



The Daily Star

SECOND EDITION



REGD. No. DA 781 | Vol. XXXI No. 154 | ASHAR 9, 1428 BS | Your Right to Know | ZILQAD 11, 1442 HURI | 16 PAGES PRICE : Tk12.00

Curbs toughen to delink Dhaka

Road, rail, waterways communications snapped to contain the surge in Covid-19 infections

STAR REPORT

Dhaka has been virtually cut off from the rest of the country following the suspension of all inter-district transports -- road, rail and waterway -- to stem the surge in Covid infections and deaths.

The latest restrictions were imposed yesterday, a day after the government enforced lockdown in seven districts around Dhaka.

Bangladesh Railway suspended all passenger trains from Dhaka to other parts of the country from 12:01am today, said Sardar Shahadat Ali, additional director general (operations) of the BR.

However, passenger trains between other districts and cities would run as usual, he told The Daily Star yesterday.

Bangladesh Inland Water Transport Authority (BIWTA) also suspended operation of all launches to and from Dhaka.

"We have taken the measures in line with the directives of the higher authorities," said Zainal Abedin, joint director of BIWTA.

SEE PAGE 2 COL 3

Highest daily infections in two months

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The country has recorded the highest daily Covid-19 infections in over two months.

At least 4,846 people tested positive for the disease in the 24 hours ending at 8:00am yesterday.

The positivity rate is 19.36 percent, according to the daily Covid-19 bulletin issued by the Directorate General of Health Services (DGHS).

The positivity rate is slightly higher than that of the previous day as on Monday it was 19.27 percent. The rate reached 23 percent on April 1, the highest ever reported in the country.

SEE PAGE 2 COL 1



People heading for the capital walk along Dhaka-Aricha highway in Savar's Baliarpur area yesterday morning as vehicles are caught in a long tailback after law enforcers barred them from entering the city to enforce Covid-19 "lockdown". Passengers had to walk up to Gabtoli to get vehicles to reach their destinations. PHOTO: PALASH KHAN



A view of Dhaka Boat Club on the Turag river in Birulia. The club was set up allegedly on the flood-flow zone along the Dhaka flood protection embankment. The photo was taken last week. PHOTO: STAR

Boat club in public interest? NO WAY!

Questions hang over its existence on the Turag

STAR REPORT

Dhaka Boat Club Limited, which came into the limelight with a recent allegation of attempted rape raised by film actress Pori Moni, is shrouded in questions about its very existence.

The club is set up on the flood-flow zone and foreshore of the Turag river, yet no one can call it illegal. Indeed, it has every permission required to be deemed legal.

But visually it appears no different from an establishment illegally built on land grabbed from the Turag. So, one may wonder how permission was given or arranged to build this club on that land.

The authorities can bend laws or rules for the sake of "public interest" and then



illegal becomes legal. But, as it appears, the club has nothing to do with public interest -- it is solely for the recreation of some influential people.

"We have taken permission from all the authorities concerned," said

Nizamul Hoque Bhuiyan, one of the nine executive members of the club, adding that they got the go-ahead from around 17 government departments.

The boat club building did not go beyond the river's demarcation pillars, according to Bhuiyan, also general secretary of Dhaka University Teachers' Association.

The club has 60 bighas of land on the bank of the Turag in Birulia area. Of the land, he said, they got a lease of 30 bighas from the Bangladesh Water Development (BWDB) and bought the rest from locals.

On a recent visit to the area, it was seen that the rear wall of the building is just inches away from the river boundary demarcation pillars.

SEE PAGE 2 COL 3



MUZZLING INVESTIGATIVE JOURNALISM It's all to exert political clout

Say speakers at a webinar

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Both external and internal pressure on investigative journalism was amplified with the view to establishing a supreme level of unilateral political influence, said discussants at a webinar yesterday.

Investigative journalism should be carried out by maintaining journalistic ethics and facing external and internal pressure, they said at the webinar styled "Challenges of investigative journalism and things to do", organised by the Transparency International Bangladesh (TIB).

Media houses should ensure the professional safety of journalists maintaining internal ethics and integrity, the speakers said.

If mass media unilaterally or unitedly maintains ethics, it is possible to handle the internal challenges, said Iftekharuzzaman, executive director of TIB.

The atmosphere of investigative journalism depends on political perspective and it is applicable for different countries of the world including Bangladesh, he said.

In Bangladesh, the political parties have the attitude of winning or staying in power at all costs.

"They first defeat the political opponents and when they are in power, they consider a portion of the government a part of the civil society and journalists as their enemy

SEE PAGE 10 COL 1



Mohiuddin Ahmed no more

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The history of the country's publishing industry will be incomplete without him. In fact, Mohiuddin Ahmed will be at the centre.

For years after years, the veteran publisher actively contributed to the book development activities in Bangladesh. Through his talent and relentless hard work, he helped introduce to the world books and other works being accomplished here,

SEE PAGE 6 COL 2

QATAR ECONOMIC FORUM Hasina places six points for global recovery

UNB, Dhaka

Putting forward six suggestions to consider in framing post-Covid-19 economic recovery plan, Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina yesterday underscored the need for taking immediate collective action to help mitigate the impacts of the pandemic.

"As we're witnessing the challenges, we need to

SEE PAGE 2 COL 1



Suspected Covid patient Sandhya Das, 36, lies on the floor of Khulna Medical College Hospital as her mother fans her. The woman from Narail was admitted to the hospital yesterday with breathing problems. With the surge in Covid cases in Khulna division, the hospital is struggling to provide patients with proper care. PHOTO: STAR

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