

লোগো ডিজাইন প্রতিযোগিতায় অংশ নিয়ে জিতে নিন ৩০ লক্ষ টাকা



পূবালী ব্যাংক লিমিটেড
PUBALI BANK LIMITED

লোগো জমা দেওয়ার শেষ তারিখ
১৯ অক্টোবর ২০২৩ বৃহস্পতিবার

বিস্তারিত জানতে ভিজিট করুন
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DENGUE OUTBREAK

13 more die,
2,799 get
hospitalised

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

At least 13 more people died from dengue in 24 hours preceding 8:00am yesterday as the country grapples with a record outbreak of the mosquito-borne disease.

Of the 13 deaths, seven were reported in the capital.

At least 2,799 dengue patients were hospitalised in the 24-hour period, according to data from the Directorate General of Health Services (DGHS).

Dengue has so far claimed at least 1,030 lives this year and nearly 2,11,683 were infected, making this the deadliest year since the first recorded epidemic in 2000.

According to DGHS data, 9,198 dengue patients were undergoing treatment at different hospitals across the country yesterday morning.

A total of 2,01,455 patients have so far been released from hospitals across the country this year.



PHOTO: RISHI KABBO

On September 28 and 29, cartoonist Morshed Mishu, accompanied by various organisations and volunteers, took on a mission to clean this canal in Mohammadpur Society Limited. Afterwards, people were finally able to see the water that had previously laid hidden beneath all the trash.

By-polls to
Laxmipur-3,
B'baria-2 on
November 5

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The by-elections to Brahmanbaria-2 and Laxmipur-3 constituencies will be held on November 5, said Election Commission Secretary Jahangir Alam yesterday.

The EC announced the schedule of the elections after a meeting of the commissioners.

The last date for submission of nomination papers is October 11, said EC Jahangir while talking to reporters after the meeting at the EC office.

The last date for withdrawal of candidature is October 19.

The Parliament Secretariat on Sunday announced the constituencies vacant after the deaths of former aviation and tourism minister and Laxmipur-3

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A cartoonist's crusade
to clean up canals

RAKSHANDA RAHMAN MISHA

If you strolled through the Mohammadpur Society Limited area even a week ago, an unpleasant smell would pervade the air. The smell was actually from a canal, which appears to be filled with layers of filth, giving the impression that water has all but disappeared from the scene.

However, Morshed Mishu, a determined and passionate cartoonist, took a mission to change this landscape. Within just two days, they transformed it successfully, with support from Dhaka North City Corporation.



Mishu initiated a two-day clean up event, on September 28 and 29, named "Khale Hobe" for this canal.

The initiative received tremendous support from various stakeholders, including local councillor Asif Ahmed Sarker, DNCC cleaning workers, Asian Paints Bangladesh, Awareness 360, and several volunteers.

During a visit to the area yesterday, one resident, Shariat Khan told this newspaper, "We had almost forgotten that there was water beneath all this debris! But Mishu opened our eyes to reality. It's truly unbelievable. We did our best to support their

efforts. Now, it's a question of whether we can ensure that no more waste is dumped here."

Speaking to The Daily Star, Morshed Mishu said, "I was absolutely shocked when I saw the extent of the pollution. We discovered everything from household waste to furniture and clothing buried beneath the filth. It seems people were dumping everything here except money and gold!"

"Our plan was to collect the trash and dispose of them at designated dumping sites, but the volume was staggering. Thankfully, DNCC cleaning workers helped us to clear the blockages under the bridge, enabling the waste to flow during the cleanup process," he shared.

He further said, "In two days, we spent approximately Tk 86,530, and we received wholehearted support from

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Full-time cop or part-time narco-trader?

Charges pressed against constable for selling drugs

EMRUL HASAN BAPPI

Four years ago, Bayezid Bostami, a resident of Noabadi village in Brahmanbaria's Bijoyanagar, joined the police force as a constable. However, rather than upholding the law, he used his position as a cover to sell narcotics.

At the age of 23, Bayezid began procuring illegal drugs from the Kasba border area within Brahmanbaria district, and subsequently distributing and selling these across various regions of the country, including Dhaka.

His unlawful activities came to light when the Detective Branch of police arrested him from the capital's Shahjahanpur area with 24 kilogrammes of marijuana on January 17.

"Bayezid's village is near the Kasba border, which is known for drug availability. People from Dhaka and other parts of the country travel to the area to buy drugs," a local representative told The Daily Star recently.

His proximity to the drug-ridden border played a pivotal role in facilitating his illicit dealings, he said seeking anonymity.

Although arrested from Dhaka, the constable was posted at Balaganj Police Station in Sylhet during his arrest.

"Bayezid was suspended after he was arrested in a narcotics case. Now a

departmental probe is underway against him," Roma Prosad Chakrabarty, officer-in-charge of Balaganj Police Station, told The Daily Star.

The day of Bayezid's arrest, DB inspector Rabiul Alam filed a case against him with Shahjahanpur Police Station under the Narcotics Control Act.

Two months later, investigation officer Sheikh Md Jasim Uddin, also a DB sub-inspector, pressed charges against Bayezid.

The police constable is now on bail. The trial of his case is pending at a Dhaka court.

According to the charge sheet, Bayezid left his Sylhet station on January 16 without informing anyone, and when his supervisor called him, he said he was ill.

This raised suspicion, and DB arrested him the following day based on a tip-off.

Bayezid kept 14kg of marijuana inside a large travel bag with "professional serious cooperation" written on it, and another 10kg in a plastic bag.

Contacted, investigator Jasim Uddin said, "We could not find anyone with whom Bayezid did the narcotics business. So, we only pressed charges against him."

A ward member of Singerbil Union Parishad in Bijoyanagar told The Daily Star, "Bayezid's family members are involved in drug selling."

'We respect
sovereign
rights of
Bangladesh'

Says Chinese envoy

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Ambassador of China to Bangladesh Yao Wen yesterday said Bangladesh will surely become a golden country in future with the hard work, struggle and contributions of its people.

"People of Bangladesh are the true masters and builders of the country," he said while addressing as a special guest in the 56th founding anniversary programme of Communist Party of Bangladesh (M-L) at Engineers Institution, Bangladesh (IEB) auditorium in the capital.

The ambassador expressed his pride in China's relationship with Bangladesh and said China is committed to respect the sovereignty of Bangladesh and fostering collaborative

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Couple held
over Ashulia
family murder

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Rapid Action Battalion personnel have arrested two persons in connection with the brutal killing of a couple and their son in Dhaka's Ashulia.

The arrestees are Sagar Ali, 31, and his wife Ishita Begum, 25.

A team of Rab-4 apprehended the couple in Shafipur area of Gazipur on Monday night, said Commander Khandaker Al Moin, director of Rab's Legal and Media Wing, at a media briefing in Dhaka yesterday.

Sagar was previously involved in a similar incident that came to light in 2020 when he killed four members of a family in Tangail.

Following that incident, Rab-12 arrested him, but he managed to secure bail and was released from jail in June this year, the Rab official said.

However, within just four months, Sagar committed another gruesome crime.

Decomposed bodies of Babul Hossain, 50, his wife Sahida Begum, 40, and their son Mehedi Hasan Joy, 12, were recovered on September 30.

Babul and Sahida were employed at a readymade garment factory, while Joy was a seventh-grader at a local school.

On September 28, Babul had visited an ayurvedic medicine shop and shared some of his

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Modernise drainage,
reclaim canalsSpeakers tell authorities on mitigating
Dhaka's waterlogging crisis

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Water resource experts and town planners yesterday urged the authorities concerned to modernise the drainage system, and conserve and reclaim floodplains, wetlands to make Dhaka a liveable city.

They made the call during an event titled, "Transformative Change in Stormwater Management of Dhaka City" organised by United International University (UIU) on the university campus in the capital.

The Daily Star was the media partner of the seminar.

Three experts -- in their presentation on the drainage systems, canal encroachment and rivers of Dhaka -- illustrated how the reclamation of Hatirjheel reduced water stagnation woes in surrounding areas.

Md Mujibor Rahman, professor of Department of Civil Engineering at UIU, said overcoming the weakness of drainage system was pivotal with reining in the unplanned urbanisation, which is eating

up the capital's wetland and floodplains.

"Open areas, waterbodies are fast depleting in the capital so much so that 70 percent of 71-square-kilometres of Hatirjheel project, including Begunbari canal area, will become a built-up area by 2025. If the current trend continues, the capital's open area, including waterbodies, would reduce to 3.5 percent," he observed.

Underscoring the need to control urban sprawl, he said the capital is yet to experience the onslaught of climate change impact that could worsen the already perilous drainage system.

Analysing rain patterns since 1957, he said the country saw a slight increase in rainfall, which has no link with climate change. The rainfall variability is not that severe in our analysis. We are not prepared yet to combat the impact of climate change."

He recommended five more projects like Hatirjheel to mitigate the woes of waterlogging.

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Speakers and guests at the seminar titled, "Transformative Change in Stormwater Management of Dhaka City" yesterday. The programme was organised by the United International University (UIU) on its campus in the capital. The Daily Star was the media partner of the event.

PHOTO: STAR

VISA POLICY
Journos
protest US
'pressure'
on media

UNB, Dhaka

Journalist leaders yesterday protested US Ambassador Peter Haas' recent remarks on US visa policy, noting that such statement is an unwanted interference and pressure on the free media in Bangladesh.

They came up with the observation at a rally held under the theme, "To Protest the US Pressure on Media in the Name of Visa Policy", organised by a platform named "Justice for Journalists" at Jatiya Press Club.

Speaking at the rally, DBC Television Chairman and The Daily Observer Editor Iqbal Sobhan Chowdhury said the tendency of imposing visa policy on the media

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