



# The Daily Star

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## OXFORD UNIVERSITY-ASTRAZENECA VACCINE

# Bangladesh okays it for emergency use

Govt assures that India's export ban on the vaccine produced by Serum Institute will not hamper timely supply of 3cr doses to Bangladesh

MOHAMMAD AL MASUM MOLLA and WASIM BIN HABIB

Bangladesh yesterday approved the Oxford University-AstraZeneca coronavirus vaccine for emergency use, paving the way for importing the vaccine from Serum Institute of India.

Bangladesh's drug administration gave Beximco Pharmaceuticals Ltd, the local partner of Serum, the no objection certificate (NOC) required to import the shots branded Covishield.

The government is likely to make half the payment today in advance for the three crore doses of the much-sought-after vaccine.

According to the contract between the government, Serum and its local partner Beximco Pharmaceuticals Ltd, the first

shipment should arrive in the country a month after the approval and the payment. Each dose of the vaccine is to cost \$5 for the government.

"The vaccine can be administered for emergency use. Hopefully, we will make the advance payment tomorrow [today]," Health Secretary Abdul Mannan told The Daily Star last night.

Ayub Hossain, spokesperson for the Directorate General of Drug Administration (DGDA), told The Daily Star that the DGDA gave the NOC to import the vaccine and approved its emergency use because registering it would be a time-consuming process.

However, Beximco Pharmaceuticals Managing Director Nazmul Hassan Papon

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Impounded vehicles left to rot close to a makeshift market along the highway near Kanchpur Bridge in Narayanganj. Although the highway act stipulates that no temporary or permanent structures can be erected within 10 metres of highways, highway police itself was seen using this place as an impound site. The authorities have also turned a blind eye to the establishment and operation of the illegal market. The photo was taken yesterday.

PHOTO: ANISUR RAHMAN

## BUSINESS

### Tk 10,220cr black money legalised in just 6 months

Black money holders legalised the highest amount of undeclared assets in history in just six months of the current fiscal year as no government agencies now ask questions about the sources of incomes. Tk 10,220 crore entered the formal economy after many untaxed money-holders whitened assets by paying taxes, the National Board of Revenue said yesterday.

STORY ON B1

"As the deal was done on the basis of discussion at the highest level – between Bangladesh Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina and Indian Premier Narendra Modi, so no ban will be applicable on us. So, there is no reason for us to worry."

FOREIGN MINISTER AK ABDUL MOMEN



"We will prioritise our neighbours particularly Bangladesh in sharing our vaccines. It will take a few weeks to roll out, perhaps by the end of month."

A TOP OFFICIAL OF MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS OF INDIA WISHING NOT TO BE NAMED

"Since we have signed an agreement, it is my firm believe that it would not be problematic. Even today [yesterday] we have talked to Serum, but we did not get any indication from them that there would be any delay [in getting the vaccine]."

MANAGING DIRECTOR OF BEXIMCO PHARMACEUTICALS LTD NAZMUL HASAN PAPON

## Britain rolls out Oxford vaccine

AGENCIES

Britain yesterday began rolling out the Oxford-AstraZeneca coronavirus vaccine, a possible game-changer in fighting the disease worldwide, while China raced to inoculate millions with a domestically made jab.

Britain started the new drive with 530,000 doses of the AstraZeneca vaccine, as it struggled to control a severe wave of infections

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## ARMS, NARCOTICS CASES

# Erfan Salim cleared of charges

MD JAMIL KHAN and ZYMA ISLAM

In their final report, Chawkbazar police said they did not find evidence to prove the charges against Mohammad Erfan Salim in two cases filed under the narcotics control and arms acts.

The law enforcers claimed that the arms found by Rab in Erfan's home was "planted by someone else" to frame him, destroy his political career and ruin his social standing.

"We are sending the final report to court today. We did not find evidence to prove the charges [against Erfan] beyond doubt," Moudud Hawlader, officer-in-charge of Chawkbazar Police

Station, told The Daily Star yesterday.

Erfan's bodyguard Md Zahidul Mollah, however, is not being let off the hook.

He is being charged with possession of an illegal firearm, said the investigation officer of one of the cases, Inspector Delwar Hossain of the police station.

The two cases were filed following a Rab raid on the home of Erfan, son of Dhaka-7 lawmaker and Awami League leader Haji Md Salim, and his alleged torture cell in the capital's Chawkbazar.

Prior to his arrest on October 26, Erfan, 37, was the councillor of Ward-30 under Dhaka South City Corporation.

According to a first information report, filed by Md Kaiyum Islam, deputy additional director (DAD) of Rab-3, following the raid, they found illegal arms at Erfan's bedroom and an adjacent room.

"We entered Erfan Salim's bedroom and found a black pistol under the mattress of the bed. The barrel of the pistol was six inches long, and the butt was white in colour. The gun had two bullets and a magazine. The bullets were embossed with the words 'KF' and '7.65'," described DAD Kaiyum.

In the final report, the Chawkbazar police refuted that it was Erfan's bedroom.

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Onions are weighed using a scale at Sujanagar wholesale market in Pabna on Sunday. Traders at this wholesale onion market -- one of the largest in the country -- say prices of the locally-produced bulb have dropped after Indian onions started arriving in markets. Bottom, two women sorting out freshly harvested onions for sale in Adampur area of Faridpur.



PHOTO: AHMED HUMAYUN KABIR TOPU / SUZIT KUMAR DAS

## BSMMU mulls Chinese firm's vaccine trial

Proposal comes from Anhui Zhifei Pharma MOUDUD AHMED SUJAN

The BSMMU authorities are considering approving Chinese pharma Anhui Zhifei's proposal for the third phase trial of its Covid-19 vaccine.

On Sunday, Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujib Medical University (BSMMU) received a letter from China's Anhui Zhifei Longcom Biologic Pharmacy in correspondence with the first one received on September 2, confirmed Prof Dr Kanak Kanti Barua, vice chancellor of BSMMU, to The Daily Star yesterday.

"They had not communicated with us since we gave our 11 observations. Yesterday [Sunday], they sent another letter. We are reviewing it to take further steps," he said. Earlier, another Chinese company -- Sinovac Ltd -- cancelled the third phase of its trial in

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## ACC arrests PK Halder's 'associate'

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Anti-Corruption Commission yesterday arrested Shankha Bepari, an "associate" of Proshanta Kumar Halder, known as PK Halder, who allegedly laundered over Tk 10,000 crore of four non-banking financial institutions (NBFIs) abroad.

He is held in a case filed against PK Halder, former managing director of NRB Global Bank, for amassing about Tk 275 crore beyond the known sources of income.

The ACC filed the case on January 8 last year.

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## BB officials harbour financial thugs: HC

Full text of the court order blasts some top officials in charge of monitoring activities of banks, FIs

ASHUTOSH SARKAR

The High Court has observed that a section of Bangladesh Bank officials, tasked with monitoring the activities of banks and financial institutions, have been harbouring financial thugs for personal gains.

"It is the misfortune of the people of this country that while the head of the government is working tirelessly with utmost honesty for the economic development of this country, the officials concerned, particularly the DGMs [deputy general managers], GMs, executive directors and deputy governors of Bangladesh Bank, who were in charge of monitoring performance and activities of banks and financial institutions at the relevant time,

have been harbouring financial thugs/perpetrators, just for personal gains, destroying the motherland's economy," said the court.

The HC bench of Justice Muhammad Khurshid Alam Sarkar made the observation in the full text of its order on a petition that sought its directives to remove the current board of directors of Bangladesh Industrial Finance Company Limited (BIFC).

The bench had delivered a short order on the issue on December 17 last year. The full text of the order was released yesterday.

Tees Mart Inc, a US private company holding 10 percent shares in BIFC, filed the petition in March last year. It sought HC directives for appointing an independent

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## Our Shining Star

**Samson H. Chowdhury**  
25 September 1925 - 5 January 2012

Anita Chowdhury and family