BANGLADESH<br/>UPDATE1,359<br/>New cases in 24hrs7,61,943<br/>Total cases11,569<br/>Deaths



DRAFT EDUCATION ACT

# All guidebooks to be banned

### Mohiuddin Alamgii

The education ministry is set to finalise the draft of the Education Act soon, keeping a provision for imposing ban on printing, publishing, and marketing notebooks and guidebooks.

The draft act stipulates that teachers will not be able to give private tuitions to students of their own institutions. It also seeks to ban corporal punishment for schoolchildren and mental torture by teachers.

Speaking to this newspaper after attending a virtual meeting yesterday afternoon, top education officials said the work on the draft by the ministry was in the last stage.

"We will take a short time to bring changes in the sentences and words of the draft if there is any lastminute changes," said a top education ministry official.

"We will send the draft to the Bangla Bhasha Bastobyan Kosh Committee under the public administration ministry to improve its language. And the draft will be also sent to a committee of Cabinet Division that usually goes through the draft before placing it before cabinet," Mahbub Hossain, secretary of Secondary and Higher Education Division, told The Daily Star.

Education Minister Dipu Moni, Deputy Education Minister Mohibul Hassan Chowdhoury and top officials of the education, and primary and mass education ministries attended the meeting

According to officials, the draft makes printing, publishing, marketing of notebooks and guidebooks punishable by a and maximum imprisonment of three years or a maximum fine of Tk 5 lakh or both.

It also states that if a teacher forces students of his institution to buy notebooks and guidebooks, actions will be taken against him or her.

However, the government will allow publication of supplementary books and education aid books only after approval from the authorities education".

If a teacher of an educational institution forces students to purchase supplementary books and education aid books, it will be considered as misconduct and disciplinary actions will be taken against him or her, says the draft law.

The draft act also said a school may arrange additional classes for weaker students, subject to written consent of the parents. This classes will be held either before or after school hours in line with rules or policies framed by the government or a circular or executive order.

Coaching centres for helping jobseekers, admission seekers or improving English proficiency will remain out of the purview of the law, said top education ministry officials.

The draft law also says no teacher can give corporal punishment or harass any student of the educational institution concerned mentally. Violation of this provision will be considered as misconduct and administrative disciplinary actions can be taken against the teacher concerned.

Students' tuition fees in all public and private educational institutions at the higher education level will be determined with the approval of the government or government-appointed authorities (such as University Grants Commission).

The education ministry took the initiative to prepare an education law in line with the Education Policy of 2010. The policy recommended formulation of a law for proper implementation of the policy.

It also asked a subcommittee of the education policy implementation committee to draft a law on January 26, 2011.

In December 2016, the education ministry sent a draft of the Education Act to the Cabinet Division. But it took the draft act back following huge criticism as the ministry gave legitimacy to coaching and private tuition in the name of "shadow

# UK defends aid cuts after UN warnings of deadly impact

#### AFP, LONDON

Britain yesterday defended cuts to its aid spending, stressing the budget reductions in its contributions, impact of the coronavirus pandemic, months after moving to suspend after several UN agencies warned they

At least three UN agencies this week warned of a devastating impact after Britain informed them of steep



A man hard at work on block printing clothes at the capital's New Supermarket. Shoppers visit the stores to get their designs customised by the workers. The price of a block print dress depends on the design and can range from Tk 100 to Tk 500. PHOTO: ANISUR RAHMAN

#### Can we administer FROM PAGE 1 vaccine.

uncertain. As per the World Health Organization's guidelines, in order to achieve full protection, the second dose has to be taken within 12 weeks of receiving the first dose. If taken later, the level of protection offered by the vaccine may decline.

The government is now desperately trying to procure vaccines from other sources. The country's Directorate General of Drug Administration has already approved Russia's Sputnik-V and China's BBIBP-CorV vaccines for emergency usage; and given nod for local co-production.

There is a possibility of receiving 0.5 million shots from Sinopharm within the next two weeks.

Can we, however, implement the "mix and match" strategy using the Sputnik-V or the Sinopharm vaccine with the Oxford-AstraZeneca vaccine to continue our vaccination feat? As in, can the people who have already received the first dose of Covishield be administered Sputnik-V or Sinopharm as the second dose? The second question is are these vaccines effective and safe? Sputnik-V or BBIBP-CorV is yet to

receive the nod from the World Health Organization. These vaccines have not received approval from European regulator (EMA), UK's regulator MHRA or the US regulator FDA either.

Recently, India, however, has given approval for using Sputnik-V in their country.

Drug Regulators of different countries determine how safe and effective a new drug or a vaccine is. This approval process is quite complicated and time consuming.

In order to complete this process, a panel of experts scrutinise all kinds of laboratory and clinical trial data of the vaccines thoroughly. Given the current takes at least three

## Journo sued under DSA sent to jail

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Dinajpun

A Dinajpur court on Saturday sent a journalist to jail in connection with a case filed under the controversial Digital Security Act (DSA).

The accused is Itekhar Ahmed Khan Babu, 40, a correspondent for the daily Delta Times, an online news portal in the district.

Golam Imtiaz Inan, general secretary of Dinajpur unit Chhatra League, filed the case with Kotwali Police Station against Babu and two other journalists.

The other accused are Jahid Hossain, 35, Dinajpur correspondent for Delta Times, and Monjurul Bari Noyon, 34, editor of news portal Dhaka Protidin.

According to the case statement, the journalists published a false and fabricated report against the BCL leader.

On April 25, police seized a truck loaded with Phensidyl, an illegal Indian cough syrup, in the district's Ghoraghat upazila.

The journalists reported that the truck belonged to BCL leader Inan.

On information, Inan went to the police station and filed a case against them.

Babu was arrested on April 30 night. He is now facing 10 cases, including two lawsuits filed under the DSA, claimed his family members.

Azim Uddin, officer-in-charge of Kotwali Police Station in Dinajpur, said they handed Babu over to the Detective Branch of police in the district after the arrest.

### Bittersweet win

### and matching these two vaccines will be effective, or whether it will cause any dangerous side effects or not. FROM PAGE 1

If the TMC retains power in WB but Mamata loses, she would effectively have six months to get another shot at being elected as the Member of the Legislative Assembly (MLA). For this, an MLA from her party will have to resign so that by-polls can be held there.

This will take place as per the Article 163 and 164 of the Indian Constitution.

As of filing this report at 10:00pm, the TMC is poised to win 215 seats and the BJP 75 seats out of a total 296 seats. Elections were postponed in two seats after the death of candidates.

Immediately after her party's landslide victory, Mamata tweeted, "Eta Banglar joi. Banglar manusher Bangla gota Bharat-kay ioi.

would translate into thousands of deaths among the world's poor.

"I've found the process of making those savings very difficult," Foreign Secretary Dominic Raab told Sky News.

"We've had to make this extremely difficult decision to reduce and find savings in the aid budget, that's because of the impact Covid has had, the biggest contraction we've seen in the economy for 300 years," he said.

Despite the cut of £4 billion (\$5.5 billion, 4.6 billion euros) to £10 billion in its aid budget, Britain remains a leading contributor among the G7 nations, Raab added as he prepares to chair a meeting of G7 foreign ministers in London this week.

SCIMAGO

INSTITUTIONS

its legally enshrined target for aid spending.

The children's fund Unicef and UNAIDS added their own concern after UNFPA, the UN's sexual and reproductive health agency, said the plan would lead to some 250,000 more deaths around the world.

Raab said the government was adopting "a more strategic approach, and also to get maximum value out of every penny of taxpayers' money that goes abroad".

The G7 meeting is expected to agree on fair access to Covid-19 vaccines around the world, and is a "great opportunity ... to use our convening power and make a real team effort to tackle these problems together", he said.

disperse before the police moved in.

Brussels police

lockdown party

crackdown on anti-

Belgian police arrested 132 people

as they used tear gas and water

cannon to break up a banned anti-lockdown party in a Brussels park on

the weekend, an official report said

One partygoer was knocked out by a water cannon and 14 others

were slightly injured -- including one struck by a police horse -- as riot

police brutally dispersed the party on

Saturday in scenes echoing a similar

gathering in the park a month before.

into police custody, the police said.

clashes with the protesters.

festivities had even begun.

Five of those arrested were taken

Three officers were hospitalised

Between 1,000 to 2,000 mainly

young people gathered for the party,

which was organised online, to protest

against restrictions imposed to fight the spread of Covid-19.

Prime Minister Alexander de

Croo had urged the crowds to stay

away, and 600 riot police, numerous

water cannon and a mounted unit

were deployed to the park before the

drowned out police demands for

mask-wearing and social distancing,

and AFP reporters at the Bois de la

Cambre park did not hear an order to

The protesters' music all but

and a dozen slightly injured during

arrest 132 in

AFP, Brussels

yesterday.

As police cars and armoured trucks with water cannon rolled onto the grass close to the heart of the gathering, the merry-makers chanted: "Freedom, Freedom."

Exactly a month previously on April 1, around 2,000 people had gathered in the Bois de la Cambre and several people were hurt, along with officers and horses, in clashes when the police intervened.

Belgium is under its second national lockdown as a coronavirus prevention measure and bars and restaurants have been shut since late October.

But a vaccination drive is picking up speed and outdoor dining and drinking is due to resume on May 8.

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four weeks for this process to complete.

In this regard, how did Bangladesh approve these two vaccines within such a short time? Has Bangladesh ever approved a vaccine that has not been pre-approved by WHO or FDA?

How effective and safe is Sputnik-V? As per the Phase-3 trial results of Sputnik-V, published in the Lancet on 20 February 2021, the effectiveness of the two doses, given 21 days apart, is 92 percent.

The effectiveness of a single dose is 74 percent that begins from 14 days after the shot. Some 22 thousand adult volunteers in Russia took part in the trial phase, which continued from September to November last year.

No severe side effects were observed in the vaccine trial. A few deaths were reported during trial, but later was cleared as unrelated to the vaccine. The effectiveness of the vaccine on adults (18-60 year) was quite similar to the elderly.

However, only the frozen formulation of this vaccine has been tested during the Phase-3 trial. The storing temperature for the frozen vaccine is -18 degree Celsius. Another formulation of this vaccine is its powder or lyophilized form, which can be stored at 4-8 degree Celsius in a regular refrigerator.

This formulation has not yet been evaluated in the Phase-3 trial.

According to the phase one and two trial reports, published in the Lancet on September 8, 2020, both formulations were able to produce enough neutralising antibodies in the blood of all participants and it also elicited the desired "T-cell response". The finding allows us to expect the

similar effectiveness of the frozen form from the powder form of the vaccine. However, there must be adequate evidence in this regard. We should take this fact in consideration before choosing which formulation of Sputnik-V could be manufactured in Bangladesh.

This vaccine, which has been developed by the century old Gamalaya institute of Russia, is a heterogeneous adenovirus vector vaccine. Two different types of human adenovirus have been used for the two doses of this vaccine. A rare adenovirus species named Ad26 has been used for the first dose and a common species Ad5 adenovirus has been used for the second dose.

Using DNA recombinant technology, a piece of coronavirus gene has been inserted inside the adenovirus vectors which are capable of producing Spike protein. These recombinant adenoviruses are injected into the muscle as shots, which produce the spike protein to elicit an immune response against the coronavirus and eventually, builds the protective immunity.

The other vaccines developed using adenovirus vector technology include Oxford-AstraZeneca, Johnson & Johnson and China's Cansinobio

details for this vaccine is not yet available. The Phase-3 trial took place in the United Arab Emirates, Egypt, Bahrain, Peru and Morocco.

However, other than Sputnik-V, all vaccines of this category are single vector vaccine. In Oxford-AstraZeneca,

Chimpanzee adenovirus has been used.

On the other hand, Johnson & Johnson

and Cansinobio has used Ad26 and Ad5

human adenovirus, respectively. Meanwhile, a Phase-1/2 clinical trial was supposed to commence on March 30 this year in Russia, which was

to determine whether Sputnik-V and Oxford-AstraZeneca vaccines can be

administered as first and second doses.

However, according to clinicaltrials. ov, this trial, which was supposed to

be completed by October, has not yet

started. Thus, until this trial is complete,

we cannot say for sure whether mixing

Scientists, on the other hand, have

The Covid-19 vaccine of Sinopharm

is a killed or inactivated vaccine. In

this procedure, the coronavirus is

rendered inactive using chemicals and

then administered as vaccine. This is a traditional tried-and-trusted method

of making vaccines. Another Chinese vaccine Sinovac, India's Covaxin and

France's Valneva vaccines are all killed

Sinopharm is developing two Covid vaccines funded by the Chinese

government. One is being developed in the Beijing institute and the other in Wuhan. Bangladesh is purchasing the vaccine that comes from Beijing. The Phase-3 clinical trial results of

the Sinopharm vaccine are yet to be published in any journal. Thus, the

effectiveness and side effects related

opined that as both vaccines are from

the same platform, administering them in a mixed and matched manner may

prove effective.

Covid-19 vaccines.

As per the press release by the Sinopharm, after two doses given 28 days apart, the effectiveness of the vaccine (Beijing Institute) is 79 percent. On the other hand, the Wuhan version shows an effectiveness of 72 percent.

None of the trials has shown any serious side effects, as reported in a commentary published in the BMJ, 9 April 2021. Now, the Sinopharm vaccine is awaiting the WHO approval. The decision is anticipated to be made by next week.

Previously, Sinopharm conducted the first two phases of their vaccine's trial on 96 and 224 volunteers, respectively. Fourteen days after receiving the jabs, enough neutralising antibodies were generated within the blood of 86 percent of the volunteers. However, this vaccine failed to generate the desired T-cell response, as published in the JAMA journal on August 13, 2020. For this reason, the longevity of the immunity created by this vaccine could be less, at least in theory.

Bangladesh will be receiving half million Sinopharm vaccines within the next two weeks. Now the question is whether this vaccine can be mixed and matched, and used along with the Oxford-AstraZeneca vaccine. As in, can the people who received the Covishield vaccine as the first dose, safely receive the Sinopharm vaccine as the second dose? The answer is still unknown.

Sinopharm and Covishield vaccines come from totally different platforms. One is a killed vaccine and the other is a live adenovirus vector vaccine. The effects and immunogenic responses of these vaccines are totally different. Currently, the UK is conducting a trial on mixing and matching the Oxford vaccine with mRNA vaccines, such as Pfizer and Moderna.

The Sputnik-V vaccine uses modern technology and its price per dose is only 10 US dollars. This vaccine has been approved in over 60 countries.

Perhaps this vaccine will soon get approval from the World Health Organization as well. The powder formulation of this vaccine can be most suitable in our country's perspective. However, we need to assess whether it's complicated production process can be easily replicated in Bangladesh for local production.

On the other hand, the Sinopharm vaccine uses traditional production procedures and can easily be manufactured by our local pharmaceutical companies. The Phase-3 trial results of this vaccine still remains unpublished. Thus, we should only administer it to our countrymen after it gets WHO approval. Each dose of this vaccine costs 35 US dollars. If we can produce it locally, the price may be brought down a notch.

Baanchiyechey. [It's a victory of the Bengal and its people. The Bengal has saved entire India]."

Addressing her first media conference standing on her feet leaving the wheelchair in Kolkata, she said the first priority of her new government would be to tackle the pandemic.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi last night congratulated Mamata and promised continued support to her government to "fulfil the people's aspirations and to overcome Covid-19 pandemic."

The WB was considered by the BJP as the "final frontier" in its quest for expanding its footprints in every Indian state.

But the BJP will cheer, having moved up from just three seats in 2016 to over 75.

Confined to a wheelchair with a leg in cast during most of the campaign after being attacked in Nandigram, Mamata has clearly come out as the undisputed winner in Bengal.

### Vaccines will be

#### FROM PAGE 1

She virtually inaugurated the disbursement of financial assistance for marginalised families from her official residence the Gono Bhaban.

Each family will directly receive Fk 2,500 as G2P (Government-to-Person) transaction through mobile financial services (MFS) -- Nagad, oKash, Rocket, and SureCash.

Stressing that the government will put its all-out efforts, Sheikh Hasina said, "We're procuring each dose of the vaccine spending money, but providing it free so that people can tay safe.

Hasina urged all to strictly follow health guidelines for themselves and others, regardless of whether they have taken the vaccine or not.

Later, the prime minister spoke to various people, including beneficiaries of the cash support programme in Bhola, Joypurhat, and Chattogram districts.

An amount of over Tk 1,500 crore has been allocated to ease the sufferings of marginalised people during the second wave of Covid-19.

Soon after the second wave of the virus emerged, the prime minister directed the authorities to start the activities of humanitarian assistance.