City





8,00,858 Recoveries

GLOBAL



3,929,235



181,390,852

Covid death toll passes 14k mark

The death toll from Covid-19 in Bangladesh crossed 14,000 yesterday as health authorities reported 77 fresh

The latest deaths took the overall national tally to 14,053. The last 1,000 deaths have been recorded in just 15 days, as the number of fatalities crossed 13,000 on June 11.

The previous thousand (from 12,000 to 13,000) took a full month, as the

12,000 mark was crossed on May 11. Still, the number of deaths recorded a substantial fall from the previous day's figure. The deadly virus was reported to have killed 108 people on Friday, the 2nd highest number in daily deaths since the outbreak of coronavirus in Bangladesh in March, 2020.

The daily caseload also fell sharply, with 4,334 new cases pushing up the total caseload to 883,138. On Friday health authorities reported 5,869 new

But the drop in cases was most likely a function of reduced testing, as the day's positivity rate rose to 22.50 percent from 21.22 percent on Friday, according to the Directorate General of Health Services (DGHS).

Yesterday's caseload was derived from testing 19,262 samples in 554 labs across the country. Friday's number was derived from testing 27,653 samples.

If the same number of samples were tested yesterday (27,653), given the day's positivity rate, the number of cases would have exceeded yesterday's

Yesterday's positivity rate was the

highest since April 16, when the rate was 23.36 percent.

Meanwhile, the case fatality rate remained static at 1.59 percent.

On a positive note, 3,295 patients recovered from Covid-19 during the last 24 hours, with a 90.68 percent

Among the latest deaths, 48 were men, and 29 were women.

Chattogram overtook Khulna in terms of highest number of fatalities as 20 people were recorded dead by the viral disease in the last 24 hours in the

Khulna came second in terms of daily deaths as 19 people died in the division.

Besides, 17 more died in Dhaka, nine in Rajshahi, four each in Sylhet and Rangpur, three in Mymensingh, and one in Barishal division.

Jashore's daily caseload hits new igh of 469

Jashore, considered to be a high risk zone of Covid-19 spread, reported a record 469 new infections yesterday.

The new cases were detected from 940 sample tests, said Jashore Science and Technology University's Covid-19 testing team member assistant prof Shirin Nigar.

The positivity rate is a fraction under 50 percent which is extremely high. The WHO advises a positivity rate of 5 percent for two weeks as a safe level.

The fresh cases raised the district's total caseload to 11,187.

Also, five more people died of Covid-19 in the district pushing the death toll to 129.

Just give us the vaccines

Pleads WHO as poor countries go wanting

AGENCIES

Rich countries are opening up societies and vaccinating young people who are not at great risk from Covid-19, while the poorest countries cruelly lack doses, the World Health Organization said on Friday, condemning a global failure.

The situation in Africa, where new infections and deaths jumped by nearly 40% last week compared to the previous week, is "so dangerous" as the Delta variant spreads globally, WHO director-general Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus said.

"Our world is failing, as the global community we are failing," he told a news conference.

His comments came ahead of Australia's largest city Sydney entered a two-week lockdown yesterday to contain a sudden Covid surge, but several European nations lifted restrictions despite the global spread of a highly contagious form of the

Tedros, who is Ethiopian, chastised unnamed countries for reluctance to share doses with low-income countries. He compared it to the HIV/ AIDS crisis, when some argued that African nations were unable to use complicated treatments.

"I mean that attitude has to be a thing of the past," Tedros said. "The problem now is a supply problem, just give us the vaccines.

"The difference is between the haves and the have nots which is now completely exposing the unfairness of our world - the injustice, the inequality,

let's face it," he said. COVAX, run jointly by the GAVI vaccine alliance and the WHO, has delivered 90 million Covid-19 vaccine doses to 132 countries since February, but has faced major supply issues since India suspended vaccine exports.

ICU occupancy

Suhrawardy Medical College and Hospital and Mugda Medical College and Hospital was available yesterday. Only six percent of the beds at

BIRDEM and 10 percent at BSMMU were empty, shows the DGHS data. Among private hospitals, Uttara

Crescent Hospital, Bangladesh Specialized Hospital Limited, and LabAid Hospital had zero ICU beds empty yesterday. At Popular hospital, 97 beds were

filled, while both United Hospital and Green Life had over 65 beds occupied. Evercare hospital's Covid-19 beds were three-fourths full. On Friday, the DGHS reported that

108 people died of Covid-19 in 24 hours, which was the second highest daily deaths in the country since the first cases were confirmed in March

The daily death toll was 77 vesterday but cases continued to surge, leaving a lot to worry about.

Covid-19 International Modelling Consortium's Bangladesh team has, meanwhile, forecast that the peak of this wave will be sometime

after the first week of next month. The CoMo Consortium was created by researchers at University of Oxford,

Cornell University and partners with infectious disease modellers from over 40 countries in the world to provide forecasts of the disease.

The Bangladesh team includes Mofakhar Hussain of the University of Toronto, Abu Jamil Faisel, member of the public health and epidemiology committee of the DGHS, Prof Syed Abdul Hamid and Prof Nasrin Sultana of Dhaka University, Abdul Kuddus of James Cook University, Australia, and Shafiun Shimul, an associate professor of health economics at Dhaka University, who leads the projection team.

They ran the forecast model yesterday and found that this wave could hit the ceiling with as many as 7,909 daily cases.

"This is what we will observe if the [Covid-19] testing capacity remains the same. If we can test more people, the number of daily cases may go up to 12,000 and beyond," Prof Shafiun to The Daily Star.

Yesterday, the country registered 4,334 new cases.

Asked whether the lockdown would make any difference, Prof Shafiun said, "This forecast was done keeping in mind the lack of shutdowns till June 30, so it is not likely that the predictions will change by a lot," he said.

Lockdown now from Thursday

Monday (June 28)," SK Rafiqul Islam, additional secretary of district and field admin wing of the Cabinet Division, told The Daily Star.

He also said as June is ending and there are some issues relating to the ending of the financial year, the decision was taken to enforce the lockdown from July 1 but there will be limited scale countrywide lockdown from Monday.

The government decided to go for countrywide lockdown when the National Technical Advisory Committee (NTAC) on Covid-19 recommended "a complete nationwide shutdown" for 14 days in the face of a deepening health

Asked what they meant by a complete shutdown, Prof Mohammad Sahidullah, chief of the NTAC, said, "It means all should stay home. Everything will be closed except for emergency services.

Although the experts said the country must go for complete lockdown, BGMEA leaders said that the factories would be operational in special

arrangements during the lockdown. The Covid-19 situation of the recorded the second-highest death after April this year. The infection rate is also on the surge. Yesterday's Covid-19

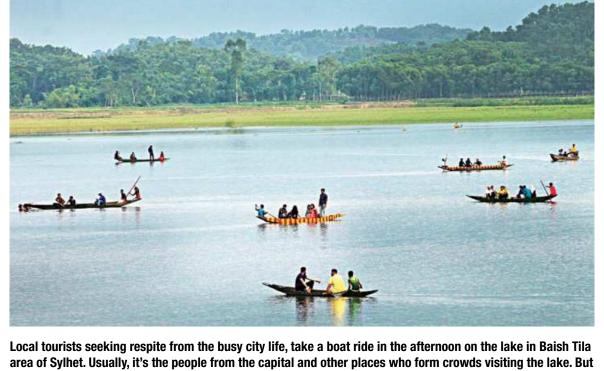
Sources in the meeting said during the countrywide "complete lockdown" industries especially the RMGs are likely to remain out of the purview of

The meeting sources also said mass transportation will be suspended from Monday and markets, hotels, and restaurants may be in operation for a limited scale from Monday but will go

The details of the lockdown are likely to be made clear today through a press statement.

Currently, the government is trying to save the capital from the surge of coronavirus by isolating Dhaka from

Lockdown is going on in the seven adjacent districts of Dhaka since June



the coronavirus restrictions have reduced the number of tourists at the scenic lake. PHOTO: SHEIKH NASIR

Cruelties rising in chaotic time

To explain this, he said, "We are heading towards a disordered society. Culture of impunity and decline of social values play a vital role in this regard. Criminal tendencies and aggressive behaviour see a rise when social values go down."

Human aggression has intensified for economic, political or familial factors and the result is rising brutality, he said.

"In Bangladesh, access to justice is very low. People do not want to report to the police or go to court. So the victim remains tormented until he or she gets killed," he added.

the victims. But there is very minimal implementation... law enforcers must give importance to these issues." THE INCIDENTS Ain O Salish Kendra data shows around

"We have well-defined laws to protect

95 women were killed by their husbands from January to May 30 of this year. Also, eleven women were murdered by their in-laws, 23 by their own family members, and 40 died by suicide.

Around 502 women were raped and 22 were killed after rape during that period, it added.

In 2020, between January and May, some 86 women were killed by their husbands.

Besides, 21 women were murdered by their husband's family members, 16 by their own family members, and 25 committed suicides during this period, ASK data shows.

This May alone, police sources said, around 129 people were killed across the country.

In some cases, the family members were found informing the police after killing their beloved ones. On June 19, 30-year-old Mehiabin Islam Moon called the national emergency hotline 999 after killing her parents and younger sister in the capital's Kadamatali.

"I killed my father, mother and sister come and rescue them," the woman told an officer who attended the call, according to police.

She also threatened that if they

arrived late, she would kill her husband gradually." and daughter too.

Police said a family dispute was the reason behind the killing, which she planned after watching Indian TV series "Crime Patrol".

On May 30, an auto-rickshaw driver named Moyna Mia was cut into six pieces by his first wife Fatema Khatun and dumped in different places of the

Fatema admitted that her frustration over Moyna's second marriage made her commit the crime.

On May 31, a physician at Green Life Hospital Kazi Sabira Rahman, 47, was killed by cutting her trachea and her mattress set on fire in a Kalabagan house. Police suspect this murder too was a result of a family dispute.

On the same day, police arrested Arifa and her boyfriend Tanay in Gazipur on charges of killing her husband Sumon Mollah and slicing up the body into six pieces.

On May 19, Abdur Rahman, the imam of a mosque in Dakshin Khan killed a readymade garment worker Azhar in his room. The body pieces were dumped in a septic tank.

This was the result of an extramarital affair, police said.

On March 23, police recovered bodies of Hashi Begum, 25, a homemaker, and her three-year-old son Nirob Hossain from a lake near the Korail slum in Banani. Police say Hashi's husband Rubel Hossain killed the two because of a family dispute.

On February 11, police recovered the body of 34-year-old Sajid Hasan from Wari, who was killed because of an extramarital affair, they said.

THE FACTORS

Monirul I Khan, professor of sociology at Dhaka University, told The Daily Star that many factors lead to such brutalities -- including weak family ties and deprivation.

"In any industrialised society, family relationships become weak and get diluted due to the lack of commitment," he said, adding, "The commitment and values to keep the family integrated have been lessening

The recent incident of a woman killing her parents and sister is an example of weak family relationship, he opined.

The sociology professor further said brutalities are a "reverse reaction of deprivation".

Economic deprivation is one such thing that helps inequality rise, he said, also pointing to people not getting jobs after the end of their studies or not being able to access education.

Shafiqul Islam, commissioner of Dhaka Metropolitan Police, observed that people are becoming intolerant for various reasons.

"Nowadays, family ties are not working properly. The person who is earning passes all day at the office, his children are busy on Facebook, while his wife is busy watching Indian serials. They are not talking to each other or sharing their feelings."

Mekhala Sarkar, associate professor at the National Institute of Mental Health, suggested the media not publish or air reports detailing the murders -- such as how it took place -as it sometimes may influence a person who has grievances or who is seeking revenge.

She also suggested the authorities bring some control over programmes like "crime shows" and some online

Sayedul Ashraf, lead psychiatrist of LifeSpring, thinks social media is one of the multifactor elements which is leading people to such a level of aggression.

"People are spending more time online and on social media activities rather than spending time with family members. Besides, many content on social media are violent in nature. People do not have any control over what they are watching or following," he told The Daily Star.

Ashraf suggested remaining cautious before following people or pages on social media. "We also need to be careful about children using social media and should not allow anyone below 15," he added

per person to go to Rangpur.

the lockdown. "How can I pay Tk 2,000 to go to Rangpur and more to reach Kurigram? But I will have to starve if I stay here

on Dhaka-Mymensingh highway at the entrance of Gazipur to prevent people from reaching the capital from the districts. This forced many people to walk or get on small vehicles to reach their destinations.

Our correspondent in Munshiganj reports that Shimulia and Banglabazar ferry terminals remained crowded since early morning. Maintaining physical distancing was out of the

Safayet Ahmed, manager at Shimulia ghat, said 14 ferries were operating between Shimulia and Banglabazar. Only the vehicles providing emergency services were supposed to board the ferries.

markets kitchen Mohammadpur, Karwan Bazar, Mirpur and other areas of the capital, people were buying goods in large quantities even though the government has said nothing about closing down kitchen markets.

Traders said it seemed that most of

Shopkeepers at Karwan Bazar kitchen market said the number of shoppers increased after around 12:00pm. Sellers at Yousuf General Store said people were mostly buying

of onion rose from Tk 42-45 a kg to Tk 50-55 a kg and the price of potatoes

Mohammadpur said there were more shoppers than usual yesterday.

country got worse as this month has

for complete lockdown from July 1.

the rest of the country.

positivity rate was 22.50 percent.

lockdown. The banking services may also in place for smooth operational activities of the export-oriented transactions, they

22 and this will continue till June 30.

This pandemic has shown why countries must have a vaccine plant, said the health minister. Prof Mohammod Shahidullah,

chief of the National Technical Advisory Committee (NTAC) on Covid-19, said, "The government should expedite the process... This pandemic has opened our eyes and showed us how important a vaccine plant is."

Prof Muzaherul Huq, a former adviser to WHO in South-East Asia, said the authorities can entrust the Essential Drugs for the task, but it would have been better to strengthen the Institute of Public Health (IPH) which already has experience in producing vaccines.

"As IPH has infrastructure and human resources. The government could launch production within a shorter period with technology transfer, recruitment and training. It's a good move from the government, but we have to do it fast," said Huq, also a former director of IPH.

Bangladesh needs other vaccines too, he said. "If the government acts fast, we might even export vaccines in the future." However, Be-Nazir, former director

of the health directorate, has a

different opinion regarding the IPH.

He said the IPH was once capable of producing vaccines, but it had been ruined. "Reviving the IPH is a very difficult task as it does not have the laboratory facilities and skilled people. It can still be restructured and made ready to produce vaccines, but it will take time and money."

Be-Nazir supported the decision to choose Essential Drugs and said the move will bring good results.

institution. Every year, we will need

"We need to have our own

Work on own vaccine plant to start soon

many vaccines for our children. We will be able to produce them at our own institutions. We can also export them after meeting local demands." According to Unicef, which is tracking the doses distributed across the world through COVAX and other agreements, the majority of high-

income countries have secured at least 350% of the doses they need (without accounting for vaccines that are yet to be released). Meanwhile, the agreements reached by low- and middle-income countries for doses to be delivered by 2023 cover half their populations, or less.

The developed and richer nations have already inoculated a large part of their population which is in stark contrast to the poor or developing

Developed nations have been planning to return to normalcy while the developing or poor countries are still witnessing the surge of Covid-19 cases along with no or very poor vaccination. While a handful of well-off

nations have reached the 50 percent vaccination mark, at least 41 countries have yet to provide at least one dose to 2 percent of their population, according to New York Times data from May 29.

Bangladesh suspended

administering the first dose of the Oxford vaccine on April 26 amid depleting stocks.

The administration of the second dose has also been suspended in many places.

The mass inoculation started with a target of vaccinating all the citizens aged 18 and above in phases. government suspended the vaccination registration process on May 5. The inoculation campaign

stumbled after Serum Institute of India failed to ship Oxford-AstraZeneca vaccines. As per an agreement, Bangladesh was supposed to receive three crore shots of the vaccine in phases from January to June. Serum delivered the first 50 lakh doses in January, but shipped only 20 lakh shots the following month. No shipment has been received since The country was also supposed to

get 6.8 crore doses from COVAX, a global initiative, by this year, but so far has received only 1.06 lakh doses of the Pfizer vaccine. The inoculation resumed last week

on a limited scale with a stock of around 11 lakh Sinopharm vaccine doses received as a gift from China.

Bangladesh has written to AstraZeneca seeking its formula to produce the shots locally, but has yet to get a response. The government has also talked with Russia and China over local production of Covid vaccines, but a final agreement is still to be reached.

2.5m Moderna shots to arrive soon

Says US ambassador DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT

Bangladesh will soon receive a gift of 2.5 million doses of Moderna Covid-19 vaccine from the US, said US Ambassador to Bangladesh Earl R

"Pleased to announce Bangladesh will soon receive a gift of 2.5 million doses of Moderna Covid-19 vaccine from the American people via Gavi," he tweeted vesterday.

"As the largest contributor to COVAX, the US is committed to increasing the country's vaccine supply to beat the pandemic here and worldwide," Miller

Covax is a global initiative coordinated by the World Health Organization, the Vaccine Alliance Gavi, and the Coalition for Epidemic Preparedness Innovations working to ensure that low- and middle-income countries have equitable access to Covid Under the facility, Bangladesh was

supposed to get this year 6.8 crore vaccine doses, which would cover around 20 percent of its population. But it has so far received only one consignment of 1.06 lakh doses of the Pfizer vaccine. Bangladesh is urging for vaccines

from different countries of the world, including the US, UK, China, Russia, Australia and Canada, after India's halt of exporting AstraZeneca vaccines. Serum Institute of India had supplied

only 7 million of the contracted 30

million doses of the vaccine in January

and February. Indian government gifted 33 lakh AstraZeneca vaccine doses while China gifted 11 lakh Sinopharm vaccines to Bangladesh. Bangladesh also signed a deal to buy Sinopharm vaccines.

Bangladesh had requested the US to

supply 2 million AstraZeneca vaccines, but no progress was known as the US FDA has yet to approve AstraZeneca. Meanwhile, the foreign ministry n early June told the media that Bangladesh would receive 1 million

800 AstraZeneca vaccines from Covax.

but it did not mention the source. On June 21, Biden-Harris Administration announced distribution list for 55 million of the 80 million doses of America's vaccine

supply President Biden pledged to allocate by the end of June. Of the vaccines, about 16 million will be shared with the Asian countries,

including Bangladesh. The G-7 countries last week promised 1 billion vaccines by 2022. Of the amount, 500 million will be donated by the US alone.

Madness, again

and other essentials. Many have said that the seven-day lockdown will be

At Gabtoli bus terminal, people were arriving throughout the day on rickshaws and auto-rickshaws. They went across the Gabtoli bridge on foot and boarded local buses in Amin Bazar to reach their destinations. A large number of people were also

entering the capital in the same way. In Amin Bazar, small vehicles were being hired in exchange for exorbitant

sums by the people. Microbuses were charging Tk 2,000

Jahidul Islam, a 33-year-old construction worker, was returning to his village in Kurigram, fearing that he would not be able to find work during

without a job," he said. Law enforcers stopped the vehicles

question on the packed ferries.

the buyers appeared to be stocking up for a week or longer.

groceries and sanitary products. He added that the wholesale price

rose from Tk 16-19 per kg to Tk 25. A salesperson at a store in