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"Awami League is running the country with administration, they are barely in politics."
JATIYA PARTY CHAIRMAN GM QUADER



"With most of the country already under extreme measures...we need to do more together to bring this new variant under control."
UK PM BORIS JOHNSON



"The president spends more time whining and complaining than doing something about the problem."
US PRESIDENT-ELECT JOE BIDEN ON PRESIDENT TRUMP'S HANDLING OF PANDEMIC



OXFORD VACCINE FROM SERUM, INDIA Govt's cost not over \$5 a shot

Serum to charge Bangladesh same price that Indian govt will pay; no ban on export of vaccines, clarifies India's health secretary

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Bangladesh will get the Oxford-AstraZeneca vaccine from Serum Institute of India at the price the Indian government will pay for it, say two top officials of the health ministry and Beximco Pharmaceuticals Limited.

Meanwhile, Indian Health Secretary Rajesh Bhushan said the union government has not banned export of any Covid vaccines, including Oxford-AstraZeneca and Covaxin, approved by the drug regulator for restricted emergency use.

In reply to a query at a press briefing in New Delhi yesterday, Bhushan said, "The union government has not banned the export of any of the Covid-19 vaccines and this should be absolutely clear."

"... Therefore, our request to our media friends would be that we should be on guard when such misinformation is sought to be spread."

Bangladesh has purchased three crore shots of Oxford vaccine from Serum for \$4 per shot, according to the tripartite agreement signed between the government,

Serum and Beximco on November 5 last year.

However, each shot will cost the government \$5 as it has to pay Beximco, the local agent of Serum, 80 cents in service charge and another 20 cents for transporting the vaccine shots to the government vaccination centres.

Talking to the Press Trust of India yesterday, Serum's Chief Executive Officer Adar Poonawalla said, "We want the vaccine to be affordable and accessible to all. The government of India will receive it at a far more affordable price of \$3-4, since they will be buying in a larger volume."

He, however, said the vaccine would be sold at double that price in the private market once such sales are allowed.

Poonawalla's statement apparently dispelled worries in Bangladesh over paying a much higher price for the vaccine.

Contacted, Nazmul Hassan Papon, managing director of Beximco Pharmaceuticals Limited, said it would be a violation of the agreement if Serum, the

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WHO WILL GET VACCINES FIRST

- 1 Healthcare professionals
- 2 Law enforcers
- 3 Govt officials, employees
- 4 Media professionals
- 5 Public representatives
- 6 Emergency service personnel, religious leaders
- 7 Port officials, employees
- 8 People involved in funeral services
- 9 Bank officials, staff
- 10 People with less or no immunity
- 11 Health staff working for forcibly displaced Myanmar nationals

GOVT VACCINATION PLAN



VACCINATION TEAM

Each team will consist of 6 personnel including two vaccinators (nurse, paramedic, intern doctor, hired medical staff) and 4 volunteers for screening, mobilisation and record keeping

PHASES OF VACCINATION			
PHASE	STAGE	% OF POPULATION	PEOPLE TO BE VACCINATED
FIRST	1	9%	1,54,80,000
	2	10-20%	1,89,20,000
	3	21-40%	3,44,00,000
SECOND	4	41-80%	6,88,00,000
	TOTAL		13,76,00,000

TOTAL BUDGET FOR VACCINE

Tk 4,236cr

COVAX vaccines with subsidised price	Transport and operational expenses
Tk 1,175cr	Tk 384cr
Direct purchase from COVAX or other sources	Preservation, cold chain and supply chain management
Tk 2,262cr	Tk 346cr
Shipping cost	
Tk 68cr	



In the name of repairing Pachpir Jhali Road, 2.09 lakh cubic feet of hills were cut using government funds by a local union parishad member in Moulvibazar. Finding out, the DoE yesterday fined him Tk 13.12 lakh.

PHOTO: MINTU DESHWARA

14cr to get Covid vaccine in phases

WB to provide most of the funds for Tk 6786cr project

REJAUL KARIM BYRON and MOUDDUD AHMED SUJAN

The government will inoculate in phases nearly 14 crore people against Covid-19 with double-dose vaccine from the COVAX facility under a Tk 6,786 crore pandemic preparedness project.

The COVAX facility is a global initiative coordinated by WHO, GAVI, the Vaccine Alliance and Coalition for Epidemic Preparedness Innovations (CEPI).

The project was undertaken in April last year and will be completed in June 2023.

Of the total project cost, Tk 6,614 crore will be given by the World Bank and the Asian Infrastructure Bank in project

assistance. Tk 172 crore will come from government funds.

The WB would supply most of the funds, show project documents.

Healthcare professionals, law enforcers, government officials and employees, media professionals and public representatives are among the 11 top-listed groups to get the vaccines, according to the documents.

The project documents do not mention that people aged 60 and above are in the priority list, but said those with less immunity will be vaccinated.

Under the Covid-19 Emergency Response and Pandemic Preparedness Project, the

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'It felt like I was in a grave'

Finally home, after 53 days of enforced disappearance and 7 months in prison, photojournalist Shafiqul Islam Kajol talks to Zyma Islam of The Daily Star about his ordeal

"I decided not to shave the beard. I've just trimmed it a bit, I think I quite like the beard," laughed Shafiqul Islam Kajol, his eyes twinkling with amusement at the irony of keeping the large, shaggy, grey beard that grew out over his 53 days of enforced disappearance and seven months in prison.



"My eyes were tied, my hands were cuffed behind, and my mouth was gagged for all 53 days up until I was dropped off to Benapole."

"But I could not find my old barber at the spot where he used to sit, so I had to go to a new one..." he added in postscript -- a sobering reminder of the months that were taken from this photojournalist's life.

Kajol had disappeared on March 10 last year and was "found" by the Border Guard Bangladesh roaming around the Benapole border 53 days later.

He would then land in jail for three Digital Security Act cases filed by lawmaker Saifuzzaman Shikhor, and two Jubo Mahila League activists for a Facebook post.

The lower court kept denying him bail these last seven months, until the High Court on November 24 granted him bail in one case and ordered the investigation officer and Cyber Tribunal to submit reports.

And finally on December 17, the HC ordered bail in two remaining cases after his lawyer pointed out that the probes into his cases had to be concluded within 75 days of filing of the cases, and the investigators had failed to do so.

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ERFAN SALIM

He gets bail in 2 cases based on police report

Rab contradicts cops' findings

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Based on a police report, a Dhaka court yesterday granted bail to Mohammad Erfan Salim, son of Awami League leader Haji Md Salim, in two cases.

Rab Director General Chowdhury Abdullah Al-Mamun, however, said they had filed the cases based on what they had found.

Bhaskar Debnath Bappi, additional district magistrate of Dhaka, granted bail to Erfan in connection with the two cases in which he

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KUSHTIA MEDICAL COLLEGE, HOSPITAL PROJECT

A deadline that would never end

An irate PM orders probe into delay, cost hike

REJAUL KARIM BYRON and TUHIN SHUBHRA ADHIKARY

Around eight years ago, the government had approved a project to establish Kushtia Medical College and Hospital between January 2012 and December 2014 at the cost of Tk 275.44 crore.

The project, which was taken up without any feasibility study, witnessed only 34 percent progress till

December 2019. In the meantime, its cost rose to Tk 611.08 crore.

Moreover, many allegations of irregularities in the project surfaced, including the use of bamboo and wood instead of steel for constructing one of the buildings and the death of a worker after a portion of an under-construction building collapsed on him.

The Directorate General of Health Services (DGHS), the project's implementing agency, yesterday sought approval for a hike in project cost as well as an extension of deadline, which irked Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina.

Instead of approving the revised proposal at Executive Committee of the National Economic Council, Hasina, who presided

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Police ask Interpol to locate, arrest PK Halder

STAR REPORT

Bangladesh Police has requested Interpol to issue a red notice on Proshanta Kumar Halder, who is facing a graft case for illegally amassing wealth and has allegedly laundered over Tk 10,000 crore from four non-banking financial institutions abroad.

The National Central Bureau (NCB) of Bangladesh Police has made the request, Mohiul

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FOR YOUR CONTINUED LOVE, SUPPORT AND BELIEF IN US.



RECOGNIZED AS THE MOST LOVED RETAIL SHOE BRAND IN BANGLADESH