

## Nation to pay tribute to Ahmad Rafique today

BSS, Dhaka

Condolences continued to pour in following the death of Language Movement veteran Ahmad Rafique.

Ahmad Rafique, also a poet, essayist and Rabindra specialist, breathed his last on Thursday night while undergoing treatment at the Intensive Care Unit of BIRDEM Hospital in the city. He was 96.

Chief Adviser Prof Muhammad Yunus has expressed profound shock and sorrow at the death of Language Movement veteran Ahmad Rafique.

In a condolence message yesterday, Yunus said, "Ahmad Rafique was a prominent witness and a fierce voice of our Language Movement. Simultaneously, he was an exceptional poet, essayist, researcher, and a guiding light in Rabindra studies."

Through writing and editing more than a hundred books, Ahmad Rafique enriched Bangla literature, culture, and the history of the Language Movement, he added.

His contributions in the field of Rabindra studies earned him equal respect in both Bengals, the chief adviser said, adding, the Tagore Research

SEE PAGE 9 COL 5



A mother and father break down in tears while speaking to relatives about their child's health, as he suffers from dengue. It was the third consecutive day of blood tests, with his platelet count still low and his body weak. The photo was taken at the DNCC Dedicated Covid-19 Hospital in the capital yesterday.

PHOTO: PRABIR DAS

## YUNUS AT UNGA Press secretary outlines 6 key achievements

UNB, Dhaka

Chief Adviser's Press Secretary Shafiqul Alam yesterday highlighted six major achievements during Chief Adviser Prof Muhammad Yunus' recent tour to the UNGA.

Prof Yunus led Bangladesh's high-level delegation to the 80th United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) in New York last week, where he addressed the international community, held bilateral meetings with world leaders, and outlined Bangladesh's vision for democracy, humanitarian leadership, and future economic cooperation.

He returned home on Thursday morning.

The press secretary shared a summary of Prof Yunus' UNGA tour achievements.

### A MESSAGE OF DEMOCRATIC COMMITMENT

In his address to the General Assembly, Prof Yunus reaffirmed Bangladesh's unwavering commitment to democracy, transparency, and inclusive governance.

Highlighting the government's preparations for free, fair, and participatory elections, he assured the global community that

SEE PAGE 9 COL 7

# Ongoing rains may worsen dengue crisis

## Experts warn of extended dengue peak

HELEMUL ALAM

Ongoing rainfall in October is expected to intensify the risk of dengue, with experts warning the situation may worsen in the coming months.

Last year, dengue peaked in October, remained prominent in November, and began declining in December. Experts fear the current rainfall pattern may lead to a similar or worse trend this year.

According to the Bangladesh Meteorological Department (BMD), light to heavy showers will continue for the next five days.

Between October 5 and 8, most divisions, including Chattogram, Sylhet, Dhaka and Rajshahi, are likely to see light to moderate rain, with some moderately heavy falls.

A BMD warning further stated that heavy to very heavy rainfall is likely in several divisions during the 48 hours from 3:00pm on October 2 under the influence of a deep depression over the Bay.

According to the Directorate General of Health Services (DGHS), dengue claimed at least 575 lives last year, with 1,01,214 hospitalisations.

The monthly breakdown shows 14 deaths and 2,669 cases in July, 30 deaths and 6,521 in August, 87 deaths and 18,097 in September, 135 deaths and 30,879 in October, 173 deaths and 29,652 in November, and 87 deaths and 9,755 in December.

This year so far, 202 people have died and over 48,491 have been hospitalised. DGHS reported 41 deaths and 10,684 cases in July, 39 deaths and 10,496 in August, 75 deaths and 15,866 in September, and four deaths with 886 cases in the first three days of October.

Entomologist GM Saifur Rahman said the recent rains may reverse the declining trend seen in August. "On-and-off rainfall creates breeding grounds for Aedes mosquitoes. Even light showers significantly increase populations," he said.

Mosquito populations expand quickly after rainfall, with a 15 day to one-month growth window, he said, adding, "If Aedes mosquitoes get a week after rain, a new generation emerges. Once matured, they can survive another 22-23 days, remaining infectious throughout that period."

Rahman stressed the need for personal protection measures -- nets, repellents, coils and sprays -- alongside targeted fumigation in hotspot areas.



### RECOMMENDATIONS

Ensure year-round mosquito control programmes

Step up hotspot monitoring and source reduction

Strengthen community awareness and participation

Improve household-level cleanliness and waste management

Use targeted fumigation in high-risk zones

Entomologist Kabirul Bashar of Jahangirnagar University warned that the dengue peak may be prolonged due to continuing rain, urging intensified source reduction, hotspot control and community engagement.

Brig Gen Imru-al-Quais, chief health officer

of Dhaka North City Corporation, said patient lists from DGHS often contain incomplete or misleading addresses, sometimes including patients from outside Dhaka, such as Gazipur or Narayanganj. This, he said, diverts attention from actual hotspots inside the capital.

Spraying insecticide alone cannot control mosquitoes, he noted, stressing waste management and public awareness.

DNCC initiatives include patient data collection, hotspot marking, source-reduction programmes with BRAC, a dengue dashboard with rainfall-based risk models, and advocacy campaigns through imams, schools and volunteers.

According to DNCC, current measures include collecting patient data and marking hotspots, using community surveys, deploying traps, and conducting source-reduction programmes with BRAC volunteers. DNCC has also launched a dengue dashboard showing hotspots, predictive models and rainfall-based risk analysis, alongside a chatbot for symptoms and free testing at 52 urban primary health centres.

Nishat Parvin, chief health officer at DGHS, said their activities include larviciding, adulticiding, and awareness campaigns.

"We spray outside houses, but dengue mosquitoes often breed indoors, in hidden spots or seemingly clean areas. Without household awareness, controlling them is very difficult," she said.

Parvin added that while resources are sufficient, public participation remains weak. "People know what to do but don't always follow through. That's why we've strengthened both large-scale and small-scale campaigns."

She said the most vulnerable areas include parts of Old Dhaka, where abandoned or waterlogged houses harbour breeding grounds.

"Dengue won't disappear, but with year-round programmes, we can keep it under control," she said.

## Child's body recovered after Turag boat capsized Another still missing

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Gazipur

Divers from the fire service yesterday recovered the body of one of the two children who went missing after a boat capsized in the Turag river in Gazipur's Kaliakair upazila on Thursday evening.

The body of Ankita Rani, 2, daughter of Swapan from the Hijaltali area, was recovered around 10:00am, said Abdul Mannan, officer-in-charge of Kaliakair Police Station.

Another child, Tanmoy Moni Das, 7, son of Tapash from the same area, remains missing. A search operation is ongoing to recover his body, said Iftekhar Hossain Raihan, station officer of Kaliakair Fire Service.

The incident occurred on Thursday around 5:30pm during immersion of a Durga idol on the west side of Chapair Bridge.

A small engine-powered boat carrying the children and their families collided with a larger boat and sank. While other passengers managed to swim ashore, Ankita and Tanmoy went missing.

## 22-day ban on hilsa fishing begins



OUR CORRESPONDENT, Patuakhali

The government has imposed a 22-day ban on catching, transporting, storing, selling, and marketing hilsa across the country to ensure safe spawning of the fish during its peak breeding season.

The ban took effect from midnight yesterday and will continue until October 25, according to a notification issued by the Ministry of Fisheries and Livestock on September 24.

In Patuakhali, where around 80,020 fishermen are registered, some 75,043 will receive 25kg of rice each as government assistance during the ban, said the district fisheries office.

To enforce the restriction, the district administration has taken up several initiatives, including awareness campaigns, distribution of leaflets and posters, and loudspeaker announcements at markets, riversides, and coastal areas. Fishermen have been instructed to keep their trawlers and nets away from rivers and estuaries during this period, said Md Kamrul Islam, district fisheries officer.

## 38 rescued from traffickers in Teknaf

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Cox's Bazar

A joint operation by the Bangladesh Coast Guard and Navy rescued 38 people, including women and children, from human traffickers in the remote hills of Baharchhara in Teknaf early yesterday.

Two alleged traffickers were also detained during the raid.

Lieutenant Commander Siam-ul-Haque, media officer of the Coast Guard, said the operation was launched around 2:00am following intelligence reports. During the raid, security forces rescued 18 women, 12 men, and eight children from a hideout.

Traffickers were planning to send them to Malaysia and other Southeast Asian countries by sea, he said. "The victims were being held captive, tortured, and extorted for ransom by the traffickers."

## 'No legal barrier to implementing July Charter'

Says attorney general

UNB, Dhaka

Attorney General Md Asaduzzaman yesterday said there is no legal barrier to implementing the July Charter in line with the decision of the National Consensus Commission.

He made the remark while attending a views-exchange meeting with journalists at Johan Dream Valley Park in Jhenaidah town.

The attorney general also said the government will take decisions regarding officials who were involved in major crimes during the Awami League regime, considering their offences.

Asked whether a neutral election is possible under the current administration, he said the Election Commission is aware of the matter and he believes it will form a neutral administration ahead of the polls.

## AZIZ SUPER MARKET Factions clash over committee, lock market gates

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Most shops at the Aziz Super Market near the capital's Shahbagh remained closed since yesterday afternoon due to tension between two factions over the formation of the Shop Owners' Association Committee.

After Juma prayers yesterday, the market's main gates were found locked, prompting many traders to close their shops and leave. Shahbagh police later arrived and opened the gates.

The Daily Star contacted employees of five different shops -- all confirmed that their stores did not reopen in the afternoon.

"There has been tension between the two groups for some days. The market was closed yesterday [Thursday]. Although it opened today [yesterday], trouble started again at noon. The committee leaders then locked the market gates," one shop employee said.

Khalid Mansur, officer-in-charge of Shahbagh Police Station, told The Daily Star, "One faction is not accepting the committee. This is the source of the conflict."

He said that police went to the spot around 3:00pm and unlocked the gates.

"I have learned that the two factions will hold a meeting tomorrow [today] to resolve the dispute," the OC added.



A woman desperately searches for plastic scraps as the sun sets at the Sylhet City Corporation dumping zone in Parirchak, Dakshin Surma. She scavenges for items to sell and survive. More than 100 men and women from different communities comb such dumping zones from morning till evening to make ends meet.

PHOTO: SHEIKH NASIR