




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

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PHOTO: RASHED SHUMON

Men from Al-Markazul Islami, a social service organisation that has dedicated itself to burying Covid-19 victims for free, on the way to perform the last rites and burial of another dead. While even families and relatives are afraid to approach the bodies due to fear of infection, employees of Al-Markazul Islami have been working selflessly to ensure proper burial of the dead. So far, they have performed the last rites and burials for 680 suspected and confirmed Covid-19 victims. The photo was taken yesterday at Rayerbazar burial grounds.

13 judges infected with Covid-19

26 court staffers also have the disease

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Thirteen judges and 26 staff of lower courts across the country have so far been infected with Covid-19.

Four lower court judges with Covid-19 symptoms are receiving treatment in isolation, Supreme Court sources said yesterday.

District and Sessions Judge of Netrokona Shahjahan Kabir and Chief Judicial Magistrate of Munshiganj Begum Rokeya Rahman, who were the first among the judges to have been infected with the virus, have already recovered and joined their offices.

Ferdous Ahmed, judge of Women and Children Repression Prevention Tribunal in Lalmonirhat, has been admitted to the ICU at Combined Military Hospital, sources said, adding that he has been given plasma therapy.

Begum Shamim Ahmed, Judge of Special Judge Court-8 of Dhaka, has been

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Shutdown stopped their lessons

Children of chars with no access to electricity or TV deprived of remote learning

MOSTAFA SHABUI, Bogura

Schoolchildren in char areas do not even have the chance of accessing the government's remote education programme because their families don't own televisions or have electricity.

After educational institutions countrywide were indefinitely closed in mid-March due to the coronavirus outbreak, the government introduced televised learning from March 29 for classes six through 10 -- later expanding it to include primary students as well.

Char students, however, are deprived of their daily lessons as entire chars on the Padma, Jamuna, Teesta and other major rivers are not under electricity coverage. Televisions, therefore, are rare in these communities.

This correspondent visited five chars on the Jamuna river last month, none of which had electricity. Only several families on each had solar panels, which they use to charge mobile phones and power fans and TVs for those who have them.

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FIRST YEAR OF BANGLADESH BANGABANDHU'S NATION-BUILDING CHALLENGES

Bangladesh gets IMF membership



A five-member Egyptian delegation calls on Bangabandhu at his official residence on June 17, 1972.

June 17, 1972

SHAMSUDDOZA SAJEN

EGYPTIAN DELEGATION CALLS ON BANGABANDHU

A five-member Egyptian delegation today calls on Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman at his official residence. They hand over a letter from Egyptian President Anwar Sadat to the Bangladesh prime minister.

Later, referring to the question on Egypt's recognition of Bangladesh, Mohammad Tawfiq Obeida, leader of the delegation, tells journalists that Bangladesh is now a reality. He expresses his confidence in the leadership of Bangabandhu and says that under his able leadership Bangladesh will be a happy and prosperous country.

BANGLADESH BECOMES A MEMBER OF THE IMF

Bangladesh today becomes a member of the International

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People rush for tickets as int'l flights resume

Many wait in queue for hours but get no Qatar tickets

RASHIDUL HASAN

Many people were seen waiting in a long queue at a Qatar Airways ticket counter in the city's Tejgaon area yesterday, the first day of resumption of international flight operations to and from Dhaka after nearly three months.

Several of them said they couldn't buy any ticket after waiting at the counter for hours.

Qatar Airways and Biman Bangladesh Airlines are the two airlines primarily granted permission by the Civil Aviation Authority of Bangladesh (CAAB) to operate international flights on a limited scale.

"I came to the counter at 7:00am and waited

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Bolivia villagers destroy 5G masts over virus fears



AFP, La Paz

Multiple telecoms masts were destroyed Monday by Bolivian villagers who feared that 5G technology could transmit coronavirus, media reports said.

The South American country does not yet have 5G wireless infrastructure, which has been linked to the pandemic in viral posts on social media.

According to the conspiracy theory, electromagnetic radiation causes the symptoms of Covid-19, not a virus -- an idea debunked by scientists.

Four communications towers were destroyed in Yapacani, near the city of Santa Cruz, local police chief Franklin Villazon was cited as saying by the newspaper El Deber.

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13 die after showing Covid-19 symptoms

STAR REPORT

At least 13 people died with Covid-19 symptoms in six districts since Monday.

In Patuakhali, two people, aged between 60 and 65, died with coronavirus-like symptoms while undergoing treatment at the isolation unit of Patuakhali 250-bed Hospital.

They were admitted to the hospital with Covid-19 symptoms a few days ago, said Kamruzzaman, resident medical officer

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PRAYER TIMING JUNE 17

Fajr Zohr Asr Maghrib Esha
AZAN 4:05 12:45 5:00 6:50 8:15
JAMAAT 4:40 1:15 5:15 6:55 8:45

SOURCE: ISLAMIC FOUNDATION

UP member shot dead in Bandarban

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Bandarban

A union parishad member died of bullet wounds at Chattogram Medical College Hospital late on Monday night, hours after unidentified criminals shot him at his Bandarban home.

The dead is Chain Chahla Marma, 35, a member of Kuhlalong Union Parishad under Bandarban Sadar upazila.

Sanu Prue Marma, chairman of the union parishad, said a group of criminals went to Chain Chahla's home around 7:00pm on Monday and shot him. The criminals soon left the scene.

Locals rushed the UP member to Bandarban Sadar Hospital. He was later shifted to Chattogram Medical College Hospital where he breathed his last, said the chairman.

Shahidul Islam, officer-in-charge of Bandarban Sadar Police Station, said they were trying to identify the criminals.



Nikhil Talukdar, George Floyd -- faces of two victims of police brutality from two sides of the world are graffitied side by side on the Dhaka University campus. Nikhil, a Gopalganj farmer, was allegedly assaulted by an assistant sub-inspector and later died in a Dhaka hospital. George Floyd was murdered by a police officer in Minneapolis last month. The photo was taken yesterday.

PHOTO: PRABIR DAS

Virus clusters in China growing

NZ reports first new cases in almost a month as infections surge in LatAm, S Asia

AGENCIES

China's capital was facing an "extremely severe" coronavirus threat yesterday, as New Zealand reported its first new infections in almost a month and fears mounted that the deadly pandemic is still far from under control.

More than eight million people have now been infected with the virus worldwide since it first emerged in China late last year -- with more than 437,000 deaths -- and the tolls are still surging in Latin America and South Asia.

Even without an effective treatment, caseloads and death rates have declined across Europe.

The UK, however, is still struggling with the world's third largest outbreak and New Zealand said the two new cases reported there were recent arrivals from Britain.

The South Pacific nation had declared last week that it had ended community transmission of the virus.

European countries are eager to drop coronavirus restrictions to save the imminent summer tourist season, but Spain warned that it may quarantine British visitors should the UK persist with its plan to quarantine all overseas arrivals.

And the latest reminder of the threat came from China, which had largely brought its outbreak under control, as 27 new infections were reported in Beijing, where a new cluster linked to a wholesale food market has sparked mass testing and neighbourhood lockdowns.

"The epidemic situation in the capital is extremely severe," Beijing city spokesman Xu Hejian warned, as the number of confirmed infections soared to 106.

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