

DOCUMENTARY ON MIGRANT WORKERS
 Malaysia grills six Al Jazeera journalists
 SEE PAGE 5

The Daily Star

www.thedailystar.net

Your Right to Know



REGD. NO. DA 781 | Vol. XXX No. 172 | ASHAR 27, 1427 BS | ZILQAD 19, 1441 HURI | 12 PAGES PRICE : Tk12.00

BANGLADESH UPDATE	2,949 New cases in 24hrs	1,78,443 Total cases	2,275 Deaths	86,406 Recoveries	GLOBAL UPDATE	559,379 Deaths	12,490,771 Total cases
--------------------------	------------------------------------	--------------------------------	------------------------	-----------------------------	----------------------	--------------------------	----------------------------------

PRIVATE CLINICS, DIAGNOSTIC CENTRES

Two-thirds run without licence

Only 5,000 out of 15,000 renewed licences from DGHS; lax monitoring, lack of action by authorities let others run 'illegally'

MOHAMMAD AL-MASUM MOLLA

Two thirds of the country's over 15,000 private clinics and diagnostic centres have been running without any valid licence since 2018 facing almost no consequences. The Directorate General of Health Services (DGHS) did nothing but send notices to these facilities and make public announcements in newspapers, officials admitted. The renewal of licences has been slow since 2018, when the DGHS began "digitalising" the process, said Aminul Hasan, director of hospitals and clinics at the DGHS. "Of about 15,000 private clinics and diagnostic centres, some 5,000 have proper licences... They did not come forward for renewal of the licences," he told The Daily Star yesterday. Clinics and diagnostic centres need environmental clearance, employee details, city corporation clearance, tax certificates and other documents to get their licence renewed every year, he explained.

"Most of these facilities could not get their licence updated because they failed to provide those documents." Meanwhile, the DGHS is toothless when it comes to taking corrective measures. The facilities are governed under The Medical Practice and Private Clinics and Laboratories (Regulation) Ordinance, 1982. "According to this ordinance, we cannot do anything, except declare them illegal. Those who do not have renewed licences are illegal," Aminul said. "We regularly send them notices and publish announcements in the newspapers." Manpower shortage is also a major issue, he said. There are three officials to look after the licences of around 5,000 clinics and diagnostic centres in Dhaka. The issue of licences is being discussed widely after it became known last week that the DGHS signed an agreement with Regent Hospital while being fully aware that the hospital's licence had expired in 2014. A mobile court of Rab raided the hospital's Uttara branch on July 7 and recovered

SEE PAGE 2 COL 1



Denied entry to Italy, Bangladeshi passengers of a Qatar Airways flight walk out of the capital's Hazrat Shahjalal International Airport around 5:30am yesterday. The European country on Thursday imposed a restriction on the entry of all flights and passengers from Bangladesh till October 5 after "a significant number" of Bangladeshis on board of a special Biman flight tested positive for Covid-19 in Rome on July 6. Around 146 returnees were quarantined in Hajj Camp in the city's Ashkona.

PHOTO: ANISUR RAHMAN

A severe blow to foreign students

Latest US policy worries Bangladeshi, other foreign students as uncertainty looms over their study in the US

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Bangladeshi students pursuing higher education in the United States face uncertainty over their future due to a new policy of the US administration on not allowing foreign students in the aftermath of Covid-19. On Monday, the US Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) in a statement said it would not allow foreign students to remain in the country if the courses they take this fall were entirely online. ICE said the decision came as an effort to reduce coronavirus transmission in the country. Talking to The Daily Star, several Bangladeshi students studying at different colleges and universities in the US called the decision "inhumane, demeaning and mindless." "The decision is nothing but inhumane and cruel to international students studying in the US," said Nuhan B Abid, a student at Dickinson College. He said he was still waiting for further instructions from his university about how the ruling specifically affects them. Since his university is conducting in-person classes for the fall semester, he is not directly affected. "However, this would still depend on my course load, as some of my classes might still be remote," he said. The ICE in the statement said, "Nonimmigrant F-1 and M-1 students attending schools operating entirely online may not take a full online course load and remain in the United States." "Active students currently in the United States enrolled in such programs

RELATED STORY ON PAGE 12

SEE PAGE 4 COL 2

Cops yet to track down Shahed

Home boss says he'll be brought to justice

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Regent Hospital owner Mohammad Shahed was at large till last night, four days after a mobile court sealed off the hospital in the capital's Uttara on charges of issuing several thousand fake Covid-19 test reports. Multiple Rab teams are working to arrest him, Lt Col Ashique Billah, director of the force's legal and media wing, told The Daily Star. "We hope we will be able to catch him soon." Asked whether Shahed was under their watch, the Rab official said they were yet to trace him. Replying to a query, a top Rab official said Shahed could not flee the country. Immigration police have been asked to remain alert, he said. Briefing reporters at his residence yesterday, Home Minister Asaduzzaman Khan said Shahed would not be forgiven



SEE PAGE 2 COL 3

Half of dist admins ignore govt order

A good initiative for transparency disregarded

MAHBUUB RAHMAN KHAN

The deputy commissioners of nearly half of the country's 64 districts continue disregarding the government's directive to upload information on allocation and disbursement of relief and financial aid on their respective websites. The disaster management and relief ministry has long been asking the DCs to publish the information on the district web portals to ensure transparency and accountability. But going through the web portals of all districts until July 7, The Daily Star found only 30 of them have information related to relief allocation and distribution. Experts say showing such disregard leaves a room for corruption and irregularities to creep into the government's relief distribution activities, already tainted by reports of misappropriation of rice and other aids, meant for distribution among the poor during the Covid-19 pandemic. "This also shows how appropriate government decisions often remain

ineffective and public interest is undermined," said Transparency International Bangladesh Executive Director Iftekharuzzaman. Questions may be raised if those who have not complied with the directive have vested interest in non-disclosure of the information and hence are among beneficiaries of lack of transparency, he told The Daily Star. Interestingly, some DC portals were found to have uploaded information about donations made by local political leaders and businessmen. Take Shariatpur district for an example. The government allocated about 2,248 tonnes of rice and Tk 1.49 crore in phases till June 4 for those whose life and livelihoods have been affected by the pandemic. While making the allocation, the DC was asked to upload information on the website about the amount of relief the district received from the government and about the amount distributed among upazilas.

SEE PAGE 2 COL 3



Sahara to be laid to rest today

She passed away at a Thai hospital Thursday night

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Sahara Khatun was a key figure among those who led the Awami League during difficult times and who remained by the side of party chief Sheikh Hasina through thick and thin for decades. The former home minister and a presidium member of Awami League, who died at a hospital in Thailand on Thursday night, will be buried at the

SEE PAGE 2 COL 6

No scope to become complacent

Say experts amid fall in cases; 37 die, 2,949 infected in a day

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Though the number of new Covid-19 cases dropped last week compared to the week before, experts say there is no room for complacency as the rate of infection remained almost static. They said the number declined thanks to the decreased number of tests. According to sources, 25,917 positive cases were recorded between June 27 and July 3 after testing samples of 1,20,406 people, meaning the average infection rate in that week was 21.52 percent. The test number was reduced to 1,00,925 between July 4 and yesterday, of which 22,052 tested positive, taking the weekly average infection rate to 21.84 percent. Recalling the spike in coronavirus cases during the last eid festival, experts

SEE PAGE 2 COL 1



Workers of Latif Bawany Jute Mills in the city's Demra loading their household belongings on to a pick-up as they prepare to leave the area yesterday, nine days after the government shut down production of 25 state-run jute mills, including Latif Bawany. Inset, workers staging a protest demanding payment of their dues.

PHOTO: ANISUR RAHMAN



BD WORKERS IN ITALY 15,000 stranded at home, face uncertain future

RASHIDUL HASAN and JAMIL MAHMUD

After several months of wait in Bangladesh, expatriate worker Enamur Rahim was scheduled to fly back to Italy next week. He has been stranded since March as regular air communications remained suspended from March 16 to June 15 amid the coronavirus pandemic. But the Italy government's fresh decision to put restrictions on entry of all flights or passengers from Bangladesh till October 5 came as a bolt from the blue for Enamur. "If I cannot return to my workplace within the next 15 days, my visa will be expired and my job there at a private company will be at stake," Enamur said, adding, "It seems my whole plan turned upside down." Italy made the decision on Thursday after several Bangladeshi passengers were found Covid-19 positive upon their landing to that country recently. The decision has put the fate of several thousand Bangladeshi expatriates in Italy, who are currently in Bangladesh, in further uncertainty. According to Association of Travel Agents of Bangladesh (ATAB), around 12,000 to 15,000 Bangladeshi expatriate workers in Italy are waiting for their travel to the country at present. An official at Bangladesh embassy in Rome said after several Bangladeshis were found Covid-19 positive, locals in Italy, especially in capital Rome, have started treating Bangladeshis in a "different way".

SEE PAGE 2 COL 3