

Need effective leadership to address key challenges Says army chief

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Chief of Army Staff General Waker-Uz-Zaman yesterday called for effective leadership and a shared understanding among all stakeholders to address Bangladesh's key challenges related to security, development, and strategic governance.

He made the remarks while addressing the closing ceremony of the Capstone Course at the National Defence College (NDC) in Dhaka.

Highlighting the role of the NDC, Waker said the institution was established as a national centre of excellence for issues relating to defence, security, strategy, and development.

He said the Capstone Course offers a unique platform for senior professionals to develop a

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Chief of Army Staff General Waker-Uz-Zaman in a photo session during the closing ceremony of the Capstone Course at the National Defence College in Dhaka yesterday.

PHOTO: PRABIR DAS

Must tackle internal divides to navigate global rivalry

Speakers tell CGS dialogue

DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT

Foreign policy experts and politicians have called for addressing divisive politics, economic vulnerabilities, and human rights concerns to safeguard Bangladesh's strategic autonomy in an increasingly bipolar world.

They said many developing countries are struggling to maintain balanced foreign relations amid the growing rivalry between US and China-led blocs.

The observations were made at a dialogue on Bangladesh's foreign policy organised by the Centre for Governance Studies (CGS) at the CIRDAP auditorium in the capital yesterday.

"The world is certainly getting bipolar. How we will navigate it will depend on our internal strength," said Bangladesh Enterprise Institute Chairman and former ambassador M Humayun Kabir.

He said Bangladesh suffers from a tendency toward internal conflict, which hampers the formulation of a strong foreign policy. Political actors often use foreign alliances to undermine their opposition, he added.

Kabir also said while the US reviews its foreign and defence policies every four years, Bangladesh has made only two minor adjustments since 1972.

He stressed the need to diversify the export basket, currently dominated by the RMG sector, and adopt robust policies to reduce dependence on imported energy, a strategic commodity.

CGS Executive Director Parvez Karim Abbasi said the global order is witnessing a Cold War-like atmosphere, with the US remaining the leading economy and the dollar still held in most countries' reserves.

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- SUGGESTIONS**
- Build political consensus on foreign policy
- Diversify export basket beyond RMG
- Reduce reliance on imported energy
- Strengthen Bangladesh missions abroad
- Balance relations with US, China, and India

HELEMUL ALAM

The number of dengue deaths and infections in July more than doubled compared to the previous month, underscoring the growing severity of this year's outbreak.

According to the Directorate General of Health Services (DGHS), 41 people died of dengue in July, up from 19 in June. Reported cases surged to 10,684 last month, compared to 5,951 the previous month.

So far this year, 83 dengue-related deaths have been recorded, including 36 from outside Dhaka. The total number of cases has reached 20,980, with 16,412 reported from areas beyond the capital.

Health experts have warned that the current weather is highly conducive to the spread of Aedes mosquitoes, the primary vector of the disease, and have urged immediate action from the authorities.

The Bangladesh Meteorological Department (BMD) has forecast continued rainfall, which experts say could further accelerate dengue transmission. Between 9:00am on August 1 and the next three days, light to moderate rain and thunderstorms accompanied by gusty winds are expected in most parts of Dhaka, Mymensingh, Chattogram, and Sylhet divisions, as well as several other regions.

"Intermittent rain is highly favourable for the spread of dengue virus," said entomologist GM Saifur Rahman.

He said Aedes mosquitoes are more active in overcast weather,



AT A GLANCE

- » 41 died and 10,684 infected last month
- » Total deaths this year at 83, most cases outside Dhaka
- » Rainy weather accelerating mosquito breeding
- » Experts warn August may see triple the July cases
- » Delayed treatment, secondary infections raising fatality risk

RECOMMENDATIONS

- » Wear full-sleeve clothing and use mosquito nets, repellents
- » Regularly clean rooftops, containers holding stagnant water
- » Seek immediate hospital care if warning signs appear
- » Intensify mosquito-control efforts in identified hotspots
- » Share hotspot data to raise community awareness

season.

Saifur urged people to wear full-sleeve clothing, use mosquito nets and repellents, and regularly clean potential breeding sites such as rooftops and containers holding stagnant water.

He also pointed to several reasons behind the rising death toll. Many patients arrive at hospitals late, confused by overlapping symptoms of other viral fevers currently circulating in the city. This delay in seeking treatment often leads to severe complications or death. Secondary infections can also contribute to increased mortality, he added.

Saifur stressed the importance of intensified mosquito-control efforts in dengue hotspots and called for the destruction of adult mosquitoes and their breeding sites.

Jahangirnagar University entomologist Prof Kabirul Bashar said, "August could see at least three times as many dengue cases as July, with numbers rising further in September."

Bashar emphasised targeted vector control near patients' homes and in hospitals to prevent further transmission.

"Hospitals can become transmission hubs if Aedes mosquitoes bite infected patients and then others," he said.

Without active community participation in eliminating breeding grounds, controlling the outbreak will be extremely difficult, he warned.

Dr HM Nazmul Ahsan, associate professor at Shaheed Suhrawardy

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MILESTONE TRAGEDY

'Why would we hide bodies of children?' Army refutes allegations

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Brig Gen Nazim-ud-Daula, director of Military Operations Directorate (MOD) at the Army Headquarters, yesterday rejected allegations that army personnel beat up teachers or attempted to hide bodies of the victims during the rescue operation at Milestone School and College following the July 21 fighter jet crash.

"Some say we beat up teachers, or hid bodies. Why would we hide the bodies of innocent children? Their parents were there. Wouldn't they have asked where their children were?" he told reporters during a briefing at Dhaka Cantonment.

He said if anyone was pushed amid the chaos, it was never deliberate.

"We had to clear the way for ambulances. In doing so, some jostling may have happened, but our only objective was to save lives," he said.

Nazim pointed out that the crashed aircraft had created a deep hole in the school building and jet fuel had leaked into the area.

"There was already fuel at the spot where the nose of the plane had hit. If a spark had gone off, those involved in the rescue could have died. Thankfully, that didn't happen. But those who rushed there did so with full awareness of the risk," he said.

He said army personnel were the first to respond and begin rescue operations, as their camp was located just 150 to 200 yards away from the school.

"Our soldiers dropped everything and ran. You'll see in

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In Sylhet's haors, the rhythm of the season beats softly -- farmers transplanting Aman seedlings, others carry them across emerald fields. With the weather in their favour, they labour in hope, hearts set on golden harvests in Agrahayan. The photo was taken in Barni area of Companiganj upazila yesterday.

Political clashes, mob attacks leave 25 dead in July

Says MSF monthly report

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

At least nine people were killed and 584 injured in 48 incidents of political violence across the country in July, according to a report by rights organisation Manabdhikar Shongskriti Foundation (MSF).

Of the nine, three were killed in internal feuds within the BNP, one in clashes involving the BNP and Jamaat, and five during clashes between law enforcers and Awami League members and supporters centring a programme of the National Citizen Party (NCP) in Gopalganj, the report said.

Of the 48 incidents, 27 were related to internal BNP conflicts; two involved clashes between the BNP and Awami League; two were internal NCP disputes; one involved the NCP, AL, and law enforcers; four were between BNP and Jamaat; one between Jamaat and AL; and another between supporters of adviser Asif Mahmud and the BNP.

"The rise in mob violence has raised serious concerns, shaking the public's sense of security, and it is the state's responsibility to identify the culprits and take legal action," said MSF.

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- » 9 killed, 584 hurt in 48 incidents of political violence
- » 51 mob attacks reported; 16 killed, 53 injured
- » 352 incidents of violence against women, children
- » 56 rape cases reported, including 18 gang rapes

Protesters block Shahbagh, demand July Charter Commuters suffer in daylong traffic chaos

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A group of demonstrators under the banner of "July Warriors" staged a protest at the capital's Shahbagh intersection yesterday, demanding the immediate finalisation of the proposed July Charter.

The blockade began around 11:00am and was ongoing as of 8:00pm, the time of filing this report.

The demonstration caused severe traffic congestion in the surrounding areas. Commuters were stuck on the roads for hours, while many were forced to walk long distances to reach their destinations.



PHOTO: ANISUR RAHMAN

"Traffic movement in and around Shahbagh came to a halt, resulting in severe congestion across adjacent roads," said Khalid Mansur, officer-in-charge of Shahbagh Police Station.

Saad Ahmed, a private firm employee, said it took him over two and a half hours to reach Karwan Bazar from Jatrabari.

"I went to Jatrabari in the morning for official work but later learned about the Shahbagh blockade through social media. Fearing heavy traffic, I boarded a bus which takes a route via Basabo, Kamalapur, and Malibagh -- but the roads were still jam-packed," he said.

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20 parties miss EC audit deadline

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Twenty political parties have yet to submit their annual audit reports to the Election Commission (EC), despite yesterday's deadline.

Currently, there are 50 registered political parties in the country. Of them, 29 have submitted their audit reports, and 10 parties have applied for an extension through written applications.

According to an EC report on political party audit submissions, the ten parties requesting extensions are: Liberal Democratic Party (LDP), Communist Party of Bangladesh (CPB), Bangladesh National Awami Party, Bangladesh Khelafat Majlis, Bangladesh Muslim League (BML), Bangladesh Sangskritik Muktiote, Jatiya Samajtantrik Dal-JSD, Bangladesh Jatiya Party-BJP, Bangladesh Jatiya Party, and

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