

Covid Delta variant not specifically targeting children

Says WHO, blames increasing transmissions on social mixing

AFP, GENEVA

The Delta variant of the coronavirus is not specifically targeting children, the World Health Organization said Friday.

The WHO's Covid-19 technical lead Maria Van Kerkhove said the evidence showed that the variant first detected in India was rather being transmitted among people who were socially mixing.

"Let me be very clear: we are not seeing the Delta variant specifically target children," the US expert told a press conference.

Delta has now been detected in 132 countries and is more transmissible than earlier versions of the virus, including other variants of concern.

The UN health agency said work was under way to gain a better understanding of the dynamics of Delta and why it is more transmissible.

"There was some suggestion that the variants were specifically targeting children, but that actually is not the case. What we are seeing is that the variants will target those who are socially mixing," Van Kerkhove said.

"What we do see is that the variants that are circulating will infect people if they are not taking the proper precautions," she said, referring to measures such as physical distancing and avoiding gathering in poorly-ventilated, crowded indoor spaces.

The WHO has published a plan detailing ways in which schools can reopen and stay open in safety.

"But we do really need to drive down transmission in the communities to make sure that they can open safely," Van Kerkhove said.

Act now before deadlier variants emerge

Warns WHO, says safety measures still works against Delta variant, slams vaccine inequality

AFP, Geneva

The Delta variant of Covid-19 is a warning to the world to suppress the virus quickly before it mutates again into something even worse, the WHO said Friday.

The highly-transmissible variant, first detected in India, has now surfaced in 132 countries and territories, the World Health Organization said.

"Delta is a warning: it's a warning that the virus is evolving but it is also a call to action that we need to move now before more dangerous variants emerge," the WHO's emergencies director Michael Ryan told a press conference.

WHO chief Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus added: "So far, four variants of concern have emerged -- and there will be more as long as the virus continues to spread."

Tedros said that on average, infections increased by 80 percent over the past four weeks in five of the six WHO regions.

Though Delta has shaken many countries, Ryan said proven measures to bring transmission under control still worked -- notably physical distancing, wearing masks, hand hygiene and avoiding long periods indoors in poorly ventilated, busy places.

"They are stopping the Delta strain, especially when you add in vaccination," he said.

"The virus has got fitter, the virus has got faster. The game plan still works, but we need to implement and execute our game plan much more efficiently and much more effectively than we've ever done before."



A woman mourns at the grave of her husband who passed away due to the Covid-19 near Jakarta, Indonesia. Photo was taken recently.

PHOTO: REUTERS

The UN health agency has consistently called for vaccines to be distributed evenly around the world and has branded the drastic imbalance a "moral outrage".

More than four billion doses of Covid-19 vaccines have now been administered globally, according to an AFP count.

In countries categorised as high income

by the World Bank, 98 doses per 100 people have been injected.

That figure drops to 1.6 per 100 in the 29 lowest-income countries.

If the four billion doses had been administered equally to people aged over 60, "we basically could have gotten two doses into everybody at highest risk of severe consequences when we got to a

strain like Delta", said Bruce Aylward, the WHO's frontman on the Covax scheme which aims to get donor-funded jabs to poorer countries.

Instead, those nations, "in the face of the Delta variant -- they're going to pay a very, very different price as a result".

The WHO wants every country to have vaccinated at least 10 percent of its population by the end of September; at least 40 percent by the end of this year, and 70 percent by the middle of 2022.

"We are a long way off achieving those targets," Tedros lamented.

He said that just over half of the 194 WHO member states have fully vaccinated 10 percent of their population; less than a quarter have vaccinated 40 percent; and only three countries have vaccinated 70 percent.

Meanwhile the WHO says Burundi, Eritrea and North Korea are the only remaining member states yet to start Covid-19 vaccination campaigns.

The novel coronavirus has killed at least 4.2 million people since the outbreak emerged in China in December 2019, while nearly 196.6 million cases have been registered, according to tallies from official sources compiled by AFP.

Tedros said that on current rates of infection, the 200 million known infections mark will be surpassed within the next two weeks, although the true figure will be much higher.

"There are no magical solutions," said Ryan. "The only magic dust we have is vaccination. The problem is we're not sprinkling that evenly around the world and we are working against ourselves."



JULY 31

1914 - Germany declared war on Russia and shots were fired between French and German border patrols.

1944 - The 63-day Warsaw Uprising began when Poles rebelled against Nazi occupation.

1990 - A five-day coup attempt in Trinidad and Tobago ended with the surrender of Muslim rebels.

2000 - Guerrillas in Kashmir carried out seven massacres, killing at least 90 people and injuring dozens, most of them Hindu pilgrims and labourers.

2001 - Tony Blair began the first visit to Argentina by a British prime minister since the 1982 Falklands War.

2005 - Saudi Arabia's King Fahd died and Crown Prince Abdullah was pronounced his successor.

SOURCE: REUTERS



A Libyan man, who suffered severe burns while he fought a fire on a boat of migrants, and his daughter, also injured in the fire, wait to be medically evacuated by the Italian Coast Guard from the German NGO migrant rescue ship Sea-Watch 3, off the coast of Lampedusa island in the western Mediterranean Sea, on Friday.

PHOTO: REUTERS

Vaccine campaigns may need to continue for years

Scientists tell UK govt

REUTERS, London

The protection that vaccines give against coronavirus infection, and potentially severe disease, is highly likely to wane over time so vaccine campaigns will continue for years to come, scientists told the British government's advisory group.

"It is highly likely that vaccine induced immunity to SARS-CoV-2 infection, and potentially severe disease (but probably to a lesser extent) will wane over time," according to an executive summary of a document considered by the government's Scientific Advisory Group for Emergencies (SAGE).

"It is therefore likely that there will be vaccination campaigns against SARS-CoV-2 for many years to come, but currently we do not know what will be the optimal required frequency for re-vaccination to protect the vulnerable from Covid disease," the scientists said.

The document, titled "How long will vaccines continue to protect against Covid?", was written by prominent virologists and epidemiologists from Imperial College London, University of Birmingham and Public Health England.

Britain has approved and is using three shots - Oxford-AstraZeneca, Pfizer-BioNTech and Moderna - in a mass vaccination programme that started in December 2020.

Real world data show that these vaccines protect with 95% or greater effectiveness against the Alpha variant that dominated in Britain in early 2021, the scientists said, although the ability of the shots to protect against infection and onward transmission was lower.

They said it might be expected that vaccine effectiveness would remain high for severe disease but effectiveness against mild disease and infection could fall off over time.

US issues new Cuba sanctions

Biden promises more to come after Havana cracks down on protesters

REUTERS, Washington

The United States imposed sanctions on the Cuban police force and two of its leaders on Friday in response to the Havana government's crackdown on protesters, and President Joe Biden promised Cuban-American leaders more actions were coming.

The US Treasury Department said the sanctions, which appeared to be largely symbolic, were a reaction to "actions to suppress peaceful, pro-democratic protests in Cuba that began on July 11."

Targets of the sanctions are two Cuban police force leaders, as well as the Cuban interior ministry's national police force, the department said.

"There will be more, unless there's some drastic change in Cuba, which I don't anticipate," Biden said during a meeting with Cuban-American leaders at the White House.

"The United States is taking concerted action to bolster the cause

of the Cuban people," said Biden.

Biden said he had asked the Treasury and State departments to report back in a month on how to allow remittance payments from Americans to Cubans without the Cuban government profiting.



In addition, Biden has been working on a plan to try to provide wireless communications to Cubans and augment US embassy staff in Cuba, a senior administration official said.

The protests erupted this month amid Cuba's worst economic crisis since the fall of its old Soviet Union ally and a record surge in coronavirus infections. Thousands took to the

streets, angry over shortages of basic goods, curbs on civil liberties, and the authorities' handling of the pandemic.

Cuban President Miguel Diaz-Canel has blamed the unrest on the United States, which in recent years has tightened its decades-old trade embargo on the island. He has said many protesters were sincere but manipulated by US-orchestrated social media campaigns.

Last week, the US Treasury announced sanctions on Cuba's defense minister and an interior ministry special forces unit over allegations of human rights abuses in the crackdown that followed the protests, which saw hundreds of activists detained.

Florida's 1.5 million Cuban Americans voted heavily for Republican Donald Trump in the 2020 presidential election. Winning back their support is crucial for Biden's Democratic Party to clinch the swing state in the 2024 presidential election.

270 Palestinians injured in clashes

AFP, Beita

About 270 Palestinian protesters were injured, mostly by tear gas fire, in clashes with Israeli troops Friday in the West Bank, the Palestinian Red Crescent said.

The heaviest clashes were in Beita village near Nablus in the northern West Bank where residents have held regular demonstrations since May when Jewish settlers started to set up caravans and pave roads on a disputed hilltop.

The Red Crescent said most of those injured Friday across the West Bank needed treatment for tear gas inhalation, while seven Palestinians were injured by live fire and about 50 by rubber bullets.

In the south of the territory, soldiers clashed with Palestinians in Beit Ummar mourning the death of Shawkat Khalid Awad, 20, who was killed by army gunfire Thursday at the funeral of a Palestinian boy.

নাজমা মৌলা
(১৯৪৬-২০২১)

এসিআই নিমিটিডের পরিচালক,
নাজমা মৌলা-এর প্রয়াসে ব্র্যাক ব্যাংক পরিবার শোকহত।
ঊঁর পরিবারের প্রতি রইলো আমাদের গভীর সমবেদনা।

Islami Bank
Bangladesh Limited
Based on Islamic Shari'ah

Board & Company Affairs Wing
Share & Bond Division
Head Office
63 Dilkusha C/A (5th Floor), Dhaka

Price Sensitive Disclosure
relating to Quarterly Un-Audited Financial Statements
of the Bank for the 2nd Quarter ended 30th June 2021

This is for kind information of all concerned that the Board of Directors of Islami Bank Bangladesh Limited in its 302nd Meeting held on 31st July, 2021 for consideration/adooption of Quarterly Un-Audited Financial Statements of the Bank for the 2nd quarter ended 30 June 2021 through virtual platform at 12.00 Noon took the following Price Sensitive decisions :-

Sl. No.	Particulars	As on 30 June 2021		As on 30 June 2020					
		Solo (Taka)	Consolidated (Taka)	Solo (Taka)	Consolidated (Taka)				
1	Net Asset Value (NAV)	63,153,283,801	64,356,939,547	61,777,455,950	62,508,373,283				
2	Net Asset Value (NAV) Per Share	39.23	39.97	38.37	38.83				
3*	Net Operating Cash Flow Per Share (NOCFPS)	37.65	37.76	21.88	21.96				
		01 Jan 2021 to 30 June 2021		01 Jan 2020 to 30 June 2020		01 April 2021 to 30 June 2021		01 April 2020 to 30 June 2020	
		Solo (Taka)	Consolidated (Taka)	Solo (Taka)	Consolidated (Taka)	Solo (Taka)	Consolidated (Taka)	Solo (Taka)	Consolidated (Taka)
4	Net Profit After Tax	3,139,831,770	3,346,424,564	3,115,101,875	3,123,468,585	2,489,689,011	2,615,050,727	2,440,783,151	2,427,651,483
5	Earnings Per Share (EPS)	1.95	2.08	1.93	1.94	1.55	1.61	1.52	1.50

* The Net Operating Cash Flow Per Share (NOCFPS) on solo basis has significantly increased by Tk. 15.77 per share than that of previous corresponding period mainly due to positive net cash inflows from customer deposits Tk. 27,789 million, deposits from other banks Tk. 387 million and less disbursement to investment clients Tk. 11,099 million as well as net cash outflows for placement from other banks Tk. 11,621 million during the period i.e. 01 January 2021 to 30 June 2021.
N.B.: The details of the Quarterly Un-Audited Financial Statements of the Bank for the 2nd quarter ended 30th June 2021 will also be available in the Bank's website (www.islamibankbd.com)

By Order of the Board
Sd/-
(J Q M Habibullah, FCS)
DMD & Company Secretary

Date: Dhaka, 31st July 2021.
www.islamibankbd.com