

# The Daily Star

SECOND EDITION

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Your Right to Know

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**'IT ISN'T OVER'**  
WHO warns against easing  
Covid restrictions too soon as  
UK, Germany move to lift curbs  
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**"Only hanging [execution of death sentence] cannot protect the society."**  
CHIEF JUSTICE SYED MAHMUD HOSSAIN



**"Lebanon is a few days away from the social explosion. The Lebanese are facing this dark fate alone."**  
CARETAKER PM HASSAN DIAB URGES DONORS TO SAVE LEBANESE FROM ECONOMIC CRISIS



**"It's always challenging to play away matches, but in terms of preparation, I am hopeful that if we play better cricket over five days..."**  
BANGLADESH CAPTAIN MOMINUL HAQUE AHEAD OF TEST MATCH AGAINST ZIMBABWE

## Nasal cannula crisis now proving fatal

Most district hospitals don't have life-saving high-flow cannulas to treat Covid patients with acute respiratory issues

ZYMA ISLAM and MOUJIB AHMED SUJAN

The deaths of at least 16 Covid-19 patients at hospitals across the country last week, reportedly due to shortage of oxygen, shone a light on the extent of the oxygen crisis.

Doctors say there is a very simple explanation for major district hospitals like Khulna Medical College Hospital or Rajshahi Medical College Hospital always being so overwhelmed -- the other hospitals in such districts are totally ill-equipped to deal with critical coronavirus patients who need high-flow oxygen.

At the moment, all districts except Panchagarh and Faridpur have central oxygen plants, but those are massively underutilised as most hospitals do not have life-saving high-flow nasal cannulas.

"Patients, who need more than 15 litres of oxygen per minute and have a stressed respiratory system, require supply from high-flow nasal cannulas," said Muhammad

### DIVISION WISE HIGH FLOW NASAL CANNULA DISTRIBUTION

DIVISION	% OF TOTAL
Mymensingh	1.87
Rangpur	3.03
Sylhet	3.62
Barishal	6.18
Khulna	6.18
Rajshahi	6.53
Chattogram	10.79
Dhaka	61.79

Asaduzzaman, head of the Department of Critical Care at Kuwait Bangladesh Friendship Hospital in Dhaka.

It is a known fact that the health facilities in Dhaka division are the country's best when it comes to treating critical patients, but what does the disparity look like?

Data from the Directorate General of Health Services (DGHS) shows that 1,714 high-flow nasal cannulas were being used at health facilities across the country yesterday.

Of the cannulas, 1,059 were being used by facilities in Dhaka division alone, leaving 655 cannulas for the other seven divisions.

Dhaka division's lion's share of high-flow nasal cannulas are being used by 72 hospitals.

This leaves districts which do not have a medical college hospital with meagre crumbs.

At least 56 hospitals across the country have less than five high-flow nasal cannulas

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Police detain people in front of the Rajuk Bhaban in the capital's Dilkusha yesterday for violating "strict lockdown" rules. The detainees could not give valid reasons for being out. Law enforcers made them aware of complying with the rules before releasing them on assurance that they won't flout the rules again.

PHOTO: PRABIR DAS

## Daily Covid cases climb to new record

11,525 more infected, 163 die in 24 hours

STAR REPORT

Bangladesh logged 163 deaths from Covid-19 in 24 hours till 8:00am yesterday, said a press release of the Directorate General of Health Services (DGHS).

The total number of Covid deaths now stands at 15,392 and the death rate is 1.59 percent.

During the 24 hours, 11,525 new infections were reported, a record in the country.

With this, the total caseload went up to 9,66,406, said the release.

On Monday, Bangladesh saw 9,964 new cases and 164 deaths.

The current positivity rate is 31.46 percent and the total positivity rate stands at 14.22 percent.

A total of 36,631 samples were tested across the country in the 24-hour period.

At least 5,433 Covid patients recovered during the same period.

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## Serum silent yet Dhaka 'hopeful'

DELIVERY OF 2.3CR DOSES OF VACCINE

MOHAMMAD AL-MASUM MOLLA

The Covid-19 situation has improved remarkably in India but there is no sign yet from the neighbouring country of resuming supply of the Oxford-AstraZeneca vaccine Covishield, abruptly held up for own use.

Serum Institute, the vaccine manufacturer in India, has remained tight-lipped despite repeated communications from the Bangladesh government for the doses it paid for. Serum Institute has not sent a single dose after February, putting the country's vaccination campaign in jeopardy, and more pressingly leaving around 15 lakh people -- waiting for the second doses -- in limbo.

It has supplied 70 lakh doses of Covishield in two instalments from the three crore doses Dhaka procured. According to the contract, Serum was supposed to send 50 lakh doses each month between January and June.

Bangladesh's inoculation drive, which began on February 7 and revolved mainly around Serum's supply, came to a grinding halt after New Delhi suspended vaccine exports in the last week of April due to a massive surge of Covid-19 infections in India.

In terms of coronavirus cases, India is one of the worst-hit countries in the world with the pandemic claiming 4,01,050 lives and 30,502,362 people getting infected there.

However, as the situation in India has improved significantly over the

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## Five officials OSD for graft, negligence

HOMES FOR THE HOMELESS

RASHIDUL HASAN

Five government officials have been made Officers on Special Duty, considered a punishment position, after some houses built for the homeless as a gift from the prime minister either collapsed or became uninhabitable days after the beneficiaries moved in.

Everyone involved in irregularities and negligence in the Ashrayan Project, an initiative of Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina, will face investigation and subsequent action, top officials said.

The wobbly and flimsy houses have embarrassed the Prime Minister's Office, they said.

Shafiqul Islam, one of officers made OSD, is also facing departmental proceedings. He was the UNO of Kazipur, Sirajganj, during implementation of the project.

The four other officers are UNO of Barguna's Amtali, Asaduzzaman; former UNO of Bogura's Sherpur, Liaqat Ali Sheikh (now additional

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## Fan out across the country

Govt asks 1,239 doctors at medical college hospitals to join Covid units by today; doctors outraged by the decision

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Amid a surge in Coronavirus patients, the government has directed 1,239 doctors working at medical colleges to join Covid units at public hospitals and upazila health complexes across the country.

The decision was part of "the government efforts to tackle the Covid pandemic properly and ensure healthcare services".

In multiple circulars on Sunday and Monday, the Health Services Division (HSD) instructed the doctors to join their newly-designated work stations by today.

However, the transfer orders would not be applicable to the doctors already involved in RT-PCR Covid test or those working in Covid-dedicated hospitals, according to another HSD circular issued yesterday evening.

A doctor who is the only teacher available in a department at a medical college is also exempted from such orders, it mentioned.

Besides, the HSD suspended the transfer orders that contain wrong information about the current workplaces of a number of doctors.

It has asked the authorities concerned to send to the health ministry lists of these doctors by tomorrow.

The government decision has triggered outrage among doctors who said the reshuffle was made in an "unplanned" way without any discussions with them.

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## SSC, HSC EXAMS Pros, cons of alternatives being weighed

MOHIUDDIN ALAMGIR

The government is looking for alternative ways to evaluate SSC and HSC examinees this year as uncertainty looms over holding of the major public exams if the Covid situation does not improve significantly.

However, students and guardians are worried as no concrete decisions on holding of the exams have been made yet.

Education officials said they would try their best to hold the Secondary School Certificate (SSC), Higher Secondary Certificate (HSC) and their equivalent exams. But they are also considering some alternatives like evaluating students based on their results in previous public exams and assignments.

Officials are also thinking of taking the exams reducing the number of subjects and total marks.

"Nothing is final. We are working on several options,

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Patients wait in three ambulances for hours outside Khulna Medical College Hospital yesterday to get admitted. The 130-bed Corona unit of the hospital is already well beyond capacity as the Khulna division sees a huge surge in Covid-19 cases.

PHOTO: COURTESY BY HABIBUR RAHMAN

## LOCKDOWN AID FOR POOR Not reaching the targeted

Experts fear Covid risk increasing as the poor defy restrictions to earn living

MAHBUBUR RAHMAN KHAN

Nazim Uddin did not have any other choice. A small vendor who earns his living by selling children's garments in front of Gazipur's Sreepur Upazila Parishad, he came out of home yesterday amid the lockdown because he ran out of stock of daily essentials.

But this time, he was selling facemasks. "Police will fine me if I sell clothes. That's why I'm selling masks. If I could get some money, I'll be able to buy food for a day," Nazim said.

He said he would not have to leave his home if the government provided him with assistance, be it food or money. Like Nazim, a large number of poor and marginalised people in various parts of the country, who became jobless due to the ongoing lockdown, have been in dire straits without any government support.

Three days before the lockdown started on July 1, the Department of Disaster Management (DDM) disbursed Tk 23.6 crore for the poor, insolvent and jobless people of the 64 districts through the district administrations. The money was supposed to be distributed among the people by July 3.

The Daily Star correspondents spoke to people and local representatives of union parishads of 17 districts in eight divisions and found many had not gotten the aid.

In some districts, the local administration is yet to begin the distribution as they are still preparing the list of people in need.

The disaster ministry on Sunday allocated another Tk

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