



ZIDANE HAILED AS REAL MADRID WIN 34TH LA LIGA TITLE, MESSI LEFT FRUSTRATED  
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## SCHOOL CLOSURE AMID PANDEMIC

## Dropout rise a major concern

Govt, edn experts fear thousands of students may drop out of schools; it may also lead to rise in child marriage, child labour

MOHIUDDIN ALAMGIR

The ongoing closure of schools due to the coronavirus pandemic is increasing chances that thousands of marginalised students across the country might have to drop out and engage in child labour, warn government documents and educationists.

Among those students, girls are more likely to discontinue studies, which can also lead to child marriages, they said.

Last week, a Save the Children report also warned that almost 10 million children across the world may never return to school after the pandemic.

The report said children in 12 countries are at extremely high risk of dropping out of school forever. In another 28 countries, including Bangladesh, children are at moderate or high risk of dropout. "Girls are at increased exposure to gender-based violence and risk of child marriage," the report added.

There are 1.05 crore students in

secondary schools across the country. Among them, 54 percent are girls. At the primary level, 51 percent of 1.73 crore students are girls.

Speaking on the issue, educationists said checking the dropout and child marriage rates would be a massive task for the government.

They called for some immediate steps, including building awareness on the issue, strengthening monitoring, and ensuring ceaseless stipend programmes, to tackle the situation.

"We all know that the rates of dropout and child marriage will certainly go up in the coronavirus fallout. It will be a challenge for the government to keep the rates at a minimum level," said Campaign for Popular Education (Campe) Executive Director Rasheda K Choudhury.

## WARNINGS

The Directorate of Primary Education (DPE) finalised its stakeholder engagement

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Sitting in a school van, Md Monir runs his makeshift shop on a road in the capital's Kakrail area. The 50-year-old van driver, who used to transport schoolchildren, has been operating the small business since late March when he lost his source of income following the closure of a nearby school due to the Covid-19 pandemic. He now has a meager daily income of Tk150-200 to support his four-member family.

PHOTO: PRABIR DAS

BANGLADESH UPDATE



3,034

New cases in 24hrs



1,99,357

Total cases



2,547

Deaths



1,08,725

Recoveries

GLOBAL UPDATE



591,157

Deaths



13,841,890

Total cases

### Covid cases close to 2 lakh mark

51 more die

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

As the total number of Covid-19 cases in the country is set to cross 2 lakh milestone today, record shows, it has taken only four weeks to cross the second one lakh mark.

It took over 14 weeks since the detection of first case on March 08 to reach one lakh mark. On June 18, the total of number of coronavirus cases was 102,292.

Between June 18 and July 17, 97,065 more cases were recorded.

During yesterday's briefing Dr Nasima Sultana, additional director general (administration) of the Directorate General of Health Services (DGHS), said the total number of case till yesterday stood at 1,99,357 with newly detected 3,034 cases in 24-hours.

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## HEALTH RESEARCH AT UNIVERSITIES

## Knowledge UNUTILISED

Fund shortage, under-equipped lab key obstacles

MD SHAHNAWAZ KHAN CHANDAN

Hundreds of biological science and technology graduates of the country cannot apply their specialised knowledge in practical settings due to the lack of well-equipped laboratories and funding.

Existing government policies also do not reinforce scientific research on viruses and other pathogens, immunology, vaccine development and biotechnology.

A postgraduate student of Dhaka University's microbiology department, wishing anonymity, said for a research project he wanted to study dengue virus at DU's BSL-2 laboratory, a well-equipped laboratory of the country.

"However, one of my professors said, 'Do you want to kill us all? Our laboratory is not suitable for working with these viruses.' So, I had to abandon that project."

Prof Muhammad Manjurul Karim of DU's microbiology department, said, "The BLS-2 laboratories in the university are not fit for research on highly contagious live

viruses such as Ebola, dengue or Covid-19. For that, we need BSL-3 or 4 laboratories."

He asserted that their curriculum is designed in a way that graduates can both detect a virus and develop vaccines.

"Our extensive courses on virology include structure and replication process of virus, infectious behaviour of virus, host-virus interaction, genetic morphology, mutational behaviour, bio-informatics and genomics."

Though DU's microbiology department can conduct in-silico analysis for vaccine design, they don't have the lab set-up to actually do the task, he added.

According to the University Grants Commission, at least 19 public and four private universities currently offer graduate or postgraduate courses on subjects including biotechnology, genetic engineering, microbiology, biochemistry and molecular biology.

"Most of the contractors, who build the university structures, don't know how to

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### Boy dies by 'suicide' after cops 'pick up' mother, sister

Sub-inspector closed

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A teenage boy allegedly died by suicide hours after police assaulted and picked up his mother and sister in Agrabad area of Chattogram yesterday.

Police recovered the body of Salman Islam Maruf, 18, hanging from the ceiling at his home in the morning.

Sub-inspector Helal Uddin of Double Mooring Police Station whose team picked up his mother and sister was closed to Dampara Police Line yesterday in connection with the incident.

According to the University Grants Commission, at least 19 public and four private universities currently offer graduate or postgraduate courses on subjects including biotechnology, genetic engineering, microbiology, biochemistry and molecular biology.

Locals said Maruf beat up a young man - who introduced himself as a police informant -

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### Three shot dead in clash over supremacy

Another beaten to death by mob after the killings in Khulna city

DIPANKAR ROY, Khulna

Three villagers were killed and seven others injured after a local Awami League leader and his two brothers allegedly opened fire on them at Moshiali village of Atra-Gilatla Eastern Gate area in Khulna city on Thursday night.

The shooting took place around 8:30pm over leadership of a local madrasa management committee.

Attacker Zakaria Sheikh was suspended last night from the committee Khan Zahan Ali Thana Awami League.

Angry locals then beat to death a close associate of Zakaria Sheikh.

The men shot dead were Mohammad Nazrul Islam, 45, Golam Rosul, 30, and Saiful Islam, 27.

Nazrul Islam and Golam Rosul died at the scene while Saiful Islam died at Khulna Medical College Hospital.

The man killed by the mob was Jihad Hossain, 38. He also died at the hospital.

The feuding parties are members of a clan.

Locals said, Zakaria, former co-publicity secretary of Khan Zahan Ali area Awami League, and his brothers detained a villager named Mojibor Sheikh and handed him to police on Thursday evening alleging that the latter possessed illegal firearms.

The incident angered locals and about 50 people then

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PHOTO ON PAGE 12

## FAHIM MURDER

### His personal assistant arrested

Reports US media

AGENCIES

The personal assistant of Fahim Saleh, co-founder of ride-sharing venture Pathao, was arrested yesterday in the murder of the 33-year-old tech entrepreneur in his Manhattan apartment, New York's news media reported.

Saleh's body was found dismembered and decapitated in his luxury condo on Tuesday, New York police said.

The suspect, identified as Tyrese Devon Haspil, 21, is expected to be charged in the murder, several media outlets reported, including the New York Times, NBC's New York TV station, the New York Daily News and the New York Post.

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### Prof Emajuddin passes away

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Renowned political scientist and former vice chancellor of Dhaka University Prof Emajuddin Ahmed died at a hospital in the capital early yesterday.

The eminent educationist, known as a pro-BNP intellectual, was 87.

He fell sick at midnight and was taken to LabAid Hospital in Dhanmondi where he breathed his last around 7:30am. He had been suffering from complications associated with old-age.

Prof Emajuddin left behind four children and a host of relatives and well-wishers to mourn his death.

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A sample collector takes a nap in a booth at the capital's Mugda General Hospital yesterday as there is nobody around to give samples for Covid-19 testing. Staffers at the hospital said only 15 people collected tokens till noon, although 150 were available for the day. A very few turned up there to give samples in the last few days. Inset, a man sits in the almost empty waiting area before giving samples.

PHOTO: ANISUR RAHMAN

## COVID-19 HOSPITALS

### Some may halt services for a lack of patients

MOHAMMAD AL-MASUM MOLLA

While the number of infections and deaths from Covid-19 continues to rise in the county, the health directorate mulls over suspending operations of some hospitals dedicated to treating coronavirus patients due to a "lack of patients".

The Directorate General of Health Services has planned to initially suspend operations of some hospitals in the capital and later on outside the city, said sources at DGHS.

An announcement to this end is likely to be made next week. However, the Covid-19 dedicated hospitals would resume offering services to general patients once they are relieved of their special duties.

Speaking to The Daily Star on condition of anonymity, a top DGHS official said, "Some of the hospitals either have no patients or have a very few, but their total manpower remains deployed. It is a waste of resources. So we are planning to suspend the activities of some of the Covid-19 dedicated hospitals."

Experts, however, said it was too early for the authorities to make such a plan as neither the rate of infection nor that of death has declined.

They suggested the government take steps to build confidence among the people about getting treatment in hospitals without any hassle.

Prof Be-Nazir Ahmed, former director of disease control at the health ministry, said the government should not suspend the activities of the hospitals. It should motivate patients to go to hospitals which would ultimately cut the number of deaths, he added.

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