



# Cumilla not doing well

Covid cases, deaths rising alarmingly

KHALID BIN NAZRUL

The coronavirus situation in Cumilla is getting worse day by day.

The first Covid-19 patient in the district was detected on April 8, and by May 1, the number of cases rose to 80.

Between May 1 and June 1, the total increase in the number of Covid-19 patients was 940.

From June 1 to July 1, the number of cases rose by 2,542. In the next 15 days, more than a thousand new cases were added to the tally.

According to the website of the Institute of Epidemiology, Disease Control and Research, based on total cases as of July 13, Cumilla is the fourth worst affected district in the country after Dhaka, Chattogram and Narayanganj.

Cumilla's Civil Surgeon Dr Md Neyatuzzaman claimed that all preventive steps were taken, yet community transmission just exploded in the district with 17 upazilas.

"At first, the intensity of infection was high in the upazilas but now Cumilla city is the worst affected," he said, hoping that the situation will improve in red zones as lockdown has been imposed in four ward areas.

As of yesterday, Cumilla city had 1,227 coronavirus cases out of the district's total of 4,698.

CUMILLA DISTRICT			
NUMBER OF POSITIVE CASES		NUMBER OF DEATHS	
80	MAY 1	0	
1,020	JUNE 1	28	
3,562	JULY 1	100	
4,698	JULY 15	124	

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Underprivileged children living at the city's Suhrawardy Udyan are delighted with the burflowers they picked for themselves. Like many impoverished children across the globe, they have nothing to protect themselves from the horrors of the Covid-19 pandemic and yet are able to find immense joy in the little things. The photo was taken yesterday.

PHOTO: FIROZ AHMED

INTERVIEW TO MEDIA

## Four BRTC bus drivers suspended

TUHN SHUBHRA ADHIKARY

Bangladesh Road Transport Corporation (BRTC) has suspended four of its drivers for giving interviews to the electronic media about their long pending arrears.

The chairman of the state-owned corporation issued the suspension order on July 1, but the drivers received the letters on July 11.

On Tuesday, a corporation official interrogated the four at a BRTC Bus Depot in the capital.

All four drivers had been working at the capital's Joar Sahara BRTC Bus Depot on April 21 when they gave the interviews. But two of them were transferred to Bagura and Dinajpur BRTC bus depots last month allegedly for the same reason.

The Daily Star has obtained a copy of the suspension order.

In the letter, BRTC Chairman Ehsan-E-Elahi said they gave "false and

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## Pandemic stalls planned workers migration

Over 85,000 Bangladeshi workers can't go abroad to work

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The pandemic has either delayed or stalled the process of sending of 85,405 workers to different labour-receiving countries, Bangladesh Association of International Recruiting Agencies said yesterday.

Of them, 30,422 workers are waiting for visas, 22,987 received the visas and completed all procedures but could not get flights, while another 19,198 received visas only, Baira said during a virtual views-exchange meeting with the media.

Some 2,816 work visas had expired and flights of another 3,078 workers had been cancelled.

Process of 6,904 workers obtaining visas remains stalled for various reasons, said the country's apex trade body for overseas recruitment which organised the meeting on the pandemic to find ways forward.

Baira Secretary General Shameem Ahmed Chowdhury Noman said the data was from only 328 out of the over 1,200 member agencies of Baira.

"Information from the other agencies could not be obtained because offices of most of them remained closed due to the pandemic," he said.

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## FIRST YEAR OF BANGLADESH BANGABANDHU'S NATION-BUILDING CHALLENGES

### Freedom of press assured



July 16, 1972

SHAMSUDDOZA SAJEN

#### STICK TO ETHICS, MUJIB SAYS TO JOURNALISTS

Prime Minister Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman today assures that his government would not curb the freedom of the press provided the press sticks to its ethics and act responsibly keeping in view the national interest. Inaugurating the Annual General Meeting of the Dhaka Union of Journalists at the Jatiya Press Club, Bangabandhu says as a democracy, one of the four state principles, presupposes adherence to a set of principles so the press is supposed to follow a set of principles. He asserts that press in Bangladesh enjoys maximum freedom because the government believes in democracy and the freedom of speech. Nobody can justifiably say that his government has interfered in the affairs of the press. He urges

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## Over 25pc samples test positive

3,533 cases detected, 33 more die

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Bangladesh registered its highest positivity rate yesterday, 25.23 percent.

At least 3,533 people tested positive for Covid-19 after 14,002 samples were tested in 24 hours until 8:00am yesterday.

The tests were carried out in 79 labs across the country.

Experts said, rise in positivity rate indicates the transmission is rising in many parts of the country, especially outside the major hotspots like Dhaka and Narayanganj.

Between July 5 and July 13 (Monday), the day-on-day positivity rate rose from 19.57 to 24.87 percent but decreased to 23.51 on Tuesday.

"The rising trend in the positivity rate indicates the transmission is rising and probably, it is outside

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## Humanoid clerk helps to cut red tape in Russia



REUTERS, Moscow

A human-like robot designed to look and act like a female clerk has started providing services to the public at a government office in Siberia.

The humanoid, with long blond hair and brown eyes, is serving customers in Perm, a city 1,100 km (680 miles) east of Moscow.

So far it only helps with issuing certificates to testify that people have a clean criminal record and no record of drug use, documents required in Russia to complete various legal transactions.

The robot has been designed to look like an average Russian woman, the company behind

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UNITED HOSPITAL FIRE

## HC orders it to pay Tk 30 lakh to each victim's family

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The High Court yesterday directed the United Hospital authorities to pay Tk 30 lakh to each of the four victims' families who were killed in a fire at its isolation unit on May 27.

The hospital authorities have been directed to pay the money as an initial payment in 15 days of receiving the copy of the order.

The bench of Justice M Enayetur Rahim came up with the directive after he heard virtually five writ petitions filed on behalf of the victims' families, seeking compensation from the hospital authorities.

Niaz Mohammad Mahboob, who moved one of the writ petitions, told The Daily Star that the family of Minor Hossain, one of the five victims who

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## INT'L STUDENTS US drops its plan to revoke visas

REUTERS, NEW YORK/Washington

In a stunning reversal of policy, the Trump administration on Tuesday abandoned a plan that would have forced out tens of thousands of foreign students following widespread condemnation of the move and pressure from colleges and major businesses.

US officials announced last week that international students at schools that had moved to online-only classes due to the coronavirus pandemic would have to leave the country if they were unable to transfer to a college with

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### PRAYER TIMING JULY 16

Fazr	Zohr	Asr	Maghrib	Esha
AZAN 4:15	12:45	5:00	6:54	8:15
JAMAT 4:50	1:15	5:15	6:58	8:45

SOURCE: ISLAMIC FOUNDATION



People standing in floodwaters, some loading boats on which they live now with necessities they have salvaged from their inundated homes. The water of the Jamuna in Bogura's Sariakandi upazila has been flowing 121cm above the danger level. In this second round of flash floods, around 80,000 people of the district are left stranded.

PHOTO: MOSTAFA SHABUJ

FLOOD-HIT PEOPLE

## Relief hard to come by amid pandemic

STAR REPORT

The volume of relief and food aid distributed by individuals and private organisations among the flood victims has significantly reduced this year.

The poor response from individuals and private organisations might have caused for coronavirus, said locals in the flood-hit areas.

Many individuals and business institutions have been making less profit and incurring losses due to the pandemic. Thus, they were less interested in distributing relief, they added.

Also, a large number of affluent people do not want to go out of their houses to minimise the risk of being infected with Covid-19, they further added.

Meanwhile, at least 11 rivers across the country were flowing above the danger level yesterday.

At this time when thousands of people remained marooned in northern and northeastern regions, fresh areas in districts adjacent to the capital were feared to be inundated.

In Lalmonirhat and Kurigram, no Non-Government Organisation (NGO) and individual was seen in the flood affected areas.

Sadek Ali, 66, a flood victim at Sardob village in Kurigram Sadar upazila, said individuals and NGOs previously offered them help with dry food, candle, fire box, soap, saline, lamp, and kerosene oil.

"None of them came forward to help us this year," he said.

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