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COVID IN BORDER AREAS

Restrictions imposed in 3 districts

Satkhira to go into lockdown tomorrow

STAR REPORT

In the wake of skyrocketing Covid-19 cases in bordering areas, partial lockdown and night-time travel restrictions were imposed in three more districts yesterday, while Satkhira will go into a seven-day lockdown from tomorrow.

Deputy Commissioner of Satkhira SM Mostafa Kamal made the announcement yesterday after a meeting of "District Coronavirus Prevention Committee" at his office.

Shops of daily essentials will remain open for three hours from 9:00am during the lockdown that will exempt pharmacies, hospitals, clinics, ambulances and other offices of emergency services, said the DC.

Operations of inter-district buses and motorbikes will remain suspended during the lockdown and police vigilance will be beefed up, he added.

Earlier in 24 hours from Wednesday to Thursday, 93 people tested positive in Satkhira.

The current infection rate in the district is 53.19 percent, whereas the rate was 41pc last week and 12-13 percent in the first two weeks of last month.

Public negligence in following health safety guidelines and cross-border movement through Bhomra land port are the main reasons for rising the infection rate, said the District Coronavirus Prevention Committee.

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Farmers put their pumpkins on display for sale at Fenchuganj Paschimbaraz in Sylhet. Every 100 pumpkins wholesale at Tk 1,200-Tk 4,000, depending on their sizes. Over 2,000 people in the upazila are engaged in pumpkin farming. This photo was taken recently.

PHOTO: SHEIKH NASIR

30 more die of Covid, 1,687 get infected

UNB, Dhaka

As Bangladesh continues to fight against the pandemic with rising infections in frontier districts, it recorded 30 more deaths from Covid-19 in 24 hours till yesterday morning, raising the death toll to 12,724.

Besides, health authorities reported 1,687 new cases after testing 16,982 samples during the same period.

With the new cases, the total caseload rose to 805,980, said a handout of the Directorate General of Health Services.

The daily infection rate rose to 9.94 percent, up from Wednesday's 9.81 percent, while the mortality rate remained static at 1.58 percent.

The handout said 746,035 patients, including 1,970 during the 24-hour

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INDIAN VARIANT

Community transmission in Bangladesh confirmed

Researchers find unidentified variant

MOHAMMAD AL-MASUM MOLLA

Government research confirmed community transmission of the Delta variant, popularly known as Indian variant, in the country and it also found one unidentified variant of coronavirus.

The Delta variant was dominating the coronavirus transmission in the country as 40 of the 50 samples tested turned out to be the Indian variant.

Since the first case of Indian variant was detected in the country on May 8, Institute of Epidemiology, Disease Control and Research and Institute for Developing

SEE PAGE 14 COL 5

ROAD TO FREEDOM

THIS DAY IN BANGLADESH LIBERATION WAR HISTORY

Effort to form new party

JUNE 4, 1971

SHAMSUDDOZA SAJEN

PAKISTAN, UN AGREE ON RELIEF FOR WAR VICTIMS

Pakistan and the United Nations agreed on relief operations for victims of the war in East Pakistan, a UN spokesman announced today.

The agreement was reached following a meeting yesterday between Pakistan President Gen Agha Mohammed Yahya Khan and Ismat Kittani, UN assistant secretary-general for interagency affairs.

Talks between the two apparently overcame Yahya's insistence that international assistance should be administered by Pakistani relief agencies.

No details were available, but the spokesman said Egypt's Baghat Tawil, assistant director of the UN Office of Technical Cooperation in New York, had been named to coordinate the UN programme.

BID TO DISSIDENTS

The Government of Pakistan appeared to be trying to bring some former leading members of the Awami League back into the national fold.

SEE PAGE 14 COL 5



Allowance for freedom fighters' gets a bump

PARTHA PRATIM BHATTACHARJEE

The new national budget proposes hiking the monthly allowance of valiant freedom fighters to Tk 20,000 from Tk 12,000.

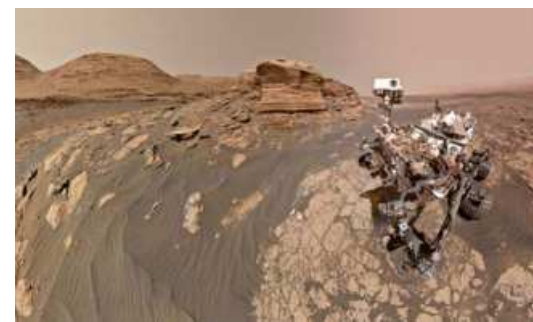
The proposal is in line with Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina's previous announcement in this regard.

According to the proposed budget for fiscal 2021-22, the government will have to spend an additional Tk 1,920 crore in the upcoming fiscal if the proposal is approved.

The government now spends Tk 3,385.05 crore a year for providing the allowance to freedom fighters.

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Curiosity rover searches for salt on Mars



CNN ONLINE

The Curiosity rover is heading for the hills as it continues to explore Mars, and the proverbial gold it's looking for may surprise you: organic salts.

No, that's not for your farm-to-table cooking. Organic salt is a key ingredient in the quest for

SEE PAGE 14 COL 4

A boost for ICT

Six services, hardware manufacturing get tax breaks

MAHMUDUL HASAN and SHAHID BAPPY

The government is going to bolster the country's expanding ICT sector with tax exemptions in six more services and VAT waiver on hardware manufacturing as it looks to prepare the nation for the fourth industrial revolution.

With the new tax breaks in cloud computing, system integration, e-learning platform, e-book publication, mobile application development and IT freelancing until 2024, now 28 services in total would enjoy the benefits.

Finance Minister AHM Mustafa Kamal also offered tax exemption, subject to certain conditions, for 10 years on manufacturing some selective hardware.

"This will give impetus to the digital transformation process of Bangladesh, make modern digital services easily available to the citizens at low costs,

SEE PAGE 14 COL 2



An Indian Pitta spotted in Nuhash Palli of Gazipur. This bird, a regular summer visitor to Bangladesh, is now visiting Bangladesh for breeding. It feeds on insects and other small invertebrates.

PHOTO: COURTESY MOHIUL ISLAM

'Made in Bangladesh' encouraged in budget

An uplift for local entrepreneurs, manufacturers

MOHAMMAD SUMAN, Ctg

Domestic manufacturing might enjoy a big boost as the government plans to encourage local investment in products labelled "Made in Bangladesh".

As part of the plan proposed in the budget, the National Board of Revenue (NBR) will continue to provide VAT exemption to makers of refrigerators, freezers, and compressors used in these products for another year.

Manufacturers of air conditioners and its compressors would also enjoy VAT exemption for three more years.

The revenue authority also proposed

to extend VAT exemption to facilitate manufacturing of cars for another five years.

Apart from VAT benefit, the NBR also offered full tax exemption for 20-year for makers of three-wheeler and four-wheeler vehicles. It offered full tax breaks for washing machine, blender, microwave ovens and other home appliance makers.

Kitchen and home appliances makers also get VAT exemption.

Such tax and VAT exemptions will play an important role in compensating for the fallout of the pandemic and help grow the domestic industry.

In his proposal for tax measures for the

SEE PAGE 14 COL 5



PRAYER TIMING JUNE 4

Fazr Juma Asr Maghrib Esha
AZAN 4-05 12-30 5-00 6-45 8-15
JAMAAT 4-40 1-15 5-15 6-50 8-45

SOURCE: ISLAMIC FOUNDATION

ROHINGYA CRISIS

Bangladesh has shown humanity, solidarity

Says UNHCR assistant high commissioner

DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT

Bangladesh has taken a huge responsibility by hosting almost one million Rohingya refugees in the largest refugee camp in the world, said the UN Refugee Agency, calling on the international community to support Bangladesh and share its burden.

"While Bangladesh has shown humanity and solidarity, in line with the guiding principles of the Global Compact on Refugees, the international community must step up and give practical effect to the obligation to share responsibility, and to protect refugees and support the host Bangladeshi government," said UNHCR Assistant High Commissioner for Protection Gillian Triggs.

Triggs and her colleague Raouf Mazou, UNHCR's assistant high commissioner for operations, issued a joint statement yesterday following a four-day visit to Bangladesh from May 30 to June 2. They visited Rohingya camps in Cox's Bazar and Bhasan Char. They had also meetings with Bangladesh government officials and UN officials in Dhaka.

The UN officials reiterated their sincere appreciation to the Bangladesh

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JABS FOR POOR COUNTRIES

Covax secures addl \$2.4b for Covid shots

WHO rules out new 'hybrid' variant in Vietnam

AGENCIES

Countries and private donors pledged nearly \$2.4 billion to the Covax vaccine-sharing plan, expanding efforts to make Covid-19 shots more available to people in poorer nations.

The announcements, ranging from \$2,500 from island nation Mauritius to millions of dollars and doses from wealthier countries, came during a video summit on Wednesday hosted by Japan and the GAVI Vaccine Alliance, which leads the Covax facility alongside the World Health Organization.

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