

'Why isn't govt allowing trial of Bangavax?'

Questions GM Quader

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Jatiya Party Chairman and Deputy Leader of the Opposition GM Quader yesterday said people of the country want to know why the government is yet to give permission for carrying out trial of Bangavax.

In a statement, GM Quader said four months have passed since the authorities concerned applied to Bangladesh Medical Research Council (BMRC) for carrying out ethical trial of the Bangladesh-developed Covid-19 vaccine.

"But the government did not give it the permission for unknown reasons. People want to know what is the reason and for whose interest that is," Quader also said.

Quader said in addition to importing foreign vaccines to prevent Covid-19, the government should provide support for success of the vaccine developed at home.

The JP chairman said World Health Organization has listed Bangavax for corona prevention.

On December 28, last year, the Department of Drug Administration gave permission to Globe Biotech to produce a

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Though a necessity of the time, the non-decomposing nature of fabric-based surgical masks could lead to incredible harm for the environment. As people indiscriminately dispose of their masks on the street, health risks also compound. This photo was taken yesterday from the capital's Mirpur.

PHOTO: RASHED SHUMON

5 lakh doses of Chinese vaccine to arrive May 12

Says Ambassador Li Jiming

UNB, Dhaka

Chinese Ambassador to Bangladesh Li Jiming yesterday officially announced that 5 lakh doses of Sinopharm Covid-19 vaccine will reach Bangladesh on May 12.

"It's the latest outcome of China-Bangladesh anti-pandemic cooperation," he said during an interaction with the members of Diplomatic Correspondents' Association, Bangladesh (DCAB) virtually.

"China is dedicated to international vaccine cooperation," said the ambassador.

The World Health Organization (WHO) has listed Sinopharm Covid-19 vaccine for emergency use, giving the green light for this vaccine to be rolled out globally.

It is produced by Beijing Bio-Institute of Biological Products Co Ltd, subsidiary of China National Biotech Group (CNBG).

At the event, the envoy said, "This is a new vote of confidence in China's vaccines cast by the world. The Bangladesh government also gave emergency use authorisation to the vaccine a week prior to the WHO clearance, which I believe is a far-sighted decision."

"It shows the faith put in China by Bangladesh, and it will surely mean a lot to our future cooperation," he said.

According to clinical statistics provided by Sinopharm and the evaluation of the WHO, the efficacy rate of the vaccine is estimated to reach 79 percent, all age groups included.

Ambassador Li said the vaccine is recommended for adults aged 18 and older, and WHO did not indicate any upper age limit for use as data suggests that the vaccine is likely to have a protective effect in elderly persons.

"It is also the first vaccine carrying a vial monitor, a small sticker on the

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DIARRHOEA CASES IN BARISHAL DIVISION Danger not over yet

IEDCR recommends not using surface water

SUSHANTA GHOSH, Barishal

Although the number of diarrhoea patients in Barishal division has decreased, officials said the threat is far from being over.

According to the Divisional Health Office, 50,820 people have been admitted to hospitals due to diarrhoea since January in the division, of which 19 have died so far.

Meanwhile, 440 people have been affected with diarrhoea in the last 24 hours; the number was four times higher in mid-April.

Amid this situation, health officials have stressed the need for bringing diarrhoea patients to medical centres immediately for treatment rather than waiting for the last moment.

Meanwhile, a team of the Institute of Epidemiology Disease Control and Research (IEDCR) has examined patients at various district hospitals including upazila health centres in the division and sent their report to the authorities concerned.

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UAE suspends entry from Bangladesh

Major setback for expats waiting to return to workplaces

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Return of several hundred Bangladeshi migrant workers to their workplaces in the UAE has become uncertain as the Gulf country yesterday suspended entry for travellers from Bangladesh and three other Asian countries.

They are Pakistan, Nepal and Sri Lanka. This decision will come to an effect from May 12.

The UAE's National Emergency Crisis and Disasters Management Authority and Civil Aviation tweeted: "Suspension of entry for travelers from Bangladesh, Pakistan, Nepal and Sri Lanka on national and foreign flights, also for transit passengers, with the exception of transit flights traveling to UAE and bound for these countries."

Officials of different recruiting agencies said Bangladeshi migrant workers will face difficulties in regard to returning to their workplaces in the UAE due to the fresh announcement.

Visa and work permit of many migrant workers may expire if the suspension remains valid for a long period, they said.

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Port city residents worry over getting second vaccine dose

Following Sunday's agitations, officials assure stocks will arrive in time

ARUN BIKASH DEV, Ctg

Retired schoolteacher Ratna Raha received her first dose of Covid-19 vaccine at Chattogram City Corporation (CCC) General Hospital on March 25. She is scheduled to get the second dose on May 25, but then news broke of the shortage of vaccines in the country and Ratna has been worrying for her second dose ever since.

Her worry soon turned into panic when she came to know that a good number of people scheduled for their second dose on Sunday couldn't get theirs.

"I'm hearing news that many who received their first doses some two weeks before me are failing to get their second doses," Ratna told this correspondent. "I'm most worried over how long the effects of the first dosage will stay if I can't get the second one in time."

On Sunday, the aggrieved people at CCC General Hospital started agitating

after being refused their second doses. The situation soon started to spiral out of control, compelling hospital authority to lock the collapsible gate.

People then took to the streets and started to block moving vehicles. Later, police had to bring everything in order.

But Dr Selim Akter Chowdhury, chief health officer of CCC, said the hospital never stopped its vaccination programme. "A lot of people who did not get called to the centre on Sunday came regardless, and when the officials refused, they started agitating," he said.

Through a video message yesterday, Civil Surgeon Dr Sheikh Fazle Rabbi assured that everyone who received the first dose of vaccine will surely get the second one.

"You need not be worried. High-ranking officials of the government have assured us that they will bring in the vaccines very soon," he said in the video.

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MARCH 26 VIOLENCE

Mamunul, Rafiqul Madani sent to jail

COURT CORRESPONDENT

Hefajat-e-Islam's former joint secretary general Mamunul Haque and Rafiqul Islam Madani, widely known as "Shishu Bokta", were sent to jail yesterday on completion of their remand.

The duo were produced before a Dhaka court in three cases filed with Motijheel and Paltan police stations.

Mamunul was produced before the court on completion of his two-day remand in the case filed with Paltan Police Station over the recent violence in Dhaka centering Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi's visit on March 26.

Rafiqul was produced before the same court following completion of his 11-day remand in two cases filed with the Motijheel Police Station.

The first case was filed against 51 named and 200-300 unnamed leaders and activists of Hefajat with Motijheel Police Station on March 25 with charges of preventing policemen from discharging duties.

Rafiqul's name was not included in the first information report in this case.

The second case was filed on April 8

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'Corona-resilient villages' can help contain the virus

Say speakers at Hunger Project webinar

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Turning communities and villages across the country into "Coronavirus-Resilient Villages" can significantly reduce the risk of infection, speakers said at an online discussion yesterday.

The Hunger Project organised the webinar where it shared experiences from its initiatives undertaken last April that can help create these "Coronavirus-Resilient Villages", said a press release from the organisation.

Moderating the discussion, Badiul Alam Majumdar, The Hunger Project's global vice-president and Bangladesh chapter country director, said health risk during the pandemic can be mitigated in two ways.

One is by improving health services and the other is by building awareness among people and changing their daily habits, he said, mentioning that the latter is the key to containing the virus in Bangladesh.

Since April last year, volunteers of the organisation have been implementing various programmes in four steps, Badiul said.

They start working by forming community mobilisation committees and then undertaking steps to build awareness and changing people's behaviour, he said.

Later, they assist infected persons to get treatment and also provide financial support to those in need, he added.

Currently, the initiative is being implemented in 1,200 villages, according to the press release.

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Modern waste bins were set up in the capital's Hatirjheel, with separate compartments for recyclable and non-recyclable waste. However, the bin itself is turning into waste now, as it lies broken and useless beside the lake.

PHOTO: SK ENAMUL HAQ



Former Dhaka North City Corporation Mayor Annisul Huq's reclaiming of the capital's Tejgaon-Satrapa road from blatant encroachment by illegally parked trucks and vans became such a part of his legacy that after his demise, the road was named after him. However, heavy vehicles have since returned to take up the road again and again, with the authorities seemingly having no long-term answer to the nuisance. The photo was taken last week.

PHOTO: RASHED SHUMON

CJ decides to run necessary courts amid Eid holidays

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Chief Justice Syed Mahmud Hossain has decided to operate necessary number of courts at all tiers during Eid holidays so litigants can get remedy.

The functions of the Supreme Court's Appellate Division, its chamber court and High Court Division are going on through virtual system amid the lockdown, a SC press release said on Sunday.

It said the Appellate Division disposed of 10,003 cases from July 13 last year to May 6 this year through virtual hearing. Besides, more than 500 criminal petitions are being settled at the HC Division where over 100 lawyers attended the hearing through virtual system.

Contacted, SC spokesperson Md Saifur Rahman, who issued the press release, said the subordinate courts have disposed of bail petitions of the accused in total 58,605 criminal cases through virtual hearings and granted bail to 31,208 under trial prisoners in 18 working days since April 12 to May 6 this year.

A total of 1,03,437 under trial prisoners have got released from jails after securing in two phases.

Increase tobacco tax to discourage consumption

Demand Progga and ATMA

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Prices of cigarettes and other tobacco products should be increased through specific taxation to bring the goods beyond people's purchasing capacity to achieve a tobacco-free Bangladesh, speakers said at a virtual roundtable yesterday.

They said increasing tobacco product price through effective taxation discourages youths to start tobacco use. Increased price also encourages existing users, particularly those who are financially vulnerable, to quit.

Knowledge for Progress (Progga) and Anti-Tobacco Media Alliance (ATMA) jointly organised the virtual roundtable on "Tobacco Tax and Price Measures for a Tobacco-Free Bangladesh: Reality and the Way Forward", said a press release sent by Progga.

At the roundtable, the organisers proposed to set retail price of cigarettes in different tiers -- Tk 140 for 10 sticks in the premium tier and Tk 110 for 10 sticks in high tier.

Additionally, they proposed to impose Tk 91 as specific supplementary duty (SD) in the premium tier and Tk 71.5 as SD in the high tier.

Addressing the roundtable, Saber Hossain Chowdhury, chairman of the Parliamentary Committee on Environment, Forestry and Climate Change, said, "Each year before budget, we raise our demands to increase tobacco taxes. Unfortunately, the national budget never reflects our demands."

Mentioning that the prime minister has voiced her vision for a tobacco-free Bangladesh, he said those who are putting obstacles in the way need to be identified.

Eminent economist and convener of National Anti-Tobacco Platform Qazi Kholiqzaman Ahmad said, "It is quite frustrating for us to find

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