

Dengue adds to COVID-hit Bangladesh's health concerns as dozens die

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Dengue patients at Sir Salimullah Medical College Hospital in Dhaka, Bangladesh [File: Mohammad Ponir Hossain/Reuters]

Dhaka, September 4 (RHC)-- Bangladesh has logged nearly 11,000 dengue cases and at least 48 related deaths this year, the government says, underscoring how other viral diseases continue to spread even as the focus remains on the coronavirus pandemic.

The country's Directorate General of Health Services (DGHS) on Thursday said some 330 dengue cases, the highest single-day number, were reported in the last 24 hours, taking the total caseload to 10,981 since January.

Three more deaths from the mosquito-borne disease were recorded in the past day, taking the total to 48, a DGHS release said. Bangladesh reported its first dengue death in early July, with 12 fatalities that month, followed by 30 more deaths in August, the DGHS said. Six people have died this month, it added.

The government data showed some 10,053 cases were reported in the capital Dhaka alone, the sprawling megacity of nearly 20 million people.

But entomologist Kabirul Bashar said the actual number of dengue patients is higher than the government figure as those undergoing treatment at private health facilities are not added to the official tally. He said the number of cases will continue to go up amid a poor government response for combating the disease spread by the Aedes mosquito, which breeds in stagnant water during the monsoon season. A 2019 outbreak of dengue in Bangladesh infected more than 80,000 people, with 67 deaths.

Meanwhile, the average daily caseload of novel coronavirus infections has declined to less than 5,000 for the last couple of weeks, compared with an average daily count of 10,000 in the first half of August.

Bangladesh has reported 1.5 million coronavirus infections and 26,362 deaths since the pandemic began in March last year.

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