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UPAZILA HEALTH COMPLEXES NEAR BORDER Underequipped for Covid surge

STAR REPORT

Debhata in Satkhira is separated from the district of 24 Parganas in India by the Ichamati river. The ban on international travel between the two countries does not stop Debhata's local fry-catchers from swimming to the spots where they find the best Bagda prawn, regardless of whether they are in Bangladesh or in India.

Locals from 24 Parganas do the same, and they meet where the waters of the Ichamati apparently wash away all notions of political boundaries.

And that is what worries one of the doctors of Debhata Upazila Health Complex, Md Abdul Latif.

In a district where the Covid-19 positivity rate is 25 percent -- more than double that the national positivity rate -- Dr Latif's health centre is woefully underprepared.

"We have 16 oxygen cylinders, but the reason why that is a problem is because we can use eight at a time. We do not have any method of filling up oxygen cylinders in Satkhira, so we have to send the cylinders to Jashore. We send eight at a time. We leave them at Jashore, and go back with the other 8 when they get finished," he said.

They are also facing a potentially impending crisis of the Indian strain of the Sars-Cov-2 virus without adequate protection for their healthcare workers.

"With regards to PPE, we are doing alright. We have around 300 PPE left from last year, but we do not have any N95 or KN95 masks. But we will manage to serve of course," Dr Latif said. The Supply Chain Management Portal of the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare shows that the health

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A man wades through a flooded street in the capital's Paschim Tejturibazar area yesterday morning. A downpour submerged many areas of the city, leaving people in trouble. The waterlogging caused traffic congestion in parts of the city. Story and more photos on page 3

PHOTO: PRABIR DAS

41 more die, 1,765 new cases in 24 hours

Researchers predict another peak in mid-July

MOUDUD AHMED SUJAN

With the number of Covid-19 new cases rising every day over last several days, a team of researchers said Bangladesh may observe another peak of novel coronavirus infection in mid-July.

They projected that the daily cases might reach the highest -- 9,698 -- on July 11, if the test figure increases to 50,000 daily.

If the government's test capacity remains as it is, the new cases may be 7,743 on that day.

Since mid-May, daily new cases and deaths started rising steadily following a downward trend from the latest peak

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BUDGET 2021-22

Tax cut galore in next budget

REJAU KARIM BYRON

"Cuts, cuts, cuts!" -- would be the chorus of Finance Minister AHM Mustafa Kamal's third budget speech that he is due to deliver in the parliament tomorrow.

The budget, which is coming off the back of a stalled economic recovery thanks to the second wave of COVID-19 cases, will look to revive the tremendous growth momentum that has made Bangladesh the wealthiest nation in the Indian subcontinent in per capita terms.

And the cynosure would be on fuelling domestic consumption meaningfully and generating employment, and Kamal is hoping to achieve that by a mixed bag of tax cut, holiday and exemption.

The measure that would draw the most cheers would be the 2.5 percentage points slash in corporate tax, a longstanding demand of the private sector, which has become all the more pertinent in jumpstarting the economic locomotive.

At present, the corporate tax range from 25 percent to 45 percent. The one-person company law would be implemented from the next fiscal year, and the corporate tax for such companies has been fixed at 25 percent.

The most adventurous fiscal measure in the budget for fiscal 2021-22 would be a tax holiday for 10 years for manufacturing import-substitute

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FISCAL MEASURES IN FY22

- Black money can be whitened as before
- Tax holiday for 'Make in Bangladesh'
- Corporate tax cuts of 2.5 percentage points
- 9 more ICT services to get tax exemption
- AIT for raw material imports cut 1 percentage point
- Revenue target Tk 330,000cr

FY21 NATIONAL BUDGET A missed opportunity

REJAU KARIM BYRON AND MD FAZLUH RAHMAN

The government in last year's budget gave priority to several crucial sectors to protect people and their livelihoods amid the pandemic, but it could not achieve the desired results due to the Covid second wave and hurdles in implementing its initiatives.

Finance Minister AHM Mustafa Kamal put the fight against the virus and the economic recovery at the heart of the budget for fiscal 2020-21.

As expected, he gave priority to health, agriculture, social protection, and job creation and retention as the country was facing an unprecedented crisis.

Kamal went for an expansionary budget that would see the deficit go past the comfortable level of 5 percent as funds were allocated to the ministries and divisions to meet regular and emergency needs so that the country could pull itself out of the crisis.

He also prioritised development projects, closed loss-making jute and sugar mills, and cut non-essential public expenditures to save money for a rainy day.

The economy reopened in the very month he placed the budget after a two-

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Pfizer vaccine roll-out in Dhaka next week

6 lakh Sinopharm jabs due in 7-10 days

MOHAMMAD AL-MASUM MOLLA

The government will start administering Pfizer Covid-19 vaccine at four vaccination centres in the capital from next week.

"Those who have already completed registration and waiting to be vaccinated will get the jabs. The Pfizer vaccine will only be administered in Dhaka city," Health Minister Zahid Maleque told The Daily Star yesterday.

The four designated vaccination centres include Kurmitola General Hospital, and

Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujib Medical University, said the minister.

A consignment of 106,000 doses of the Pfizer vaccine reached Dhaka On Monday. The government received the consignment under the global vaccine-sharing initiative COVAX.

Health officials said as Pfizer vaccine requires about negative 70 degrees Celsius storage, it will not be sent outside the capital. The required temperature is far below the normal refrigeration levels.

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Minister's cellphone snatched from SUV

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Planning Minister MA Mannan's mobile phone was snatched while he was talking over the phone inside his SUV at the capital's Bijoy Sarani area on Sunday.

The incident happened around

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A child enjoys her time on a swing hanging from a tree branch in Chattogram city's CRB area. Children have spent much of their time indoors for months amid the pandemic. Psychologists say staying outside for some time each day can provide a boost to their state of mind. The photo was taken recently.

PHOTO: RAJIB RAIHAN

Tk 23,000 almirah bought for Tk 96,000

ACC probe finds TB Hospital former, current deputy directors involved in irregularities

MAHBUB KHAN

A steel almirah typically costs about Tk 23,000 but authorities of the 250-bed TB Hospital bought 100 such items at Tk 96,000 each, according to an Anti-Corruption Commission

enquiry.

The authorities also purchased 19 essential pieces of medical equipment for the hospital at exaggerated prices in 2018.

In the enquiry, the details of which were revealed yesterday, the

ACC found that the hospital's former deputy director and current deputy director misappropriated around Tk 4.46 crore of public money in collaboration with suppliers.

ACC's Deputy Assistant Director

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শেখ হাসিনার বাংলাদেশ
জীববৈচিত্র্যসমৃদ্ধ উন্নত পরিবেশ

গণবিজ্ঞপ্তি

সেন্টমার্টিনের বিরল জীববৈচিত্র্য ও প্রতিবেশ
সুরক্ষায় পরিপালনীয় বিধি-নিষেধ

বাংলাদেশের একমাত্র প্রবালসমৃদ্ধ দ্বীপ সেন্টমার্টিন সরকার ঘোষিত একটি প্রতিবেশগত সংকটাপন্ন এলাকা। অনিয়ন্ত্রিত পর্যটন এবং পর্যটকদের অসচেতনতা, দায়িত্বজ্ঞানহীনতা, পরিবেশ এবং প্রতিবেশ বিরোধী আচরণের কারণে সেন্টমার্টিনের বিরল প্রতিবেশ এবং জীববৈচিত্র্য এখন ধ্বংসের দ্বারপ্রান্তে উপনীত। দ্বীপের পরিবেশ, প্রতিবেশ ও বিরল জীববৈচিত্র্য পুনরুদ্ধারসহ দ্বীপটিকে টিকিয়ে রাখার লক্ষ্যে পরিবেশ সংরক্ষণ আইন ১৯৯৫ (সংশোধিত ২০১০)-এর ০৪ ধারার ক্ষমতাবলে এ দ্বীপে ভ্রমণের ক্ষেত্রে নিম্নলিখিত কার্যক্রমসমূহ নিষিদ্ধ ঘোষণা করা হলোঃ

- দ্বীপের সৈকতে সাইকেল, মটর সাইকেল, রিক্সা, ভ্যানসহ সকল প্রকার যান্ত্রিক ও অযান্ত্রিক বাহন চালানো;
- দ্বীপের সৈকত, সমুদ্র এবং নাফ নদীতে প্লাস্টিকসহ সকল ধরনের বর্জ্য ফেলা;
- পশ্চিম পার্শ্বের সৈকতে কোনোপাড়ার পর দক্ষিণ দিকে এবং পূর্ব পার্শ্বের সৈকতে গলাচিপার পর দক্ষিণ দিকে পরিভ্রমণ;
- দ্বীপের চতুর্পার্শ্বে নৌ-ভ্রমণ করা;
- জোয়ার ভাটা এলাকায় পাথরের উপর হাঁটা;
- সামুদ্রিক কাছিমের ডিমপাড়ার স্থানে চলাফেরা, রাতে আলো জ্বালানো এবং ফ্ল্যাশ লাইট ব্যবহার করে ছবি তোলা;
- সৈকতে রাতের বেলা কোন প্রকার আলো বা আগুন জ্বালানো, আতশবাজি ও ফানুস উড়ানো;
- সৈকতে মাইক বাজানো, হে-চৈ এবং উচ্চস্বরে গান-বাজনা করা, বার-বি-কিউ পার্টি করা;
- ছেঁড়াদিয়া দ্বীপে স্পীড বোট, কান্ট্রি বোট, ট্রলার বা অন্যান্য জলযানে যাতায়াত এবং নোঙ্গর করা;
- সংরক্ষণের উদ্দেশ্যে সরকার কর্তৃক অধিগ্রহণকৃত ছেঁড়াদিয়া দ্বীপ ভ্রমণ;
- প্রবাল, শামুক, বিনুক, সামুদ্রিক কাছিম, পাখি, তারা মাছ, রাজকাঁকড়া, সামুদ্রিক ঘাস, সামুদ্রিক শৈবাল এবং কেয়া ফল সংগ্রহ ও ক্রয়-বিক্রয়;
- জাহাজ থেকে পাখিকে চিপস বা অন্য কোন খাবার খাওয়ানো;
- দ্বীপে সুপের ভূগর্ভস্থ পানি সীমিত বিধায় পানির অপচয় করা;
- সেন্টমার্টিন দ্বীপের প্রতিবেশের জন্য ক্ষতিকর যে কোন কার্যক্রম গ্রহণ করা;

উল্লিখিত বিধি-নিষেধের লঙ্ঘন আইনত দণ্ডনীয় অপরাধ।

আসুন বাংলাদেশের একমাত্র প্রবালসমৃদ্ধ দ্বীপ সেন্টমার্টিনকে সংরক্ষণ করি।
বর্তমান ও আগামী প্রজন্মের জন্য টেকসই পরিবেশ গড়ি।

মহাপরিচালক
পরিবেশ অধিদপ্তর