

STAND-OFF AT INDIA-CHINA BORDER

3 Indian troops killed in brawl
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BANGLADESH UPDATE



3,862
New cases in 24hrs



94,481
Total cases



1,262
Deaths



36,264
Recoveries



GLOBAL UPDATE



440,471
Deaths



8,167,465
Total cases

Caught in Shahid's web of deceit

Deportees from Kuwait describe how they were defrauded by Laxmipur MP's manpower agency

MOHAMMAD AL-MASUM MOLLA

With eyes full of hope, a group of Bangladeshis reached Kuwait about two years ago. They made it to the oil-rich Gulf country after spending everything they had.

Some of them took loans from relatives and neighbours while some sold the only piece of their ancestral land. They paid hefty sums to a Bangladeshi manpower agency, owned by Laxmipur lawmaker Mohammad Shahid Islam, to pursue their dream of making a fortune on foreign soil.

But soon after they landed at the Kuwait International Airport, they were left in total dismay. They found they would not be getting the wages they were promised in Bangladesh. Besides, they would have to work many extra hours every day. Having no other option, they decided not to raise any objection.

But their struggle was not over yet. They lost their jobs after a few months and then started working on extremely low wages to survive.

Many of them were working as day labourers at the very airport they landed two years ago hoping to change their days. After the pandemic struck suspending flight operations, they again became jobless.



Alim



Sohag

Their employers later took them to an area in the desert, where they were hiding when MP Shahid, also known as Kazi Papul, got arrested by the Criminal Investigation Department of Kuwait on charges of human trafficking and money laundering last week.

Twelve of the Bangladeshis were nabbed by the Kuwaiti police. Later, they were asked to give deposition in an investigation against Shahid, with promises that they would be compensated and sent back home.

They assisted the police and were deported subsequently.

They came back almost empty-handed.

The Daily Star spoke to four such returnees yesterday and learnt how they were deceived all along.

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Denied treatment by at least four hospitals and clinics, five-year-old Shaon lies dead on a gurney at Chattogram Medical College Hospital yesterday. A three-wheeler hit the child while he was playing along a road near his home in the city's Steel Mills area. Shaon's grandfather wails on the floor while his father tries to calm him. The child died after around 15 minutes of reaching the public hospital.

PHOTO: RAJIB RAIHAN

TREATMENT AT HOSPITALS SC stays all but 3 HC directives

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Supreme Court yesterday stayed all but three High Court observations and directives that concern ensuring treatment for patients at all government and private hospitals across the country irrespective of whether or not they are infected with coronavirus.

Chamber judge of the Appellate Division of the SC Justice Md Nuruzzaman passed the order following a petition filed by the government, seeking stay on the HC orders and observations delivered on Monday.

The three HC directives that the apex court upheld are -- submission of a report by the health ministry and the Directorate General of Health Services (DGHS) by June 30 on whether the directives issued by the health ministry to public and private hospitals on May 11 and 24 have been implemented properly; the formation of a monitoring cell to ensure that private hospitals provide proper treatment to patients and that they do not charge extra or unreasonable fees; and fixing and displaying of retail and refilling prices of oxygen cylinders at outlets and shops so that the customers are not charged extra.

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Doubts grow over coronavirus peak

Health officials' predictions appear to be off the mark; country sees record 53 deaths, 3,862 new cases in a day

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

With the country moving closer to the 100,000-mark of Covid-19 cases, healthcare experts are yet to know when the outbreak will reach its peak.

Health officials predicting the course of the pandemic earlier indicated that the outbreak would likely reach its peak by the end of May, only to shift to mid-June, after which there would be a decline in infections.

But the prediction did not match the reality in terms of infection rate. Every day, the country is experiencing an explosion of cases and rising number deaths.

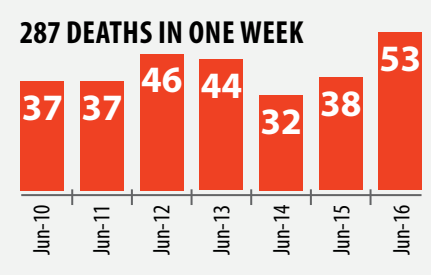
The country's tally of confirmed Covid-19 cases has inched closer to 100,000 as health authorities reported a record 3,862 fresh cases in the last 24 hours till yesterday afternoon.

The total number of infections now stands at 94,481.

In the same period, 53 people have died from Covid-19, said the Directorate General of Health Services (DGHS). This is the highest number of Covid-19 deaths recorded in a day so far in the country.

The death toll is currently at 1,262.

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Neighbourhood-based lockdowns still days away

Dhaka city corporations waiting for maps specifying areas

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Two city corporations of Dhaka are awaiting maps specifying the areas where lockdown will be imposed from the authorities concerned to stem the transmission of Covid-19.

They said it would take a few more days to get the maps, and two to three more days are also needed after getting those to make necessary preparations.

"We have sought the maps from the authorities concerned before enforcing the lockdown. After getting these, it will take 48 to 72 hours more for implementing the decision in the specific areas," Dhaka South City Corporation Mayor Sheikh Fazole Noor Taposh told journalists at the Nagar Bhaban after a coordination meeting on the issue yesterday.

Taposh said even if they get a specific map of a particular area by tomorrow, they will take 48 to 72 hours to put the area under lockdown as they will have to prepare for this.

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SEVERE COVID-19 CASES

Steroid proves first life-saving drug

REUTERS, London

Dexamethasone, a cheap and widely used steroid, has become the first drug shown to be able to save lives among Covid-19 patients in what scientists hailed as a "major breakthrough".

Results of trials announced yesterday showed dexamethasone, which is used to reduce inflammation in other diseases, reduced death rates by around a third among the most severely ill Covid-19 patients admitted to hospital.

The results suggest the drug should immediately become standard care in patients with severe cases of the pandemic disease, said the researchers who led the trials.

"This is a result that shows that if patients who have Covid-19 and are on ventilators or are on oxygen are given dexamethasone, it will save lives, and it will do so at a remarkably low cost," said Martin Landray, an Oxford University professor co-leading the trial, known as the RECOVERY trial.

"It's going to be very hard for any drug really to replace this, given that for less than 50 pounds (\$63.26), you can treat eight patients and save a life," he told reporters in an online briefing.

His co-lead investigator, Peter Horby, said dexamethasone was "the only drug that's so far shown to reduce mortality - and it reduces it significantly." "It is a major breakthrough," he said. "Dexamethasone is inexpensive, on the shelf, and can be used immediately to save lives worldwide."

There are currently no approved treatments or vaccines for Covid-19, the disease caused by the new coronavirus which has killed more than 431,000 globally.

SAVING COUNTLESS LIVES
The RECOVERY trial compared outcomes of around 2,100 patients who were randomly assigned to get the steroid, with those of around 4,300 patients who did not get it.

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GONOSHASTHAYA KIT BSMMU again delays test results

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The submission of the report on Gonoshasthaya Kendra's rapid test kit for Covid-19 has been postponed for the third time in a row by BSMMU officials, frustrating the scientists who developed the kit well before most other countries.

"It is taking some more time to complete the whole work. The committee concerned is trying to submit the report to the drug administration by June 17 or 18," said Prof Dr Kanak Kanti Barua, vice chancellor of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujib Medical University, while speaking to The Daily Star yesterday.

BSMMU, which was chosen by the Gonoshasthaya Kendra for the performance trial of the GR Rapid Dot Blot, was first scheduled to submit the report by June 10. Later, the date was rescheduled to June 16, which has again been postponed.

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Cancer patient Amena Begum, 35, left, and her mother lie on the floor near the entrance to National Institute of Cancer Research and Hospital in the city's Mohakhali yesterday. After reaching Dhaka from Tangail's Elenga on June 8, she managed to give a sample for Covid-19 test four days later. She is yet to get the result, which is required for her cancer treatment. They have been staying on the hospital floor unable to afford accommodation.

PHOTO: ANISUR RAHMAN

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SHER-E-BANGLA HOSPITAL ICU needs ATTENTION

Lack of skilled manpower, necessary equipment making Covid-19 treatments difficult

SUSHANTA GHOSH

The shortage of trained manpower at intensive care units (ICUs) compromises proper treatment of Covid-19 patients, among others, at Sher-e-Bangla Medical College Hospital (SBMCH) in Barishal.

In March, 150 regular beds and 18 ICU beds for Covid-19 patients were added to SBMCH, the only institution in Barishal division with ICU facilities.

Previously, the hospital had 1,000 regular and 10 ICU beds. Doctors also say the lack of necessary life-saving equipment is also making the fight against the coronavirus pandemic harder.

From March to June 13, a total of 954 patients were admitted at the coronavirus unit; 453 were released. A total of 52 patients have died; of them 17 were Covid-19 positive and the rest had coronavirus-like symptoms.

According to SBMCH Director Bakir Hossain, a 10-bed ICU needs at least one professor, two associate professors, three assistant professors, four consultants, 10 medical officers and 30 nurses.

But SBMCH only has one assistant professor, six medical officers and 16 nurses for its ICUs with a total of 28 beds, he said.

Only 96 of the 224 posts for doctors in the hospital are filled. Out of the hospital's 19 departments, only one has a department head. Besides, there are only five technologists for sample collection, he added.