

DENGUE OUTBREAK

August sets
monthly case
record56,798 infected so far
this month; 8 more die

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

With 2,201 infections in the last 24 hours till yesterday morning, the total number of dengue cases in August rose to 56,798, setting a monthly record.

The previous record was set in August 2019, when 52,636 cases were recorded across the country.

According to the Directorate General of Health Services, at least eight dengue patients died in the last 24 hours till yesterday morning.

Of the eight deaths, six were reported in the capital.

Dengue has so far claimed at least 514 lives this year and nearly 108,630 were infected, making this the deadliest year since the first recorded epidemic in 2000.

Of the total infected this year, 56,677 are from outside Dhaka.

Hospitals, especially in Dhaka, are struggling to accommodate the large number of patients suffering high fever, joint pain, and vomiting, health officials said.

The government has taken initiatives to limit the spread of mosquito borne diseases, they added.

Although the government has launched drives and stepped up efforts to curb the outbreak in Dhaka, experts say taking necessary measures outside the capital has

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Sitting on a hospital bed, Shadhin fights dengue fever while his friends gear up for exams. The HSC candidate was admitted to Shaheed Suhrawardy Medical College and Hospital on August 21 after attending two exams. The photo was taken yesterday.

PHOTO: PRABIR DAS

Rohingyas deserve
dignity, securitySay UN rights chief, urges int'l
community to hold Myanmar
accountable

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The UN High Commissioner for Human Rights Volker Türk yesterday urged the international community to hold the Myanmar junta accountable for the persecution of Rohingya, saying they should be able to return to their home with dignity and without any pressure.

He said they should be recognised as a part of Myanmar's population.

His comments came on the eve of the sixth anniversary of Rohingya influx into Bangladesh following a brutal crackdown by Myanmar's military on them in Rakhine state.

"Their human rights must be fully respected and their security guaranteed," Türk said from Geneva.

During the 2017 crackdown, which the UN has called a genocide, some 10,000 Rohingya men, women, boys, girls, and newborns were killed, and over 300 villages were destroyed.

Over a million Rohingya have fled to Bangladesh, and more than 100,000 others are being held in closed displacement camps inside Myanmar, Türk said.

Pointing to the impunity Myanmar enjoys, Türk urged states to support international efforts to hold the junta accountable for Rohingya persecution and humanitarian crises.

The Rohingyas, both in Myanmar and in the camps in Bangladesh, need greater support and funding from the international community, he added.

Meanwhile, Fortify Rights yesterday said the junta should end the ongoing Rohingya genocide, and the democratic forces there should fully embrace Rohingyas as citizens.

"Six years on, the Myanmar junta continues to create conditions of life to destroy Rohingya and erase their identity," said Zaw Win, Human Rights Specialist at Fortify Rights.

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SEXUAL HARASSMENT AT WORKPLACE

45pc face it in
RMG sector: study

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Readymade garment workers encountered five forms of gender-based violence and harassment (GBVH) in their workplaces, according to a study released yesterday.

Among them, 45 percent experienced sexual violence and harassment, 22 percent psychological harassment, 17 percent verbal abuse, nine percent encountered economic exploitation, and seven percent physical violence, said the report.

The study, focusing on GBVH in RMG factories in Bangladesh, was conducted by nine RMG workers' organisations with support of Solidarity Center. Around 140 workers – male and female – participated in the study.

It was presented at an event titled "Publication of Research Report and Roundtable of Stakeholders" at The Daily Star Centre.

Nilufar Ahmed Karim, consultant at Solidarity Center's Bangladesh Office; Urmil Akhter, president of Hoplun Apparel Ltd Sammito Sramik Union; Tamija Khatun, education and social welfare secretary of Bangladesh Independent Garment Workers Union Federation; and Khadiza Akhter, general secretary of Sommito Garments Sramik Federation, presented the research findings at the event.

Due to sexual violence and harassment, 89 percent of workers suffered mental breakdowns, while 83 percent lost interest in their jobs, said the study.

Of the incidents, 71 percent occurred inside the factory, 15 percent took place outside the factory, nine

percent at home, and five percent happened during daily commute, the report added.

The study further said that 57 percent of workers lost their jobs, 45 percent had to temporarily stop working or lost pay, 54 percent experienced family problems, and 48 percent reported an increase or decrease in their production targets if they filed complaints with the authorities.

Additionally, 65 percent of the workers shared that the perpetrators held power due to their good relations

22% experience psychological harassment
17% face verbal abuse
9% encounter economic exploitation
7% experience physical violence

with mid-to-senior-level management employees, while 26 percent of them had connections with locally influential people and their associates.

The majority of GBVH perpetrators were co-workers and supervisors as 22 percent of GBVH incidents were caused by co-workers, with the same percentage applicable to supervisors. The second-highest group responsible for GBVH were line chiefs and mid-to-senior-level management officials, according to the study.

Thirty-six percent of workers said their experience of GBVH was worsened through character shaming

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AL wants BNP
in electionSays Quader after
meeting with UN
resident coordinator

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The ruling Awami League wants major political parties like BNP to participate in the upcoming national election to make it more competitive, said AL General Secretary Obaidul Quader yesterday.

"The United Nations wants a free, fair and neutral election in Bangladesh. Awami League also wants a competitive election. Because the more competitive the election, the more acceptable it will be at home and abroad," said Quader.

He made the remark following a meeting between a six-member AL delegation and Gwyn Lewis, the United Nations resident coordinator in Bangladesh, which took place at a venue in the capital's Gulshan.

Responding to a question on whether they would force BNP to join the election, Quader said, "Why should we force them to join the election? It is their right as a political party to participate in elections."

Quader, also the road, transport and bridges minister, said that the UN had no say regarding the opposition's demands for the prime minister's

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Verdict in case
against Odhikar
officials Sept 7

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A Dhaka tribunal yesterday fixed September 7 to deliver judgement on a case filed under the ICT Act against the officials of Odhikar for running "a distorted report and doctored images" on the May 6 police action on a Hefajat-e-Islam rally in Motijheel.

The two accused are the rights body's secretary Adilur Rahman Khan and director ASM Nasiruddin Elan.

After closing arguments from both the prosecution and the defence, Judge AM Juliker Hayet of Dhaka Cyber Tribunal set the date for delivery of judgement.

Earlier, the tribunal recorded statements of 22 prosecution witnesses, including complainant of the case.

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Withdraw libel cases
against journos

Speakers tell human chain

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Bangladesh Health Reporters' Forum yesterday demanded withdrawal of defamation lawsuit against their colleagues for publishing reports on alleged mistreatment of a patient by a surgeon.

"This is very unfortunate. The reporters did their journalistic duties," said Rashed Rabbi, the forum's president, while addressing a human chain in front of Dhaka Reporters' Unity.

Following a cardiac arrest, Kanchan Kumar Dey, a 62-year-old patient filed a complaint with Bangladesh Medical and Dental Council on May 27 against Prof Dr Masum Siraj, head of cardiac surgery at Ibrahim Cardiac Hospital.

The patient claimed that his unsuccessful open-heart surgery on December 21, headed by the surgeon, led to his cardiac arrest about three months later.

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A pedestrian jumps over a barricade to cross a busy road rather than using a foot-over bridge right behind him, risking his life and violating laws. Others also wait for the right opportunity to cross it. The photo was taken in front of Suhrawardy hospital yesterday.

PHOTO: AMRAN HOSSAIN

Nusuk to make umrah,
travel to S Arabia easySays the platform's Asia-Pacific
president as he meets *Star*

RASHIDUL HASAN

The Nusuk will facilitate performing umrah or travelling to Saudi Arabia for Bangladeshis, said the digital platform's Asia Pacific president Alhasan Aldabbagh, yesterday.

"We are offering a lot of services on Nusuk. There are over 120 services available on the platform and we will continue to add more," he said in an interview with The Daily Star at the Bangabandhu International Conference Centre.

Nusuk is the first integrated app that is designed to simplify travel to Saudi Arabia.

A person can apply for a visa to perform umrah through Nusuk or arrange a trip to Saudi Arabia by booking hotel accommodations, airlines, transportation, etc, using this app.

"So, it is a one-stop shop that makes it easy for any Bangladeshi to book their entire travel by a few cliques. It's a website [nusuk.sa] and it's also an application as well," he said.

"The idea of the platform is to allow tourism companies to be part of it and offer their services to the people. So, it's a competitive platform and when you create competition, the ultimate winner is the travellers," he added.

Alhasan said the platform will also help Bangladesh and Saudi Arabia to collaborate on tourism and investment sectors.

He said his government is investing in Bangladesh as it aims to attract 3 million Bangladeshis annually to visit Saudi Arabia by 2030.

The app will also be helpful to 2.8 million Bangladeshis living in Saudi Arabia, he said.

Saudi Arabia officially launched the Nusuk platform in Dhaka yesterday, primarily aiming at enhancing the convenience for Bangladeshi hajj and umrah pilgrims.

Alhasan said Saudi Arabia's Vision 2030 has three pillars – a thriving economy, a vibrant society and an ambitious nation – and tourism plays a big part in that.

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