

DHAKA

Dengue taking its toll on little ones

Over 20 children admitted to Mugda hospital daily

HELEMUL ALAM

Eighteen-month-old Tabassum Alo was crying on her mother's lap in the children's dengue ward at Mugda Medical College Hospital yesterday afternoon.

Her mother, Monira Akter Moyna, tried in vain to calm her down. The little girl has been undergoing treatment for dengue fever since Thursday night.

"We admitted our daughter with dengue fever, along with vomiting, diarrhoea, and high fever. She had been suffering from fever since Monday, and her condition deteriorated on Thursday when doctors confirmed dengue," said Moyna, a resident of Khilgaon Goran.

Alo's father, Ali Osman, expressed frustration at the lack of mosquito control drives. "We haven't seen any anti-mosquito campaign since August last year," he said.

Nearby, two-and-a-half-year-old Sumaiya Aysha lay sleeping as IV saline dripped into her arm. Her anxious mother, Amina, watched quietly.

Aysha was admitted on Tuesday after suffering from fever for four days. She also had convulsions,

nausea, and diarrhoea," Amina said.

Nine-year-old Mohammad Sayem was admitted to the same hospital on October 14. His parents were deeply worried -- this was his second bout of dengue in two years.

"He had fever and body pain when we brought him in. He's a little better now, but still not well enough to go home," said his mother, Bithi Akter.

According to Kamrunnahar, senior staff nurse at Mugda's children's dengue ward, the number of young patients is rising sharply.

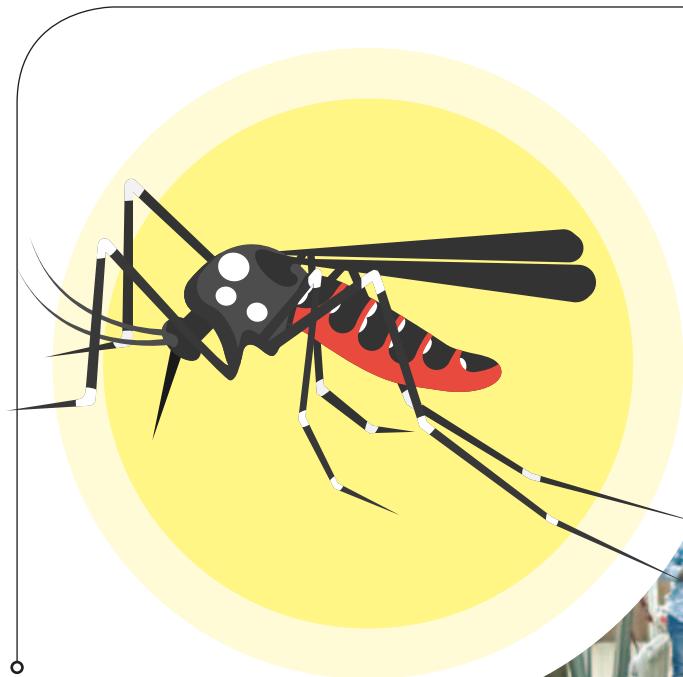
"On average, 20 to 25 children are being admitted to the ward every day. By Friday noon, 22 children had already been admitted," she said.

Children aged from 0-12 years are treated in this ward, while older patients are admitted to the general dengue ward.

According to data from the Directorate General of Health Services (DGHS), 243 dengue patients have died and 58,280 have been hospitalised across the country this year as of yesterday.

Of them, 34 deaths and 2,374 hospitalisations occurred at Mugda Medical College Hospital alone, where 139 patients were still receiving treatment till Friday noon.

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SYMPTOMS

- ⇒ Fever, severe headache
- ⇒ Pain behind eyes
- ⇒ Muscle and joint pain
- ⇒ Nausea, vomiting, swollen glands
- ⇒ Unusual weakness, rash
- ⇒ Abdomen pain, cough, loose motion



A child sleeps in the dengue ward at Mugda Medical College Hospital yesterday afternoon as her worried parents look on.

PHOTO: STAR

KAMINI BHABAN IN SREEMANGAL Once a cultural hub, now a forgotten ruin



PHOTO: STAR

MINTU DESHWARA, Moulvibazar

A 350-year-old zamindar residence in Bangaon village under Sreemangal upazila of Moulvibazar now lies in ruins, its rich history fading into oblivion due to years of neglect and abandonment.

The building, locally known as Kamini Bhawan, was once part of a vibrant feudal estate. It was built in the late 17th century by Kamini Bihari Sen, the eldest son of Kunja Bihari Sen, who arrived in the Balishira Pargana of Moulvibazar from Bangaon in the then Jashore of undivided Bengal around 1675.

Kunja Bihari established and settled in Kunjaban village, named after him. His son Kamini later built a one-storey, three-room residence in Assamese architectural style in a nearby area, which came to be known as Bangaon -- named after their place of origin.

The materials used to build the house, including ornamental

ironwork for the balconies, were sourced from Assam and Kolkata. Kamini Bhawan was not just a residence -- it was the administrative and cultural centre of the estate.

A kachhri ghar (revenue office) was built for tax collection, a charity medical centre provided treatment for locals, and a jalsa ghar hosted cultural events. Performers from Kolkata would entertain guests with music and dance, while a large pond beside the house served the local community with clean water.

However, time and neglect have taken a heavy toll. Much of the structure has been buried under overgrowth and erosion. The pond has been filled in, and the house itself is in decay.

"The house is about 350 years old and holds deep ancestral value for us," said Anupam Sen Babla, a descendant of the zamindar family. "Most of our family has moved abroad. The house is collapsing due to abandonment."

A large banyan tree still stands

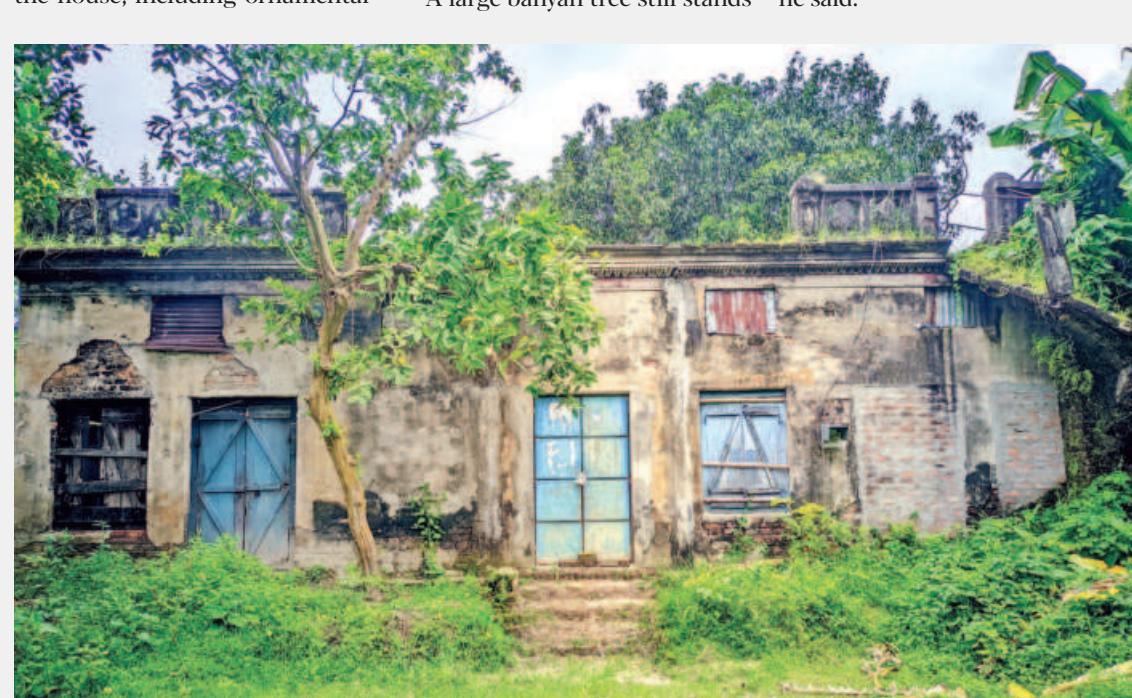
near the house, offering shade and reminding locals of the estate's former glory.

"The zamindar system brought Kamini Sen's family here from Bangaon, now in India's West Bengal," said local social activist Konkan Purkayastha Titu. "The estate was once a symbol of power and culture. Now it is only a ruin."

"This structure reflects the socio-cultural heritage of the region. Losing it would mean losing a part of our identity. The government should take immediate steps to protect it," said Md Ekramul Kabir, headteacher of Kunjaban Government Primary School.

Islam Uddin, Sreemangal upazila nirbahi officer, said necessary measures would be taken to preserve the building.

"I will bring the matter to the attention of the authorities concerned. We will assess the situation and discuss possible steps to preserve and protect this important historical structure," he said.



Include 'July forerunners' in charter Says Moyeen Khan

UNB, Dhaka



BNP Standing Committee member Abdul Moyeen Khan yesterday stressed the need for including the "July forerunners" in the July Charter to make it more meaningful.

In his reaction to the evolving situation over the signing of the Charter, he said the current situation is "completely undesirable".

"It is natural that not everyone will agree on this document. In a country of 18 crore people, it is not realistic to expect that everyone will suddenly agree on everything. If that is the case, we will be heading back to a one-party system like Baksal," the BNP leader said.

He said the charter would only have real significance if those who led the July movement were included in it.

He also questioned why consensus could not be reached on some fundamental issues and why the discussions were expanded beyond the main focus to so many other topics.

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Factory gutted in CEPZ blaze lacked fire safety

Say officials; fire brought under control after 17 hours

DWAIPAYAN BARUA, Ctg

The eight-storey factory building at the Chittagong Export Processing Zone (CEPZ), which was completely destroyed in a massive fire on Thursday afternoon, had structural flaws and lacked a mandatory fire safety plan, according to fire service officials.

Officials said warehouses on several floors were not built following proper rules, which may have delayed firefighting efforts.

Although the building had a fire detection alarm system and extinguishers, they were not adequate.

The blaze was brought under control after more than 17 hours, at 7:25am yesterday, but had not been fully extinguished as of the filing of this report at 6:30pm.

Smoke continued to rise from several parts of the building while firefighters kept spraying water to cool the site.

Md Tazul Islam Chowdhury, director (operations) of Fire Service and Civil Defence, said they brought the fire under control at 7:25am. "But it is yet to be fully extinguished."

Earlier, 17 firefighting units, with assistance from Bangladesh Navy and other forces, worked to bring the

fire under control after it broke out on the seventh floor of the building on Road 5 of CEPZ in Chattogram's South Halishahar around 2:00pm on Thursday.

The seventh floor housed the warehouse of Adam Caps & Textiles, a towel manufacturer and the sixth floor contained the warehouse of Jiehong Medical Products BD Co Ltd, while the rest of the building comprised other sections of both companies.

The building is owned by Adams Caps & Textiles, while Jiehong had rented three floors several years ago.

Factory officials claimed the top two floors housed the warehouses, though fire service and CEPZ officials suggested the warehouses were spread across the top four floors and not built as per proper standards.

Lt Col Tajul said the building was not constructed according to the building code. He noted that two adjoining buildings were erected without sufficient space between them, preventing firefighters from spraying water from one side.

He added that the storehouses were packed with flammable materials, including synthetic fabrics and yarns,

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Country needs to update pneumonia vaccine: experts

Current one no longer provides protection against evolved serotypes, says study

STAR REPORT

The pneumonia vaccine currently used in Bangladesh no longer provides protection against newly evolved pneumonia serotypes, according to a study.

The study was conducted by icddr,b and the Institute of Epidemiology, Disease Control and Research (IEDCR), supported by the US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC).

It analysed data from four public tertiary hospitals to identify *Streptococcus pneumoniae* serotypes currently causing infections among young children.

The study found that most circulating pneumococcal serotypes in Bangladesh are not well covered by the existing PCV-10 vaccine, which has been part of the national Expanded Programme on Immunisation (EPI) since 2015.

While PCV-10 has significantly reduced illnesses and deaths caused by targeted serotypes, researchers noted that new serotypes have emerged, making it necessary to introduce newer generation vaccines.

The findings were presented at a

roundtable on introducing higher-valency pneumococcal conjugate vaccines (PCVs) in Bangladesh, held at icddr,b on October 16, according to a press release.

Dr Md Zakiul Hassan, associate scientist at icddr,b's Infectious Diseases Division, presented the data, which showed that switching to PCV-13, PCV-

The study found that most circulating pneumococcal serotypes in Bangladesh are not well covered by the existing PCV-10 vaccine, which has been part of the national Expanded Programme on Immunisation (EPI) since 2015.

15, or PCV-20 could increase protection to about 17 percent, 19 percent, and 52 percent of currently circulating serotypes, respectively.

Health experts at the discussion emphasised the need to update the vaccine to ensure stronger protection for children.

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Jamaat announces third phase of two-day programmes

STAR REPORT

Bangladesh Jamaat-e-Islami has announced a fresh two-day programme as part of its ongoing simultaneous movement, pressing for five demands including holding the next national election in February based on the "July National Charter".

In a statement issued by the party's central publicity department on Sunday evening, Jamaat Secretary General Mia Golam Porwar announced the new programmes.

The statement also mentioned a new demand -- to include a provision for a referendum on adopting the proportional representation (PR) system in the July Charter.

According to the announcement, the new programmes are: a human chain in Dhaka and all divisional cities on Tuesday, October 14, and similar human chains in all district towns on Wednesday, October 15.

Golam Porwar said in

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