



The Daily Star



REGD. NO. DA 781 | VOL. XXXI No. 151 | ASHAR 6, 1428 BS | **Your Right to Know** | ZILQAD 8, 1442 HIJRI | 16 PAGES PRICE : Tk12.00

Lockdowns come, always too late

MOUJIB AHMED SUJAN

On May 29, the Epidemiology and Public Health Committee of DGHS recommended loud and clear an immediate isolation of seven districts in Khulna and Rajshahi divisions through "strict lockdown" as the Delta variant of the Covid-19 started transmitting at the community level there.

The government, however, this time too failed to act timely based on the necessity and delayed implementing the recommendation.

Following the committee's recommendation, the cabinet on May 31 asked the districts' authorities to take measures and they made delays in enforcing the lockdown to save people's livelihood during the mango-harvesting season.

Now not only those seven districts, but also many beyond have turned into Covid hotspots, despite lockdowns that were imposed recently.

The overall Covid situation across the country is worsening every day.

Yesterday, 67 Covid deaths -- the highest since May 2 -- were reported by the Directorate General of Health Services (DGHS). The positivity rate rose to 18.02 percent. It was only 7.91 percent on May 29.

Experts said the situation has turned so bad that any more slack measures to curb the virus can be disastrous.

"It's already too late. When you delay enforcing lockdown even for a single day, patient's number increases across the country. The government has already wasted too much time," Prof Nazrul Islam, member of the National Technical Advisory Committee (NTAC) on Covid-19, told The Daily Star yesterday.

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KHULNA UNDER LOCKDOWN FROM TUESDAY

Highest Deaths in Khulna **24**

Positivity rate **38.5**

Lockdown in force in **12** districts/parts of districts



PHOTO: PRABIR DAS

A woman working on a massive pile of throwaway plastic bottles in the Notun Baklia Bridge area of Chattogram. Hazardous as the single-use bottles are for the environment, many people in the country make a living out of picking up, sorting out, and bringing the bottles to factories that melt them into tiny plastic beads that are used by different industries in China.

SINOPHARM JABS Vaccination begins on a limited scale

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

As the administration of the first dose of Covid-19 vaccine resumed yesterday after around two months, 2,956 students of public and private medical and dental colleges were given Sinopharm jabs in the capital, according to a DGHS press release.

The government had suspended administering the first dose on April 26 due to a shortage of the AstraZeneca vaccines. Recently, it decided to recommence the vaccination on a limited scale at 67 centres across the country, with around 11 lakh Sinopharm doses in hand.

As only medical and dental students were given the shots yesterday, others had to return from the centres without getting the vaccine. Health officials said only such students would be vaccinated for the next few days "to maintain

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Parents, daughter killed inside home

Police suspect elder daughter drugged, strangled them over family issues

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A couple and their 21-year-old daughter were found dead in a flat in Dhaka's Kadamtali area yesterday morning.

Police suspect that the three were strangled to death after being sedated. The legs and hands of the bodies were found tied up.

The deceased are: Masud Rana, 50, a Saudi expat, his wife Mousumi Islam, 45, and their daughter Jannatul Islam.

The couple's elder daughter Mehjabin Islam Moon, 30, has been taken in for interrogation. The police suspect she was involved, Shah Iftekhar Ahmed, deputy commissioner of Wari Division of Dhaka Metropolitan Police, told The Daily Star.

Two more members of the family, Moon's husband Shafiqul Islam, 40, and their five-year-old daughter were

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ONLINE GAMBLING

Crores siphoned out of country

Hundi, cryptocurrencies used for sending money abroad; MFS used for local transactions

MOHAMMAD JAMIL KHAN

An international gambling racket has been siphoning off crores of taka from the country every day through laundering and investing in cryptocurrencies.

The local network of the racketeers mostly depends on mobile banking services for their transactions.

Law enforcers have detected over 2,300 active agent accounts at online gambling sites. Officials believe that the individuals behind the accounts illegally send up to Tk 50 crore abroad a day. They send money through laundering and buying cryptocurrencies.

Bangladesh Bank's foreign exchange regulations make cryptocurrencies illegal in Bangladesh.

Officers of the Counter Terrorism and Transnational Crime (CTTC) unit of police said they "got the details of the syndicate by interrogating a man,

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Khaleda now back home

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia returned home from Evercare Hospital around 8:35pm yesterday.

The former premier has returned home after taking treatment at the hospital after around two months, Syrul Kabir Khan, member of Khaleda's press wing, said.

Khaleda was admitted to Evercare Hospital on

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CORPORATE TAX HIKE FOR MFS PLAYERS

Throttling industry growth for nothing

ZINA TASREEN

Don't kill the goose that lays the golden eggs -- suggests the famous Greek storyteller Aesop. And looking at Finance Minister AHM Mustafa Kamal's proposed tax measures for the mobile financial services operators for the incoming fiscal year, one cannot help but recall the famous fable.

Introduced around the turn of the last decade as part of the Bangladesh Bank's financial inclusion agenda, the platform has been nothing short of a champion for the Digital Bangladesh vision.

What was historically a long-winded exercise became an illustration of how technology can make people's lives simpler and better: by way of MFS, rural people, who mostly remain out of the purview of formal banking channels for geography


and a lack of a business case, could receive money from their friends and family in cities -- within minutes.

But, MFS is more than just a conduit for urban-rural remittance -- and it is this latent potential that came to the fore during the global coronavirus pandemic.

Because of the contactless nature of its transactions, the platform came in handy for making payment at point-of-sale terminals, servicing utility bills and salary disbursements as fear of the coronavirus, which lingers on surfaces for hours, reigned supreme.

And because of the ease with which such transactions could be made, person-to-person transfers within the system took off in a big way amid the pandemic, going neck-and-neck with cash-out transactions,

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TWO TOWNS – ONE MEGACITY:

Tomorrow's Chattogram is being built connecting both sides of the river Karnaphuli



BANGABANDHU MULTIPURPOSE ROAD TUNNEL IS BEING BUILT WITH BSRM

When the Bangabandhu Tunnel is complete, the other side of the Karnaphuli will be a part of Chattogram city; communication routes will be easier between these regions and they will advance in trade and industry, elevating the standard of living for people in the area. Around

900 workers are involved in this Tk. 10,000 crore project, constructing this 3.43 km long and 150 feet deep tunnel, using steel from the steel expert BSRM. In this way, the Bangabandhu Tunnel shines a light of hope towards the path of a prosperous middle-income country.