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"There's no question of seeking pardon as she [Khaleda Zia] has not committed any crime."
BNP ORGANISING SECRETARY SYED EMRAN SALEH PRINCE



"The Chinese people will never allow any foreign forces to bully, oppress, or enslave us."
CHINA PRESIDENT XI JINPING ON 100TH BIRTHDAY OF CHINA COMMUNIST PARTY



"Last week, the number of cases rose by 10 percent (in Europe), driven by increased mixing, travel, gatherings and easing of social restrictions."
WHO'S REGIONAL DIRECTOR FOR EUROPE HANS KLUGE



WEEKLONG LOCKDOWN

First day was indeed strict

Rural areas, alleyways see crowds

STAR REPORT

On the first day of the weeklong nationwide "strict lockdown", most roads, including that of Dhaka, were eerily quiet with law enforcers going tough on people out without a valid reason.

Yesterday, the country recorded 143 deaths from Covid-19, the highest in a single day since the first cases were reported in March last year.

Several teams of the Army, BGB, Rab, and police, accompanied by executive magistrates, set up check points at various locations in Dhaka and elsewhere in the country and asked people why they were out.

People who were unable to give satisfactory answers were detained or fined.

Most Dhaka dwellers stayed home, respecting the government's order. The intermittent showers throughout the day also kept some indoors.

Dhaka Metropolitan Police (DMP) yesterday arrested 550 people in Ramna, Lalbagh, Motijheel, Wari, Tejgaon, Mirpur, Gulshan, Uttara and other places in the capital, according to a list issued by the DMP.

It said the detainees failed to provide acceptable reasons for defying the stay-at-home order. The cops also fined 212 people.

At least 274 cars were fined Tk 4.63 lakh and 26 shops Tk 45,557, according to the list.

LOCKDOWN IN DMP AREA

People arrested **550**

People fined **212**

Freed after undertaking **391**

274 vehicles fined **Tk 4.63 lakh**

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Army personnel checking whether the occupants of the car have a valid reason to be out during the "strict lockdown" that began yesterday in the capital's Banani. Police and other law enforcers were also deployed on the streets to enforce the restrictions.



PHOTO: AMRAN HOSSAIN, ANISUR RAHMAN

Record 143 deaths in a single day

8,301 new Covid cases

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Health officials yesterday reported 143 deaths, the highest in a day since the first cases of Covid-19 were detected in the country.

The deaths were recorded in the 24 hours preceding 8:00am yesterday, according to a press release from the Directorate General of Health Services (DGHS).

The number of deaths have been over 100 for the last five days.

The number of total reported deaths from Covid-19 reached 14,646 yesterday. Of them, 7,087 died this year.

The first cases of coronavirus were detected in Bangladesh on March 8, 2020.

Officials also reported 8,301 new cases yesterday and the positivity rate was 26 percent. The rate has been rising since June 1. The highest, 32 percent, was recorded on August 3, last year.

Of those reported dead yesterday, 90 were male and 53 female. Nine died at home and the rest in hospitals.

Forty-six of them died in Khulna, 35 in Dhaka, 19 in Rajshahi, 15 in Chattogram, 10 in Rangpur, eight in Barisal, seven in Sylhet and three in Mymensingh divisions.

Khulna and Rajshahi divisions have been the hotspots of new cases of Covid-19 as the Delta variant spread across the country.

Vaccination gathers steam

45 lakh doses of Sinopharm, Moderna arrive tomorrow

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The arrival of around 45 lakh doses of Covid-19 vaccine over two days is set to boost the country's vaccination campaign.

Bangladesh will receive 25 lakh doses of Moderna's Covid vaccine in two shipments today and tomorrow under the Covax facility.

The country is also going to receive around 20 lakh doses it procured from China's Sinopharm in the two days, said Health Minister Zahid Maleque.

"A total of 12 lakh doses will reach Hazrat Shahjalal International Airport around 11:20pm on Friday and the rest will arrive on Saturday at the same time. Around 11 lakh doses of Chinese Sinopharm vaccine will arrive at 12:30pm [on Saturday]," the minister said.

Zahid said after getting the vaccines, the country's vaccination campaign will gain pace as more people will be vaccinated.

He also said the registration process for people to get the vaccine is likely to be reopened.

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VACCINE RECEIVED

ASTRAZENECA
(Purchase from Serum, India)
70 lakh doses

ASTRAZENECA
(Gift from India)
33 lakh doses

SINOPHARM
(Gift from China)
11 lakh doses

PFIZER
(from Covax)
1.06 lakh

TO ARRIVE TODAY AND TOMORROW

SINOPHARM
(Purchased from China)
20 lakh doses

MODERNA
(from Covax)
25 lakh doses

LABOUR COURTS

Hassles outweigh remedy they give

Courts take 10 times the time they are allowed legally to come up with judgments: BLAST study

ZYMA ISLAM

On average, labour courts take ten times more time to pass a judgment than they are legally allowed.

This astonishing figure came up in a study done by Bangladesh Legal Aid and Services Trust (BLAST), which analysed 80 compensation cases, all related to workplace injuries and deaths, litigated by the organisation.

It took, on average, 601 days for labour courts to pass a judgment on cases of workplace injury or death, even though the legal time-limit is 60 days, found the report titled "Tire them out: Challenges

Labour courts take on average **601** days to pass verdict; legal limit is **60** days

Employers take a further **475** days on average to pay compensation

Average distance covered between worker and court was **201** km

of litigating compensation claims under Bangladesh Labour Act 2006".

The labour court of Chattogram took the longest -- 1,280 days on average -- to dispose of cases, the study found.

Such excruciatingly long waits also often come to no fruition because employers routinely defy court orders, and the workers have to then file criminal cases to obtain what is rightfully theirs -- and so, the legal process starts all over again.

On average, employers took a further 475 days following the verdict to hand over the money, SEE PAGE 2 COL 6

SATKHIRA MED COLL HOSPITAL

Five die as oxygen supply 'interrupted'

OUR CORRESPONDENT, SATKHIRA

At least five Covid-19 patients died in Satkhira Medical College Hospital after a disruption to their oxygen supply on Wednesday night.

The patients died in just 25 minutes, between 7:30pm and 7:55pm.

Hospital officials said the vendor failed to deliver the oxygen needed by the hospital on time, causing a dip in the gas pressure in the tank in the evening.

But an official of the vendor company, Spectra Oxygen Ltd, said the delay was caused at Benapole Port through which oxygen is imported to Bangladesh from India.

Contacted, Milton Hossain, Jashore depo manager of Spectra Oxygen Ltd, said, "We were informed [that oxygen was needed] at 10:00am. We thought we would be able to deliver oxygen by noon. But, we SEE PAGE 2 COL 3



Bangladesh, China should explore more avenues

Says PM on occasion of CPC's 100th anniversary

UNB, Dhaka

Describing China as a trusted partner in the socio-economic development of Bangladesh, Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina has stressed the need for exploring more avenues to take the bilateral strategic partnership to a new height.

"We would like to explore more avenues to take Bangladesh-China strategic partnership to new heights and also work together to address the regional and global issues for peace, security, stability SEE PAGE 2 COL 1



Anxious family members check Abul Bashar's oxygen supply and breathing in front of Dhaka Medical College Hospital. The 42-year-old man, who works in Dubai, recently tested positive for coronavirus. After his breathing difficulties took a turn for the worse, his brother brought him to Dhaka from Brahmanbaria yesterday.

PHOTO: ANISUR RAHMAN

NEWS ANALYSIS

UN RESOLUTION ON MYANMAR Dhaka treads on razor edge

PORIMOL PALMA

Bangladesh's abstention from voting the UN General Assembly resolution on Myanmar, which condemned the country's February 1 military coup and called for restoring democracy and preventing arms flow, has raised questions if Bangladesh is supporting Myanmar military regime.

It also created confusion of whether this stance put Bangladesh into the grouping of Russia and China, who, despite their powers at the UN Security Council (UNSC), has done little to protect the Rohingyas from the genocidal acts, especially following the 2017 military crackdown that drove some 750,000 Rohingyas out to Bangladesh and created heavy socio-economic and security challenges.

The Western countries, including the US, EU, UK, and Canada, initiated the resolution and finalised it in consultation with ASEAN members.

A total of 119 countries voted in favour and Belarus voted against it.

As many as 36 countries including UN Security Council Permanent Members China and Russia, and Bangladesh's closest friend India, and ASEAN countries Brunei, Cambodia, Thailand and Laos abstained from voting.

Rabab Fatima, Bangladesh's Permanent Representative to the UN in New York, explained the abstention.

She said Bangladesh shares borders with Myanmar and hosts over a million of their people. Therefore, stability in Myanmar is critically important for Bangladesh in finding a durable solution for the Rohingyas, who are victims of SEE PAGE 2 COL 3