



Dengue turns deadlier in October

90 deaths, 28,820 hospitalisations in just 16 days



HELEMUL ALAM

At least 90 dengue patients died and 28,820 were hospitalised in the first 16 days of October, raising concerns over the worsening outbreak.

According to the Directorate General of Health Services, dengue claimed 148 lives in September, 43 in August, 36 in July, 13 in June and one in May. Hospitalisations stood at 43,774 in September, 20,536 in August, 9,206 in July, 20,907 in June and 714 in May.

Health experts blamed delayed hospitalisation, inadequate early diagnosis, the absence of an effective three-tier dengue management system and rising infections for the increasing death toll.

A recent death review by the Institute of Epidemiology, Disease Control and Research, led by its Director Prof Quazi Ahmed Zaki, found that more than one-third of the 119 patients reviewed died within a day of hospital admission.

The review found that 62.5 percent died from dengue shock syndrome, 31.2 percent from expanded dengue syndrome and

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A father holds his dengue-stricken child close as the little one sleeps on his chest at Mugda Medical College Hospital in the capital. At least four dengue patients died while 1,181 others were hospitalised in 24 hours till 8:00am yesterday. PHOTO: **MEHEDI HASAN**



PM urges families to join dengue fight

Asks each household to spend 30-60 minutes cleaning twice a week

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Amid rising dengue cases and deaths, Prime Minister Tarique Rahman has urged every family to spend at least half an hour to an hour twice a week cleaning their homes and surroundings to eliminate mosquito breeding grounds.

"Let each of us, every family, spend at least half an hour to an hour twice a week cleaning the places in and around our homes where dengue mosquitoes may breed," he said in a video message shared on the verified Facebook page of the Prime Minister's Office.

The PM called for collective efforts to combat

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VOTER LIST ROW

Delhi cops detain CJP founder from home

Neha Bora picked up near Jantar Mantar

AGENCIES

Police detained India's 'cockroach' movement founder Abhijeet Dipke and some supporters yesterday, ahead of a protest called by him in capital Delhi's central business district, the latest rally to demand the resignation of India's election chief.

This is the second detention in a week for Dipke. He was earlier detained right after his plane landed in Delhi from Mumbai for a protest against Chief Election Commissioner Gyanesh Kumar over allegations of voter-list manipulation during the Special Intensive Revision (SIR) of electoral rolls.

All India Students' Association (AISA) President Neha Bora, 29 was also detained near Jantar Mantar. A post made on Bora's X

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Now rice adds to consumers' woes

Prices rise by Tk 1-2 per kg amid soaring living costs



An increase of Tk 1 or Tk 2 per kg may not seem significant, but we fear further hikes as we are already struggling to manage our daily expenses.

Momotaz Begum
Resident of Tejkuni Para

SHAHEEN MOLLAH

With prices of essential commodities already soaring, a fresh rise in rice prices has added to the woes of poor and lower-middle-income families struggling to make ends meet.

Rice prices have increased by Tk 1 to Tk 2 per kg over the past week, putting further pressure on household budgets strained by the rising cost of living.

Visits to six kitchen markets in Mirpur-1, Mirpur-11, Kazipara, Shewrapara, Ibrahimpur and Karwan Bazar over the past two days found that rice prices had risen by Tk 1 to Tk 1.50 per kg.

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The papaya paradox

Price plunge brings relief to consumers but losses to growers



SHAHEEN MOLLAH

While most vegetables remain expensive in Dhaka's kitchen markets, green papaya prices have plunged to just Tk 4-10 per kg at the wholesale level, bringing relief to consumers but leaving farmers and traders facing heavy losses.

The sharp fall, driven by increased cultivation and a bumper harvest, has persisted for the past week.

Visits to Mirpur-1, Ibrahimur Market in Mirpur-14, Shewrapara, Kazipara and Karwan Bazar

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Protesters chant slogans during a flag rally organised by the Cockroach Janta Party (CJP), demanding the resignation of India's Chief Election Commissioner Gyanesh Kumar, amid a security presence in New Delhi, India, yesterday. PHOTO: **REUTERS**

INTERVIEW

While Bangladesh women's football has brought the country considerable success and international recognition, girls in some parts of the country continue to face intimidation and discrimination for playing the sport. Recently, pressure and threats from fundamentalist groups forced the cancellation of a women's friendly football match in Derai, a town in Sunamganj district in northeastern Bangladesh, depriving young players of the chance to compete after months of preparation. **Shabana Akter**, *a Grade 10 student and captain of Swapnachura Club, spoke to* **The Daily Star's Anisur Rahman** *about the players' distress, the restrictions they face at home, and their demand for protection and support from the authorities.*

'Why stop us when govt supports women athletes?'

ANISUR RAHMAN

The Daily Star (DS): How did you feel when you heard that the match had been cancelled?

Shabana Akter (SA): We were getting changed into our kits and preparing to go onto the pitch when we heard that the match had been called off. Many of us became very upset and started crying. One player even fainted. We had been preparing for this match with so much excitement for the past two months.

DS: How did you try to comfort your teammates?

SA: We have around 40 to 50 players in our squad, but only 11 can play at a time. I tried to encourage some players, saying, "Look, we won't give up. We have no reason to back down. We will keep trying and moving forward."

Many of the girls already face restrictions at home. Their families sometimes scold them for playing football. After the religious teachers spoke against girls playing football, some girls were even threatened with being thrown out of their homes. Not every family is understanding, so everyone was worried about what might happen next.

DS: As captain, were you scared too?

SA: Yes, all of us were very nervous. But I felt that if I panicked, the other girls would lose hope too. So, I tried not to show my fear and urged them to keep playing and stand up for ourselves.

People said many hurtful things about us for going out to play football. The government is providing recognition and opportunities for women athletes, so why should anyone stop us from playing? If we face these kinds of obstacles, how will girls move forward in sports?

DS: Have you faced similar problems since you started playing football?

SA: Yes. I have been playing sports for ten years, and my family used to say many things to me about it. But they do not say those things anymore because they have come to trust me. I told them, "Look, I want to achieve something big. Encourage me. Playing sports is not a bad thing."

DS: Do you earn anything from these exhibition matches?

SA: No, we do not earn any money from them. We have to collect money from our relatives to organise the matches. There are no ticket sales or other income. In the haor region, girls do not get many chances to play sports. We arrange these matches to keep the girls interested and encourage more of them to play and dream big.

I have also played matches outside the region, including in North Bengal. Sometimes I received a little money, but much of it went towards travel costs. We play purely to fulfil our dreams.

DS: How did you first get into football?

SA: I was in Grade 4 when I first



played football in the Bangamata Primary School Football Tournament. Our coach, Rakib sir, saw me playing and asked if I wanted to continue. We used to play with older girls, but our families often put up obstacles and made us afraid to play.

Many players from our region have gone on to play in the Women's Football League in Dhaka and for the Army and Ansar. But when girls grow a little older, marriage proposals start coming, and their families often marry them off.

DS: What would you like the local

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