

expanded to four lanes.

"But there is no improvement in terms of reducing road crashes and deaths. The indiscipline on roads persists more than ever before," Hadiuzzaman, also acting director of Accident Research Institute at Buet, told this newspaper yesterday.

The government has turned 717.75kms of roads into four or more lanes so far, and several projects are being implemented to expand 673.46kms of roads to four or more lanes, according to the Road Transport and Highways Division.

Hadiuzzaman added that the government's focus was only on improving the infrastructure but the elements required for road safety were largely ignored.

He said there are "five pillars" for reducing road crashes -- safe roads; safe vehicles; safe users, including drivers, passengers and pedestrians; traffic management and post-accident management.

"Though we would not be able to fully curb road crashes, we need to gradually ensure safe vehicles, safe drivers and improve traffic management. But we didn't."

There are thousands of unfit and illegal vehicles on the roads and the fitness clearances given by Bangladesh Road Transport Authority (BRTA) remain questionable, he said.

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No room for violence in democracy Says US state dept

UNB, Dhaka

Ahead of political rallies of the ruling and opposition parties in Dhaka yesterday, the US reiterated that political violence has no place in a democracy and that the US favors no political party in Bangladesh.

"I will reiterate that political violence has no place in a democracy, and in the United States, we favor no political party," Principal Deputy Spokesperson at the US Department of State Vedant Patel said in a regular media briefing in Washington on July 27.

He said they support Bangladesh's goal of holding free, fair, and peaceful elections.

Patel said they have also emphasised the importance of the United States and Bangladesh working together to achieve this goal.

"We certainly continue to believe that this endeavor has no space or room for political violence," he said.

Don't compare your children with others: PM

UNB, Dhaka

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina yesterday asked guardians not to compare any child with others, rather let them gather skill as per their merit.

She also told them to be more sincere towards education of their children. "I request you to pay attention to where your children go and what they do."



The PM made the comments while addressing the results publishing ceremony of this year's Secondary School Certificate and equivalent examinations at the Gono Bhaban.

Hasina stressed the need for improving the quality of education further to keep pace with the world.

She said Bangladeshi children are brilliant and they are performing outstandingly in different universities and colleges across the world.

The PM said Bangladesh has already earned acclamation for its educational programmes.

She asked all to work together to groom the children with education, skills, thoughts and knowledge to build a manpower equipped with modern technological knowledge and skills for the era of 4th industrial revolution.

She said the use of technology, computer and artificial

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ROAD SAFETY MOVEMENT 2018

Infrastructure improves, safety worsens

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STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Fourteen US congressmen and women have written to the US ambassador to the United Nations, urging the UN to arrange for peacekeeping forces in Bangladesh during the elections "to prevent intimidation, harassment or assault of voters".

The UN should participate in supervising and conducting free and fair elections in Bangladesh, said the letter.

Dated July 27, the letter was addressed to Linda Thomas-Greenfield, the US ambassador to UN.

It also stated that the UN should immediately suspend Bangladesh's membership on the human rights council until an investigation is done on the government's alleged crimes against journalists and political opponents.

"Over the past 6-8 months, thousands of peaceful and courageous protesters have demonstrated in support of free and fair elections. These demonstrations have often been met with violence, teargas and brutal assault by the police, other state actors..." read the letter.

The letter also urged the

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The narrow stream in the distance is all there is left of the Chengi river in Rangamati's Naniarchar. Poor rainfall upstream has almost completely dried up the river, a key water source for the Kaptai Lake. The photo was taken recently.

PHOTO: RAJIB RAHMAN