

Wards with 10 or more dengue cases to see spl cleanup drives

Says DSCC mayor

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

If a Dhaka South City Corporation ward records 10 dengue cases in a week, then a special drive by cleaning staff and mosquito-control workers would be conducted there, Mayor Sheikh Fazle Noor Taposh has said.

He said the drive would be conducted every Saturday.

The DSCC mayor came up with the announcement while inspecting work on the destruction of Aedes mosquito breeding grounds at Dhaka University yesterday.

“Next Saturday, we are taking another special drive which will be ward-based. We are declaring the wards as red where more than 10 patients are detected in a week.”

He urged locals to clean their homes, establishments, buildings and yards themselves on that day.

“No one should go to work that day. This will be the biggest job,” Taposh said.

“We will have cleaners, mosquito control workers and other officials concerned. We will conduct a daylong combing operation to destroy the breeding places of Aedes mosquitoes. Through this, we can control the spread of dengue,” he added.

The mayor said that they have already found four wards – ward-5, -22, -53 and -60 – where 10 dengue patients were detected in the last one week. “We will conduct the special drive in the wards next Saturday,” he added.

Asked about marking wards “red”, a top official of the DSCC said they actually meant that a special focus would be given to those wards and homeowners and residents would be involved in the drives.

“We want active participation of locals in the drive,” the official said wishing not to be named.

Sudanese factions fight over key army base

AFP, Wad Madani

Sudanese paramilitaries fought the regular army in Khartoum yesterday as they targeted a key military base in the south of the capital for the fourth consecutive day, witnesses said.

Fighters from Mohamed Hamdan Daglo's Rapid Support Forces (RSF) began their assault on the vast strategic base on several fronts on Sunday.

Residents of Al-Shajara, the neighbourhood where the base is situated, reported “large losses on both sides” on the first day of the attack when the fighting was constant.



A portion of Char Mukundia Government Primary School collapses into the Padma as river erosion has taken a severe turn in Manikganj's Harirampur upazila. The photo was taken on Tuesday. At least 12 houses were devoured by the river in the span of half an hour just the day before.

PHOTO: COLLECTED

Invest in Bangladesh, join dev journey

PM urges South African entrepreneurs

UNB, Johannesburg

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina has invited South African entrepreneurs to invest in Bangladesh.

“Bangladesh is moving towards prosperity. We want you to join our journey of development. Do invest in Bangladesh.

We are confident that your investment will be primed for success, and we are fully prepared for a sustainable partnership,” she said.

The PM was speaking at the Bangladesh Trade and Business Summit at the Radisson Blu Hotel in South Africa yesterday.

The event was organised by Bangladesh Securities and Exchange Commission and Bangladesh Investment Development Authority.

“I have a dream. The 170 million people of Bangladesh have a dream. And that is to become a trillion dollar economy and a fully developed smart nation by 2041,” she said.

Hasina said that investment in Bangladesh is secure due to consistently high returns.

“Moreover, our government ensures a business-friendly and stable atmosphere that guarantees your investment’s success.”

Currently, Bangladesh has the most open Foreign Direct Investment policies

in South Asia. The country offers a liberalised industrial policy, one stop service, 100 percent foreign ownership, an easy exit policy, 15-year tax exemption, VAT exemption for imported machinery, streamlined services, and more, she added.

Hasina said Bangladesh and South Africa have built a strong and friendly relationship

over the last five decades based on mutual respect, shared values, cultural ties, and common beliefs.

However, despite the significant potential, the Bangladesh-South Africa bilateral trade stood at only \$316.83 million last year, she said.



UNHINDERED DEMOCRACY SPURS ACHIEVEMENT

Addressing the “Bangladesh Envoys Conference” organised by Bangladesh ambassadors stationed in African countries, she emphasised the need for an unhindered democratic process in the country for the sake of non-stop development.

“Development is only possible through the democratic trend. That should be continued so no one can hinder the advancement of Bangladesh,” she said.

Bangladesh has registered unprecedented development in the last 14 years and a half due to the uninterrupted democratic system in the country.

Accused dies in custody of Rajshahi cops

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Rajshahi

An accused in a narcotics case died Tuesday evening after “falling sick” in the custody of Rajshahi Metropolitan Police.

Moinul Islam, 23, was from Pakuria area in Rajshahi city, said Zahidul Islam, deputy commissioner of the RMP.

Airport police arrested Moinul with four grams of heroin around 11:00pm on Monday and handed him over to court police around noon the next day.

While staying there with five other accused, Moinul fell sick around 3:00pm.

Zahidul said police took him to Rajshahi Medical College Hospital (RMCH).

The deceased had bruise marks on the right of his neck, forehead, and left hand, wrote Executive Magistrate Mumtahina Kabir, who prepared his inquest report.

Moinul's family did not make any complaints about his death.

His uncle Joynal Abedin said, “My nephew was a drug addict.”

Moinul's mother Moni Begum told reporters that her son used to hurt himself sometimes.

RMCH Director Brig Gen FM Shamim Ahmed said the cause of Moinul's death would be known after getting the autopsy report.

An unnatural death case was filed with Rajpara Police Station.

96 Jamaat-Shibir men indicted over vandalism in 2012

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A Dhaka court yesterday framed charges against 96 leaders and activists of Jamaat-e-Islami and Islami Chhatra Shibir in a case filed over torching vehicles and preventing police personnel from discharging their duties in 2012.

Jamaat Ameer Shafiqur Rahman and Secretary General Mia Golam Parwar, a former lawmaker from Khulna-5, are among the accused.

Shafiqur Rahman and Golam Parwar, now in jail, and 78 others, who are on bail, pleaded not guilty to the charges and demanded justice after Dhaka Metropolitan Magistrate Md Saiful Islam read out the charges to them.

Before that, the magistrate dismissed the petitions submitted by the accused for relieving them of the charges.

Eighteen other accused have been on the run since the case was filed against them. Charges were framed against them in their absence. The magistrate issued arrest warrants against them, said Assistant Public Prosecutor Hemayet Uddin Khan.

Rohingya youth shot dead

UNB, Cox's Bazar

A Rohingya youth was shot dead allegedly by members of Arakan Rohingya Salvation Army (ARSA) at Kutupalong camp in Cox's Bazar's Ukhya on Tuesday.

The victim was Mohammad Yunus, 18, son of Hamid Hossain of the camp.

Sheikh Mohammad Ali, officer-in-charge of Ukhya Police Station, said ARSA members opened fire on Yunus around 7:30pm, suspecting him to be involved in the Rohingya Solidarity Organisation, leaving him injured.

Yunus died on the way to Cox's Bazar's Sadar Hospital.

Additional police have been deployed in the area to maintain law and order, the OC said.

2 children drown in a pit

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Narayanganj

Two three-year-old cousins died yesterday after drowning in a pit filled with rainwater in a village under Bandar upazila of Narayanganj.

The deceased are – Abdul Aziz, son of Kabir Mia; and Md Ahnaf, son of Md Nuruzzaman.

The incident happened around 3:00pm in Geodhara village under Kolagathia union parishad, confirmed UP chairman Delowar Hossain Proddhan.

The two cousins were playing in front of their house in the afternoon. After an hour or so, they were nowhere to be seen. When their family members started to look for them, they found a pair of shoes beside a hole full to the brim with rainwater. The hole, which is at least five feet deep, was 50 yards away from their house, according to the chairman.

After the boys were rescued, they were taken to the upazila health complex. Doctors announced them dead there, he added.

“Two brothers were playing in front of the house. No one understood how it happened. When we found the boys, they were already dead,” said Nuruzzaman, Ahnaf's father.

BRICS agrees

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Pandor did not give details of the framework of criteria for considering candidates, simply saying that the bloc's leaders would make an announcement on expansion before the summit concludes on Thursday.

More than 40 countries have expressed interest in joining BRICS, say South African officials, and 22 have formally asked to be admitted.

They represent a disparate pool of potential candidates – from Iran to Argentina – motivated largely by a desire to level a global playing field many consider rigged against them and attracted by BRICS' promise to rebalance the global order.

“The world is undergoing major shifts, division and regrouping ... it has entered a new period of turbulence and transformation,” said China's President Xi Jinping, who has long pushed for the expansion of the BRICS group.

“Development is an inalienable right of all countries. It is not a privilege reserved for a few,” he told the summit earlier yesterday.

Though home to about 40 percent of the world's population and a quarter of global GDP, the bloc's ambitions of becoming a global political and economic player have long been thwarted by internal divisions and a lack of coherent vision.

Russia, isolated by the United States and Europe over its invasion of Ukraine, is keen to show Western powers it still has friends.

Brazil and India, in contrast, have both forged closer ties with the West.

Brazil's President Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva on Tuesday rejected the idea the bloc should seek to rival the United States and Group of Seven wealthy economies.

Moves to expand the bloc and push its New Development Bank as an alternative to established multilateral lenders are, however, raising some concern in the West.

Werner Hoyer, the head of European Investment Bank, yesterday warned the West it was in danger of losing confidence of the “Global South”, unless it urgently intensified its own support efforts for poorer countries.

Create economic corridor to boost output, jobs

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There are eight major trade gateways in the BEC region: Mongla seaport, Payra seaport, Benapole land port, Bhomra land port (four in the southwest); Akhaura land port, Tamabil land port, Bibirbazar land port, Nakugaon land port (four in the northeast).

While Mongla and Payra seaports provide sea route trade linkages with the world (currently contributing about 11 percent of seaborne international trade), land ports in the region act as major trade gateways with India, contributing 36 percent of Indo-Bangladesh trade.

Hence, the corridor region has an inherent advantage for international trade-dependent industries from the perspective of importing raw materials and/or exporting finished products.

Besides, Northeast Bangladesh has an added locational edge with respect to cross-border trade potential with Northeast India, a landlocked territory with a market demand of \$38.5 billion.

Leveraging the logistical advantage, agri-commodities and industries from the Northeast Bangladesh region can find a potential consumer market in Northeast India.

Likewise, Northeast Indian states, being endowed with natural resources, can export rubber, limestone and other mineral resources to Northeast Bangladesh, which can act as raw materials for local industries. In addition, Northeast Bangladesh can leverage its proximity with countries like Nepal and Bhutan.

Not just locational advantage, the BEC region is rich in agricultural produce and it has an abundance of natural resources such as gas reserves, limestone, white clay and peat reserves.

“Despite being strategically located and resource-rich, to date, the southwest and northeast regions have not been able to fully utilise their natural advantages due to inadequate

transport infrastructure within the hinterland and connectivity with the trade gateways.”

Apart from limited physical infrastructure, inadequate social infrastructure is also a key reason behind the poor economic development. The corridor region lags behind the country in terms of educational infrastructure.

This has created relatively lower employment potential in industrial and service sectors (relatively high wage-paying sectors), which is corroborated by the employment number: 58 percent of the population in the corridor region is employed in agriculture, compared to the national average of 48 percent.

The development of this envisaged corridor may be carried out in two phases.

In the first phase, the southwest portion of the corridor may be developed (Southwest Bangladesh Economic Corridor [SWBEC]); in the second phase, the northeast portion of the corridor (from Dhaka to Sylhet and Mymensingh) may be developed (North-East Bangladesh Economic Corridor [NEBEC]).

To develop the BEC, ADB has identified 56 railway projects to enable efficient rail movement in the region, 114 road projects to increase road density in the region by 38 percent, 33 projects to improve inland water connectivity and 38 projects to address the bottleneck at export and import gateways.

Four partially developed industrial clusters have been identified and 12 manufacturing industries were shortlisted for the whole BEC region.

The industries are food processing, leather and footwear, textiles and ready-made garments (RMGs), jute, nonmetallic mineral manufacturers, shipbuilding, furniture, transport equipment, pharmaceuticals, plastic products, rubber and rubber products, electrical and electronics machinery, and heavy machinery.

Along with the manufacturing sector, the service sector can also

be developed. Two major service sector industries, i.e., information technology and tourism have been earmarked.

“If we want to implement the ADB recommended corridor, then a stable political regime is necessary. Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina is creative, innovative and visionary. Only she can implement these plans, if she gets the chance to run the country again,” Mannan said at the event.

Proper institutional and governance frameworks are extremely important for the economic zones to attract investors, said Sabyasachi Mitra, director of public sector management and governance of ADB.

Edimon Ginting, country director of the ADB; Shaikh Yusuf Harun, executive chairman of Bangladesh Economic Zones Authority; Uzma Chowdhury, director of Pran-RFL Group; Md Mostafizur Rahman, additional secretary of ADB wing chief of Economic Relations Division; Soon Chan Hong, senior country specialist at the ADB; and Avijit Chowdhury, executive member of the BIDA, also spoke at the event.

UAE fines

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laundry system. If they don't do so within three months, more severe penalties will be imposed.

It urged businesses to follow relevant legislation, maintain the highest levels of compliance, and communicate with relevant authorities if they have any questions or want to request technical assistance, the report said.

Earlier in Singapore, police in an anti-money laundering operation rounded up a group of foreigners who had amassed about S\$1 billion worth of assets.

The assets, which included properties, luxury cars, and goods, were either seized, frozen or issued with prohibition of disposal orders.

SC halts probe till January 8

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submitted the authenticity report to the HC through swearing an affidavit, which was presented at the court.

At yesterday's hearing, Alam's lawyers also argued that a suo moto rule can only be passed if someone's fundamental rights have been violated. They argued that by ordering a probe, the HC was acting like prosecutors.

The ACC lawyer argued that the HC can pass a suo moto rule regarding public wrongs – and pointed out that Justice Enayetur himself had previously said so in a judgment.

In that judgment, given in a case from November 2017 concerning an investigation into the assets of a retired judge, Enayetur had said that when a public wrong of grave nature has occurred, the court can issue a suo moto rule to protect and uphold the image of the judiciary, the ACC lawyer added.

The HC had also previously passed another suo moto rule against banks owned by Alam on December 4, 2022, based on allegations of loan scams raised by newspaper reports.

In that rule, the HC had ordered the BFU, the ACC and the CID to investigate the loan scams and explain why “the failure and inaction of the respondents in taking appropriate legal steps and actions against the entities and persons who have misappropriated and laundered a huge amount of money from the Islami Bank Bangladesh Ltd and other banks taking loans in the name of fake, fabricated and non-existent companies/entities using various unethical mechanisms and massive irregularities as mentioned and disclosed in different newspaper reports, shall not be declared illegal.”

The court had also asked the respondents to take action against the wrong-doers.

Alam did not challenge that rule.

Barrister Sayedul Haque Suman, who had brought The Daily Star report to the notice of the High Court, said he was saddened that he could not place his arguments at yesterday's hearing.

“I had earlier applied before the High Court to be a party to the rule, but my application has been kept on hold,”

said Suman.

“When I applied to be a party, the deputy attorney general questioned my application. Why was he opposing my inclusion, when it was I who had moved a prayer before the High Court?” he said, adding that the government's counsel seems helpless in representing their interests.

According to The Daily Star investigative report, Bangladesh Bank has so far allowed 17 companies to invest outside the country, and S Alam Group is not one of them.

Yet in Singapore, Alam bought at least two hotels, two homes, one retail space, and other properties worth at least about \$1 billion over the last one decade, all the while seeking to remove his name from the paper trails, documents obtained by this newspaper show.

10 S'pore banks

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tainted funds have been identified. Supervisory engagements with these financial institutions are ongoing,” the authority said in a statement last week, as per the newspaper.

Meanwhile, The Straits Times reports that of the 20 firms linked to the suspected money launderers, 11 were not at their registered addresses, despite being listed as “live”.

They included Golden Eagle Assets and Golden Eagle Family Office. Both listed Zhang Ruijin, 44, as a director. The Saint Kitts and Nevis national, who is believed to be from Fujian, China, is facing a fraud charge.

Singaporean law mandates that companies must ensure that their registered office is open and accessible to the public for at least three hours during ordinary business hours on each business day, reports the Singaporean daily.

It quotes Professor Lawrence Loh from the National University of Singapore Business School as saying, “It's actually quite easy to create a business and not conduct transactions.” But a company that is dormant must declare it to the Accounting and Corporate Regulatory Authority, he added.