

Need accurate data on dengue patients: Taposh

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Dhaka South City Corporation Mayor Sheikh Fazle Noor Taposh yesterday requested the DGHS to provide accurate data on dengue patients so that they can take proper action.

"If correct and accurate data on dengue patients is provided, we can ensure more effective and efficient services at the field level," he said while addressing a views exchange meeting at Nagar Bhaban.

The mayor said last year they were told there were a lot of patients in the DSCC area, but they found 9,764 patients after verifying DGHS data till October last year.

"Also, we are getting information on those admitted to the hospital. However, those who leave the hospital from outdoors, are not included in the list."

"We don't want to hold any organisation or institute responsible. We want to control the spread of the Aedes mosquitoes with the assistance of everyone," said Taposh.

He asked the Rajuk representative for the list of under-construction buildings. In response, Rajuk assured to provide the list within 10 days.



Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina at a meeting with visiting Australian Foreign Minister Penny Wong at her official residence Gono Bhaban yesterday.

PHOTO: PTD

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CLIMATE CHANGE

Developed countries fail to deliver on commitments

Hasina tells visiting Australian minister

UNB, Dhaka

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina has expressed frustration over developed countries' failure to fulfill their commitments on issues relating to climate change.

The premier shared this sentiment with visiting Australian Foreign Minister Penny Wong during a meeting at Gano Bhaban yesterday, said PM's speech writer M Nazrul Islam.

Hasina said Bangladesh is vulnerable to climate change as it is often hit by cyclones and floods.

"We, however, did not sit idle... we have created our own Climate Trust Fund to save our people," Hasina told Wong.

Hasina said Bangladesh is a densely populated country. "So, we have to

Clean energy means a sustainable future

Says Peter Haas

UNB, Dhaka

US Ambassador Peter Haas emphasised the necessity of collaborative efforts from the government, private sector, and civil society to achieve a just energy transition in Bangladesh.

Speaking at the Indo-Pacific Business Forum held at the EMK Center in Dhaka, Haas highlighted the importance of good policies to incentivise smart investments, cross-border electricity trade, privatisation of underperforming state-owned assets, adoption of new technologies, and phasing out the most damaging fossil fuel power generation facilities.

Haas noted that this transition would take years but could be expedited through collective effort and shared knowledge.

He stressed that empowering Bangladesh with clean energy today means securing a brighter, sustainable future for generations to come.

Haas highlighted the importance of harnessing solar, wind, hydro, and hydrogen energy and reiterated the US government's commitment to supporting Bangladesh's clean energy transition.

Haas also mentioned the need for effective decarbonisation, seamless integration of intermittent energy resources, development of cleaner fuels like green hydrogen, access to finance for clean energy technologies, and regional energy trading agreements.

PVT HEALTH CENTRES IN SAVAR

91pc operate without environment clearance

AKLAKUR RAHMAN AKASH

At least 91 percent of private hospitals and clinics in Savar are running without clearance from the Department of Environment.

Only 10 of the total 115 private hospitals and clinics in the upazila have necessary environmental clearance to run their operations, confirmed DoE sources.

Also, eight of the hospitals and clinics in the upazila are running without approval from Directorate General of Health Services, as per health department.

Since environmental clearance was not mandatory for obtaining a licence from DGHS earlier, most health centres in Savar have long been running without it. They merely had to submit a copy of their respective applications to the DoE seeking clearance to get the licence.

However, the DGHS, at a meeting on March 16 last year, decided that it would neither grant nor renew licences to any private hospital, clinic, diagnostic centre, or blood transfusion centre without an environmental clearance.

Environmental experts have welcomed the move.

Mashura Shammi, professor at Department of Environmental Sciences of Jahangirnagar University, said, "Environmental clearance involves several factors that are largely ignored in Bangladesh. Every day, a lot of waste is generated from the hospitals, but no environmental impact assessment for it has been done."

"Only a small portion of this

huge amount of biomedical, liquid, and hazardous medical waste generated daily is being treated, while the bulk of it is disposed of completely untreated," she added.

Saemul Huda, upazila health and family planning officer in Savar, said, "Earlier, we used to scrutinise and recommend

get a licence only after due vetting from the DoE."

Meanwhile, owners of private hospitals and clinics in the upazila expressed concern that they would face a barrage of complications in obtaining and renewing their license due to this decision.

Contacted, Wakilur Rahman,



There are more than 100 private hospitals and clinics in Savar, most of which don't follow the waste management guidelines. The photo was taken at a temporary garbage station of a private hospital. FILE PHOTO

granting licences only if the hospitals or clinics submitted copies of their applications for environmental clearance along with other necessary documents. From now on, however, it will not be done without updated environmental clearance."

Contacted, Zahirul Islam Talukdar, deputy director of DoE in Dhaka district, said, "We issue environmental clearance only if the hospitals or clinics fully comply with the conditions required to obtain it. They would

owner of Lab Zone Hospital in Savar and also vice-president of Savar's Private Hospital Owners' Association, said obtaining environmental clearance is the most difficult among the necessary licences and approvals.

"However, since it has been made mandatory, I think it will be beneficial for us if the DoE makes it easier for hospitals to get clearances. Otherwise, many hospitals and clinics may struggle to obtain or renew a licence," he added.

Do not pay anyone for visas, work permits

Says Italian envoy

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Italian Ambassador to Bangladesh Antonio Alessandro has advised visa-seekers not to pay anyone for visas, emphasising that the embassy only charges small taxes and processing fees.

"We only take small taxes and processing fees, so applicants should not pay anyone for buying working permits or procuring visas. The services are free except these fees," Alessandro said after meeting with State Minister for Expatriates' Welfare and Overseas Employment Shofiqur Rahman Choudhury at the ministry.

They discussed ways to improve migration to Italy and addressed both regular and irregular flows of migration.

Alessandro said discovery of forged documents, counterfeit working permits, and fraudulent applications, which have slowed down the visa process.

"I want to reassure those who are concerned about the expiration of work permits that they do not need to panic. If they email VFS Global, their working permits will not expire, but it will just take some time before getting a proper appointment."

He also mentioned that they are currently receiving a limited number of applications due to pending ones.

Form minority commission with judicial power

Demands Nirmul Committee

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Shahriar Kabir, the outgoing president of Ekatattor Ghatok Dalal Nirmul Committee, yesterday said the government's initiative to protect the rights of minorities does not seem sufficient.

"For a long time, we have been demanding the formation of a minority commission. If the government can't do that, we will form the National Minority Commission ourselves," he said.

He made the remarks at the announcement ceremony of the organisation's new executive committee at Jatiya Press Club.

India, Canada, and Australia have national minority commissions with judicial powers. Although there is a National Human Rights Commission in Bangladesh, it is not empowered.

SHAMSUDDIN CHOWDHURY MANIK
Justice

Speaking at the event, Justice Shamsuddin Chowdhury Manik said, "India, Canada, and Australia have national minority commissions with judicial powers. Although there is a National Human Rights Commission in Bangladesh, it is not empowered. We demand a minority commission with judicial powers from the government."

Names of the members of the new 91-member committee have been officially announced after the Eighth National Conference of the organisation.

Shyamoli Nasrin Chowdhury is president of the newly elected committee, while Asif Munir Tanmoy is the general secretary.

"The Nirmul Committee will not make any compromise in upholding the spirit of the Liberation War and the 1972 constitution," said the newly-elected president.

Muntassir Mamoon, advisor of the committee, also spoke at the event.

Leak of citizens' data alarming

TIB expresses concern

STAR REPORT

Transparency International Bangladesh yesterday expressed deep concern over the theft and sale of citizens' confidential information online.

They demanded severe punishment for those responsible, reports UNB.

The anti-graft watchdog highlighted the alarming use of law enforcement officials' IDs to steal citizens' sensitive information, including call data records, national identity card details, and mobile numbers from the National Telecommunication Monitoring Center.

This breach violates constitutional commitments to safeguard personal data, it said.

TIB also urged swift enactment of the Personal Data Protection Act, 2024.

The Daily Star published a report yesterday titled "Personal data up for sale online!" showing how crooked government employees are selling information from national database to 789 groups on social media.

The report detailed how the NTMC system was exploited using the IDs of two

law enforcement officers to collect and sell confidential information for financial gain.

TIB Executive Director Dr Iftekharuzzaman said, "Previously, Bangladeshi citizens experienced thefts of various confidential documents such as birth certificates and national identity cards at different times. Recent times have seen a surge in such breaches, with personal data being pilfered by law enforcement organisations tasked with safeguarding it."

The government's process and infrastructure for protecting citizens' sensitive information appear inadequate, raising questions about its integrity and capability, UNB cited Iftekharuzzaman as saying.

The government seems to lack the necessary commitment and investment for robust data protection, making its efforts insufficient and ineffective, he added.

Legal and institutional initiatives for data protection are superficial and risky. While suspending implicated user IDs is a positive step, identifying all involved in data trafficking is crucial, said Iftekharuzzaman.



CHITTARANJAN DAS the palm tree planter of Jashore

DIPANKAR ROY

When everyone else runs for cover from the scorching sun, 67-year-old Chittaranjan Das can be seen tending to palm trees on his broken bicycle. Neither scorching heat, torrential rains, nor biting cold can deter him from his mission.

For 16 years, he has dedicated his life to greening the roadsides of Jashore.

In 2008, Chittaranjan developed a

passion for planting trees. Since then, he has planted at least 2,88,000 palm trees along 42 roads in the Abhaynagar and Manirampur upazilas, and Nayapara municipal area.

He has also planted 56,000 date palm seeds. His efforts earned him respect and recognition throughout the country.

"It's wonderful to see

people resting in the shade of palm trees, farmers eating rice, or pedestrians seeking shelter during sunny days or storms," Chittaranjan told this newspaper recently.

Every morning, Chittaranjan leaves the house armed with sticks, water bottles, and spades. He removes weeds, adds soil to the base of trees during the rain, and

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