

NAVALNY POISONED
Germany says the Putin critic was poisoned with Novichok chemical nerve agent, demands answers from Moscow
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Your Right to Know

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**BANGLADESH
UPDATE**



2,582
New cases in 24hrs



3,17,528
Total cases



4,351
Deaths



2,11,016
Recoveries

**GLOBAL
UPDATE**



863,136
Deaths



26,008,509
Total cases

LIFTING OF RESTRICTIONS

Untimely, risky

Govt statistics show number of hospitalised, critical patients on rise; experts say social distancing not possible in public transports

COVID-19: NOW AND A MONTH AGO



| PATIENTS | 2-AUGUST | 1-SEPTEMBER |
|-----------------------------|----------|-------------|
| Hospitalised (general beds) | 3,739 | 3,749 |
| At ICUs | 283 | 300 |
| Positivity rate | 24.05% | 15.97% |

TUHIN SHUBHRA ADHIKARY

The numbers of Covid-19 patients at the hospitals and those needing treatment at Intensive Care Units have increased over the last one month, suggesting that there is still a long way to go to bring the pandemic under control.

At least 4,022 Covid-19 patients were admitted at hospitals on August 2. Of them, some 283 in critical conditions were being treated at the Intensive Care Units (ICU).

One month down the line, when things appear to be returning to normalcy, the number of hospitalised patients was 4,049; and 300 of them were in ICUs on Tuesday.

Although there is no sign of the pandemic abating anytime soon, the government has lifted all restrictions on public movement and activities which were imposed to

contain the spread of coronavirus.

The much-talked-about implementation of the containment efforts -- marking hotspots as red zones, imposing lockdown and maintaining social distancing -- have already fizzled out even before the government officially lifted the restrictions on Tuesday.

Health experts maintain that it cannot be said that the outbreak has come under control until the positivity rate falls below 5 percent, and a temporary trend of decline in the positivity rate might stumble through the lifting of restrictions.

"I don't understand why the government took the decision. Why should let people know the logic behind such a move," noted virologist Prof Nazrul Islam told The Daily Star.

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Halting traffic, motorcyclists go across the capital's busy Airport road just so they don't have to take the designated U-turn nearby. Such reckless and selfish acts often cause accidents claiming lives. The photo was taken yesterday.

PHOTO: PRABIR DAS

Covid tests go up, so do cases

35 die, 2,582 test positive in a day

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

As the number of Covid-19 tests increased in 24 hours till 8:30am yesterday compared to the previous 24-hour period, the number of coronavirus cases also went up in the country.

During the 24-hour period till 8:30am yesterday, a total of 2,582 new novel coronavirus cases were reported after testing 15,204 samples. The infection rate was 16.98 percent, according to a press release of the Directorate General of Health Services (DGHS).

Another 35 people died from Covid-19 across the country during the same period. With them, the total number of deaths from the virus rose to 4,351 with a death rate of 1.37 percent.

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Health watchdog in deep slumber

No meeting in last 5 months!

RASHIDUL HASAN and TUHIN SHUBHRA ADHIKARY

As the country is confronted with an unprecedented health emergency caused by the pandemic and multiple scams hitting the sector, the parliamentary watchdog concerned seems to be in a deep slumber.

The parliamentary standing committee on the health ministry did not hold a single meeting in the last five months when the novel coronavirus gradually gained its footing in the country, leaving the public healthcare services overstretched.

More than 4,300 people have died and over three lakh got infected since the first Covid-19 cases were reported on March 8. The infection curve is getting higher every day with no sign of relief in sight.

In these trying times, the role of the Jatiya Sangsad body, which has plenary powers to review works relating to the ministry, and inquire into any activity or irregularity, is all but depressing, say experts.

According to the rules of JS procedure, each standing committee shall meet at least once a month, but the committee in question did not hold any meeting since March 24.

In fact, the JS body met only six times in the last 19 months after it was constituted in January last year, its members told The Daily Star.

The case with the other 49 parliamentary standing committees of the current JS is similar.

No meeting of any of the committees took place in April and May; only one meeting was held in June and four in July, shows the parliament website.

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HIGH COURT RULING

Hindu widows to have right on husbands' land

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The High Court yesterday ruled that Hindu widows will have the rights to both agricultural and non-agricultural lands that belonged to their husbands.

They will also get the right to sell the lands for legal necessities during their lifetime, the HC observed.

Interpreting the Hindu Women's Right to Properties Act, a judgment of Indian Federal Court in 1941, and Adaption Law of 1972, the court said no separation has been made between the agricultural and non-agricultural lands in Bangladesh, and so Hindu widows have rights to the lands of their husbands.

The HC bench of Justice Md Miftah Uddin Choudhury came up with the verdict following a civil

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AMAN FARMING

Recurring flood ruins a season

DAE now suggesting going for late variety, winter crop

PINAKI ROY and MAHBUB KHAN

Prolonged and multiple monsoon floods have disrupted cultivation of Aman paddy, which provides around 36 percent of total rice production in the country.

This is the period when farmers remain busy taking care of their Aman paddy every year but they are mostly sitting idle this time as a vast area of agricultural land is still submerged.

Traditionally, August 15 is considered the deadline for planting Aman. But this year, cropland in many areas is still under water and farmers could not prepare their seedbeds. Floods destroyed seedbeds or submerged paddy fields where Aman saplings were planted.

The Department of Agricultural Extension (DAE) is now suggesting farmers go for a late variety of Aman or cultivate winter crops after water recedes.

Delowar Jahan, a farmer of Ghior in Manikganj, said he prepared a seedbed but could not plant Aman as water inundated his field for the second time this year.

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AL decides to come out of Covid hiatus

PARTHA PRATIM BHATTACHARJEE

After a lull of organisational activities for about five months amid the Covid-19 outbreak, the ruling Awami League has decided to revive the activities on a limited scale following health safety guidelines.

The decision came at a meeting of the party's secretary-level leaders yesterday at its headquarters on Bangabandhu Avenue in the capital, with AL General Secretary Obaidul Quader in the chair. The party has already conveyed the decision to its grassroots.

Speaking at the meeting, Quader asked party leaders to submit by this month the draft lists of full-fledged committees of those units whose councils were held but the full committees were not named.

He also asked the secretary-level leaders to submit names of members for sub-committees by the middle of this month. There would be 35 members for each sub-committee, the AL leader informed the meeting.

Sources said during the discussion on the sub-committee, party joint general secretaries Mahbubul Alam Hanif and Bahauddin Nasim told the meeting that no

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Three workers killed in fuel tank explosion

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

Three people were killed as an oil tanker exploded at the mechanical workshop of Incontrade Container Depot in Chattogram's Patenga area yesterday.

The dead are Muktar, 20, Newaz, 30, and Arman, 25, all employees of Incontrade Limited.

Besides, three more people -- Amir Hossain, 35, Jobayer Hossain, 30, and Rabiul, 38 -- sustained burn injuries.

They were admitted to Chattogram Medical College Hospital (CMCH).

According to officials, the blast occurred around 11:30am when the workers were welding a diesel tanker.

Azizul Islam, assistant director at Chattogram Headquarter of Fire Service and Civil Defense, said the tanker went off as fuel was left inside it when the workers were welding.

On information, two units of firefighters rushed to the spot, doused the flare, and rescued the injured.

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Police officers examine the charred remains of a semi-truck which caught on fire yesterday, killing three workers who were welding its fuel tank, at Incontrade Container Depot in Patenga area of Chattogram.

PHOTO: RAJIB RAIHAN

BORDER FLARE-UP WITH CHINA

India secures its east after Ladakh clashes

Rajnath Singh leaves for Russia to attend key meet

AGENCIES

India has moved troops to its eastern stretch of border with China since clashes erupted between the nuclear-armed rivals on the western part of their border in the Himalayas in June, a government official said.

The June clash in the Ladakh region, in the western part of their border, was the worst violence between the Asian giants in decades and there has been little sign of a reduction in tension, with more military action in the past week.

The movement of troops to the eastern district of Anjaw, in Arunachal Pradesh state, which China also claims, raises the prospect of a wider face-off though both government and military officials in India ruled out any imminent confrontation.

"The military presence has surely increased, but as far as incursions are concerned, there are no verified reports as such," said Ayushi Sudan, Anjaw's chief civil servant, adding that several Indian army battalions were stationed there.

"There has been an increase in troop deployment since the Galwan incident, and even prior to that we'd started," she told Reuters by telephone, referring to the June clash in which 20 Indian soldiers were killed.

Arunachal Pradesh, which China calls South Tibet, was at the centre of a full-scale border war between India and

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