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Your Right to Know

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"Countries like Bangladesh that are capable of producing Covid vaccines should be allowed to do so and be given support for that."
FOREIGN MINISTER AK ABDUL MOMEN



"We need a dialogue (with Russia) to defend our interests... it is a dialogue necessary for the stability of the European continent."
FRENCH PRESIDENT EMMANUEL MACRON



"A failure to extend the council's authorization would have devastating consequences."
UN CHIEF GUTERRES ON ALLOWING SYRIA CROSS-BORDER AID

'Total shutdown' anytime

Says state minister after nat'l advisory panel recommends a 14-day shutdown; number of Covid deaths now 4 times higher outside Dhaka

MOHAMMAD AL-MASUM MOLLA

Runaway Covid infections in every division except Dhaka has prompted health experts to recommend "stricter nationwide lockdowns" rather than focusing on protecting Dhaka.

The National Technical Advisory Committee (NTAC) on Covid-19 yesterday recommended "a complete shutdown" for 14 days. It warned about hospitals being overrun and said lives and livelihoods would be saved by the shutdown.

A state minister also went on the record to say that he agrees with the experts' recommendations and that an announcement for the "complete shutdown" could come any time.

Covid-19 deaths in seven divisions combined was around four times that of Dhaka's this month. Dhaka had always been the worst affected division until the Delta variant started riding this particular wave.

In May, Dhaka recorded 458 deaths and in April 1,494, the highest in a month. The seven other divisions combined reported 651 deaths in May and 754 in April.

No division recorded more than 100 deaths during April and May, apart from Dhaka and Chattogram.

- High transmission of virus has already been found in more than 50 districts
- Effectiveness of stopgap measures to curb the transmission is in question
- Healthcare facilities will be insufficient if strict measures are not enforced

NATIONAL TECHNICAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE ON COVID-19

Even yesterday, 68 of the 81 Covid deaths recorded were not in Dhaka division, according to the DGHS.

The NTAC in a press release yesterday said, "No matter what preparations are being made, the healthcare facilities will be insufficient if strict measures are not enforced."

It said a high transmission rate was found in more than 50 districts and that the effectiveness of the stopgap measures to curb transmission was being questioned.

"As the infection has gone out of control, the committee unanimously decided to recommend

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A sign at the entrance to M Abdur Rahim Medical College Hospital in Dinajpur says Intensive Care Unit (ICU) and High Dependency Unit (HDU) of the hospital have no beds available. For the last 10 days, the hospital's 50-bed Covid unit has been at full capacity. The photo was taken yesterday morning.

PHOTO: KONGKON KARMAKER

'So much air but not a bit for him'

Wails wife of a patient who died of Covid-19; people jostle for ICU bed in Rajshahi as situation turns alarming there

ANWAR ALI, Rajshahi

Just four years ago, Papia Sultana donated a kidney to save her husband Aman Vardar.

But on Wednesday, when all Aman needed was more oxygen, Papia watched helplessly.

Aman died of Covid-19 at the Rajshahi Medical College Hospital.

Her cries of anguish echoed through a hospital already filled with such grief on a day that saw the highest daily deaths -- 18 -- in the RMCH Covid unit. Eight of them were Covid-19 positive.

The unit is dedicated for the treatment of Covid-19 patients and those displaying coronavirus-like symptoms.

"So much air around; I couldn't give him even a bit of it," Papia wailed.

Aman, 35, of Narayanpur village in



Rajshahi's Bagha upazila, was brought to the hospital on June 16 after being diagnosed with Covid-19.

His oxygen saturation level, aided by the hospital's central oxygen supply, was around 93 percent that day.

On the night of June 20, when he started

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Country sees further surge in Covid cases

81 die, 6,058 infected in a day

UNB, Dhaka

Amid growing worries about the coronavirus situation in the country, health authorities logged 6,058 more Covid-19 cases in 24 hours till yesterday morning, up from 5,727 the previous day.

The positivity rate fell slightly to 19.93 percent from Wednesday's 20.27 percent, according to a handout of the Directorate General of Health Services (DGHS).

Besides, 81 people died of Covid during the 24-hour period, taking the national death toll to 13,868.

The fresh cases pushed up the total caseload to 872,935, the handout added.

However, the mortality rate remained static at 1.59 percent.

A total of 794,783 people, including 3,230 in the 24-hour period, have so far recovered from the virus.

Infections keep rising in different parts of the country as people are defying health protocols amid "lax enforcement" of restrictions despite health experts' repeated warnings about severe consequences.

E-COMMERCE SITES

They'll get payment after delivering items

Decides commerce ministry

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Online shoppers can now make purchases with confidence after a commerce ministry decision yesterday that stipulated holding the payment of local e-commerce platforms until confirmation of safe delivery of items, adding a layer of consumer protection to the transaction.

At present, the merchants' payment is cleared within moments of the customer making the transaction with bank cards or the mobile financial services platform.

Payment will be cleared only after confirmation by the customer, Hafizur Rahman, director-general of the WTO Cell under the commerce ministry, told The Daily Star over the phone.

"If the payment gateways can be controlled effectively, no e-commerce site can cheat or make an unusual delay in delivery of goods as the companies will also need to wait for the payment," he added.

The commerce ministry will send a letter to the Bangladesh Bank on Sunday to work out the logistics of the decision, including how the confirmation of receipt of items would come from the customers.

The development comes after a recent Bangladesh Bank inspection report on the e-commerce juggernaut Evaly that sounded off the alarm bells.

As of March 14, Evaly, which has assets worth Tk 65.2 crore, had delivery pending on goods worth Tk 213.9 crore and owed about Tk 189.9 crore to

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Registration for Covid vaccine likely to start next week

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Outbound migrant workers' registration for Covid-19 vaccine is expected to begin sometime next week, the expatriates' welfare ministry said yesterday.

"It will be possible to register [for the vaccine] using [the data of] BMET (Bureau of Manpower, Employment and Training) registration and passport.

We've got assurance in this regard," Ahmed Munirur Saleheen, secretary to the ministry, told reporters at a cheque hand-over ceremony for migrant workers, who applied for government subsidy to

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Cops reveal identity of rape victim

Court directive bars such disclosure

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Savar

Savar police disclosed the identity of a rape victim on their Facebook handle yesterday, violating the law and a court verdict.

The district police on Wednesday arrested three men, accused in the case filed over the rape, and posted about it on Facebook.

In the Facebook post, they uploaded the photos of the accused and mentioned all the personal details of the 16-year-old victim.

The Daily Star has obtained a screenshot of the post.

Contacted, Kazi Mainul Islam, officer-in-charge of Savar Model Police Station, said the identity of the rape victim was disclosed "unfortunately".

The post, however, was later edited and the victim's details were removed from it.

Neither police nor anyone else can disclose a rape victim's details in the

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Shrubs and bushes are growing in and around railway carriages left at a workshop of Bangladesh Railway in the capital's Kamalapur area. These carriages were taken there for repairs but they have been left in the open without care. The photo was taken yesterday.

PHOTO: ANISUR RAHMAN

34pc families faced job loss in pandemic

Finds NYU-BRAC-UN Women survey on 6,370 households in April-October 2020

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Between April and October last year amid the pandemic, around 34 percent of households surveyed had a family member who became unemployed, finds a new study by New York University, Brac and UN Women Bangladesh.

They conducted the survey on 6,370 households last December across 21 districts, specifically chosen for being migration-prone.

Around 77 percent of the families saw their monthly earnings go down.

The research findings were unveiled at a virtual international dialogue titled "Demographic and socio-economic changes induced by the Covid-19 pandemic: Challenges of new circumstances" yesterday.

The study found that households with returnee migrants saw a higher rate of unemployment -- 61 percent. Of these families with returnee migrants, 25 percent expressed concern about repaying their outstanding migration loans, which amounted to Tk 76,000 on average, but can go up to Tk 7 lakh.

Household debt in migrant households increased by 82.4 percent, found the researchers. In addition, households with migrant workers had a larger fall in income when compared to households without migrants.

In spite of this, households with returnee migrants saw a birth rate of 33.4 per thousand population, which is nearly double that of the national birth rate.

"Additionally, the average family size was found to be

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