



Clockwise from left, activists hold a torch procession in Shahbagh demanding the release of baul singer Abul Sarkar; artists perform protest songs at a programme in the area; and a similar event takes place at the Central Shaheed Minar with baul singer Aleya Begum, wife of Abul Sarkar, and poet and columnist Farhad Mazhar in attendance. Abul Sarkar was sent to jail in Manikganj on November 20 in a case filed on charges of hurting religious sentiments.



PHOTO: RASHED SHUMON, PALASH KHAN

People no longer want 'old, rotten politics'

Says Jamaat ameer

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Jamaat-e-Islami Ameer Shafiqur Rahman yesterday said people no longer want "old, rotten, and foul politics" and are seeking a change.

"They want to see a 'New Bangladesh'. And a 'New Bangladesh' cannot run on old formulas," he told a rally at the BRP ground in Dhaka's Bhashantek area.

Speaking as chief guest at the event organised in support of SM Khaliduzzaman, Jamaat's nominee for Dhaka 17, Shafiqur said people do not want to see any partisan government in the future. "They want a people's government -- one in which every official prioritises public interest over personal gains."

Referring to the July uprising, he said, "A great deal of blood and lives were sacrificed for change. People hoped fascism would leave this land forever. Sadly, it has not. A section of the fascists may have left, but fascism still remains."

He cited corruption, extortion, land grabbing, disrespect for women and attempts to destabilise

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Families struggle as dengue cases peak in November

HELEMUL ALAM

Twelve-year-old Nuhas and his two and a half-year-old sister Najat are sharing a single bed at the children's ward of Mugda Medical College and Hospital, both diagnosed with dengue.

Their grandmother, Dina, said Nuhas developed a fever on Friday and was treated at a local clinic in Demra. As his condition worsened, he was referred to Mugda Medical College and Hospital and admitted on Tuesday.

"After his admission, Najat also developed a fever and was diagnosed with dengue on Wednesday," Dina said.

According to their mother, Sonia, Nuhas' platelet count fell to 26,000 on Thursday, though his condition has since shown slight improvement. Doctors are still waiting for Najat's test results. The family said they are trying to avoid admitting her unless necessary, as they want to keep her off saline unless required.

A similar ordeal was unfolding for another family from Mugda. Four-year-old Mohammad Bagdad was admitted to the dengue ward on Tuesday. His mother, Samsunnahar, said he had been suffering from fever since Sunday and was diagnosed at Islamia Hospital before being referred to Mugda. "He still has fever and abdominal pain," she said.

Bagdad's two-year-old sister, Kaniz Fatima, has also been running a fever since Monday but has not been admitted. Doctors are treating her on an outpatient basis, Samsunnahar added.

These are not isolated

cases. November recorded the highest number of deaths and hospitalisations from dengue this year, even though overall cases have recently begun to decline.

According to the Directorate General of Health Services (DGHS), 377 people have died from dengue and 93,194 have been hospitalised nationwide so far this year. Of these, 94 deaths occurred in

November, the highest in a single month, surpassing October's 80 deaths.

Hospitalisations also peaked in November with 23,322 admissions, compared to 22,520 in October. Entomologist Prof Kabirul Bashar of Jahangirnagar University said dengue will decrease only slightly in December, with a significant decline unlikely before late January.

"Only the number of patients will slowly decrease," he said, cautioning that the Culex mosquito population is rising and could cause new public health problems by January or February.

"Containers that held water earlier may still contain eggs even if they are dry. These must be disposed of properly. Active breeding sites must be destroyed immediately," Rahman said. He added that authorities have a short window to act. "If preventive measures are implemented now, it may delay the dengue surge that usually comes after the first rains in March or April."

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