



# The Daily Star

SECOND EDITION



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## Cry for water in the south

Safe drinking water a distant dream for 73pc people in five salinity-prone upazilas in Khulna-Satkhira region

PINAKI ROY and DIPANKAR ROY, Khulna

Roksana Khatun moves aside dirt and floating leaves from a pond, slowly lowers her earthen pitcher into it and fills it with around 20 litres of water. Collecting the water, she carefully climbs the muddy, steep stairs of the pond and walks around 45 minutes to return home. She holds the heavy pitcher against her waist or on her head the entire time.

Only to fetch water for her family, she does this arduous task every day, twice, throughout the year, except for a few months when it rains and she can store some drinking water, she told The Daily Star, while on her way home from the pond recently.

"I've a tubewell, but it does not work. I've no other option ... I need water for my family of six. I've been doing this for years," Roksana, aged

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WORLD WATER DAY

Households surveyed **66,234**  
Population **271,464**  
AREA: Dacope, Koyra, Paikgachha, Assasuni and Shyamnagar upazilas under Khulna and Satkhira districts.

- 73% households use unsafe water
  - 63% people face difficulties in getting drinking water
  - 51% face water crisis for more than six months a year
  - 16% households have their own drinking water source
  - 75% people rely on hand tube-wells or pond water
  - 48% ponds have drinkable water
  - 27% hand tube-wells are found with safe water
- Monthly average cost per household up to **Tk 2,463** (if they spend more than 2 hours a day to get drinking water)
- Women are solely responsible for fetching drinking water in **74%** households in study area

SOURCE: GENDER-RESPONSIVE COASTAL ADAPTATION PROJECT (UNDP), 2021

## 50YRS OF INDEPENDENCE Nepal president arrives today

DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT



Nepal's President Bidya Devi Bhandari is arriving in Dhaka today on a two-day visit to attend the celebrations of Mujib Borsho and golden jubilee of Bangladesh's independence.

She will be the third of the world leaders visiting Bangladesh after the Maldives President Ibrahim Mohamed

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## COVID-19 VIRUS IN BANGLADESH

### Researchers find 34 unique mutations

ARUN BIKASH DEY

SARS COV-2, the virus that causes Covid-19, mutated 4,604 times in Bangladesh from April to the first week of December last year, and of the mutations, 34 were unique meaning they do not match any other mutations found in other parts of the world.

A team of Bangladeshi researchers in collaboration with Monash University in Malaysia came up with the findings after analysing 371 genome sequences of the virus.

They named the 34 unique mutations of SARS COV-2 as "Bangla Mutation".

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## Sharp rise in infection rate

2,172 new cases, 22 deaths in 24 hours

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The country saw a sharp rise in Covid-19 infection rate yesterday.

The daily rate went up to 10.29 percent in the 24 hours ending at 8:00am yesterday. On the previous day, the positivity rate was 9.39 percent.

After a month-long declining trend until March 8, the positivity rate started rising again.

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## NEWS ANALYSIS

### Why so hush-hush?

MOHAMMAD AL-MASUM MOLLA

World leaders have frequently used the word "war" to describe the fight against the coronavirus primarily to emphasise how precious every second, every minute or every strategic decision is in combating the invisible killer.

Even slight delays in making and implementing decisions can jeopardise the whole effort, as has been seen in the case of numerous countries around the world in the last 15 months since Covid-19 was first detected in the Chinese city of Wuhan in December 2019.

Bangladesh is no exception.

The country's health officials identified a few cases of the UK variant of Covid-19 back in January, but this information was published only on March 10. The government also acknowledged the presence of the variant but has not explained the delay in sharing the information.

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## Heartiest Welcome

To  
Right Honourable President  
**Mrs. Bidya Devi Bhandari**  
Rt. Hon. President of Nepal

We extend our warm welcome to her excellency on her arrival in Bangladesh as the nation celebrates the birth centenary of the father of the nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman and Mujib Barsho as well as the 50th year of its independence. We hope the alliance between the two countries only strengthens in the coming days and leads to sustainable prosperity.

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## AN ACHIEVEMENT FOR YOU A MILESTONE FOR BANGLADESH

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Saifuzzaman Chowdhury  
Hon'ble Minister, Ministry of Land Dhaka (Bangladesh)  
Has been honored for massive contribution in digitizing services and developing transparent and accountable public institutions of the Ministry of Land, Bangladesh.  
Appointer: Mr. Ramon Soria (President, WBR - Bangladesh)  
Date: 23 February 2021  
Santosh Shukla  
President

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