

**FOUR PUBLIC UNIVERSITIES
STRUGGLING WITH
SEMESTER SYSTEM**
No timely exam results
SEE PAGE 12

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Your Right to Know

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**BANGLADESH
UPDATE**



2,735
New cases in 24hrs



68,504
Total cases



930
Deaths



14,507
Recoveries



**GLOBAL
UPDATE**



407,309
Deaths



7,142,021
Total cases

CRISIS OF OXYGEN CYLINDERS

Demand sky high, prices too

SHAHEEN MOLLAH and MUNTAKIM SAAD

Faruk Mia came to Dhaka on Saturday, all the way from Narsingdi, to buy an oxygen cylinder for his 65-year-old ailing father as it could not be managed in his district.

He found that only one shop at the BMA medical equipment market in Topkhana still had a few in the stock. But the price was sky high.

"Now it's Tk 35,000.

It was Tk 16,000 a

week ago, and Tk

11,000 a few months

back," a salesman of

Alfa Surgical store told

Faruk about 1,400-litre

cylinders.

Faruk had Tk 18,000

in his pocket. He called

home, asking for more

money through mobile phone transaction

but failed to arrange the amount, and went

back without a cylinder.

On Friday, the family took his father, an

asthma patient, to a government hospital in

Narsingdi for Covid-19 test as his breathing

problem had become severe.

This was when a doctor said, "No matter

what the test result is, a cylinder must be



ready as a precaution."

Like Faruk, many are looking for oxygen cylinders desperately while most of the public hospitals across the country, including those dedicated for Covid-19 treatment, lack a central oxygen supply.

The hospitals without a central oxygen supply use cylinders, in many cases inter-connected large cylinders, as critical Covid-19 patients need oxygen supports.

Besides, a section of affluent people is reportedly buying cylinders just in case someone in the family tests coronavirus positive and suffers breathing problems. 'D E M A N D SKYROCKETING'

Visiting the BMA market on Saturday, these correspondents found customers being turned away as the cylinders were almost out of stock.

A salesman at Alfa Surgical said the demand for cylinder has been high for the last one month. But since the last week, the "demand is skyrocketing".

SEE PAGE 2 COL 3



A farmer trying to salvage paddy in a field inundated by rainwater in Sheikh Para area of Rangpur Sadar upazila yesterday. Rain damaged boro paddy on vast swaths of land in and around the area causing losses to farmers.

PHOTO: KONGKON KARMAKER

COVID-19 SITUATION

We're among 10 countries with surges

2,735 more infected, 42 die

MAHBUBUR RAHMAN KHAN

Ten countries of South Asia, Middle East and Latin America have seen a sharp rise in Covid-19 cases over the last couple of weeks, according to World Health Organization data.

Coincidentally, in the past few months, the trend of a rise in cases were almost similar in eight of those countries -- Bangladesh, India and Pakistan of South Asia; Brazil, Peru, Chile and Mexico of Latin America, and Qatar of Middle East.

The two other Middle Eastern Countries -- Saudi Arabia and Iran -- are experiencing a second wave of positive cases after a gap.

In Bangladesh, a total of 68,504 people has so far been officially recorded to be Covid-19 positive, while 2,735 patients were diagnosed over the last 24 hours, according to the Directorate General of Health Services (DGHS).

The new patients were diagnosed after 12,944 samples were tested over the period.

Followed by Qatar, Bangladesh now ranks 20th among countries with huge numbers of Covid-19 cases.

SEE PAGE 2 COL 1

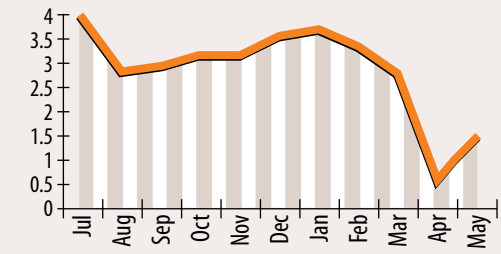
EAST RAJABAZAR TRIAL LOCKDOWN FROM MIDNIGHT

Exports' rally has begun

Experts see hope after 40-year-low in April

EXPORTS RECEIPTS SO FAR THIS FISCAL YEAR
(in \$b)

SOURCE: EPB



REFAYET ULLAH MIRDHA

A glimmer of hope just appeared for the bruised and battered economy: exports seem to be looking up.

After crashing to a 40-year-old low in April, export receipts almost trebled to \$1.46 billion last month, according to data from the Export Promotion Bureau, which was released yesterday.

Although May's receipts are down 61.57 percent from a year earlier, it is still a decent figure seeing that much of the global economy were still in some state of an induced coma last month.

"So we can say that export will grow in the near future as the major importing countries are slowly opening up their economies," said Ahsan H Mansur, executive director of the Policy Research Institute.

But the export receipts will not reach its previous place this year, he said. Last fiscal year, exports had brought home \$40.54 billion, emboldening the government to set a 12.23 percent higher target for this year.

SEE PAGE 2 COL 1

AL leader sued for importing subpar masks

Charges include forgery

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Directorate General of Drug Administration (DGDA) has filed a case against the owner of Elan Corporation for importing "substandard" KN-95 masks by showing "fake documents".

Aminul Islam Amin, deputy publicity affair secretary of ruling Awami League, is the owner of the company. He, however, claimed one of his friends "who imported the masks using his import license is liable for this".

In another case filed by Tejgaon Industrial Police under the Special Powers Act, Tazul Islam of Dhaka's Hazaribagh and his driver were also sued for importing substandard masks using Elan Corporation's licence.

"We [DGDA] filed a case with Banani Police Station on May 29 over submitting fake documents. Later, police also filed a case under the Special Powers Act," Md Ruhul Amin, director of the DGDA, told The Daily Star yesterday.

The DGDA brought allegations under sections 468, 471 and 198 of the penal code. Nur E Azam Mia, officer-in-charge of Banani Police Station, said the drug

SEE PAGE 2 COL 1

BUDGET FOR HEALTH MINISTRY

No big rise for inefficiency

REJAUL KARIM BYRON and MOHIUDDIN ALAMGIR

The health ministry will not see a significant rise in allocation in the upcoming budget amid Covid-19 pandemic mainly due to its lack of capacity to utilise funds, say planning ministry officials.

The ministry has failed to complete one-third of the development projects under the Annual Development Programme (ADP) within the deadline, meaning those have to be approved afresh. Besides, many of the projects will require additional funds, they point out.

There have been expectations that the size of allocation and the number of projects in the health sector will go up significantly in the next fiscal year, as the country is facing an unprecedented challenge from coronavirus pandemic that has exposed the vulnerabilities of the healthcare system.

With Covid-19 infections on the rise, a lack of Intensive Care Unit (ICU) beds and a shortage of oxygen in most of the hospitals have become a matter of concern.

The government recently took two coronavirus-related projects involving Tk 2,492 crore funded by the World Bank and the Asian Development Bank. The projects, approved by the Ecne last week, have been included in the ADP for the next fiscal year.

Against this backdrop, Finance Minister AHM Mustafa Kamal is likely to allocate Tk 27,600 crore for the health ministry in the upcoming budget to be unveiled in parliament on June 11, said officials of finance and planning ministries.

This means the allocation for the ministry will increase by 7.25 percent from outgoing fiscal year's allocation of Tk 25,733 crore.

The allocation includes the health ministry's ADP budget of Tk 13,033 crore, which is 6.25 percent higher than that in the outgoing fiscal year.

SEE PAGE 2 COL 6

Bangladesh asks Kuwait why its MP arrested

DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT

Bangladesh has written to Kuwait seeking to know why lawmaker Mohammad Shahid Islam, also known as Kazi Papul, has been arrested.

"We have written to Kuwait's foreign ministry to learn the details of why Shahid Islam MP has been arrested," Bangladesh ambassador to Kuwait, SM Abul Kalam, told The Daily Star yesterday.

A source in Kuwait said the Gulf country's Criminal Investigation Department handed the independent MP from Luxmipur-2 to the general prosecution, which sent the arrestee to jail.

Asked if the government would take any step for Shahid's bail and provide him with legal support, Foreign Minister AK Abdul Momen said any

Bangladeshi arrested abroad would get consular services from the Bangladesh government.

"Getting consular services is their right,"

SEE PAGE 10 COL 4



Leaning on her mother's shoulder, cancer patient Nazneen Akhtar dozes off while waiting to be tested for Covid-19 at the capital's Mugda General Hospital around 6:00am yesterday. Nazneen is scheduled to have a chemotherapy at a cancer hospital in Mohakhali on Friday, but her doctor told her she must bring in the test reports that day. Nazneen managed to give sample for the test later in the day with help from some journalists.

PHOTO: ANISUR RAHMAN

Faridpur town AL gen secy held

His brother, a local journo, among 8 others arrested for attack on district unit president's house

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Faridpur

Police arrested nine people, including a ruling Awami League leader and a journalist, on Sunday night on charge of attacking the house of Faridpur AL president.

Sazzad Hossain Barkat, general secretary of Faridpur town unit AL, and his younger brother Imtiaz Hossain Rubel, president of Faridpur Press Club, are among the arrestees.

Rubel is also the editor of a local newspaper -- Dainik Bhorer Protasha.

Other arrestees are: Mahfuzur Rahman Mamun, a councillor of Faridpur municipality, Narayan Chakraborti, president of ward-16 unit AL, and AL activists Rezaul Karim, Yeasmin Sultana Borna Mandal, Enamul Islam Jony, Amio Sarkar, and Zahid Khan.

The nine were produced before a Faridpur court yesterday. The court placed Barkat, Rubel, Mamun, and Rezaul on a five-day remand each and sent the five others to jail.

Police claimed they recovered three pistols and 10 bullets from the possession of Barkat, Rubel, and Rezaul.

Two more pistols, two shotguns, 91 more bullets, 180 cartridges, six bottles of liquor, 65 yaba tablets, Tk 29 lakh, \$3,000, 98,000 Indian rupees, and five passports, were recovered from the houses of Barkat and Rubel. Besides, 1,200 sacks of government rice, each containing 50kg, were seized from the garage of their construction firm office, according to the law enforcers.

SEE PAGE 2 COL 6