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Sundarbans saves Bangladesh BUT PAYS A HEAVY PRICE

Extensive damage to wildlife feared, at least 39 deer confirmed dead

DIPANKAR ROY, *Khulna*

The Sundarbans, Bangladesh's "silent protector", the shield and first line of defense against natural disasters, has once again safeguarded the nation from a cyclone -- Remal.

However, it came at a heavy cost to the forest's wildlife and ecosystem.

While the human cost of cyclones can be tragically clear, assessing the immediate impact on wildlife after such disasters proves far more difficult. The true number of animal deaths may take quite some time to emerge.

However, a grim picture is starting to unfold. Videos and photographs are surfacing, showing the bodies of dead deer scattered across the forest floor as floodwaters recede.

Forest officials have confirmed at least 39 deer perished, with 17 others were rescued. Sadly, this is likely just the tip of the iceberg. Reports suggest numerous other animals, including precious tiger cubs, were swept away by the high tide.

The tidal surge, reaching heights of 10-12 feet, inundated the entire Sundarbans.

Meanwhile, many trees were also



Dead animals, uprooted trees and heavily damaged forest department offices -- Cyclone Remal has left behind a trail of destruction in the Sundarbans, the world's largest mangrove forest. Following tidal surges that reached 12 feet in some places, the forest was under water for 36 hours. The damage to wildlife has started emerging as water started receding from yesterday.



PHOTO: COLLECTED

SEE PAGE 4 COL 6

AEDES CONCENTRATION

TYPE OF BUILDING	CONCENTRATION OF AEDES LARVAE
High-rise building	42.33%
Individual houses	21.6%
Under-construction buildings	21.6%
Semi-concrete houses	12.74%
Open spaces	1.73%

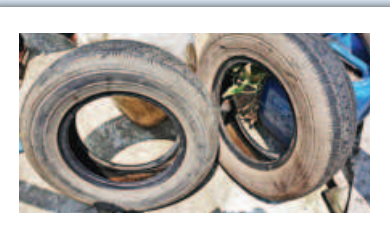


AEDES BREEDING SOURCES

SOURCE	DISTRIBUTION
Plastic drums	18%
Floors with water	15%
Plastic Buckets	14%



SOURCE: DGHS



Dengue survey paints grim picture for 2024

High density of Aedes larvae found in 41 Dhaka wards

HELEMUL ALAM

After last year witnessed the highest number of dengue fatalities, it seemed the situation couldn't get any worse. However, dengue fatalities this year till May are already 21 more than the same period last year, indicating the worst is yet to come.

A recent pre-monsoon survey by the Directorate General of Health Services, conducted from April 17 to April 26, found a high density of Aedes mosquito larvae in 29 wards of Dhaka South City Corporation and 12 wards of Dhaka North City Corporation.

The survey inspected 3,152 houses across 99 wards of the two city corporations and found Aedes mosquito larvae in 463 houses.

The risky wards in DSCC are 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 8, 9, 13, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 23, 26, 27, 28, 35, 39, 42, 43, 47, 52, 53, 54, 56, 57, 58, and 61.

The risky wards in DNCC are 1, 5, 12, 13, 17, 20, 29, 30, 32, 33, 35, and 36.

Presenting the survey report at Shasthya Bhaban, Prof Dr Sheikh Daud Adnan, line director of Communicable Disease Control at DGHS, emphasised the urgent need to control Aedes mosquitoes by destroying their breeding sources.

Responding to a question about partial data collection of dengue patients, Dr Md Robed Amin, line director of Non-Communicable Disease Control at DGHS, said they are holding meetings with private hospitals to introduce an online system for collecting data on outdoor patients.

He also said they will introduce the system in both government and private hospitals shortly.

According to the DGHS data, 2,795 dengue patients were hospitalised across the country by May 28, while 35 died. The number of dengue deaths till May last year was 13.

Last year, dengue claimed 1,705 lives, making it the deadliest year on record.

SEE PAGE 4 COL 4

Feasibility study for MRT Line-4 begins in June

TUHIN SHUBHRA ADHIKARY

The metro rail authority will start the feasibility study for Mass Rapid Transit (MRT) Line-4 next month, which is supposed to link Dhaka with Narayanganj's Madanpur.

The consultants hired for the job have reached Dhaka and held a meeting with the metro railway authorities on Monday.

"They [consultants] will first visit the project area and will mobilise their manpower to start the study next month," MAN Siddique, managing director of Dhaka Mass Transit Company Ltd (DMTCL), told The Daily Star on Monday.

He said a consortium of four South Korean companies will carry out the feasibility study and prepare a basic design for the project. Korea will finance the work.

The consortium is supposed to complete the work within one and a half years, he said, adding that they will prepare the project's basic design to get its estimated cost.

DMTCL has a time-bound action plan to build a 140-km metro rail network, comprising six lines, in and around Dhaka by 2030 to reduce traffic congestion and air pollution.

The MRT Line-6, country's first metro rail line, is now operational on Uttara-Motijheel route and its extended part from Motijheel to Kamalapur is expected to be opened by June next year.

The physical works on MRT Line-1 and MRT Line-5 (northern route) started last year, while a project proposal for MRT Line-5 (southern route) is now pending with the Planning Commission for approval.

MRT Line 4 and 2 are lagging behind in terms of preparation and may miss the deadline to complete the lines within 2030, officials said.

Although feasibility of MRT Line-4 is going to start, the financier for the feasibility study of MRT Line-2 has not yet been found, let alone hiring a consultant for the work, they added.

Once the feasibility studies are done and financiers are found, the authorities will have to go through a long process -- preparing a project proposal, having it approved, acquiring land, preparing a



Feeling hot and sweaty after rain? Here is why

MOHAMMAD AL-MASUM MOLLA

The country experienced heavy rainfall due to Cyclone Remal, yet people from various regions reported still feeling sweaty and uncomfortable. Meteorologists explained that this discomfort is primarily due to the excessive moisture in the air.

The temperature will continue to rise in the coming days, they said.

"The air is saturated with moisture, that's why we can't cool our body," Muhammad Abul Kalam Mallik, meteorologist of Bangladesh Meteorologist Department, told The Daily Star yesterday. He said the rain helped the soil to release the latent heat that is responsible for warming the environment. "That's why we are feeling discomfort even though there is no heatwave or high temperature. It is mainly due to damp weather."

According to Bangladesh Meteorological Department, Dhaka's temperature was recorded 32.1 degrees Celsius at noon while 244 millimetres of rainfall was recorded in the



capital in the last 48 hours.

Hafizur Rahman, meteorologist of BMD, said the temperature may rise in the coming days if there is no rain. He said people will sweat more due to excessive moisture in the air.

In April, Bangladesh experienced the longest heatwave ever, and a mild to moderate heatwave swept the country in the middle of May. Data from BMD shows that the average maximum temperature throughout April was 36.2 degrees Celsius. With an average rainfall of just 1mm, the month was also the driest in 43 years.

Mostafa Kamal, a weather and climate researcher at the University of Saskatchewan in Canada, explained that warm weather after heavy rainfall can be due to higher humidity, heat released by the rain, and warm, dry air arriving afterwards.

"Rainfall is typically associated with the release of latent heat. When water vapor condenses into rain droplets, it releases heat (Latent Heat) into the atmosphere, which can raise the temperature of the surrounding air," he said.

As of today, May 28, 2024, a heat wave is sweeping through western and central India and moving toward West Bengal and Bangladesh, he said.

Warm and dry air from this heatwave already started penetrating West Bengal and Bangladesh, which is also increasing air temperature over Bangladesh.

"The above three factors make people feel warmer despite heavy rainfall from Cyclone Remal over the last two days."

SEE PAGE 4 COL 4