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ASTRAZENECA VACCINE

No reason to stop using it

Says WHO after several countries suspend its roll-out over blood clot fears

AGENCIES

The World Health Organization yesterday said there was no reason to stop using AstraZeneca's Covid-19 vaccine after several European countries suspended the roll-out over blood clot fears.

The WHO said its vaccines advisory committee was currently looking at safety data and stressed that no causal link had been established between the vaccine and clotting.

Denmark, Norway, Iceland, Italy, Bulgaria and Romania postponed or limited the rollout of AstraZeneca vaccines after isolated reports of recipients developing blood clots.

In Asia, Thailand yesterday abruptly delayed its rollout of the AstraZeneca vaccine, stopping Premier Prayut Chan-O-Cha from getting the first jab.

"AstraZeneca is an excellent vaccine, as are the other vaccines that are being used," WHO spokeswoman Margaret Harris told reporters at a briefing in Geneva.

"We've reviewed the data on deaths. There has been no death, to date, proven to have been caused by vaccination," she said.

"Yes, we should continue using the AstraZeneca vaccine," she added, stressing though that "any safety signal must be investigated."

"We must always ensure that we look for any safety signals when we roll out vaccines, and we must review them," she said.

"But there is no indication to not use it."

The WHO statement came after health authorities around the world stressed there was no evidence of any link, but they were acting out of an abundance of caution.

Australia, Mexico and the Philippines said they would continue their

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Day labourers picking diamond potatoes at a farm in Munshiganj's Haldia area. There has been a bumper harvest of the popular vegetable, which can be bought at source for Tk 9 per kilogramme and sold in kitchen markets for between Tk 15 and Tk 18 per kg. The photo was taken yesterday.

PHOTO: ANISUR RAHMAN

Fall in supply pushes up onion price

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Onion prices shot up in Dhaka markets over the last week as supply of imported bulbs and early harvested varieties declined.

Locally grown onions were being traded at Tk 45-50 per kilogramme yesterday, said Riaz Hossain, an onion and spices retailer at Mohammadpur Town Hall Market.

Retail prices were Tk 35-40 a week ago, data of Trading Corporation of Bangladesh showed.

Prices have gone up as stock and supply of early harvested onions, known as "Murikata onion", depleted, said traders.

Market is likely to see an increased supply in the next one-two weeks as harvesting will begin in that time.

Onions from India have started arriving over the last two-three days, said Ashadul Islam of Milon Enterprise, an importing firm at Bhomra land port -- one of the biggest land ports for onion import.

Shah Alam, an onion wholesaler at Mohammadpur Krishi market, said supply of onions increased at the wholesale level.

Prices are likely to decline, he said.

He said the main harvesting season of onions has started. The market is likely to be stable in two weeks, he added.

Bangladesh requires 25-30 lakh tonnes of onion annually and it has to import roughly 10 lakh tonnes as domestic production falls short.

ROAD TO FREEDOM
THIS DAY IN BANGLADESH LIBERATION WAR HISTORY

Bhutto cornered

MARCH 13, 1971

SHAMSUDDOZA SAJEN

BANGABANDHU'S 4 DEMANDS FIND SUPPORT IN BOTH WINGS

Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman's demands received wide approval in both wings of Pakistan. Even smaller parties from West Pakistan came out in support of Awami League. A meeting called by Jamiat Ulema-i-Islam was held today in Karachi where leaders of Muslim Leagues, Jamaat-i-Islami and Jamiat Ulema-i-Pakistan attended.

The leaders of the West Pakistani parties supported Bangabandhu's four demands and called for interim governments to be established in both the centre and provinces. They criticised Bhutto's insistence on prior agreement on constitutional matters, and declared that Bangabandhu had given the "clearest assurance" that the majority party would be responsive to suggestions.



They also called on Yahya to meet Bangabandhu and clear up "misunderstandings, apprehensions and suspicions". [Srinath Raghavan, 1971: A Global History of the Creation of Bangladesh, Permanent Black 2013, pg. 46]

The leader of the National Awami Party Khan Abdul Wali Khan today arrived Dhaka. He, in an interview with journalists at the airport, expressed his full support for the demands of Bangabandhu. He further said the present crisis had taken such a turn that it could endanger the unity of Pakistan. The NAP chief demanded immediate withdrawal of the military power and handing over power to the elected representatives of the people.

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STUDENT MURDER

3 madrasa teachers, 4 others held in N'ganj

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Narayanganj

Police yesterday arrested seven people, including three teachers, over their alleged involvement in beating a madrasa student to death in Narayanganj's Siddhirganj upazila.

The dead, Sabbir Hossain, 14, was a student of Rowjatul Uloom madrasa in Rasulbagh Majhipara area of the upazila.

The accused included three teachers of the madrasa -- Shawkat Hossain Sumon, 26, Zobayer Ahmmad, 26, and Abdul Aziz, 42. The other four are classmates of the victim. The Daily Star is not publishing their names since they are minors.

In the case statement, Sabbir's family alleged that the teachers and

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Scientists capture astounding 'slow supernova'



INDEPENDENT.CO.UK

Astronomers have managed to capture an image of an astonishing stellar explosion showing the remnants of a supernova.

Located near the centre of the Milky Way, the remnant Sagittarius A East was thought to be the remains of a massive star that exploded - but scientists now have a different theory.

Study from Nasa's Chandra X-ray Observatory have indicated that the remnants actually come from the explosion of a white dwarf that pulled in material from a companion star before exploding

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INDIA'S DIGITAL MEDIA

New rules spark fears of curbs on press freedom

REUTERS, New Delhi

India's new oversight of digital news platforms is drawing protest from the media industry and activists who fear the rules will curb press freedom in the world's largest democracy.

India, which has one of the world's biggest and most diverse media industries, last month announced the Intermediary Guidelines and Digital Media Ethics Code, aimed at pushing Big Tech firms such as Facebook to comply with content

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PRAYER TIMING MARCH 13

Fajr Zohr Asr Maghrib Esha
AZAN 5-05 12-45 4-30 6-12 7-30
JAMAAT 5-40 1-15 4-45 6-15 8-00

SOURCE: ISLAMIC FOUNDATION



LAWACHHARA FOREST Rare leopard cat crushed under wheels

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Moulvibazar

An endangered leopard cat was killed while crossing a road in Jonakichhara area of Lawachhara forest in Moulvibazar's Kamalganj upazila yesterday.

The leopard cat died after being crushed under the wheels of a speeding vehicle around 12:00 noon, said Motaleb Hossain, range officer of Wildlife Management and Nature Conservation Department in the district.

The body was recovered and it would be buried following necessary procedures, he added.

Leopards are nocturnal animals and endangered due to various obstacles including the destruction of habitat and food crisis.

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A staffer of Mugda Medical College Hospital collecting the saliva of a man to test if he is infected with Covid-19. New infections have started rising in the country and the positivity rate has shot up to over five percent again. However, the staffer is not wearing the required personal protective equipment, exposing himself and others to risk of infection. The photo was taken yesterday.

PHOTO: ANISUR RAHMAN

COUP IN MYANMAR Bribery claims 'hilarious joke'

Says Suu Kyi's lawyer; UK asks citizens to leave the country amid escalating crackdown on protests

AGENCIES

Ousted civilian leader Aung San Suu Kyi's lawyer yesterday rejected junta corruption claims against her as 'groundless', as Britain advised its citizens to flee Myanmar amid escalating crackdown on protesters.

The military authorities are cracking down with increasing severity on daily protests against their February 1 coup, with at least 70 people killed according to the UN's top rights expert on the country.

The turmoil prompted Britain, the former colonial ruler, to urge its citizens to get out if they could, warning that "political tension and unrest are widespread since the military takeover and levels of violence are rising".

The military -- which has defended its takeover by citing alleged voting irregularities in November elections won by Suu Kyi's National League for Democracy party -- held a rare news conference on Thursday accusing her of corruption.

Junta spokesman Zaw Min Tun said the detained chief minister of Yangon admitted giving Suu Kyi \$600,000 in cash, along with more than 11 kilograms (\$680,000 worth) of gold.

Suu Kyi's lawyer Khin Maung Zaw yesterday rejected the claims.

"This allegation against Daw Aung San Suu Kyi, the state counsellor, is groundless, especially regarding the dollars

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