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## DENGUE OUTBREAK

# ‘Nobody performs duty properly’

## Health minister slams local govt bodies

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Health Minister Zahid Maleque said the authorities concerned need to carry out their mosquito control duties efficiently to curb the dengue outbreak in the country. He said that the mosquito population has not been adequately reduced, leading to a surge in dengue cases this year.

He was talking to journalists following his address at the National Conference on Maternal and Adolescent Nutrition held at a hotel in Dhaka.

The Ministry of Health and Family Welfare organised the event with the support of Unicef to accelerate nutritional care for adolescents and women in Bangladesh.

“Everyone has to perform their own duties (in curbing dengue outbreak); but we do not see anyone do this,” Zahid Maleque said pointing to the local government bodies who are responsible for controlling mosquitoes.



He also expressed concern about dengue spreading to rural areas, which were previously less affected compared to urban areas. The minister said that approximately 3,000 dengue patients are being hospitalised daily.

Regarding the nutrition status in the country, Maleque acknowledged progress but emphasised that there is still much work to be done. He announced the development of the 5th Health Population and Nutrition Sector Programme, scheduled to begin in 2024, and the government’s commitment to invest additional resources to ensure equitable access to nutrition services for mothers and adolescent girls across

Bangladesh.

Experts at the event presented evidence highlighting the consequences of inadequate nutrition, including weakened immunity, poor cognitive development in children, and increased risks during pregnancy and childbirth.

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Rusty iron rods sticking out of a moving pickup-van points at two men riding a motorbike in the capital’s Paltan. Such actions can lead to accidents. The photo was taken recently.

PHOTO: PRABIR DAS

## First ever Local Govt Day tomorrow

### PM to address event at Gono Bhaban

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

With an aim to make local government bodies more vibrant and effective the government is going to celebrate “Local Government Day” tomorrow for the first time with the presence of over 8,000 elected local government representatives.

With the slogan -- “Efficient pioneer for service and progress, the local government is for development and innovation”, the programme will be held at the prime minister’s official residence Gono Bhaban. PM Sheikh Hasina will address the event as chief guest.

Three elected representatives from each division will speak at the programme to describe their achievements and problems.

Mayors of the city corporations and municipalities, district council chairmen and members, chairmen of upazila and union parishads and councillors of two Dhaka city corporations were invited to the programme.

However, elected representatives of the government that were suspended and facing criminal charges, were not invited.

Currently, there are 5,474 local government bodies in the country, including 4,577 union parishads, 329 municipalities, 495 upazila parishads, 61 district councils and 12 city corporations.

Three day-long development fairs will also be held at upazila level, starting from September 16, where government’s achievements and future plans will be showcased. Upazila administrations were asked to take initiatives to make the fair attractive and participatory.

Dhaka city corporations will carry out special cleaning and anti-mosquito drives to mark the day.

# Once a dream, soon to be reality

## PM to open Karnaphuli tunnel on Oct 28; cops to be vigilant against ‘propaganda’, fears of gridlock at Patenga point

FM MIZANUR RAHAMAN

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina is scheduled to inaugurate Sheikh Mujibur Rahman Tunnel beneath the Karnaphuli River on October 28 during her visit to the port city.

Following the inauguration, South Asia’s first underground tunnel will open for vehicular traffic starting from October 29, said Bridges Division Secretary Md Monjur Hossain yesterday after an inter-departmental preparatory meeting held at Chattogram Circuit House.

The trial run of vehicles inside both tunnel tubes has already been completed, informed Manjur. “Inside the tunnel, vehicles will be limited to a speed of 80km per hour, and three-wheelers and two-wheelers will not be allowed to prevent road disturbances,” he said.

During the meeting, various departments in Chattogram, including the police, CDA, and political leaders, provided recommendations and insights. Present at the meeting were the Chattogram Divisional Commissioner, Deputy Commissioner, Chattogram Metropolitan Police (CMP) Commissioner, leaders from the ruling party, and other stakeholders.

Chattogram Divisional Commissioner



**The Tk 10,374 crore project consists of a 3.40 km tunnel and 5.35 km approach road. It will connect the northern part of the port city to Anwara upazila in the south, boosting the country’s economy.**

Tofayel Islam said, “We will take legal action against any rumors or propaganda on social media regarding the tunnel. Misinformation or propaganda could arise, so everyone should remain vigilant.”

This jointly funded project by Bangladesh and China consists of a 3.40km long tunnel and a 5.35km approach road, with a total cost of Tk 10,374 crore. The tunnel, following the “one city two towns” model like Shanghai, will connect the northern part of the port city to Anwara upazila in the south, boosting the country’s economy.

It will serve as an alternate route connecting

Cox’s Bazar, Teknaf, Matarbari, and northern Chattogram, contributing significantly to the Asian Highway Network and enhancing connectivity between Bangladesh and neighboring countries.

During the meeting, CMP Commissioner Krishna Pada Roy requested the tunnel authorities to provide dedicated vehicles for rescue operations in case of breakdowns inside the tunnel and suggested the need for a ‘dumping zone’ for such vehicles.

Later Talking to The Daily Star, he said the meeting also discussed the concerns

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With dengue fatalities and cases on the rise, Uttam, a flower wholesaler, stays inside a mosquito net while working at the capital’s Shahbagh. The photo was taken yesterday.

PHOTO: AMRAN HOSSAIN

## EC workshop on polls today

### Section of civil society members invited

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Election Commission is set to hold a workshop today with a section of civil society members to know their expectations regarding the upcoming 12th parliamentary polls.

The commission has invited former election commissioners, bureaucrats, election observers, journalists, and others to attend the event titled, “12th National Polls: Expectations and Reality” at its office in Agargaon.

“Discussion will be held followed by a review, where we’ll get to know the expectations of all stakeholders regarding the next general polls. It will

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## NIKO GRAFT CASE

## Permission sought to produce FBI official

COURT CORRESPONDENT

The prosecution yesterday filed an application with a Dhaka court seeking its permission for producing an official of the Federal Bureau of Investigation and two officials of the Royal Canadian Mounted Police as witnesses in the Niko corruption case.

Attorney General AM Amin Uddin submitted the application to the Special Judge’s Court-9 of Dhaka, said Anti-Corruption Commission’s lawyer Khurshid Alam Khan.

Judge Sheikh Hafizur Rahman fixed September 17 for hearing the issue.

The judge also completed recording statement

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## ASP SHIPON MURDER Charges framed against 15

COURT CORRESPONDENT

A Dhaka court yesterday framed charges against 15 people in a case filed over death of ASP Anisul Karim Shipon on November 9, 2020.

Fourteen of the accused, who are now on bail, pleaded not guilty and demanded justice after Judge Sheikh Samidul Islam of Dhaka’s Third Additional Metropolitan Sessions Judge’s Court read out the charges to them.

They are National Institute of Mental Health and Hospital (NIMH) registrar Abdullah Al Mamun; Mind Aid Psychiatry and De-Addiction Hospital directors Fatema Khatun Moyna, Abdullah Al Mamun and Sazzad Amin; its marketing manager Arif Mahmud Joy; coordinator Redwan Sabbir Sajib; kitchen staffer Masud Khan; ward boys Jobayer Hossain, Tanif Mollah, Sajeeb Chowdhury,

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## Soil management (amendment) bill passed

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Sand Quarry (Balumahal) and Soil Management (Amendment) Bill, 2023 was passed in the Parliament yesterday, bringing some changes to the existing act of 2010 with a view to impose new restrictions in defining sand quarries and extraction of sand and soil.

Land Minister Saifuzzaman Chowdhury placed the Bill which was passed by voice vote.

The hydrographic survey of Bangladesh Inland Water Transport Authority is considered in defining sand quarries. As per the draft law, the survey of the Water Development Board, if any, will have to be considered in this regard.

If there is a possibility of destruction to cropland or its topsoil, sand and soil cannot be extracted,

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