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SURGE OF DELTA VARIANT US brings back masks

Even vaccinated people must wear those

AGENCIES

People vaccinated against Covid-19 in high-risk parts of the United States should resume wearing masks indoors, the top health authority said, as countries around the world yesterday extended curbs struggling to suppress the Delta variant.

President Joe Biden said the announcement showed that America needs to "do better" on vaccinations, adding that a vaccine mandate for the country's more than two million federal workers was now "under consideration."

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention director Rochelle Walensky cited new data that shows rare breakthrough cases involving Delta have an increased risk of onward transmission.

"In areas with substantial and high transmission, CDC recommends fully vaccinated people wear masks in public indoor settings," she said.

As recently as last week, the CDC had defended its surprise decision in May that vaccinated people did not have to wear masks indoors in most circumstances.

In another setback, the White House on Tuesday also ordered all its staff to mask up again due to local transmission rates in Washington.

According to the latest CDC data, 63 percent of the country's more than 3,200 counties are experiencing substantial or high transmission.

Substantial is defined as being between 50 and 100

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Over 200 people queued up to give samples for the Covid-19 test at Brahmanbaria General Hospital's Bangladesh Medical Association building yesterday. To ensure existing general patients remain safe and away from Covid-19 suspects, the hospital turned the building into what it calls "the flu corner" to conduct coronavirus tests. However, the people in line didn't maintain social distancing required by health safety guidelines.

PHOTO: MASHUK HRIDOO

PEGASUS SCANDAL Modi 'hit the soul of India's democracy'

Says Rahul Gandhi

AGENCIES

The Prime Minister "inserted a weapon in our phones", used it to "hit the soul of India's democracy" and now the government is trying to silence opposition demands for a discussion in Parliament, Congress MP Rahul Gandhi said yesterday.

Gandhi was addressing reporters after a meeting of 14 opposition parties - a meeting to chalk out a strategy to take on the government over the Pegasus phone-hacking scandal, which has triggered protests in, and forced repeated adjournments of the monsoon session of Parliament, reports NDTV.

"The entire opposition is here... our voice is being curtailed in Parliament. We are only asking if the Pegasus software was bought and if it was used against certain persons in India," Gandhi said.

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President of Natore AL in fear of attack

Claims he dares not go to party office in town

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Natore

Natore Awami League President Abdul Quddus has alleged that he cannot stay in the district town as he fears of being attacked by criminals.

Quddus, also a lawmaker from Natore-4 (Baraigram-Gurudaspur), said he cannot go to the party's district office for the same reason.

He made the allegations in a virtual discussion, organised by the district Swachhchasebak League, on Tuesday.

He claimed that despite being the president of the ruling AL's Natore unit, he does not receive invitations to party and national programmes in the district.

"I had rented a house in the town to make the party's activities more dynamic. But some people brandishing arms threatened the landlord that he must evict his tenant," said Quddus.

He said an office was arranged for him to run party activities, but he still cannot enter it.

The lawmaker, who became Natore AL president in late 2014, said he even could

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ROAD TO FREEDOM
THIS DAY IN BANGLADESH LIBERATION WAR HISTORY

Pakistan preparing for long guerrilla war

JULY 29, 1971

SHAMSUDDOZA SAJEN

STRATEGY TO COUNTER GUERRILLA ATTACKS

The New York Times reported today, "the Pakistan's military Government was waiting for what it fears may be a protracted guerrilla war, in East Pakistan, and Government strategists are drawing from the writings of Mao Tse-tung and other experts in their plans."

The American daily further reported that guerrilla activity had accelerated during the last two weeks and had begun to pose a problem for the military authorities. The three divisions of troops, armour and artillery now being maintained in East Pakistan had not been able to prevent the dynamiting of power installations, bridges, roads and houses by guerrillas. It was estimated that there were 30,000 active guerrillas in the province.

As to the response of the Pakistani military regime to this development, The New York Times informed that the Pakistan government organised the new Razakar (volunteer) force on July 15 as a step toward countering guerrillas. The government said it had already recruited more than 22,000 Razakars of a planned force of 35,000.

A high-ranking Pakistan army official was quoted in The New York Times as saying, "The people are definitely giving us information about the guerrillas. The people realize that the guerrilla operations

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AL leader murdered in Bogura

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Bogura

Criminals killed a union-level Awami League leader in Bogura Sadar upazila on Tuesday night.

Mominur Islam Rocky, 32, was the general secretary of Fapor union AL unit.

Quoting his family, Selim Reza, officer-in-charge of Bogura Sadar Police Station, said Rocky was returning home after offering Esha prayers at a mosque. When he reached Haatkola Bazar, near his home, some 15-20 youths attacked him with sharp weapons and rods around 8:30pm.

They hit him on his head with iron rods and stabbed him. They fled the spot, leaving him critically injured.

Locals sent him to Bogura Shaheed Ziaur Rahman Medical College Hospital where doctors declared him dead.

The attackers were

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Inscription of last Babylonian king found in KSA



MAIL ONLINE

An ancient carving made on a basalt stone 2,550 years ago has been identified as the last Babylonian king, Nabonidus.

Discovered in Saudi Arabia, the inscription depicts king Nabonidus holding a scepter and surrounded by four religious symbols: a snake, a crescent moon, the sun and a flower.

Although researchers are still deciphering the meaning of the symbols, some suggest they could be linked to deities in the Mesopotamian pantheon, representing the star of Ishtar, the winged disc of the sun god Shamash and the crescent of the moon deity Sin - a god favored by

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House tutor lands in jail over rape of ninth-grader

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Naokhali

A Naokhali court yesterday sent a home tutor to jail for his alleged involvement in the rape of a teenage girl in the district's Chatkhil upazila.

The accused is Farabi Ahmed Foye, 25, of the upazila's Porkot village, said police.

Anwarul Islam, officer-in-charge of Chatkhil Police Station, said they arrested the accused on Tuesday night after the victim's family filed a case with the police station.

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PRAYER TIMING JULY 29

Fazr Zohr Asr Maghrib Esha
AZAN 4-20 12-45 5-00 6-50 8-15
JAMAAT 4-55 1-15 5-15 6-55 8-45

SOURCE: ISLAMIC FOUNDATION

Sr judicial magistrate dies from Covid

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A senior judicial magistrate of Jhalakathi, Sania Akter, died of Covid-19 yesterday morning.

Sania, 29, breathed her last while receiving treatment at Barishal Sher-E-Bangla Medical College Hospital at 10:30am, her husband AHM Imranur Rahman told The Daily Star.

Imranur, also a senior judicial magistrate in Jhalakathi, said his wife got infected with coronavirus on July 12.

She was then admitted to Sher-E-Bangla Medical College Hospital, he added.

Sania was born on August 1, 1992 at Hoglekanda village of Narayanganj's Arahazur upazila. She completed Masters in Law from Jagannath University.

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Passengers on boats caught in heavy rain while crossing the Karnaphuli from Abhoy Mitra ferry terminal in Chattogram. Many people are having to travel on different modes of transport for emergencies, even during the nationwide lockdown, but continuous rain has been a barrier. The photo was taken yesterday.

PHOTO: RAJIB RATHAN

PRODUCING COVID VACCINES Bangladesh to get priority in US plan

Says senior US official

DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT

The US will prioritise Bangladesh in its plan for producing Covid-19 vaccines and therapeutics and expanding production of PPE, a senior US official has said.

Ambassador Marcia Bernicat, senior official for Economic Growth, Energy, and the Environment at the US State Department, made the comment during a meeting with Salman F Rahman, prime minister's adviser for private industry and investment, in Washington DC on Tuesday.

At the meeting, both sides expressed willingness to work more closely to fight against the Covid-19 pandemic.

They underlined the need for remaining engaged through different institutional mechanisms and beyond on further deepening the partnership between the two friendly governments, according to the Bangladesh embassy in Washington.

The pandemic's adverse impacts on public health and global economy were discussed at the meeting.

Tuesday's meeting was a follow-up to the first Bangladesh-US Economic Partnership Meeting held on September 30 last year.

Adviser Salman thanked the US government for providing more than 5.5 million doses of Covid-19 vaccines to Bangladesh through COVAX.

He stressed the need for scaling up the global production of Covid-19 vaccines and other pandemic management

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