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## CRITICAL PATIENTS AT HOSPITALS IN 2 DIVS In dire need of oxygen support

MOUDUD AHMED SUJAN

Medical oxygen supply to public hospitals in at least two divisions has come under severe strain as its demand doubled amid a surge in Covid patients requiring the life-saving gas over the past few weeks.

The crisis of high-flow oxygen support has turned grave at many hospitals in Khulna and Rajshahi divisions. Deaths of patients due to a lack of oxygen support were reported yesterday for the second consecutive day.

At least 13 patients died at two hospitals in Bogura in 24 hours till yesterday noon because of the shortage of high-flow oxygen support provided through a device called high-flow nasal cannula (HFNC).

The devices are meant for the patients whose oxygen saturation levels are very low. But many hospitals in the two divisions don't have enough devices to treat the rising number of such patients infected with the virus.

Of the 13 dead, seven died at Mohammad Ali Hospital and the rest at Shaheed Ziaur Rahman Medical College Hospital (SZMCH), reports our

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- 13 die in Bogura in 24hrs due to shortage of high-flow oxygen support
- Demand for oxygen at public hospitals rises to 200 tonnes per day
- Hospitals struggling to treat critical patients who need high-flow oxygen



PHOTO: ANISUR RAHMAN

Covid patient Josna Begum, 65, lies in an ambulance in front of Dhaka Medical College Hospital yesterday. Josna's daughter is on a video call with her brother, an expatriate in Qatar, to show him the condition of their ailing mother. A resident of Narsingdi, Josna was admitted to the hospital with breathing problems.

## A quiet 2nd day of strict lockdown

### 328 held for violating stay-at-home order

STAR REPORT

Streets in the capital and elsewhere remained almost empty yesterday, the second day of the "strict lockdown" the government enforced amid rising cases of Covid-19.

People mostly left home to say the Jumma prayer or to go to the kitchen markets.

On the roads, there were check posts manned by teams of the army, BGB, Rab and police. There were executive magistrates at some of the check posts. They stopped traffic and those who failed to explain why they ventured outdoors were detained or fined.

At many check posts in the capital, the officers did not have much to do as the streets remained almost empty. No law enforcers were seen at some of the check posts.

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### COST OF FOREIGN TOURS OF GOVT OFFICIALS

## Pandemic saves Tk 2,500cr

REJAUL KARIM BYRON and DWAIPIYAN BARUA

Every cloud has a silver lining and so has the Covid-19 pandemic. It saved the government and taxpayers around Tk 2,500 crore since March last year.

In the 2020-21 fiscal year, the government had allocated Tk 2,200 crore as expenses for foreign tours of its officials; this figure was around Tk 70 crore more than the allocation made in the previous

fiscal year.

But as the pandemic prompted suspension or postponement of global events like meetings, seminars, trainings and workshops amid cancellations of international flights since early January last year, more than Tk 2,000 crore of last fiscal year's allocation remained unspent, according to finance ministry officials.

In the 2019-20 fiscal year, around Tk 500 crore of the allocation was unspent, they said.

The allocation for foreign tours, made under the revenue and development budget, has been on the rise every year due to growing keenness among officials to travel. But the pandemic led to a significant dip in spending on foreign trips.

Bangladesh reported the first cases of Covid-19 on March 8 last year.

On Thursday, the finance ministry issued a circular, suspending 50 percent of this fiscal

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## Zoom meeting from hospital prison cell!

### 4 jail guards suspended after Destiny Group MD's video leaked

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

"It's the fifth meeting since I created the group and this meeting will continue regularly," Destiny Group Managing Director Md Rafiqul Amin was seen in a video telling the participants of a Zoom meeting.

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### BANGLADESH'S PROMISING BOURSE

## Cash-flush Americans can now invest easily

ZINA TASREEN

A hidden gem is what British banking giant HSBC dubbed Bangladesh's bourse earlier last month.

But the problem is, access to this market is rather difficult for global investors who are flush with cash but not lucrative investment options.

Foreign investors need to open a special cash account with a custodian bank as well as a foreign currency account for remittances inside and outside the country and a beneficiary owner's account -- steps not very straightforward for someone not residing in Bangladesh.

But Bangladesh's stock market could do with the liquidity for vibrancy, further development and most importantly, for economic growth.

Many profitable investments require a long-term commitment of capital, but investors are often unwilling to give up control of their savings

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