



The Daily Star

SECOND EDITION



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"This is an epidemic, for God's sake, and it has to stop."
BIDEN ATTEMPTS TO TACKLE US GUN VIOLENCE AS HE CALLS IT A PUBLIC HEALTH CRISIS



"With the extremely inequitable vaccine distribution I will not attend the COP26 conference..."
SWEDISH CLIMATE CAMPAIGNER GRETA THUNBERG



"With these, let's call them what they are - dictators - with whom one nonetheless has to coordinate..."
ITALY PM MARIO DRAGHI BLASTS TURKEY PRESIDENT ERDOGAN FOR HUMILIATION OF EU COMMISSION CHIEF

Strict lockdown from April 14

To remain in force for a week, announces govt as ongoing restrictions prove ineffective

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The country will be put under a strict lockdown for a week from April 14, the government announced yesterday amid a worsening coronavirus situation as the ongoing restrictions have apparently proved to be ineffective in containing the spread of the virus.

Except for emergency services, all government and private offices and factories will remain closed during the lockdown. Public transport services will also stay suspended, State Minister for Public Administration Farhad Hossain told The Daily Star.

"We had no other option but this, given the rapid transmission of Covid-19. During this period, people will be made to stay at home at any cost," he said.

The state minister also said the government has made all-out preparations to enforce the lockdown following the directives of Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina and suggestions from experts.

Army will not be deployed, he said, adding

- ➔ All govt, private offices, factories will remain closed
- ➔ Public transport services will be suspended
- ➔ People will be made to stay at home
- ➔ Only emergency services will remain open

that a gazette notification in this regard will be issued soon.

Earlier in the morning, Road Transport and Bridges Minister Obaidul Quader said the government was actively considering imposing an "all-out lockdown" for one week from April 14.

The lockdown will come into effect on the first day of Bangla calendar -- Pahela Baishakh -- and three days after the end of the ongoing seven-day restrictions, which began on April 5.

Public health experts have been pitching for strict enforcement of Covid-19 restrictions as they raised questions about the effectiveness of a half-hearted enforcement to tackle the worsening coronavirus situation in the country.

They said relaxed measures like gradual resumption of the operation of public transport and reopening of shopping malls would not yield the desired results, and it would rather push the country towards a greater risk.

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Customers throng Noor Mansion Shopping Centre in the capital's New Market area yesterday, the first day of reopening of malls after a brief four-day closure during the ongoing "lockdown". Many shoppers and salesmen showed blatant disregard for health safety rules.

PHOTO: PALASH KHAN

COVID-19 VACCINES WHO chief slams 'shocking' imbalance

Backs AstraZeneca shots

AFP, Geneva

The World Health Organization yesterday condemned the chasm between rich and poor nations in accessing coronavirus vaccines, saying more than a dozen countries were still completely unprotected.

WHO chief Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus -- a fierce critic of wealthy countries buying up vaccine supply for themselves -- blasted the scarcity of doses available for poorer nations.

His target of seeing vaccination under way in every country by Saturday -- the 100th day of 2021 -- is set to be missed.

"There remains a shocking imbalance in the global distribution of vaccines," Tedros told a press conference.

He said that out of 220 territories, 194 had started vaccination, while of the remaining 26, seven have received doses and are preparing to start, while a further

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Young adults get infected more

Rate of infection among them over 60pc in recent weeks

MOHAMMAD AL-MASUM MOLLA

More young adults getting infected with coronavirus has been a worrying sign in recent weeks, experts said.

While most of the people dying are old, health officials believe it is the young people who are giving the virus to older and more vulnerable people.

According to the Institute of Epidemiology, Disease Control and Research (IEDCR), 68.8 percent of the people who tested positive for coronavirus on April 5 were aged between 19 and 48 years.

Twenty-seven percent infected were aged over 49, it said.

IEDCR does not compile age-based data regularly, but its officials said the rate of infection among young adults has been over 60 percent in recent weeks.

On the other hand, yesterday's bulletin from the Directorate General of Health Services showed 80.73 percent of those who died with Covid-19 were over 50.

Young people getting out and about are contracting the disease and putting their vulnerable family members at risk, IEDCR officials said, adding that the elderly people do not often leave their homes frequently.

"Homes are a perfect place for transmission because we don't follow the health rules there. The young adults violating the health rules get infected and then they spread the virus to the older family members," IEDCR director Tahmina Shirin told The Daily Star.

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Daily Covid cases still over 7,000

63 more die

UNB, Dhaka

Bangladesh yesterday recorded more than 7,000 Covid-19 cases for the fifth time in six days even as the country undergoes a weeklong lockdown to contain the virus transmission.

In a 24-hour period ending at 8:00am, 7,462 new cases were registered with the infection rate jumping to 23.57 percent.

The number of cases was 6,854 on Thursday. On April 4, the country recorded 7,087 Covid-19 cases and 7,075 the next day. On April 6, the number was 7,213, followed by 7,626 the next day.

Sixty-three more people died from Covid-19, said the Directorate General of Health Services yesterday.

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ACHIEVING GLOBAL CLIMATE GOALS

Dhaka, Washington to forge new partnership

Kerry hands over Biden's invitation to Hasina to join Apr 22-23 Global Leaders' Summit

DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT

Having returned to the Paris Agreement after assuming office in January, US President Joe Biden is eager to work with Bangladesh as part of a new global partnership to fight climate change and protect future generations.

The US is ready to provide funding and leadership in raising climate ambition -- net zero carbon emissions and adaptation mechanisms -- and the "Leaders Summit on Climate" to be hosted by Biden on April 22-23 will prepare the groundwork ahead of the COP26 in Glasgow in November.

"We have experienced the hottest month and year in human history [last year]. We see the damages all across the world -- fires, flood, drought, sea level rise,



food production being hampered... migration is already happening because of climate change," said US Special Presidential Envoy for Climate John Kerry yesterday.

"We know from scientists we all need to take actions."

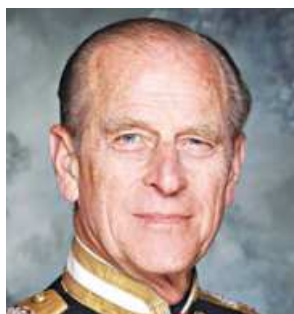
Kerry, who arrived in Dhaka at 11:30am

yesterday, following visits to India and the UAE, called on Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina in the afternoon and handed over Biden's invitation to attend the "Leaders Summit on Climate" to be hosted by the US president on April 22-23.

The summit will be attended by 40 global leaders of major economies and climate vulnerable countries.

"Returning of the US to the Paris

SEE PAGE 2 COL 3



UK mourns as Prince Philip dies at 99

AFP, London

Prince Philip, the longest serving royal consort in British history who was a constant presence at Queen Elizabeth II's side for decades, died yesterday aged 99, Buckingham Palace announced.

The death of the Duke of Edinburgh is a profound loss for the 94-year-old monarch, who once described him as her "strength and stay all these years".

Queen Elizabeth II announced his passing "with deep sorrow" after he died peacefully in the morning at Windsor Castle, west of London, the palace said in a statement.

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A shell-shocked Rani catches a last glimpse of the body of her husband Riton in an ambulance at the city's Mugda Medical College Hospital. The 49-year-old Covid patient died at the hospital yesterday after undergoing treatment for five days. Rani said she could not manage an ICU bed for her husband.

PHOTO: ANISUR RAHMAN

4 Rab members arrested in city

They abducted a trader, demanded Tk 2cr ransom; three more involved in it, say police

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Police arrested four Rab members in the capital's Hatirjheel yesterday on charges of abducting, torturing, and demanding ransom from a man.

Police said there are three other suspects, one of whom, a civilian woman, got arrested as well.

The arrested men were handed their force after a case was filed with Hatirjheel Police Station, said Dhaka Metropolitan Police Commissioner Shafiqul Islam.

But their names and designations were not mentioned in the case.

"They kidnapped a man and demanded ransom. Police held two of the accused at the scene, after the man's sister informed them. Three more were detained later," he added.

Police sources said seven people were found involved in the incident.

The civilian woman named Ranu Begum was placed on a two-day remand by a Dhaka court.

Subrata Debnath, who is investigating the case, applied to the court, requesting that the accused men be tried under the laws of the forces they belong to.

Police officers with knowledge of the incident said the accused men demanded Tk 2 crore from the victim and eventually settled for Tk 12 lakh. Police held two of them with the money in a CNG-run auto rickshaw.

According to the case filed by victim Tamjid Hossain's sister, the incident took place on Thursday after the 27-year-old left their Mirbagh home for Uttara.

Around 12:00pm, a man called his sister introducing

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