

Flagging drives letting Aedes bite

Dengue cases rise amid lacklustre anti-mosquito campaign as councillors in hiding

HELEMUL ALAM

Amid a dearth of local government representatives, anti-mosquito campaigns have become irregular which according to experts may lead to a deadly dengue outbreak very soon.

The number of confirmed dengue cases is already high.

After the fall of the Awami League government in early August, 12 city corporation mayors, 330 municipality mayors and administrators, almost all the zilla and upazila parishad chairmen were removed.

The interim government then appointed administrators to carry out the responsibilities of the mayors.

But as most of the councillors of Dhaka's two city corporations went into hiding after the fall of the government, there is no one to watch over the mosquito killing drives.

Many local government representatives, most of whom were Awami League leaders, in the capital and elsewhere have gone into hiding.

Eighty percent councillors are still absent in Dhaka North City Corporation and 75 percent in Dhaka South City Corporation, according to the officials.

Meanwhile, the disease borne by Aedes mosquitoes claimed 92 lives this year, and the confirmed cases was 14,804 as of yesterday. Twenty-



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eight of the deaths and 8,505 of the cases were detected outside Dhaka.

Entomologist Kabirul Bashar of Jahangirnagar University said the numbers may rise significantly later this month because rains are creating puddles of clear water for Aedes to breed while the authorities are almost inactive.

"We must identify the dengue hotspots and start working now to prevent more cases. The situation is bad across the country," he told The Daily Star. "Public leadership is very important in anti-mosquito campaigns. But there is no mayor."

Entomologist GM Saifur Rahman said surveillance, which is key to control Aedes mosquitoes, was absent even in the major cities.

"Through surveillance, we detect active clusters and breeding places of the Aedes, and then destroy them," he said.

The number of infections is likely to keep rising until the second half of October.

HIGH CASE FATALITY RATE

In epidemiology, case fatality rate is the proportion of people who have been diagnosed with a certain disease and end up dying of it.

According to the health directorate, the rate this year is 0.61 percent, up from 0.5 percent in 2023.

At least 1705 people died of dengue last year.

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The shallow wetlands are teeming with red water lilies this monsoon. A hundred of these delicacies can fetch up to Tk 800 at the weekly bazaar. The photo of two people sorting them was taken yesterday from Daserpool Haat in Binoykati union under Jhalakathi Sadar upazila.

PHOTO: TITU DAS

Star INTERVIEW

Environment, Forest, and Climate Change Adviser Syeda Rizwana Hasan discussed with The Daily Star's Pinaki Roy how the interim government is going to stop businesses from polluting the rivers of Bangladesh.

'Won't tolerate river pollution'

Environment, Forest, and Climate Change Adviser Syeda Rizwana Hasan has issued a stern warning against the pollution of rivers by businesses.

"This generation who waged the Anti-Discrimination Student Movement never saw any pollution-free rivers in Bangladesh. I want to show it to them," Rizwana said.

In an interview with The Daily Star, Rizwana, also in charge of the water resources ministry, said the interim government is preparing a list of rivers



that have been heavily polluted by industrial waste.

"We will not tolerate pollution of any river by any business to increase profits," she remarked. The adviser also mentioned that rivers belong to people.

Bangladesh has many rivers, and the government must protect them all. But it is also true that this government would not be able to work for all at the same time, said Rizwana, known for her work as an environmental activist.

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Teesta water issue has to be solved

Says Yunus, calls for humanitarian approach to flood management

OUR CORRESPONDENT,
New Delhi

Chief Adviser Muhammad Yunus has emphasised the need to resolve the longstanding transboundary river water-sharing issue between India and Bangladesh in line with international norms.

In the second part of the interview with Press Trust of India, conducted at the CA's official residence in Dhaka last Sunday, Yunus said lower riparian countries like Bangladesh have specific rights that must be respected.

The second part of the interview was released yesterday.

The chief adviser said Bangladesh's interim government would continue working with India to resolve differences over the long-pending Teesta



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Ex-minister Shajahan held, placed on remand

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A Dhaka court yesterday placed former shipping minister Shajahan Khan on a seven-day remand in a case filed over the death of 14-year-old Abdul Motaleb in the city's Dhanmondi area on August 4.

Dhaka Metropolitan Magistrate Mahbub Ahmed passed the order after investigation officer Khokon Mia, a sub-inspector of Dhanmondi Police Station, produced him before the court seeking a 10-day remand, a sub-inspector working in the court told The Daily Star.

Shajahan, 75, also an Awami League presidium member, was arrested

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GOVT HEALTHCARE FACILITIES Protests, departures cripple services

Scores of high-ranking health officials not being allowed to work

AHMED DEEPTO

Protests after the fall of the Awami League government have forced heads and top officials of many government healthcare facilities and institutes to resign or remain absent, leaving the entire sector in disarray, and ultimately causing patient suffering.

Even the new head of the Directorate General of Health Services (DGHS), appointed last month after the fall of the Awami League government, has been unable to enter his office in the face of protests.

Meanwhile, a string of sudden promotions of pro-BNP doctors who were "deprived" during the AL government at Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujib Medical University (BSMMU) has shed light on the direct effects of politics on the sector.

Although the influence of politics was not directly linked to the recent doctors' protests over the assault on a colleague at Dhaka Medical College Hospital (DMCH), the absence of top officials was clear as the new administration grappled with the situation. Amid the doctors' strike for two days earlier this month, many patients were turned away.

Dulal Hossain, 60, a patient with chest pain from Munshiganj, SEE PAGE 2 COL 1



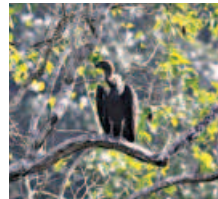
Battleground of change

WR1



Dismantling recruitment syndicate

P8



The silent decline of 'nature's cleaners'

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