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Your Right to Know

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"These allegations may be ill motivated and I don't think there is any ground for the allegations."
ELECTION COMMISSIONER BRIG GEN (RETD) SHAHADAT HOSSAIN
CHOWDHURY ON EMINENT CITIZENS' DEMAND FOR JUDICIAL PROBE INTO EC



"I vaccinated Santa Claus myself. I measured his level of immunity, and he is good to go."
TOP US INFECTIOUS DISEASES EXPERT ANTHONY FAUCI TELLS CHILDREN HE VACCINATED SANTA



"Russia Russia Russia is the priority chant when anything happens."
TRUMP PLAYS DOWN RUSSIAN ROLE IN US CYBERATTACK

Food security still not for all

BBS survey shows a section of urban households goes to bed hungry; food security situation grimmer for low-income people surveyed in Dhaka, Ctg

REJAU KARIM BYRON and WASIM BIN HABIB

Although Bangladesh achieved food security and improved access to food, eight percent of the households where the urban poor live still go to sleep with empty stomachs, reveals a government survey.

The first-ever study of its kind also found people of around 12 percent of the poor urban households had no food in their house.

The Urban Socioeconomic Assessment Survey (USAS) 2019 was conducted by the Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics from December 8 to 26 last year.

There was not enough food at over 21 percent of the households surveyed and 20.64 percent of the respondents could not eat what they preferred, said the survey released in the last week of November.

The survey, covering 2,150 households in city corporation areas across the country, does not reflect the impact of the pandemic, and thereby raises more concerns over the country's food security because the coronavirus restrictions have definitely worsened the situation.

Many low-income people saw their income fall drastically while others became unemployed and with no stock of food during a 66-day countrywide shutdown that started on March 26. A Brac survey, conducted from March 31 to April 5, found that 14 percent of the country's low-

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SURVEY FINDINGS

Worried there was not enough food	21.25%
Couldn't eat preferred food	20.64%
Had limited variety of foods	16.63%
Ate non-preferred food	14.96%
Reduced meal size	14.48%
Consumed fewer meals	6.94%
Had no food in the house	11.51%
Went to bed hungry	8.22%
Did not eat the whole day and night	2.80%



PHOTO: ANISUR RAHMAN

Nayeem, a student of class-III, smiles as he carries his basket of cigarettes and betel leaves on the streets of the capital's Mugda. With his school closed since the start of the coronavirus outbreak, the eight-year-old has been selling his wares on the streets in the morning to contribute to his family's income. His father used to work as a rickshaw-puller and his mother works as a domestic help. Nayeem says he makes a profit of Tk 200-300 from three-four hours' work, which he hands over to his father. The photo was taken on Saturday.

TRAIN RAMS BUS Rail probe blames RHD, gateman, bus driver

TUHIN SHUBHRA ADHIKARY

The gatekeeper of Joypurhat's Purnanil level crossing failed to lower the gate on time as he was either sleeping or drowsy, causing the accident that left 12 people dead and eight others injured, a railway probe found.

Holding gateman Nayan Miah main responsible for the accident, the committee has recommended his removal from the job.

Nayan, who was recruited under a railway project, has already been suspended.

The committee also blamed the bus driver and the Roads and Highways Department for the accident.

The four-member

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COVID-19 VACCINATION

Plan it realistically to avoid chaos

Speakers at webinar urge the govt

MOUDUD AHMED SUJAN

With the government about to finalise the Covid vaccine deployment plan, a number of speakers yesterday warned that there may be chaos if the plan does not go with field-level reality.

While the government faces the challenge of collecting vaccines timely at affordable prices, some unanswered questions about vaccine preservation and equal distribution in the country need to be addressed in a transparent manner, they said.

Citizen's Platform on SDGs organised the virtual dialogue titled "Access to Covid-19 Vaccine in Bangladesh: Who, When and How?". Eminent personalities, scientists, healthcare professionals and political leaders joined it.

"We can plan well but we have weakness in implementation... When it comes to distribution [of vaccine] at the district level, I am sceptical... There is that might-is-right reality," said former health minister Dr

AFM Ruhul Haque.

"The [vaccine deployment] plan is being prepared, but I have doubts about how much control we will have over the situation."

Pointing at the authorities, Dr Rashid-E-Mahbub, former president of Bangladesh Medical Association, said, "Those who you are considering as eligible for vaccination in the first phase are not eligible given the country's socio-economic context. There will be chaos in priority fixing and vaccine distribution."

Presenting a concept paper, Dr Mushtaque Raza Chowdhury, convener of Bangladesh Health Watch, said, "There are a lot of questions over many issues such as cold-chain management, list of vaccine recipients and community engagement."

Dr Debapriya Bhattacharya, convener of the Citizen's Platform for SDGs, said, "Such a big initiative must be made a national initiative with participation of the private

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Covid-19 cases pass 5 lakh mark

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Thirty-eight people have died in the country from Covid-19 in the 24 hours ending at 8:00am yesterday, according to a press release issued by the Directorate General of Health Services (DGHS).

The total number of deaths has now reached 7,280 and the death rate stands at 1.45 percent.

A total of 1,153 new infections were recorded during this period, taking the total number of people infected to 5,00,713, stated the release.

The current positivity rate is 8.66 percent, while the total positivity rate stands at 16.28 percent.

At least 13,316 samples were tested across the country in the 24 hours.

In the meantime, 1,926 Covid-19 patients have

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BORDER KILLINGS BY BSF

India claims they open fire in self-defence

Foreign minister says in interview with Star

GOLAM MORTOZA

A virtual summit between Bangladesh and India was held on December 17 when multiple agreements and memorandums of understanding (MoUs) were signed. Bangladesh Foreign Minister Dr AK Abdul Momen, who was busy with the developments, was in cheerful mood. The Daily Star made a phone call to have a discussion with the minister.

"Today is a very good day. Today's conference (virtual summit) with India was held in a very cordial manner. We are very pleased with it," the minister said on the phone.

The Daily Star (DS): It was great that the summit was held in a cordial manner. Is there any good news regarding two crucial issues -- the Teesta water-sharing agreement and border killings?



Momen: You know what the barriers to signing the Teesta water-sharing agreement are. The Indian government has promised multiple times that they would sign the agreement after solving their internal disputes over the issue. So, there is no reason to create an embarrassing situation by raising the question

repeatedly. Instead, you should ask the government and media of West Bengal. The agreement has already been drafted with the signatures of some officials concerned. But it cannot be implemented. The Indian central government has agreed to sign the agreement, but it cannot be implemented as the public opinion in West Bengal is against it.

DS: Is India making visible attempts to implement it?

Momen: You better ask Indian leaders; I

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গণপ্রজাতন্ত্রী বাংলাদেশ সরকার

পরিচালকের কার্যালয়
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স্মারক নং-এনআইইএনটি/প্রশাসন/২০২০/১৪৭৯ তারিখঃ ২০/১২/২০২০

বিজ্ঞপ্তি

“সম্পূর্ণ শ্রবণ প্রতিবন্ধীদের কক্সিয়ার ইমপ্লান্ট ডিভাইস প্রাপ্তি আবেদন”

মাননীয় প্রধানমন্ত্রী শেখ হাসিনার নির্দেশে ন্যাশনাল ইনস্টিটিউট অব ইএনটি-তে গণপ্রজাতন্ত্রী বাংলাদেশ সরকারের সমাজকল্যাণ মন্ত্রণালয়ের অর্থায়নে এবং স্বাস্থ্য ও পরিবার কল্যাণ মন্ত্রণালয়ের সার্বিক সহযোগিতায় শ্রবণ প্রতিবন্ধীদের কল্যাণে ‘কক্সিয়ার ইমপ্লান্ট কার্যক্রম’ চালু করা হয়েছে। এই কর্মসূচির মাধ্যমে শ্রবণ প্রতিবন্ধীদেরকে সার্জারীর মাধ্যমে সরকারি অর্থে কক্সিয়ার ইমপ্লান্ট ডিভাইস (যন্ত্র) প্রদান করা হবে। সমাজকল্যাণ মন্ত্রণালয়ের অনুমোদিত কক্সিয়ার ইমপ্লান্ট বরাদ্দ নীতিমালা অনুযায়ী নির্বাচিত প্রার্থীদেরকে ডিভাইসটি বিনামূল্যে/আংশিক মূল্যে প্রদান করা হবে।

কক্সিয়ার ইমপ্লান্ট ডিভাইসটি বরাদ্দ পাওয়া ও সার্জারীর মাধ্যমে কানে স্থাপনের জন্য আগ্রহী শ্রবণ প্রতিবন্ধী শিশু রোগীর অভিভাবকগণের পক্ষ থেকে আবেদন আহ্বান করা যাচ্ছে। উল্লেখ্য ০৫ বছরের নীচের শিশুদের অগ্রাধিকার দেয়া হবে। আবেদনপত্র ও বিস্তারিত তথ্যের জন্য যোগাযোগ করুন- সকাল ৯.০০ ঘটিকা হতে দুপুর ১.০০ ঘটিকা পর্যন্ত (বৃহস্পতি দিন ব্যতীত), রুম নং ৭০৯ (৭ম তলা), কক্সিয়ার ইমপ্লান্ট বিভাগ, ন্যাশনাল ইনস্টিটিউট অব ইএনটি, তেজগাঁও, ঢাকা। আবেদনপত্র জমা দেওয়ার শেষ তারিখ- ২১ জানুয়ারি ২০২১।

২১/১২/২০২০

অধ্যাপক ডাঃ মোঃ আবু হানিফ
পরিচালক কাম অধ্যাপক
ন্যাশনাল ইনস্টিটিউট অব ইএনটি
তেজগাঁও, ঢাকা

জিডি-২০২২

Allegations ‘baseless, might be ill motivated’

Says Brig Gen Shahadat on request for investigating EC

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Distinguished citizens have brought “baseless” allegations against the Election Commission, said Election Commissioner Brig Gen (retd) Shahadat Hossain Chowdhury yesterday.

The allegations of corruption and other misconduct against the EC “might be ill motivated,” said Shahadat, while talking with reporters at his office.

Forty-two eminent citizens on December 14 urged the president to constitute a supreme judicial council to probe allegations of corruption and other misconduct by the EC.

In a letter to President Md Abdul Hamid, they claimed that members of the EC, under KM Nurul

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The sign pinned to the front of the bus, reading “all kind of parking prohibited here, by order of traffic police”, perfectly exemplifies how a rule is being broken by those who made it. The bus was seized by law enforcers and kept by the side of the road where, according to them, parking is prohibited. The photo was taken yesterday at the capital's Shahbagh.

PHOTO: PRABIR DAS