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AS AMAZON CEO**
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role to Andy Jassy
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Hospitals swamped by Covid patients

Admission rises 267pc in last 2 weeks

STAR REPORT

Hospitals across the country have been struggling to cope with a sharp rise in Covid-19 patients as infections from the highly transmissible virus continue to surge.

As of yesterday afternoon, at least 10 hospitals were treating more patients with Covid-19 or coronavirus-like symptoms than the hospitals' capacities would allow, according to data from the Directorate General of Health Services (DGHS).

Four of those hospitals were in Rajshahi division, three in Chattogram and one each in Rangpur, Khulna and Barishal divisions.

The number of hospital admissions has increased by around 267 percent across the country over the last two weeks.

In the first four days of July, an average of 7,024 patients with Covid-19 or coronavirus-like symptoms were being treated in the hospitals each day. This number was only 2,628 countrywide between June 15 and June 18.

In July, hospitals in Dhaka division were treating three-and-a-half times more patients compared to mid-June.

Hospitals in Rajshahi division saw around a 148-percent increase in hospital admissions during the same period, followed by 143 percent in Khulna division.

The picture is similar in all other divisions, with the number of patients rising.

Each of these divisions has also been seeing a surge in Covid-19 deaths.

Between May and June, Rajshahi saw weekly deaths rise from 15 to 48. From June to July, this number rose by 157 percent to a weekly death toll of 139.

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Rickshaw-pullers navigating their vehicles through a waterlogged portion of the capital's Green Road yesterday. Torrential rain for hours in the morning and afternoon and the city's widespread drainage issues led to similar scenes throughout Dhaka, where 43mm of rainfall was recorded till 6:00pm yesterday.

PHOTO: PRABIR DAS

Moderate rain exposes poor drainage in city

*Many areas inundated
for several hours*

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

For three hours after 9:00am yesterday, there was a rainfall of 38mm in the capital, which is considered to be a moderate downpour.

But this was enough to send many neighbourhoods and main streets knee-deep in water, thanks to poor drainage systems.

Fewer people ventured outdoors due to the lockdown, but those who did suffered on the flooded streets.

Urban planners blame the gradual decline in the number of water bodies that act as reservoirs and recent lackluster cleaning efforts by the city corporations for the mess.

Residents posted

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Left to starve in pandemic

*Tens of thousands of workers jobless after
jute mills closure last year still owed
arrears, struggling to find work*



**Farida, 56,
who was a
jute mill
worker,
now finds it
difficult to
get by.**

DIPANKAR ROY, Khulna

Farida worked as a "substitute" labourer at Platinum Jubilee Jute Mill in Khulna's Khalishpur area for around nine years before it was shut down in July last year, leaving her unemployed.

At the age of 56, she started working as a domestic help in Khulna town. But she was jobless again for around three months, unable to find steady work during the pandemic.

Farida, whose husband died around 15 years ago, is a mother of four. Her elder son, 38-year-old Alamin Sheikh, who worked at the same jute mill, also lost his job. He then worked as a day labourer but soon, this work also dried up as the pandemic effects continued in the country.

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COVID DAILY UPDATE

Bangladesh logs record 153 deaths

*Daily infection rate
rises to nearly 29pc*

STAR REPORT

One hundred and fifty-three people died from Covid-19 in 24 hours till 8:00am yesterday, according to a press release issued by the Directorate General of Health Services (DGHS).

This is by far the highest number of deaths from Covid-19 in a single day in the country since the pandemic began last year.

The total number of Covid-19 deaths in the country has reached 15,065 and the death rate stands at 1.59 percent.

At least, 8,661 new infections were recorded during the period, taking the total number of people infected to 944,917, added the release.

The current positivity rate is 28.99 percent while the total positivity rate stands at 14.05 percent.

A total of 29,879 samples were tested

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Moderna roll-out likely next week

MOHAMMAD AL-MASUM MOLLA

The government is likely to start administering the Moderna Covid-19 vaccine among priority groups early next week.

The jobs will be given to professionals, law enforcers, freedom fighters and students, who already got registered for vaccination and are waiting for the first dose, said Health Minister Zahid Maleque.

"We have resumed mass inoculation with Sinopharm and Pfizer vaccines. We hope to start inoculation with the Moderna vaccine early next week," the minister told The Daily Star yesterday.

Vaccine registration is now open for people under three categories -- law enforcers on the frontline, medical students and students of residential universities. They will get either Moderna or Sinopharm vaccine, he mentioned.

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RESTORING CTG HILL Contempt rule against 9 officials

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The High Court has issued a contempt of court rule against nine government officials including a secretary for not complying with its earlier directives to restore Gunagari hill in Banshkhali upazila to its original state.

In the rule, the court asked the nine officials to explain in four weeks why contempt of court proceedings should not be initiated against them for violating the directives issued in May, 2018.

The HC bench of Justice Mamnoon Rahman and Justice Khandaker

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Policeman Liton Hasan doing his bit to serve as well as protect by helping a woman in a wheelchair cross the street in the capital's Nayabazar area yesterday. Due to the strict lockdown enforced, it has been harder for people who have to depend on others to get necessary things done. And sometimes a little help goes a long way in making someone's day.

PHOTO: AMRAN HOSSAIN

7 New BRIDGES IN NORTHERN DISTRICTS Havoc on rivers for faulty designs

Finds IMED study

TUHIN SHUBHRA ADHIKARY

At least seven bridges built recently by the Roads and Highways Department in several northern districts have faults, either in alignments or guide banks, which may have adverse impacts on the rivers there, says a government report.

The impacts include rivers dying and eroding, says the report by Implementation Monitoring and Evaluation Division (IMED), prepared on a foreign-funded RHD project.

The IMED published the in-depth monitoring report recently over the Western Bangladesh Bridge Improvement Project of RHD. It had carried out the study by its consultant named Techno Consultant International Ltd in 2020-21 fiscal year.

The RHD built solid reinforcement

concrete walls which had already created discontent among locals as it obstructed the view of the river.

In an executive summary of the report, it has gone through different lab test reports to check the quality of the bridge and found the reports "satisfactory".

"However, the design and construction work of the guide banks of seven bridges in several districts [Dinajpur, Thakurgaon and Panchagarh] built under the projects appears to be faulty. As a result, it can have adverse impacts [such as rivers eroding and dying] on climate change," reads the report.

Bridge guide banks are built to control the river flow and to ensure that water flows beneath the bridge at all times, engineers said.

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Star BUSINESS



CONSUMER ELECTRONICS SUPPLEMENT 2021

Home appliance makers and retailers are trying to lure home-confined people with attractive offers and discounts ahead of Eid al-Adha. To know more about the offers read today's business supplement.



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