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Curbs extended to cut virus spread

Restrictions to stay 10 more days amid worries over fresh surge

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

With the Covid positivity rate surging in bordering districts, the government has extended the nationwide restrictions for 10 more days to check virus transmission.

The Cabinet Division yesterday issued a gazette notification to this effect, saying no social, political and religious gatherings will be allowed till June 16.

All tourist spots, resorts, and community and entertainment centres will remain closed during the period, it mentioned.

Restaurants and food shops are allowed to stay open from 6:00am to 10:00pm every day. Restaurants can provide either dine-in or takeaway services but the dine-in will be limited to half of the seating capacity.

Earlier, there had been no time limit for operation of restaurants and food shops.

According to the notification, public transports, including inter-districts buses, will carry passengers at half capacity, maintaining the health safety rules.

SEE PAGE 2 COL 3

DIVISION-WISE POSITIVITY RATE

RAJSHAHI	25.19%
RANGPUR	23.66%
KHULNA	21.66%
SYLHET	13.89%
MYMENSINGH	12.37%
CHATTOGRAM	8.69%
BARISHAL	7.58%
DHAKA	6.05%



Rickshaw-pullers in Chattogram city's Muradpur area drag their vehicles in waist-deep water while behind them, other vehicles are poised on slightly higher ground, preparing to take the plunge. Inset, the lower third of a bus in the Gate No-2 area is submerged as parts of the port city saw severe waterlogging during incessant rainfall yesterday.

BTRC fixes minimum broadband charges

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The telecom regulator yesterday fixed the prices for broadband internet connections.

The monthly cost of a connection with a minimum speed of 5 Mbps is Tk 500, 10 Mbps Tk 800 - 1,000, 20 Mbps Tk 1,100 - 1,200, according to the new decisions.

Bangladesh Telecommunication Regulatory Commission (BTRC) fixed the rates after multiple meetings with International Internet Gateway, Nationwide Telecommunication Transmission Network, International Terrestrial Cable and Internet Service Providers.

The BTRC decisions were announced at an event titled One Country One Rate.

BTRC Director General
SEE PAGE 2 COL 6

Medical board finds 'no signs of torture'

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Dhaka Medical College Hospital (DMCH) medical board that was tasked with doing a physical check-up of cartoonist Ahmed Kabir Kishore told the court yesterday that they did not find any signs of torture.

The three-member medical board had submitted a report to the Metropolitan Sessions Judge's Court of Dhaka on March 20, 2021, said the court sources yesterday.

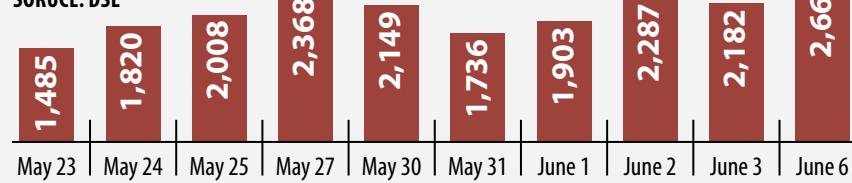
According to the report, the physical examination of Kishore revealed

SEE PAGE 6 COL 3

Turnover at DSE spirals on budget measures

TURNOVER OF THE DSE (IN CR TK)

SOURCE: DSE



AHSAN HABIB

The Dhaka Stock Exchange yesterday recorded its second-biggest turnover, as the ongoing bull run seems to have gotten an added impetus from the proposed budget measures for the incoming fiscal year.

A sign of the level of bustle in the bourse, the turnover stood at Tk 2,669 crore, up 22 percent from the previous session on Thursday.

Only on December 6, 2010 were a higher turnover, which is the ratio of the

value of total shares traded to the average real market capitalisation, was recorded: Tk 2,710 crore.

Finance Minister AHM Mustafa Kamal in his proposed budget for fiscal 2021-22 extended a 2.5 percentage point-cut in the corporate tax rate for both listed and non-listed companies except for financial institutions, telecom and service-oriented companies.

The corporate tax is a tax on the profits of a company; the amount taken out is

SEE PAGE 2 COL 1

Hefajat to get a committee today

AL-leaning activists to be in it

RASHIDUL HASAN and MOHAMMAD JAMIL KHAN

Hefajat-e Islam will announce today its new committee comprising of what insiders said would be the leaders sympathetic to the ruling Awami League.

The previous committee was disbanded around one and a half months ago amid a government crackdown on Hefajat leaders following the Islamist organisations' violence across the country that started over Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi's visit to Bangladesh in late March.

The new Hefajat committee will be

SEE PAGE 2 COL 1

Govt moves to procure Sinovac

MOHAMMAD AL-MASUM MOLLA

After Sinopharm, the government has started the process of procuring coronavirus vaccine from another Chinese company Sinovac to inoculate most of the country's 163 million population.

As part of the move, the Directorate General of Drug Administration (DGDA) has approved Sinovac's Covid-19 vaccine "CoronaVac" on June 3. Incepta Vaccine Ltd, as a local agent of Sinovac, applied for its approval for emergency use in Bangladesh.

"We are communicating with Sinovac and, as part of our discussion, we have given approval for emergency usage authorisation. Now our discussion will progress further," Health Minister Zahid Maleque told The Daily Star yesterday.

"We will procure vaccines from Sinovac if the price is affordable, if the terms and conditions are favourable and the delivery timing matches our demand."

He said many countries have already relaxed lockdowns and lifted restrictions of movement after massive vaccination drives.

"We have to vaccinate our people and for that we need a massive amounts of vaccine. So we are exploring all potential sources."

SEE PAGE 2 COL 3

BB stops FAS Finance MD's US trip

AKM ZAMIR UDDIN

Bangladesh Bank yesterday refused to allow FAS Finance and Investment Ltd Managing Director Prithish Kumar Sarker to travel to the US.

The non-bank financial institution, which has faced a wide-range of financial scams in recent period, is being scanned by the central bank.

Bangladesh Bank asked Prithish not to travel abroad before the first meeting of the reconstituted board of FAS and minutes of the meeting were prepared.

The "embargo" on Prithish's travelling abroad could be extended, said a central bank official, seeking anonymity.

Prashanta Kumar Halder
SEE PAGE 6 COL 3



The inside of a bus in the capital's Paltan area shows that passengers are packed together, some having to stand as there are no seats available. This is in violation of the government directive on buses to operate at half capacity in order to maintain social distancing guidelines. While they are charging the 60 percent higher fares to compensate for reduced capacity, many operators are ignoring the half-capacity directive.

PHOTO: PRABIR DAS

4 corporations offer free O2 nationwide

MOHAMMAD SUMAN, Chattogram

Four corporate houses based in Chattogram have expressed willingness to extend their free oxygen supply support to Covid-19 patients and hospitals at border districts.

In a bid to ease the strain on oxygen supply, the four companies have been supplying oxygen to hospitals and patients for free in several districts, like Chattogram, Cox's Bazar, Feni, Cumilla, and Sylhet since the middle of last year.

The four business conglomerates -- Mostafa-Hakim Group, Abul Khair Group, GPH Ispat and Master Group -- have pledged to provide the support as long as the pandemic lasts.

So far, they have distributed 12,000 cylinders to 35 private and government hospitals. During March-April this year,

when the infections surged, they were refilling around 700 oxygen cylinders free of cost every day.

Now, the companies are refilling around 600 oxygen cylinders free of cost daily as the demand has gradually decreased after Eid.

Contacted, Nazmul Islam, head of GPH Ispat's oxygen plant, told The Daily Star that the demand for oxygen decreased in Chattogram and surrounding districts.

"However, coronavirus infections have increased in several districts, including Chapainawabganj and Rajshahi, during this period. We have talked to the officials concerned in these districts. They said there was no oxygen crisis. If they want, we can help hospitals of those areas with free oxygen cylinders," he said.

SEE PAGE 2 COL 6

Only 2pc RMG workers vaccinated

Finds survey; 4pc have factory provided transport to work

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Only 2 percent of readymade garments workers were able to get Covid-19 vaccines, found a survey done jointly by South Asian Network on Economic Modeling and Microfinance Opportunities.

Sixty-nine percent of workers said they were willing to get vaccinated if they were eligible to get the vaccine, said the report circulated by SANEM.

The organisations interviewed a pool of 1,285 workers over phone on April 23, 2021, and found that only an insignificant minority was vaccinated. The workers were from Chattogram, Dhaka city, Gazipur, Narayanganj, and Savar.

"On being asked whether they think they are eligible to get vaccinated, 36 percent of the respondents said they were eligible, 28 percent said they were not eligible, and 34

SEE PAGE 2 COL 3

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মহাপরিচালক (অতিরিক্ত সচিব)
ফোনঃ ০২-৪৮৩১৮২০৪
ইমেইলঃ dq@wewb.gov.bd

জিডি-১১৪৬