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The Daily Star

www.thedailystar.net

REGD. No. DA 781

Vol. XXX No. 133

JAISHTHA 19, 1427 BS

Your Right to Know

SHAWWAL 9, 1441 HJRI

16 PAGES PLUS LIFESTYLE PRICE : Tk12.00

**BANGLADESH
UPDATE**



2,381
New cases in 24hrs



49,534
Total cases



672
Deaths



10,597
Recoveries

**GLOBAL
UPDATE**



374,736
Deaths



6,310,892
Total cases

Containment zones planned

Capital, N'ganj, Gazipur to be designated as red zones; mayors of these 3 cities want total restriction on entry, exit

RED ZONE
Movement will be restricted; all shops, except those selling essentials will be closed.

YELLOW ZONE
Movement, businesses and transport services will continue on "a limited scale" with restrictions.

GREEN ZONE
No restriction on movement of people and vehicles, opening of shops and markets.

PARTHA PRATIM BHATTACHARJEE and WASIM BIN HABIB

The government is likely to put the capital, Narayanganj and Gazipur in the "red zone" with severe restrictions in the wake of rising Covid-19 deaths and infections in the city areas.

The highly affected areas in the cities will be under a total lockdown for a certain period and instructions on health protocol in the zones will be given to prevent further spread of the virus, said sources.

The Chattogram city may also be put in the "red zone" if it sees a steady rise in coronavirus deaths and infections.

This was discussed at a high-profile meeting of government high-ups and the mayors of the three cities yesterday with Health Minister Zahid Maleque in the chair.

It was attended, among others, by Home Minister Asaduzzaman Khan and IGRD Minister Tajul Islam.

The mayors suggested that no one should be allowed to enter and leave the areas in Dhaka, Gazipur and Narayanganj cities for at least 15 days to prevent further spread of the virus, said meeting sources.

The meeting decided to divide all the areas affected by deadly virus into three zones -- red, yellow and green -- based on the severity of infections and death rates.

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Vehicles wait in long queues in front of a traffic signal near Hanif Flyover in the capital's Jatrahari around 2:30pm yesterday, hours after road transport services resumed across the country following over two months of suspension due to the Covid-19 outbreak. Inset, a few commuters jostle as they try to board a bus in the city's Sabujbagh area around 8:30am.

PHOTO: FIROZ AHMED/SK ENAMUL HAQ

Experts warn of darker days ahead

2,381 test positive; 22 die

MAHBUBUR RAHMAN KHAN

Attributing the surge in Covid-19 cases to increased public movement in the capital and elsewhere, experts warn that the country will see darker days ahead if the government fails to ensure physical distancing and make people follow the other health guidelines right away.

"The number of coronavirus cases has shot up due to the relaxation of shutdown before and after Eid-ul-Fitr," said Prof Muzaherul Huq, former adviser (Southeast Asia Region) of the World Health Organization (WHO).

In the last 14 days, the number of people infected with coronavirus has shot up dangerously as people frequently ignored the guidelines, including maintaining physical distancing, he said.

The country has so far recorded 49,534 Covid-19 positive cases and more

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COLLEGE ADMISSION

Students have to wait more

MOHIUDDIN ALAMGIR

The government is in a tight spot over fixing the schedule for enrolling students to HSC and equivalent courses for the next academic session as it fears the admission process may expose a section of students and guardians to Covid-19.

Education boards were scheduled to start the online admission process on May 10, but they could not do so as they were not able to publish the results of this year's Secondary School Certificate (SSC) and equivalent exams.

Officials later expected they would be able to start the admission process on June 6-8 following the announcement of the results on May 31. But they now think it will not be possible for them to launch the process this month.

A top official of Dhaka education board said, "Starting the admission process totally depends on the novel coronavirus situation. We will not be able to launch the admission process this month."

Speaking to The Daily Star, Prof Ziaul Haque, head of the intra-board coordination committee, said they were observing the Covid-19 situation in the country.

"We will conduct the admission process once the situation starts to improve,"

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Watch it closely for first 15 days

Health experts urge govt about situation after reopening, say new measures should be based on the outcome

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Leading health experts yesterday called on the government to be cautious in its measures to ensure health and safety in the aftermath of offices and different sectors reopening amid high numbers of daily confirmed coronavirus cases.

The government should closely monitor the situation for the first 15 days of the reopening and then adopt new measures based on the outcome, they said during a virtual dialogue.

Citizen's Platform for SDGs, Bangladesh organised the dialogue on "post-shutdown health concern".

Yesterday, the Directorate General of Health Services reported 2,381 new Covid-19 positive cases and 22 fatalities in 24 hours. There have so far been 49,532 confirmed Covid-19 cases in the country, and 672 fatalities.

After a countrywide shutdown enforced from March 26, the government announced resumption of all public transport services, and public and private offices on a limited scale from May 31.

However, all educational institutions

will remain closed till June 15, according to a circular issued by the Cabinet Division on May 28.

Addressing the dialogue, Ahmed Mustaque Raza Chowdhury, an adviser to James P Grant School of Public Health, Brac University, said a "zoning method" can be followed as the country reopens.

Applying the method, initially businesses, schools and colleges, shops and mosques can be opened in 10 selected districts and its effectiveness monitored, said Mushtaque, a core group member of the citizen's platform.

Besides, effectiveness of preventive measures like hand washing and sanitisers has to be looked at as well, he said.

"Through this, we will be able to understand where the risk lies and from such lessons we can gradually reopen other districts," he added.

He urged for continuation of rigorous coronavirus tests and said testing facilities were still not evenly available throughout the country.

Abu Jamil Faisal, one of eight members

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BUSINESS

Mobile phone use to be even costlier

Mobile phone users can brace themselves for higher taxes next fiscal year as the government is planning a bigger revenue earning target banking on the sector that sees more than Tk 30,000 crore turnover a year.

The supplementary duty on phone calls, data use, texting and other services may go up by 5 percentage points to 15 per cent in fiscal 2020-21, said a senior official of the finance ministry. Officials of mobile phone operators said additional taxes will compel subscribers to cut down on their mobile phone use.

STORY ON B1

Buses get back on the roads

Operate at half capacity to ensure physical distance among passengers; health guidelines maintained on trains but not on launches

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Road transport services across the country reopened yesterday after more than two months of suspension.

To maintain distance among passengers, most of the transport companies reduced the vehicles' capacity to about 50 percent of normal levels.

Transport workers were seen spraying disinfectants on passengers' hands before they got on the bus. There was hardly anyone without wearing a mask.

People on the trains mostly maintained the health guidelines on the second day of the reopening, but there were large crowds at Sadarghat Launch Terminal in the capital.

The government enforced the countrywide shutdown and travel restrictions on March 26 to combat the spread of coronavirus.

Road transport services reopened yesterday with a government-approved 60 percent hike in fares.

Samdani Khandakar, office secretary at Dhaka Road Transport Owners' Association, said bus services resumed in Dhaka and its adjacent areas maintaining all health guidelines of the government.

"We have given masks and gloves to our drivers and other employees. We hope passengers will maintain the health safety guidelines," he told The Daily Star.

Jaki Hossain, a conductor of Bihongo Paribahan which travels between Pallabi and Sadarghat areas of the capital, said he and his colleagues washed the buses with savlon and bleach on Sunday night.

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First post-shutdown flight has 4 passengers

Biman cancels 2 flights; other carriers see better load factor

RASHIDUL HASAN

Local airlines yesterday saw an underwhelming response on the first day of the resumption of regular passenger flights on three domestic routes, following more than two months of flight suspension, sources at different airlines said.

The volume of passengers was so low that national flag carrier Biman Bangladesh Airlines was forced to cancel two of its flights on the Dhaka-Sylhet and Dhaka-Chattogram routes, Tahera Khandaker, deputy general manager (public relations) of Biman, told The Daily Star.

Following the shutdown enforced to curb the spread of coronavirus, the first post-shutdown flight of the national airliner left Hazrat Shahjalal International Airport (HSIA) for Saidpur at 7:45am with only four passengers on board, she said.

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A tanker truck drives into thousands of demonstrators marching on a highway during a protest against the death in Minneapolis police custody of George Floyd.

PHOTO: REUTERS

KILLING OF UNARMED BLACK MAN

Teargas fired outside White House

Violence rages in US for sixth day; China says unrests show 'chronic disease' of racism

AGENCIES

Police fired tear gas outside the White House late Sunday as anti-racism protestors again took to the streets to voice fury at police brutality, and major US cities were put under curfew to suppress rioting.

With the Trump administration branding instigators of six nights of rioting as domestic terrorists, there were more confrontations between protestors and police and fresh outbreaks of looting.

Violent clashes erupted repeatedly in a small park next to the White House, with authorities using tear gas, pepper spray and flash bang grenades to disperse crowds who lit several large fires and damaged property.

Local US leaders appealed to citizens to give constructive outlet to their rage over the death of an unarmed black man in Minneapolis, while night-time curfews were imposed in cities including Washington, Los Angeles and Houston.

One closely watched protest was outside the state capital in Minneapolis' twin city of St. Paul, where several thousand people gathered before marching down a highway.

"We have black sons, black brothers, black friends, we don't want them to die. We are tired of this happening, this generation is not having it, we are tired of oppression," said Muna Abdi, a 31-year-old black woman who joined the protest.

Hundreds of police and National Guard troops were deployed ahead of the protest.

At one point, some of the protestors who had reached a bridge were forced to scramble for cover when a truck drove

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