

THE WORLD IS 'SEEING A LIE'
Cuban President Miguel Diaz-Canel dismisses unrest as regime mounts response
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"Experts have warned that the situation may worsen unless the participation of all in building awareness is ensured."
DGHS SPOKESPERSON DR NAZMUL ISLAM ABOUT DENGUE OUTBREAK



"I am going to Delhi to discuss how quickly the [Covid] vaccine, manufactured in India, can be supplied to Bangladesh."
INDIAN ENVOY TO BANGLADESH VIKRAM DORAISWAMI



"It is my fervent hope... Congress will finally provide security to all Dreamers, who have lived too long in fear."
US PRESIDENT JOE BIDEN PROMISES TO APPEAL IMMIGRATION RULING

Crimes behind Brahman cows

Shady businesses manipulate system to dodge ban on import of the cattle breed, make hefty profits

RASHIDUL HASAN

Import ban, so what? There are ways to sneak those in, through the country's main airport even.

That's the case with 18 Brahman cows that were flown in from the US recently amid pandemic restrictions, with nobody showing up at Hazrat Shahjalal International Airport to receive those.

Importer Sadeeq Agro Limited used fake livestock ministry documents for this import, and it already had other Brahman cows, possibly from previous such imports, on sale at its farm, finds an investigation by The Daily Star.

Forged documents, copies of which this correspondent was able to obtain, were used to dodge the government's ban imposed in 2016 on import of the Brahman cows, one of the cattle breeds meant for



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the meat industry, after Bangladesh attained self-sufficiency in meat production.

The importer or its agent did not even submit to the customs authorities the bill of entry, a mandatory legal document on or before the arrival of a consignment.

After the failure of Plan A, which was to "manage" airport officials, followed a routine procedure -- seizure of the cows by customs officials and a three-week wait before auction.

But if Plan B -- buying up the cows at the auction -- or Plan C -- paying a fine by the court -- worked out, the importer Sadeeq Agro Limited would still be able to get these giant American-breed cattle of Indian origin to its farm in Mohammadpur's Beribadh area.

Only about two months back, another

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Hundreds of traders and customers gather at the Tebaria cattle market in Natore ahead of Eid-ul-Azha. There is no evidence of social distancing while a majority of people are seen either without masks or not wearing them properly. Although many members of local administration were present at the market, no one was ensuring that Covid-19 safety protocols were being followed.
PHOTO: BULBUL AHMED

ANTIGEN-BASED TEST

78 healthcare bodies given permission

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The government yesterday allowed 78 private healthcare organisations across the country to conduct antigen-based Covid-19 rapid testing.

The move, which has been demanded for long, was taken for expanding testing facilities and making those easily available.

The approval of the Directorate General of Health Services (DGHS) came more than one and a half months after it sent a letter to the health ministry, detailing the cost and other issues regarding the rapid antigen test.

Antigen tests are immunoassays that detect the presence of a specific viral antigen, which implies current viral infection. They are relatively inexpensive and can be used at the point-of-care.

The rapid tests in the private healthcare settings can be done for patients showing Covid-19 symptoms and those who came in close contact with Covid-19 patients,

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COVID VACCINATION

Govt to lower age bar to 30 years

Vaccination to start at Karail slum after Eid, at Rohingya camps August 16

MOHAMMAD AL-MASUM MOLLA

The government has decided to lower the age limit to 30 years for Covid vaccination to bring more people under its inoculation campaign.

The decision came at a virtual meeting of the Covid Vaccination Programme Committee yesterday as the country continues to see a surge in virus infections and deaths.

"We suggested bringing down the age limit to 18 years ... But the meeting decided to lower the age limit to 30 years from 35 at this moment and gradually bring it down to 18," a top government official told The Daily Star, seeking anonymity.

Asked, Health Minister Zahid Maleque said, "We are working to implement the prime minister's decision to expand the vaccination

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VACCINE	AMOUNT
AstraZeneca (Japan)	29 lakh (confirmed)
Moderna	30 lakh (confirmed)
Sinopharm	1.1 crore (confirmed)
Johnson & Johnson	50 lakh (under process)
Sinopharm	3 crore (Proposed)

CROWDED CATTLE MARKETS

DGHS worried over violation of safety rules

225 more die of Covid

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Health officials have voiced concern over violations of the health safety rules at cattle markets as the country yesterday recorded 225 deaths from Covid, the third-highest toll in a day.

People have been flocking to cattle markets all over the country to buy sacrificial animals ahead of the Eid-ul-Azha to be celebrated on July 21.

"As cattle markets are supervised by the local government ministry, we know they too are monitoring the situation. We think awareness and sense of responsibility among both sellers and buyers are important," said Dr Nazmul Islam, spokesperson for the Directorate General of Health Services (DGHS).

He said the DGHS has already issued "specific suggestions" to all civil surgeons in this regard.

"There are teams led by civil surgeons

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INDECISION ON RUNNING RMG UNITS

Uncertainty over workers' Eid trips

REFAJET ULLAH MIRDHA

Nizam Uddin, a sewing machine operator at a garment factory in Ashulia, cannot decide whether to go to his village in Mymensingh to celebrate Eid-ul-Azha with his family.

The reason for his indecision is that he is unsure how long his Eid leave would be. Would it be for three days or 17 days?

Like him, thousands of garment workers are left in a state of suspense on whether the government would allow factories to run as normal during the fortnight-long lockdown starting July 23.

As things stand, factories would be shut during the lockdown, supposed to be the strictest yet amid the pandemic that began in March last year.

But garment and textile factory owners have been lobbying with the government since Wednesday to keep their plants out of the purview of the lockdown. In case that cannot be managed, they are also lobbying to resume production at their factories from August 1 instead of August 5, when the lockdown ends.

If they get their way, the workers would then have to report to duty on July 23, two days after Eid and on the day the lockdown sets off. They would then have to start from their villages on July 22, the day following Eid.

In short, it would be too short a trip for it to be worthwhile.

If the workers have to report to duty on August 1, which is in the middle of the strict lockdown, they would have a problem getting to Dhaka from their villages in the absence of any public transport.

Fearing an unkind situation like they had faced last year, when they had

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Shakib guides Tigers to series win

STAR SPORT DESK

Shakib Al Hasan played a match-winning knock of unbeaten 96 runs as Bangladesh clinched the three-match series 2-0 with a three-wicket victory against Zimbabwe in the second one-day international in Harare yesterday.

The 34-year-old all-rounder, who was going through a lean patch with the bat since his reintroduction into international cricket following a one-year suspension by the ICC, came into his own and scored the winning boundary as Bangladesh chased down the 241-run target with five balls to

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With a pen in her hand and a smile on her face, three-and-a-half-year-old Dolon sits on the pavement near the capital's Moghbazar and listens to her mother Nazma's instructions on what next to write on the notebook open on her lap. Nazma sells masks on the side of the road while making sure that her daughter does not miss out on her education amid the ongoing closure of schools. The photo was taken yesterday.

Pilgrims stream out of Makkah

60,000 fully vaccinated Muslims begin hajj rituals



AFP, Makkah

Hajj pilgrims streamed out of the holy city of Makkah and into the Mina valley yesterday, launching the rituals of the great pilgrimage which Saudi Arabia is holding in a scaled-down form for a second year.

Only 60,000 fully vaccinated citizens and residents of the kingdom are allowed to take part, far from the vast crowds that descend on Makkah in normal times when the ritual draws some 2.5 million pilgrims.

Since Saturday, groups of pilgrims have been performing the "tawaf" at Makkah's Grand Mosque, circling the Kaaba, a large cubic structure draped in golden-embroidered black cloth towards which Muslims around the world pray.

After that, they have been making their way to Mina, where they will spend the night. Mina sits in a narrow valley surrounded by rocky mountains, some five kilometres (three miles) from the Grand Mosque, and is transformed

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