

The Daily Star

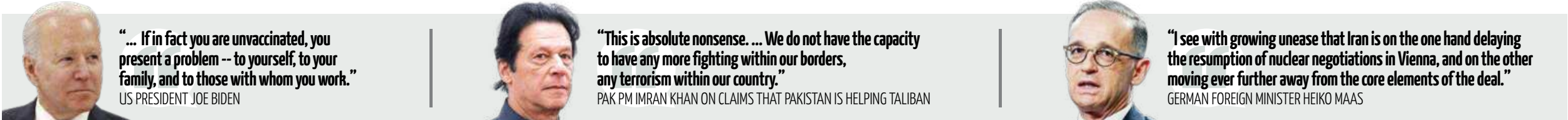
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CONTROVERSIAL SECURITY LAW
In a first, a Hong Kong court sentences former waiter for 9 years for 'terrorist activities'
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SURGE IN COVID PATIENTS

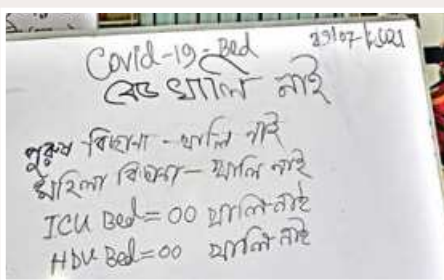
Hospitals in city overwhelmed

Many patients refused admission for lack of beds



Covid patient Habibur Rahman, 75, is being wheeled into Dhaka Medical College Hospital. The hospital had released him yesterday after providing treatment for about a week, but his relatives took him back to the DMCH as his health deteriorated on the way to his son's Mirpur home.

PHOTO: ANISUR RAHMAN



- All major public hospitals already overcrowded
- Bed occupancy in private hospitals nearly 100%
- Sharp increase in patients coming from rural areas

SHAHEEN MOLLAH and MD SHAHNAWAZ KHAN CHANDAN

Wednesday was a nightmare for Shipra Baidya and her family.

While at home in Gopalganj, the woman in her mid-40s started having breathing difficulties early that day. She was whisked off to a public hospital in the capital dedicated to treating Covid-19 patients.

But she was turned away as no bed was available there. She was then taken to another government hospital in the city but was refused admission there as well.

Hoping that Shipra would be admitted

to Dhaka Medical College Hospital (DMCH), her son Shukhdeb Baidya waited outside the hospital gate for hours on Wednesday night. The entire time, Shipra had to suffer lying inside an ambulance outside the DMCH.

"My mother needed oxygen support and we had taken her to the capital on doctor's advice. But all the hospitals there shut the door on us. Having no other options, we took her back to Gopalganj and got her admitted to a local hospital," Shukhdeb said.

This is not an isolated case. Many like

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Infection rate rises in 42 dists

212 deaths, 13,862 new cases in 24 hrs

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Covid infection rate has increased in 42 districts in the fourth week of this month compared to the third week.

A total of 19 districts, including nine bordering ones, have seen a drop in infection rate during this period. However, the rate remained unchanged in the rest of the three districts, according to data of the Directorate General of Health Services (DGHS).

The infection rate rose in the three hill districts. The rate also increased in Dhaka and its four nearby districts -- Narayanganj, Munshiganj, Gazipur and Manikganj.

In Dhaka, the positivity rate was 35 percent last week, up from 33 percent in the previous week.

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Target 60 lakh jobs in 6 days

Aged citizens, rural people to get priority in special vaccination campaign from Aug 7

MOHAMMAD AL-MASUM MOLLA

The government has decided to inoculate at least 60 lakh people against Covid-19 in just six days starting from August 7, in what officials said would be a special campaign mainly targeting the elderly individuals in rural areas.

The plan is to vaccinate 10 lakh people each day in over 15,287 wards across the country, they added.

The ward councillors will coordinate the drive, making sure that people with little access to the registration process get inoculated even if they don't have the national ID card.

During the six days, the regular vaccination centres will give the jobs only to the individuals who had previously taken the first shot, officials said.

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Targeted number of people:	1,34,42,000
Number of rural people:	1,10,40,000
Total vaccination centres:	15,287
Ward-based centres in rural areas:	13,800
Centres in city corp areas:	433
Centres in municipal areas:	1,054
Vaccine for rural areas:	Sinopharm
Vaccine for city corp areas:	Moderna

Export-oriented factories reopen from August 1

Experts fear infection rise

MOHAMMAD AL-MASUM MOLLA and MAHBUBUR RAHMAN KHAN

Apparently giving in to pressure, the government has decided to allow export-oriented factories to reopen from August 1 amid the ongoing "strict lockdown" enforced to curb the spread of Covid-19.

The cabinet division in a circular issued yesterday said all export-oriented industries and factories will be out of the purview of restrictions from August 1 considering the "overall situation".

The circular was issued a few hours after the Directorate General of Health Services (DGHS) disclosed that it recommends extending the current nationwide lockdown, considering the worsening Covid-19 situation.

"We have advised the public administration ministry to extend the lockdown. If the government reopens everything, infections will definitely rise," Prof ABM Khurshid Alam, director general of the DGHS, told reporters yesterday.

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ROHINGYAS IN BANGLADESH

No question of their integration with locals

Govt tells World Bank on suggestion for giving them privileges, says repatriation its only goal

PORIMOL PALMA and REJAUJUL KARIM BYRON

Bangladesh does not want any measures that promote integration of the Rohingyas into the local society.

This message was conveyed to the World Bank by the government after the former sought opinions on preparing a global Refugee Policy Review Framework.

"In a meeting with the World Bank and UN officials on Wednesday, we clearly stated that Rohingya repatriation is our only goal. We cannot allow freedom of movement or other privileges, including education and job, like those enjoyed by the Bangladeshis," Foreign Minister AK Abdul Momen told The Daily Star yesterday.

He said the World Bank has sent a letter attaching a document that spoke of Rohingyas' freedom of movement, birth certificate, privileges of education and job, and infrastructure.

"This document is not Bangladesh-specific, but we said we won't agree with these suggestions. We agreed to provide education to Rohingyas under Myanmar curriculum and language so that it becomes useful when they return to Myanmar. The World Bank and the UN have agreed."

Momen said Bangladesh is not a signatory to the UN Convention on Refugees and it defines Rohingyas as forcibly displaced Myanmar citizens, not refugees. Myanmar has committed crimes against the Rohingyas and Bangladesh being a victim of the situation extend help, he added.

Some one million Rohingyas currently live in Bangladesh. Most of them had fled a military crackdown in Myanmar's Rakhine state in 2017. Repatriation has not been possible over the years as Rohingyas denied returning, saying conditions in Rakhine were not safe and they had no guarantee of

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Former deputy speaker Ali Ashraf no more

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Prof Md Ali Ashraf, a veteran lawmaker of the ruling Awami League, died at a city hospital yesterday.

He was 74.

"Prof Ashraf died around 3:50pm at the city's Square Hospital," his personal assistant Jashim Uddintold The Daily Star.

A freedom fighter, former deputy speaker of parliament and five-time MP, Prof Ashraf is survived by his wife, one son, four daughters and a host of relatives, friends and well-wishers to mourn his death.

He became a lawmaker for the first time from Cumilla-11 in the maiden Jatiya Sangsad election of Bangladesh in 1973.

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The pandemic has plunged the people from low-income families into financial despair. For Johura Begum, it has caused great hardship since she lost her job as domestic help last month. Her ailing husband cannot go out for work either. Holding her two-year-old son Bishal on her lap, Johura waits for alms from pedestrians in the capital's Tejaon area on Wednesday.

PHOTO: PALASH KHAN

RISE IN DENGUE CASES IN CITY

Key terminals, depots turn Aedes hotspots



HELEMUL ALAM and SHAHEEN MOLLAH

Major terminals and depots in the capital have become ideal breeding grounds for Aedes mosquito, the carrier of dengue virus, thanks to puddles formed in discarded tyres and plastic containers.

Plastic barrels that are filled with rainwater and left untouched for days are also common around the terminals, giving the Aedes larvae ample spaces to grow and multiply. Meanwhile, more than 2,400 people have been infected with the dengue virus over the past few months.

In recent visits to bus terminals in Sayedabad, Gabtoli and Mohakhali, Tejaon truck terminal, and BRTC bus

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