



PHOTO: RASHED SHUMON AND PRABIR DAS

(Clockwise from top left) Female Bangladesh Chhatra League activists march through Dhaka University campus ahead of a rally in the capital yesterday; activists hold Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina's cut-out and a boat, the party's symbol, near a Suhrawardy Udyan entrance; a BNP activists pose with the party's symbol in front of their office in Naya Paltan; and heavy tailback is seen on the opposite side of the road of Notre Dame College as BNP activists march to Shapla Chhattar from Arambagh.

## POLITICAL RALLIES Gridlocks make people suffer

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Dhaka city residents experienced significant hardships yesterday as two major political parties held rallies in the metropolis on the public holiday.

Bangladesh Chhatra League organised a rally to commemorate National Mourning Day, while BNP's processions were held marking the party's 45th founding anniversary.

The events, which attracted VIPs and numerous leaders and activists from various parts of Dhaka and the country, led to the closure of some major roads. This situation placed additional stress on the surrounding alternative roads and bypasses.

BCL's rally at Suhrawardy Udyan commenced at 3:00pm, with the prime minister attending as chief guest. Meanwhile, BNP's programmes, including a

SEE PAGE 4 COL 3

## DENGUE DEATHS 2023

# 597 and counting

Reinfections, late hospitalisations adding to the toll

HELEMUL ALAM

With four new deaths recorded yesterday, dengue fatalities this year rose to 597, which is more than double compared to the previous record since the mosquito-borne disease's first official outbreak in 2000.

To put this into perspective, the previous highest annual death toll was 281, recorded last year.

Moreover, the total number of dengue cases this year rose to 125,342, eclipsing the previous record of 101,354 cases in 2019.

Besides, the daily dengue bulletin from Directorate General of Health Services relies on data from only 57 public and private hospitals in Dhaka, and 81 district and divisional-level hospitals.

However, there are approximately 16,000 public and private hospitals, clinics, diagnostic centers, and blood banks across the country providing dengue care, suggesting that the actual number of cases and fatalities may be significantly underreported.

Dengue is a reportable disease in other countries, meaning data on every single dengue patient must be recorded, according to experts.

Apart from negligence of the authorities concerned, experts attribute this year's unusually high death toll to delayed hospitalisation, reinfections, coinfection and presence of Den-2 and Den-3 serotypes among the infected.

Dengue exists as four distinct serotypes (closely related forms of



the virus).

Immunity from infection with one serotype may provide lifelong protection from that serotype but is only partially protective against the others. A second-time infection with a different serotype increases the infection's severity which can lead to fatality, explained the experts.

IEDCR Director Prof Dr Tahmina Shirin said, as dengue has been active in Bangladesh for the last 23 years, many have been infected with different serotypes, increasing the chances of reinfection. This is one of the main causes of this year's high death rate.

Besides, the country's temperature remains favourable for breeding of Aedes mosquitoes.

Climate change, resulting in warm temperatures and intermittent rain have also contributed to increased transmission of dengue over the last

decade, stressed experts, including Prof Shirin.

However, early detection and immediate hospitalisation can help lower the risks significantly.

"Consulting a doctor and taking necessary medication are essential if a patient is diagnosed with fever. Patients should take in enough fluids," advised prof Shirin.

She suggested intake of coconut water, saline and home-made fruit juices to keep the patients hydrated as these fluids will ensure a supply of necessary vitamins and minerals needed for a speedy recovery.

HM Nazmul Ahsan, associate professor at Shaheed Suhrawardy Medical College Hospital, stressed the need of immediately hospitalisation if the patients experience severe stomach aches, breathing difficulties, weakness, bleeding from gums or nose, and

SEE PAGE 4 COL 3

## EXPRESSWAY OPENING

## Roads to avoid today

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Vehicular movement around the city's old international trade fair ground in Sher-e-Bangla Nagar will be restricted today for the inauguration programme of the Dhaka Elevated Expressway.

Dhaka Metropolitan Police (DMP) in an announcement yesterday advised all types of vehicles except for those carrying stickers and banners (issued for joining the programme) to take alternative roads from 11:00am to 6:00pm.

The following roads will be under restriction: from Shyamoli to Rokeya Sarani via Shishu Mela Crossing, 60 feet and Agargaon Light Crossing, from Love Road East end to Gono Bhaban Crossing via Bijoy Sarani Crossing-Aeroplane Crossing and Crescent Lake, from Arong Crossing to Farmgate via Manik Mia Avenue, Bangabandhu Chattar and Indira Road, from road up to Taltala, Agargaon Light Crossing, BICC Crossing and Biman Crossing on Rokeya Sarani, and from Shyamoli to end of Manik Mia Avenue (Arong Crossing) on Mirpur Road.

However, vehicles carrying patients and other important services will be out of the purview of the restrictions.

## A 'clear threat' to judiciary

## Say 170 eminent citizens over open letter on Yunus

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

More than 170 eminent citizens yesterday expressed concern over a letter by global figures calling for the suspension of judicial proceedings against Nobel Laureate Prof Muhammad Yunus.

In a joint statement signed by eminent artist Nisar Hossain, they said recently it came to their sight that an open letter seeking attention of Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina has been issued by Nobel Laureates, politicians, businesspersons and civil society members of different countries.

"The open letter's words look like a 'clear threat' to Bangladesh's sovereignty and an independent judiciary," they said in the joint statement.

SEE PAGE 4 COL 3

## Online gambling ring busted in Dhaka, Sirajganj

## Six arrested, kingpin still at large

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Criminal Investigation Department has arrested six persons in Dhaka and Sirajganj on charges of running online gambling platforms like Mel Bet, 1x Bet and Bet Winner.

CID's Cyber Intelligence and Risk Management team conducted the raid on Thursday after it noticed that a large number of Bangladeshi citizens were using these online platforms, said CID sources yesterday.

Rezaul Karim, Saikat Rahman, Sadiqul Islam, Nazmul Ahsan, Towhid Hossain and Zakir Hossain

SEE PAGE 4 COL 5

## BIMAN RECRUITMENT

## Candidates boycott exams at a centre

## They bring question leak allegations, authorities deny

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Job candidates applying for positions at Bangladesh Biman boycotted a recruitment exam at a centre in Uttara, amid allegations of a question paper leak.

The exam, intended for 33,000 candidates vying for roles in ground handling, technician, and helpers, was scheduled at 10 different centres across the city.

Candidates at Uttara High School and College claimed that their exam was delayed by an hour, raising suspicions of a potential question paper leak.

Additional Deputy Commissioner of Uttara Zone under Dhaka Metropolitan Police (DMP) told The Daily Star that the exam was set to begin at 3.00pm, but, it started around 4.00pm.

"As a result, candidates came out and started to protest. Additional police forces were needed to bring the situation under control at around 5.00pm," he added.

Quoting locals, police estimated that there might be around 3,000 candidates at the centre.

According to Shafiul Azim, CEO of Biman Bangladesh Airlines, the exam delay was due to rain and Friday prayers. It was also announced two and a half hours before the scheduled time. However, some centres received the exam materials on time and conducted the exam at 3.00 pm. Few candidates at Uttara High School and College used this situation to create chaos.

"We will investigate the matter. We are yet to decide on whether fresh exams will be taken or not," he added.



Ignoring safety, a group of women and children get on a minibus at a starting point of Mayor Hanif flyover. A few of them further expose themselves to accidents as they stop a CNG-run three-wheeler to reach their destination. The photo was taken in the capital's Jatra Bari yesterday.

PHOTO: ANISUR RAHMAN

## No one is above the law in Bangladesh: Anisul

BSS, Brahmanbaria

Law Minister Anisul Huq yesterday said propaganda against the judicial process in Bangladesh would not be tolerated.

"No one is above the law in Bangladesh. Law will run at its own pace. Everyone has to respect the court's order," he said while addressing a function to distribute keys to the homes of Ashrayan project at Kutu union under Kasba upazila in Brahmanbaria.

Urging all to re-elect Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina, the law minister said people are witnessing enormous development work in the country.

"To keep the development going, we need Sheikh Hasina as prime minister once again," he added.

The law minister at the function handed over keys to the newly built houses among 52 homeless families.