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4 more die of dengue 1,121 hospitalised

UNB, Dhaka

At least four dengue patients died, and 1,121 were hospitalised in the last 24 hours till yesterday morning.

Of the deaths, three were in Dhaka city and one in Khulna division.

With the new deaths and cases, the total number of deaths rose to 241, while the total number of cases rose to 48,582, according to the Directorate General of Health Services (DGHS).

Currently, 3,954 dengue patients are undergoing treatment in different hospitals in the country.

As rain and thunderstorms are expected in various parts of the country over the next few days, experts warn that the dengue season could extend further this year.



Long tailbacks were seen on both sides of the road in front of the Hotel Intercontinental in the capital yesterday, which was caused as a result of outsourcing government employees blocking the Shahbagh intersection with a demand for nationalisation of their jobs.

Contractual workers block Shahbagh for 7hrs

Demand nationalisation of their jobs

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Contractual employees of government institutions blocked the Shahbagh intersection in Dhaka for more than seven hours yesterday, demanding nationalisation of their jobs.

The protest, which began around 10:00am, severely disrupted traffic in the surrounding areas, causing congestion and suffering to the commuters, especially BSMU-bound patients.

Around 4:00pm, a seven member representative team went to the chief adviser's residence and met some officials there.

They returned to Shahbagh and announced that they gave a 15-day time to meet their demands, and if the demands are not met by then, they will wage tougher movement.

The protesters left Shahbagh around 5:15pm. According to witnesses, several hundred contractual employees from across the country arrived in Dhaka on buses in the early morning, and later they gathered in the Shahbagh area, chanting slogans to press their demands.

Additional police force was stationed nearby, but they were not seen taking any action to clear the road. Later, members of Army personnel also arrived at the scene.

"Our one-point demand is nationalisation of our jobs. We will continue our protest until our demand is met,"

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Shrines' significance often overlooked

Discussants tell seminar

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The rich cultural and historical significance of shrines in Bangladesh is increasingly being overlooked, said speakers at a seminar yesterday.

They said shrines have played an integral role across the Indian subcontinent and continue to hold importance in countries such as Afghanistan, Iran, and Turkey. Figures like Shah Jalal and Khan Jahan Ali were deeply involved in the socio-political affairs of their time, underscoring the historical relevance of these sites.

The seminar, titled "Shrine-Khanqah Attacks: Majoritarian Fascism, Discrimination, and the Challenge of Inclusivity; Reflections on Post-Uprising Bangladesh," was held at Dhaka University.

Artist Arup Rahi, speaking at the event, said the attacks on shrines and "khanqah sharifs" are being used as a pretext for marginalising specific groups.

"The real issue lies in isolating certain communities. In a society, no group is inherently a minority; minorities are created by societal forces, which runs counter to the inclusive thinking we should promote."

ARTIST ARUP RAHI

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Path to building a new state far from smooth

Speakers say there's optimism as well as concern in current context

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Sacrifices made during the students-people mass uprising have not only paved the way for creation of a discrimination-free Bangladesh but also provided an opportunity for the overall reconstruction of the state, said the country's prominent civil society activists during a national consultation yesterday.

CSO Alliance, which coordinate and represent the country's NGO sector, organised the event on "Civil Society: Past, Present, and Future" at a city hotel.

There's both optimism and valid concerns about building an equitable society in Bangladesh, and the journey to achieve this goal remains challenging, he added.

Addressing the event, Transparency International Bangladesh Executive Director Iftekharuzzaman said, "There is a consensus on the vision for a new Bangladesh. However, diverse forces are at play among those involved in the movement."

There's both optimism and valid concerns about building an equitable society in Bangladesh, and the journey to achieve this goal remains challenging.

IFTEKHARUZZAMAN
Executive Director, TIB

Having an opportunity does not mean that the desired goal has been achieved. Changes will not come if the character of power is not pluralistic.

HOSSAIN ZILLUR RAHMAN
Former adviser to a caretaker govt

He said many of their agendas contradict the core spirit of the anti-discrimination movement, aiming instead to create discrimination.

Iftekharuzzaman said vested interests have been aggressively working against the vision of building a secular Bangladesh, posing significant threats.

He questioned whether civil society and NGOs could remain silent in light of such a situation. He said civil society and NGOs must be proactive and urged the government to create an enabling environment for their activities.

Former adviser to a caretaker government Hossain Zillur Rahman said sacrifices of the students and people have created an opportunity for change.

"However, having an opportunity does not mean that the desired goal has been achieved," he said. Changes will not come if the character of power is not pluralistic, he added.

He said if politics is viewed

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We must build resistance against fascism

Prof Ali Riaz tells event

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Repressive laws, a manipulated historical narrative for ideological loyalty, media alignment with regime interests, and foreign influence -- the fascist and autocratic regime in Bangladesh has lasted over 15 years based on these four pillars, said Prof Ali Riaz, head of the constitution reform committee, yesterday.

Speaking at an event "Story of Injured Poets and Writers in the July Uprising," organised by the literary magazine Kaler Dhoni in the capital, he said while the first phase of dismantling fascism has been completed, success in the second phase relies on a thorough reassessment of these factors.

The first pillar is the role of state institutions, which have enforced oppressive laws that instill a culture of fear among citizens. These laws were crafted to consolidate control and sustain the autocratic government, he explained.

The second pillar concerns the construction of ideological loyalty. He said the past regime manipulated the narrative surrounding the Liberation War, making it all about a single person.

On this issue, he expressed concern about a troubling trend among intellectuals who have

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Declare Easter Sunday a public holiday

Christians urge in a letter to Yunus

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Bangladesh's Christian community has written a letter to Chief Adviser Prof Muhammad Yunus, requesting him to declare Easter Sunday a public holiday.

Archbishop Bejoy N D'Cruze, OMI, president of the Catholic Bishops' Conference of Bangladesh and also of the United Forum of Churches, Bangladesh, wrote the letter to the chief adviser on October 17.

It said the Christians of Bangladesh expressed deep gratitude to the chief adviser for taking the important role during the crisis period of Bangladesh and assured him of prayers for the success of his government.

"We beg to bring your kind notice that the

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CANCELLATION OF NAT'L DAYS

Writers' group attacked during protest in Dhaka

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A group of men swooped on a writer's group in front of Jatiya Press Club yesterday when they tried to stage a rally condemning the cancellation of March 7 and August 15 as national days.

The incident occurred around 11:30am.

Khalid Monsur, officer-in-charge of Shahbagh Police Station, told The Daily Star that he heard about the incident.

He said one group came to protest the cancellation of the two national days, while another obstructed them.

However, he was unaware of any assault and the identities of those involved.

Kutub Hilali, spokesperson for the Creative Writers Association, which identifies itself as pro-Liberation War writers, said around 11:00am, at least 25 members of their association began preparing for the protest.

Upon hearing this, at least 70-80 men arrived at the scene and chased them away.

"The group began attacking us just as we were unveiling the banner for the programme. They surrounded me and beat me indiscriminately," he said. During the altercation, the attackers reportedly assaulted several protesters with sticks.

A video of the incident went viral on social media,

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A makeshift tailor shop and tea stall have been set up precariously close to the railway tracks. With trains passing just feet away, an accident can happen in the blink of an eye. The photo was taken in Dhaka's Nakhhalpara area yesterday.

PHOTO: ANISUR RAHMAN