

OLYMPIC LAUREL FOR YUNUS  
Nobel laureate to become award's second recipient  
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"We have to curb the virus transmission. Otherwise, the health system will break down."  
HEALTH MINISTER ZAHID MALEQUE



"In 2021 we have potentially a perfect storm about to happen.... We are ringing it (the alarm bell) now."  
KATE O'BRIEN, WHO DIRECTOR OF IMMUNISATION, ON LOW RATE OF ROUTINE VACCINATION OF CHILDREN



"We will not turn a blind eye to the CCP's ongoing crimes against humanity..."  
US REPUBLICAN SENATOR MARCO RUBIO ON BILL TO BAN ALL PRODUCTS FROM XINJIANG



# SSC, HSC likely in Nov, Dec

Stripped-down versions of the exams to be held if Covid situation improves

MOHIUDDIN ALAMGIR and WASIM BIN HABIB

The SSC examinations will be held in November and the HSC tests in December if the Covid situation improves, the government announced yesterday allaying to some extent worries of around 36 lakh students as well as their guardians.

Usually, the Secondary School Certificate (SSC) and its equivalent examinations take place in February while the Higher Secondary Certificate (HSC) and its equivalent tests in April. The pandemic forced the government to postpone the exams, severely disrupting the academic life of the students.

The government said the examinees would have to take the tests only in three optional subjects. The syllabus will be shortened and the exams will carry fewer marks. The students will not have to sit for tests in compulsory subjects like Bangla, English and Mathematics.

The results of the three optional subjects and the Grade Point Average (GPA) of the students' previous public examinations, including Junior School Certificate (JSC) tests, will be taken into consideration while preparing the final results, it said.

The government wants to hold the SSC and its equivalent examinations in the second week of November and the HSC and its equivalent tests in the first week of December, Education Minister Dipu Moni said yesterday.

"This time, we want to prepare the SSC and HSC results through evaluation. If the Covid situation improves, we will take the tests within the shortest possible time. A shortened syllabus will be prepared," she said at a virtual press briefing.

Since there will be no tests in the compulsory subjects, the students' GPA of the previous public exams will be considered for the final results of the SSC and HSC exams.

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Desperate family members try to give elderly Covid-19 patients some sort of comfort on the ground outside the Tangail General Hospital. After a fire broke out in the ICU of the hospital around 3:13pm, panic-stricken families took the patients out of the hospital building and waited out in the open.

## TANGAIL GEN HOSPITAL Covid patients whisked out of ICU as fire triggers panic

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Tangail

Dozens of patients were whisked off Tangail General Hospital by their panic-stricken relatives yesterday after a fire broke out at the hospital's Intensive Care Unit (ICU).

The patients had to take shelter beside a road near the hospital. Some critical Covid patients gasped for air without adequate oxygen support.

One of them died after suffering a cardiac arrest.

The deceased, Saiful Islam, 50, was undergoing treatment at the hospital's Covid unit, which is adjacent to the ICU. He was from Tangail's Ghatail upazila.

Tangail Civil Surgeon Abul Fazal Mohammad Shahabuddin said the fire broke out at the ICU at 3:13pm. Panicked, Saiful's relatives hurriedly moved him out of the hospital

PHOTO: STAR

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## VIRUS TRANSMISSION If not checked, health system may collapse

Warns health minister as country sees 226 daily deaths, 12,236 cases

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The health directorate reported the second highest daily deaths of 226 from Covid-19 yesterday, which was the first day of withdrawing the "strict lockdown" for a week.

On Sunday, the highest ever 230 deaths were recorded.

Amid the rising trend in deaths and infections, Health Minister Zahid Maleque yesterday said the health system might collapse if Covid-19 transmission was not controlled.

"We must curb the transmission. Otherwise, the health system will break down," he said while addressing an event at the College of Physicians and Surgeons in the capital.

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## Insanity reigns as lockdown goes

Risk of Covid spread rises as thousands leave city barely maintaining safety rules

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Thousands of people left Dhaka yesterday on buses, trains and launches as the government relaxed the "strict lockdown" ahead of Eid-ul-Azha, which has raised fears of an increase in Covid-19 transmission.

All types of transport modes were supposed to carry passengers at 50 percent capacity to minimise the transmission, but some local trains, buses and launches allegedly violated the rules by carrying more than the stipulated passengers.

Thousands were seen crossing the Padma on crowded ferries, while the sharp increase of vehicles on some highways, including Dhaka-Aricha and Dhaka-Tangail, led to traffic congestion.

Many passengers also alleged that some bus operators overcharged, while others complained about scarcity of bus tickets.

Meanwhile, Dhaka has quickly reprised its pre-lockdown character with heavy traffic jams and bustling crowds on streets, and shopping centres and markets packed with shoppers ahead of Eid.

The government on Monday announced that the ongoing "strict lockdown" would be relaxed from yesterday to July 22 centring the Eid on July 21.

This development came at a time when the country witnessed the second-highest single-day death toll of 226 yesterday, with the daily positivity rate at 27.23 percent.

In the lead-up to the lifting of the strict lockdown, many health experts had warned that it could lead to a further spike in Covid-19 cases and deaths, as was the case in the aftermath of Eid-ul-Fitr in mid-May.

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## VACCINE PRODUCTION Dhaka to join int'l institute to build capacity

MOHAMMAD AL-MASUM MOLLA

Faced with limited resources in research against infectious diseases like Covid-19, Bangladesh has decided to join Seoul-based International Vaccine Institute to build the capacity to produce vaccines locally.

The country is among the 36 signatories to the founding charter of IVI when the non-profit organisation was established in 1997, but has yet to ratify it, said health ministry officials.

"We are a member of the organisation. We have decided to ratify in the shortest possible time and initiatives were taken in this regard," Health Minister Zahid Maleque told The Daily Star.

The ratification will pave the way to facilitate the production of new vaccines in the country through the transfer of new technology, the health minister said.

He also said the ratification will boost technical assistance and training in vaccine production and research in Bangladesh.

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## Life sentence is 30 years

Says full text of HC judgement

ASHUTOSH SARKAR

Life imprisonment means 30 years in jail and a convict awarded such a sentence should get remission of seven and a half years as per the laws, according to a Supreme Court judgement.

In a 120-page judgement released yesterday, the apex court ruled that imprisonment for life apparently means a convict's jail sentence for the rest of his or her life.

"In Bangladesh, life sentences have become a complex patchwork of judicial and executive orders. A young person sentenced to imprisonment for life could theoretically serve many more years in jail than an older person. An older person has a significantly greater chance of serving the rest of his life in jail.

"Many prisoners serving life sentences will likely die in prison. The society should find a humane way of handling life sentences," the Appellate Division of the SC observed in the full text of the verdict.

Interpreting the observations, lawyer Mohammad Shishir Manir told The Daily Star that prisoners who have been sentenced to life imprisonment will have to serve 30 years and will get the remission. It means, convicts awarded life imprisonment will have to remain behind bars for a total of 22 and a half years, he said.

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People who left the house on the first day after the "strict lockdown" were greeted with long tailbacks and congestion that persisted almost throughout the day in the capital yesterday. The photo was taken at Tejgaon Satrasta intersection in the morning.

PHOTO: AMRAN HOSSAIN

## GATCO GRAFT CASE Khaleda, others committed offence: HC

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The High Court has observed that BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia and others accused in the Gatco corruption case have violated laws.

They committed offences of breaching trust and abetting crimes under sections 409/109 of the Penal Code and attempting to commit criminal misconduct under section 5(2) of the Prevention of Corruption Act, 1947, observed the HC bench of Justice Md Nazrul Islam Talukder and Justice KM Hafizul Alam in an order following a petition filed by directors of GATCO, a farming equipment trader.

On November 25, 2018, the bench delivered a short order. The full text of the order was released yesterday.

Directors Syed Galib Ahmed and Syed Tanveer Ahmed sought cancellation of the trial proceedings against them.

In the full text, the HC directed the lower court concerned to finish in six months the trial proceedings of the corruption case, filed against Khaleda and several others in 2007.

The HC bench also ordered Syed Galib Ahmed and Syed Tanveer Ahmed to

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