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Dengue fight faltering

11 cities do not have entomologists; only 12 districts have such officials

HELEMUL ALAM and TUHIN SHUBHRA ADHIKARY

Eleven of the 12 city corporations across the country don't have any entomologists to help the authorities check mosquito borne diseases, exposing their weakness in combatting dengue that has now become a year-round concern.

Moreover, civil surgeon offices in only 26 districts have approved posts of entomologist, with at least 12 of those remaining vacant as of September 27 this year.

The systemic flaws are further exposed by delays in conducting three periodic surveys -- pre-monsoon, monsoon, and post monsoon -- which are essential to determine mosquito density and guide control measures.

The findings of this year's pre-monsoon survey were published in mid-June after the monsoon had already begun, leaving little time for the authorities concerned to take action. Last year, the health authorities could not conduct the monsoon survey due to a fund crunch and a shortage of manpower.

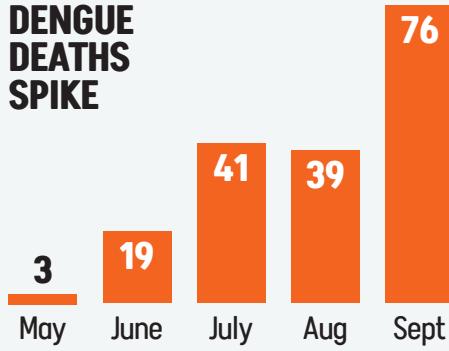
Experts said that even if the authorities manage to complete surveys, most of the recommendations remain unimplemented because of mismanagement, corruption, or a lack of manpower.

All these shortcomings highlight gaps in the authorities' preparation to control dengue that has claimed around 200 lives so far this year with more than 40,000 people hospitalised.

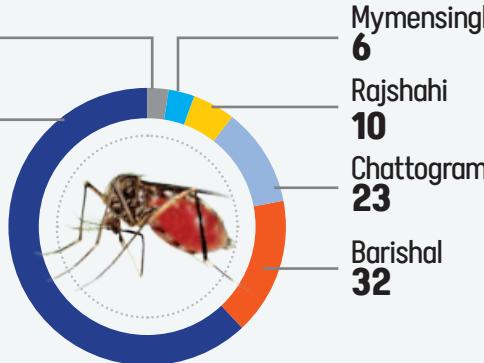
"Weaknesses and mismanagement in mosquito control come to the fore only when outbreaks turn severe and claim dozens of lives. Once the crisis eases, everything returns to its previous state -- until the next crisis emerges," said entomologist Prof GM Saifur Rahman.

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DENGUE DEATHS SPIKE



Khulna 5 Dhaka 124 DIVISION-WISE DEATH



TOTAL DEATH THIS YEAR

200

TOTAL INFECTED

47,832



DENGUE INFECTION

60.6% 39.4%

Experts warned that the outbreak may worsen in October, when cases are expected to peak.

INFECTION KEEPS RISING

May	1,773
June	5,951
July	10,684
Aug	10,496
Sept	15,866

If the authorities truly want to save lives, they must take steps to control mosquitoes systematically, and address the existing shortcomings.

Entomologist

Prof GM Saifur Rahman

September deadliest, Oct peak looms

HELEMUL ALAM

Dengue infections and fatalities continue to rise at an alarming rate, with the death toll reaching 200 and total reported cases climbing to 47,832 as of yesterday.

Experts warned that the outbreak may worsen in October, when cases are expected to peak, before beginning to decline gradually from November. However, they cautioned that infections and deaths are likely to persist well into December and January.

According to the Directorate General of Health Services (DGHS), in September alone, 76 people died from the disease and 15,866 patients were hospitalised -- the highest monthly toll this year.

The number of deaths stood at 39 in August, 41 in July, and 19 in June.

Reported hospitalisations were 10,684 in August, 10,684 in July, and 5,951 in June.

Health experts blame intermittent rainfall, favourable weather conditions, and poor mosquito control measures for creating ideal breeding grounds for Aedes mosquitoes, which transmit dengue, chikungunya, and Zika viruses.

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BCB set for controversial elections

STAFF CORRESPONDENT



The Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) is heading towards a controversial election for board of directors after 16 councillors, including former national captain Tamim Iqbal, withdrew their nominations on Wednesday, alleging government interference.

The election environment, which has been fraught with war of words and writ petitions for the last one month, came to a head when former BCB president Faruque Ahmed filed a writ petition on Tuesday, challenging the inclusion of 15 clubs which were under observation by Anti-Corruption Commission (ACC). The High Court issued a stay order on their councilorship on Tuesday, six days before the polls, scheduled for October 6.

The EC yesterday announced the final list of 33 candidates for 25 directors' posts -- 12 from Dhaka clubs, 10 from districts and divisional sports bodies, one from universities, sports institutions and players' association. The National Sports Council (NSC) will nominate two more directors from the councillors of all three categories.

While withdrawing his candidature, Tamim claimed that many councillors did not want to be part of such an environment anymore.

"It's a way of our protest since we don't want to be any part in this filth," Tamim told reporters at BCB's Election

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Heavy rains to continue countrywide BMD says, FFWC warns of flashfloods in 7 dists

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Heavy to very heavy rainfall is likely to occur across the country for 72 hours starting from 9:00am yesterday, warned the Bangladesh Meteorological Department.

According to the department, under the influence of a well-marked low over the west-central Bay and adjoining areas along with an active monsoon, heavy to very heavy rainfall may occur in Rangpur, Rajshahi, Mymensingh, Dhaka, Khulna, Barishal, Chittogram and Sylhet divisions.

Dhaka recorded the highest rainfall in the country -- 143 millimetres in 24 hours until 6:00pm yesterday -- leaving many parts of the capital waterlogged.

The BMD further cautioned that landslides



Heavy rain inundates a street in the New Market area. Dhaka recorded the country's highest rainfall yesterday, according to the Met office. Several thoroughfares went under water, putting city dwellers in trouble. The photo was taken around 9:30am.

PHOTO: PRABIR DAS

ROHINGYA CRISIS
UN meet renews focus, but yields no breakthrough
\$96m aid only tangible gain

PORIMOL PALMA

The high-level conference on the Rohingya at the UN in New York has been able to draw global attention anew on the crisis that was losing focus amid other global crises, but the level of political commitment required for a lasting solution still remains a big question.

Russia and China, the two big backers of the Myanmar junta, are continuing their support as before. Even the UN Security Council has taken no concrete measure against the country because of opposition from these two veto members.

NEWS ANALYSIS

"When all the states present at the Rohingya conference condemned the Myanmar junta and the Arakan Army, China and Russia spoke for sovereignty and integrity of Myanmar -- they spoke for engaging the Myanmar junta," said Rezaul Karim Chowdhury, chairman of COAST Foundation, who attended the event.

The two countries have major stakes in Myanmar, and it is unthinkable that the Myanmar junta will change unless there is real pressure against it, he said.

The only tangible outcome from the event is the announcement of \$96 million in new funding from the US and the UK -- \$60 million and

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KHAGRACHHARI GIRL
Doctors find 'no signs of rape'
Protesters call the report 'fabricated'

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Khagrachhari

A report prepared by a government medical board in Khagrachhari says that doctors found "no evidence of rape" in tests on a 12-year-old schoolgirl, whose alleged assault triggered fierce protests in the hilly district.

The board, led by obstetrics and gynaecology specialist Joya Chakma of Khagrachhari Modern Sadar Hospital, submitted the report to the district's Civil Surgeon Shaber Ahmed on Tuesday night.

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RELATED STORY ON PAGE 2

NOTICE



We have published a four-page supplement on Bangladesh Business Awards today along with our regular BUSINESS

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