

DENGUE OUTBREAK

Unclean hospital premises escalate risk for patients

HELEMUL ALAM and SHAHEEN MOLLAH

An acute lack of cleanliness on the premises of many hospitals, especially the government-run ones, has been raising the risk of dengue infection.

It is mandatory for all hospitals to keep the premises clean in a bid to control the Aedes mosquito population.

However, visiting a number of hospitals – including Bangladesh Shishu Hospital and Institute, National Institute of Traumatology and Orthopedic Rehabilitation, National Institute of Ophthalmology, National Institute of Cardiovascular Diseases, Dhaka Medical College Hospital, Shaheed Suhrawardy Medical College and Hospital, and Mugda Medical College Hospital, the scenario witnessed by these correspondents paints a grim picture.

Small plastic containers with rainwater accumulated in them, which provide an ideal breeding ground for Aedes mosquitoes, were seen in almost all hospital premises.

Moreover, in some hospitals, dengue patients were seen being treated without keeping them inside mosquito nets.

Entomologist Manzur A Chowdhury said, "Maintaining clean hospital premises and keeping dengue patients inside mosquito nets are very important, as Aedes mosquitoes can bite an infected person and thereby become a vector for the virus to spread among healthy individuals."

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According to the Directorate General of Health Services (DGHS), at least 199 dengue patients died, while 40,405 others were hospitalised this year till yesterday morning.

Nusrat Nahid, mother of a child patient at Shishu Hospital, said mosquitoes were found at the dengue ward even during the daytime.

Some nurses of the hospital acknowledged it. "We advise patients to keep the windows shut. We do not allow spraying mosquito repellent inside the ward as it is harmful for children," said a nurse of the dengue ward.

Many patients in different hospitals complained that they saw no activity of the city corporations to control Aedes mosquitoes.

Contacted, Abdul Hakim, public relations officer of Shishu Hospital, said, "Our ward masters are clearly instructed to maintain cleanliness in and outside the hospital. Steps will be taken if any negligence is found in this regard."

Prof Saifur Rahman, director of Shaheed Suhrawardy Medical College Hospital, said they are trying their best to ensure cleanliness.

Dr Satyajit Kumar Saha, director of Mugda Medical College Hospital, stressed for robust anti-mosquito campaigns and community clean-up efforts by authorities concerned as well as city residents.

He, however, said the city corporation has been less supportive to ensure cleanliness at the hospital this year compared to the previous year.

Mosquito nets have been provided to every bed, and they are monitored constantly, he added.

Dr Saha further said common dengue symptoms have been different this year, with patients experiencing mild fever (99-100°F), vomiting, and diarrhoea instead of high fever and headache.

People showing these symptoms, as well as severe symptoms such as abdominal pain, excessive vomiting, bleeding, or breathing difficulties, should seek immediate hospitalisation, he added.



Devotees receive ashirbad (blessings) from a priest at the Dhakeshwari Temple in the capital yesterday after completing rituals for the Saptami on the occasion of the Durga Puja.

PHOTO: PRABIR DAS

Maintain unity of July uprising

Urges Nahid

BSS, Dhaka

Information Adviser Md Nahid Islam yesterday laid special emphasis on practicing teachings of the religion in personal life.



"Religious festivals enhance harmony, compassion, amity, and unity in society," he said while addressing a greetings exchange ceremony organised by Bangladesh Puja Ujjapan Parishad at Dhakeshwari National Temple in the evening, on the occasion of Durga Puja.

Referring to the sacrifices of students and people to build a discrimination-free society, he said during the July-August uprising, there was no division based on religion.

"People of all faiths participated spontaneously

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Absconding cops face the music

Salary, allowance of 187 police officials suspended, departmental action underway

MOHAMMAD JAMIL KHAN

They are still officials of the Bangladesh Police, but they have not joined their workplace since August 5, after the fall of Sheikh Hasina's government in a mass uprising.

The authorities have finally started taking action against 187 such police members. Their salary and other allowances have already been suspended by the Police Headquarters, inside sources confirmed.

The absentees include one deputy inspector general seven additional DIGs, two superintendents of police, one additional SP, five assistant superintendents of police, five police inspectors, 14 sub-inspectors and sergeants, nine assistant sub-inspectors, seven nayeks, and 136 constables, according to PHQ.

Most controversial names among them are Harun Or Rashid, former additional commissioner (Detective Branch DB) of Dhaka Metropolitan Police, Biplob Kumar Sarker, former Joint Commissioner (DB-South) of DMP, and Proloy Kumar Joarder, Additional DIG of PHQ.

A high official of the PHQ said, "Legal proceedings have also been initiated against the officials, along with stopping their salaries and other benefits."

As per the rules, a show-cause notice was first issued against these officials asking – "Why they are not attending the workplace," the

official explained.

The official said, "Departmental steps have already been taken against the officials as they hardly got any response of the show-cause notice."

There are allegations that many of these absent officials have used excessive force on unarmed students and people during the protest.

Cases have already been filed against them for these acts.

Former DMP's Joint Commissioner Biplob Kumar was indicted in 27 cases, and Proloy Kumar in a case. These two officials also played a major role in using excessive force.

But none of these cops have been arrested.

Md Mainul Islam, inspector general of police said, "Action has been initiated against those who have not yet joined the police force. If they do not come, our stance is



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For example, at least 38 cases, mostly murder, were filed against former DB chief Harun, who is believed to have already fled the country and found refuge elsewhere.

During the anti-discrimination student movement, Harun picked up six coordinators and kept them confined at the DB custody in the name of providing security. The coordinators were released later amid criticism.

clear, there is no chance of keeping them on the job."

Regarding taking lawful action against the first information report (FIR) listed police officials, the police chief said they have already arrested 17 serving and former officers including field officials, who were accused in different cases. Their involvement was found during primary probe, he added.

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Over 30m in need of mental health services: WHO

STAR REPORT

Marking World Mental Health Day, which took place yesterday, Dhaka University, Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujib Medical University, and the National Institute of Mental Health organised various seminars, meetings, and processions.

The theme of this year was "Now is the Time to Prioritise Mental Health in the Workplace".

Despite growing concerns over mental health in Bangladesh, there have been no surveys, research, or data collected in the last five years on the number of people affected by mental illnesses.

However, the World Health Organization estimates that over 30 million people in the country are in need of mental health services.

Helal Uddin Ahmed, associate professor at the National Institute of Mental Health (NIMH), attributed this alarming situation to workplace stress, low wages, layoffs, job dissatisfaction, and a lack of social support.

Poverty and the fear of losing social status further exacerbates the issue, leading to depression among workers.

He said one in five workers experiences mental health challenges, and 80 percent of those with serious conditions lose their jobs.

A survey by the NIMH in 2018-19 revealed that 17 percent of adults in Bangladesh suffer from mild to severe mental health issues, with 19 percent of women and 15 percent of men affected. Among those under 18, 13.6 percent struggle with mental health, but over 90 percent of them do not receive treatment.

The number of mental health professionals in the country is woefully inadequate, with fewer than 250 psychiatrists and psychologists, and over 100 of them being based in Dhaka.

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PHOTO: RASHED SHUMON

A combination of illegal shops set up on the streets and traffic jam left this spot in the Gulistan area in chaos. Despite yesterday being a government holiday on the occasion of Durga Puja, this area had tailbacks one sees on the worst days of Dhaka's weekday traffic.

Mahmudur Rahman sues Hasina over attack on him

UNB, Dhaka

Acting editor of Amar Desh Mahmudur Rahman yesterday filed a case against 66 people including, former prime minister Sheikh Hasina and ex-IGP Mohammad Javed Patwary, on charge of attacking him on a court premises in Kushtia around six years back.

Kushtia Model Police Station's Officer-in-Charge Mahfuzur Haque Chowdhury confirmed the development to The Daily Star.

Replying to a question, Mahmudur Rahman, who filed the case in person, said he demanded justice.

According to the case statement, Mahmudur came under attack by the accused when he was coming out of the Kushtia court after securing bail in a defamation case on July 22, 2018.

Later, he returned to the capital by an ambulance, he said in the statement.

Schools to admit maximum 55 students per section

STAR REPORT

The education ministry asked secondary school authorities to admit a maximum of 55 students per section from classes one to nine in the 2025 academic year.

The Ministry of Education unveiled a new policy on admissions in the government secondary schools on Wednesday.

For admission to class one, students must be over six years old. Age determination for subsequent classes will be consistent with this guideline, and schools will also set the maximum age limit for admission.

An attested copy of the online birth registration certificate must accompany the admission application to verify the age.

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