

10TH DAY OF STRICT LOCKDOWN

All-too-familiar Dhaka

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

With crowds of factory workers thronging the city, Dhaka wore almost a normal look yesterday as public buses, private cars, CNG-run autorickshaws and motorcycles all rolled out on the streets.

This happened even though shopping malls and markets remained closed. The day began with factory workers pouring in to the city to join work, increasing public movement on the road.

Although public transports were allowed to operate till noon, some buses were seen plying Dhaka streets after 12pm.

This correspondent visited Asad Gate, Farmgate, Panthapath, Mohammadpur, Shyamoli, Ring Road, Adabor, Mirpur, and Dhanmondi areas and witnessed similar scenarios.

A traffic inspector of Mirpur area confirmed that vehicular movement was higher yesterday compared to the previous few days.

"Some buses were plying the street till noon. In some areas, traffic control was needed due to the pressure," he said.

Like other days, the alleyways remained crowded. Visiting the by-lanes in Mohammadpur, Kalabagan, Green Road, and Farmgate areas, this correspondent found some shops and tea stalls open, while many were seen gossiping by the roadside and moving around without wearing masks.

In some areas, shops were open with their shutters half down. "Every time a lockdown is imposed, we become the sufferers. I am already drowning in loan from paying my shop and house rent. How long can we go like this?" said Ashraf Uddin, who has a bedding store in Kalabagan area.

Meanwhile, Bangladesh Shop Owners' Association yesterday demanded reopening of markets and shopping malls after August 5 as they have been incurring heavy losses.

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They would have wanted to reach Dhaka by Saturday night, but failing to find space in any transport due to the huge onrush of people into the city, Dhaka-bound factory workers' journeys got pushed back by so much, they reached the capital in the morning. Bus and launch terminals overflowed as people scammed to reach work. The photos were taken yesterday from Jagannath University and Sadarghat areas. PHOTO: AMRAN HOSSAIN



RIISING DENGUE CASES

237 people hospitalised in a single day

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

For the first time this year, the number of dengue-infected patients who were hospitalised across the country in a single day crossed the 200 mark.

According to the Directorate General of Health Services (DGHS), at least 237 people with dengue fever were admitted to hospitals in the country in 24 hours till 8am yesterday, of which only 19 are from outside Dhaka.

With them, a total of 2,895 patients have been diagnosed with dengue this year, according to the DGHS.

Of the total infected, only 94 are from outside Dhaka.

A total of two hundred and seventy-two were infected in the entire month of June, while 43 were infected in May.

Though most of the patients who were hospitalised have so far been released, 862 of them were undergoing treatment at hospitals in Dhaka, and 34 outside the capital as of yesterday, according to DGHS data.

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AL begins observance of month of mourning

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

August, a tragic month in Bangladesh's history, started yesterday by recalling the brutal assassination of country's founding father and his family members, with renewed pledge to safeguard the country's independence and sovereignty.

On 15 August, 1975, Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman was brutally assassinated by a group of conspiring army officers. Bangabandhu's wife, sons, daughters-in-law and other relatives were also killed in the massacre, one of the most heinous in world history.

Bangabandhu's daughters Sheikh Hasina and Sheikh Rehana survived as they were abroad at the time.

Ruling party Awami League and its front and associate bodies observe the month as month of mourning to recall the brutal assassination.

Awami Swachhasebak League, the volunteers' wing of AL, on Saturday midnight observed the month of National Mourning Day with a torch procession on Dhaka streets, marching towards Bangabandhu Memorial Museum in Dhanmondi.

Party leaders, workers, supporters and people from different professions and different socio-cultural organisations yesterday placed wreaths at the portrait of

Father of the Nation at Dhanmondi 32.

AL general secretary Obaidul Quader yesterday said the perpetrators of August 15 carnage and August 21 grenade attacks (on Sheikh Hasina) still remain active, as they don't want development, peace and comfort in the country.

"They (conspirators) feel jealous of Bangladesh's march forward towards prosperity under the leadership of Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina. They want to see Bangladesh as a conflict-ridden bloody land. They don't want a Bangladesh of development, peace and comfort," he said, reports BSS.

At a press conference at his official residence, Quader, also road transport and bridges minister, said those who perpetrated the August 15 carnage had to suffer unnatural deaths as the history didn't forgive anyone. The trials of those who had staged the brutal August carnage and who were beneficiaries have been completed in the court of nature, he said.

He said the November 3 jail killing (in 1975) was actually carried out to make the nation and AL leaderless.

Bangabandhu Sangskritik Jote (BSJ) organised a candle light vigil on the premises of Shikha Chirantan at Suharwardi Udyan in the capital yesterday.

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Bangabandhu Sangskritik Jote holds a candlelight vigil at the capital's Suharwardi Udyan yesterday, marking the first day of the mourning month of August.

'Govt suffering from dependency syndrome'

Says Zafrullah Chowdhury

UNB, Dhaka

The country's health system has collapsed due to the "wrong" policy of the government as it is suffering from "dependency syndrome", said Gonoshasthaya Kendra founder Dr Zafrullah Chowdhury yesterday.

"The Covid death rate has increased in the country because of the government's wrong policy. The government has been walking on a wrong path for which the health system has completely collapsed," he said.

Speaking at a press conference at Gonoshasthaya Kendra in Dhaka, Zafrullah said, "We don't want to increase the capacity of the country. We would like to import various things, including oxygen, and widen the dependence on India. It's called dependency syndrome."

He said the government should take steps to set up oxygen plants in 64 districts to save people's lives.

"The cost of the most advanced technology capable of producing 50 tonnes of oxygen per month is only Tk 6 crore. There's many business institutions that can do this. If



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Reopening factories a 'suicidal' decision: BNP

UNB, Dhaka

BNP yesterday termed the government decision to allow export-oriented factories to resume operation amid the ongoing strict lockdown "suicidal".

"A horrible situation has been prevailing in these decisions. The government earlier declared that the factories would remain shut till August 5. Suddenly, it announced that the factories would be reopened without taking any steps to allow the workers to return. They again decided at night that public transport would operate till 12pm," said party secretary general Mirza Fakhru Islam Alamgir.

He said, "I see nothing but insanity in these decisions. The BNP standing committee feels that the government has taken a suicidal decision due to its incompetence and lack of sincerity."

Fakhru made the remarks at a press conference at BNP chairperson's Gulshan office while unveiling decisions of a virtual meeting of the party standing committee held on Saturday.

Referring to media reports, he said it is freighting the way workers in droves were desperately trying to return to their workplaces.

"They are returning from rural areas where now the coronavirus transmission is very high. They're coming back with this (virus). So, we can understand what's going to happen in Dhaka. We think the government should resign shouldering all the responsibilities for its failure to deal with the Covid situation," Fakhru observed.

The BNP leader said health experts also opposed the government's decision and they described it as a farce since Dhaka residents will be vulnerable to the Delta variant with the arrival of workers from outside the capital.

Export-oriented industries resumed operation today, the 10th day of the ongoing strict lockdown, amid warnings against Covid surge as workers started returning to their workplaces without maintaining health protocols.

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Traffic cop run over in Dhaka

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A traffic police personnel was fatally run over by a microbus in the capital's Mirpur Road yesterday morning.

The deceased was identified as Helal Uddin (50), a constable of Tejgaon Traffic Division.

The incident took place when Helal signaled the microbus -- coming from Gabtoli -- to stop around 11am.

The driver first slowed his vehicle but later tried to speed away, hitting the policeman. As he collapsed on the road, the microbus ran him over, leaving him critically injured, said Shahed Al Masud, deputy commissioner of Tejgaon Traffic Division Police. Helal was taken to nearby

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RU professor files GD over death threat

Says he mentioned Natore-2 MP's father as razakar in book; lawmaker snubs claim

OUR CORRESPONDENT, RU

A professor of Rajshahi University (RU) has allegedly been receiving death threats for mentioning Natore-2 lawmaker Shafiqul Islam Shimul's father as a razakar in his book on Liberation War.

Prof Sarkar Sujit Kumar, chairman of Bangla department at RU, filed a general diary (GD) with Boalia Model Police in this regard on Thursday, said Sub-inspector Nadim of the police station.

Prof Kumar published the book -- History-Tradition and Liberation War of Natore District -- in 2009 while another edition came out this year. In the GD, Prof Kumar said in his book, he wrote Hasan Ali Sardar (father of lawmaker Shimul) was a razakar in page 600 (number 21 in the list) of his book.

The professor alleged that alongside giving death threats, those close to the MP have been spreading false information against him. In the GD, he also said there has been an ongoing conflict centring formation of the district committee of Natore Swachhasebak League.

While discussing about MP Shimul, his father's activity during the Liberation War came up. Some local leaders used his book as a reference for the lawmaker's father's anti-Liberation War activities, said the professor.

Contacted, Prof Kumar said, "I compiled lists of freedom fighters,

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RMCH resumes Covid-related pathology tests

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Rajshahi

The authorities of Rajshahi Medical College Hospital yesterday resumed all essential pathology services for Covid-19 patients.

Many of the services remained suspended for a long time due to a lack of skilled employees and mechanical faults, said the hospital officials.

They said from now on Covid-19 patients would not have to go outside the hospital compound for tests. The initiative would also reduce transmission of the deadly virus as movement of the infected people would remain within the hospital compound.

"Patients will be our VIPs. We have asked all our doctors and staff members to treat them as VIPs. The patients will not have to go to private pathology centres for tests," said RMCH director Shamim Yazdani.

The RMCH director was briefing journalists at the hospital's conference

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NEWS IN brief

21,056 pass BCS preliminary test

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A total of 21,056 candidates have passed the 41st Bangladesh Civil Service (BCS) preliminary examination.

The results were announced in a notice signed by Public Service Commission (PSC) Examination Controller (Cadre) Nur Ahmed.

The written test for those who have passed the preliminary exam could be held in November this year, and the announcement would be made through a press release from the official website, read the notice. On March 19, this year, preliminary exams were held in eight divisional cities.

68 return from Thailand by spl flight

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Bangladesh Embassy in Bangkok has facilitated repatriation of 68 Bangladeshi, Indian and Thai nationals from Thailand to Bangladesh by a special Biman Bangladesh Airlines flight.

The flight was arranged on a self-payment basis in line with Bangladesh government's commitment to extend all possible assistance and support to stranded Bangladeshis abroad.

The flight arrived at Hazrat Shahjalal International Airport on Saturday, said the Ministry of Foreign Affairs yesterday.

Ambassador of Bangladesh to Thailand Mohammed Abdul Hye thanked the Thai government for extending their cooperation. Since the Covid-19 outbreak last year, the Bangladesh embassy has so far facilitated 16 special flights from Bangkok to Dhaka.



Some see monsoon as the season of gloom, its grey skies and dark clouds only speaking melancholy for them. For many others, it's the season of fresh air and spontaneous showers. And of course, of Rabindra Sangeet and ilish-khichuri, and the magic of raindrops setting in and clinging on to the creases and corners of every living leaf. This photo was taken from the capital's Agargaon. PHOTO: RASHED SHUMON

Actor Eka sent to jail for torturing house help

COURT CORRESPONDENT

A Dhaka court yesterday sent film actress Semon Hasan Eka to jail after rejecting both the remand and bail petitions filed against her in two cases for torturing her house help and possessing narcotics.

Metropolitan Magistrate Mohammad Jashim passed the order after Hatirjheel police produced her before it with a three-day remand in each case, court sources said.

In the remand prayers, the investigation officer said Eka attacked her house help and was found to be in possession of drugs.

On the other hand, the defense lawyer submitted two petitions seeking bail along with cancellation of the remand prayers, citing the client's illness.

Claiming herself innocent, Eka told the court that she was ill during the incident. She also claimed she was implicated as part

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