

DEADLY KABUL BLAST
Taliban claim attack on defence minister's compound as Afghan forces defend besieged cities
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"Dengue situation could turn alarming again."
DIRECTOR (DISEASE CONTROL)
OF DGHS MD NAZMUL ISLAM



"People are getting confused and losing their trust in the government due to 'funny' remarks by ministers."
JATIYA PARTY CHAIRMAN GM QUADER



"I swore to give my life for the nation in case of foreign or domestic attack. Brazil is under internal attack."
BRAZILIAN PRESIDENT JAIR BOLSONARO ON COURT'S DECISION TO PROBE INTO ATTACKS ON VOTING SYSTEM

COVID-19 VACCINATION

Special drive hits a major snag

Cut down to one day from 6 due to shortage of jabs

MOHAMMAD AL-MASUM MOLLA

A special Covid-19 mass inoculation drive, mainly aimed at vaccinating rural people at the union level, has suffered a major setback just days before it was scheduled to begin on Saturday.

Due to a shortage of vaccines, the government last night decided to cut the duration of the campaign to one day from six.

The government had earlier planned to administer around one crore doses during those six days, but the number of the jabs administered will now become significantly lower.

"The duration of the vaccination drive, originally August 7-12, has been shortened due to shortage of jabs. For the time being, the drive will take place only on August 7 [Saturday]. Based on prior registration, 300 people will be jabbed at each centre. The elderly, women and people with disabilities will get priority," a top government official said after the decision was made at a high-profile meeting last night.

"We tried very hard, but we can't change the decision," said the official. There are 4,553 unions, 328 municipalities and 12 city corporations in the country.

There will be three vaccination booths in every union and vaccines will be administered from those centres only, said an official who attended the meeting last night.

The drive hit the snag even though the government had repeatedly said it had enough stock of vaccines.

The health minister and top health officials had said that the special campaign would vaccinate at least one crore people in those six days.

Health officials said the government had around one crore shots in stock. An official who attended the meeting said people in the union digital

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Afif Hossain, right, scored 37 runs off just 31 balls and put together an impressive unbeaten 56-run partnership with Nurul Hasan to steer Bangladesh to a five-wicket win in the second T20I against Australia. The Tigers now hold a 2-0 lead in the five-match series.

PHOTO: FIROZ AHMED

Youngsters hold their nerve

ABDULLAH AL MEHDI

Youngsters Afif Hossain and Nurul Hasan showed nerves of steel to propel Bangladesh from a difficult situation to their second successive win against Australia in the five-match series at the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium yesterday.

Bangladesh were reeling at 67 for five in the 12th over in chase of a 122-run target before Afif's 31-ball 37, laced with five fours and a six, and Nurul's 22 off 21 saw the Tigers coast to a five-wicket victory.

Early on, visiting pacers Mitchell Starc and Josh Hazlewood breathed fire in defence of their small total. Starc had a bouncer in the opening over crash onto Mohammad Naim's helmet, jolting the youngster, before Soumya Sarkar tried to lavishly swing across the line to the left-arm speedster only to see his stumps flying back.

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Pori Moni held after Rab raids her home

Rabs says liquor, narcotics found; producer Raz also detained in late-night drive

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Rab yesterday detained popular actress Pori Moni after raiding her flat in the capital's Banani.



Lt Col Khairul Islam, director of Rab's intelligence wing, said the officers recovered large quantities of Ice, LSD and foreign liquor from the flat.

The narcotics and liquor were kept in showcases, cabinets and on tables, he told The Daily Star.

Pori Moni went live on Facebook around 4:00pm, saying that a group of people entered her building and were knocking on her door.

She said she contacted police but did not get any response.

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Lightning kills 19 in 2 districts

17 of them die when it hits a boat carrying a wedding party

STAR REPORT

At least 19 people were killed and 16 others injured by lightning in two incidents in Chapainawabganj and Kishoreganj yesterday.

Of the dead, 17 including five women are from Chapainawabganj. They were travelling with a groom to a marriage ceremony.

The groom and his guests started their journey from Suryanarayanpur area of Chapainawabganj by a boat for the bride's home in Panka area of Shibganj upazila.

Lightning hit the boat when it reached Telikhari Ghat near Panka around noon. The incident left 17 people dead, said Moudud Alam Khan, project implementation officer (PIO) of Chapainawabganj Sadar upazila.

The groom survived. As per government rules, the PIO is responsible for providing assistance to the families of the victims who die of lightning strikes.

Abdul Malek, officer-in-charge of Shibganj Police Station, said 16 of the dead were residents of Chapainawabganj Sadar upazila and the other one was from Shibganj upazila.

Ten of the injured were admitted to Chapainawabganj Sadar Hospital, said Dr Nurun Nahar, resident medical officer of the hospital.

A two and a half years old baby boy was sent to Rajshahi Medical College Hospital as he was in critical condition, the RMO added.

In Kishoreganj, two fishermen were killed and five others injured by lightning in Nikli upazila.

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LIGHTNING DEATHS Steps not taken could've saved many lives

HELEMUL ALAM

The government only recently decided to set up warning systems in 723 lightning prone areas in the country, even though 2,400 people died in lightning strikes over the past decade, including 19 just yesterday.

It will also set up shelters at different places.

"There are 723 lightning prone areas and we have decided to set up signalling systems from where we will send messages to everyone [in or near the area] on mobile phones 40 minutes before a strike," said Md Enamur Rahman, state minister for disaster management and relief, recently.

"We have also taken the decision to set up lightning shelters, like cyclone shelters, in empty spaces. They can be constructed every one or two kms in lightning prone areas," he said, adding that they have not yet calculated the number of shelters needed.

"A meeting was supposed to be held on

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NEWS ANALYSIS

Why is the govt indulging Evaly so much?

ZINA TASREEN

What does one do when one sees wrongdoing taking place in front of one's very eyes? For most, the natural response would be to stop it in its tracks.

And this is the question staring at the government regarding the e-commerce juggernaut Evaly.

By now, thanks to investigations by government agencies, particularly the Bangladesh Bank, everyone is all too aware of Evaly's notoriously close-lipped business model.

No, the e-commerce platform, which began its journey on December 16, 2018, did not crack any magic formula that would allow it to run year-round advertising blitzkrieg and unbelievable discounts at once -- without going broke.

How it operated until the first quarter of this year from its inception looks awfully similar to a Ponzi scheme: take advance payment from unsuspecting customers and use the money to run massive advertising campaigns broadcasting discounts as incredulous as 90 percent on the platform to draw in more customers and get more money, and rinse and repeat.

After months, the first round of customers might get delivery of their products or their order will be cancelled, with the refund taking place not in cash but in the form of a credit on Evaly's unlicensed digital wallet.

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COVID PASSPORT Govt steps back after criticism

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Faced with widespread criticism, the government yesterday backtracked on its decision -- made just a day before -- of not allowing people aged over 18 on the streets from August 11 unless they are vaccinated against Covid-19.

Liberation War Affairs Minister AKM Mozammel Haque retracted the comment he made on Tuesday, when he told the media following an inter-ministerial meeting at the Secretariat that "anyone above 18 years will not be allowed on streets and on any mode of transport unless they are vaccinated".

The government will ease the "strict lockdown" currently in place to curb the spread of coronavirus from August 11.

Yesterday morning, hours before Mozammel's retraction, the health minister in a press release distanced itself from the liberation war affairs minister's Tuesday's comment.

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The body of a victim of the Hashem Food Factory blaze being loaded onto a van in front of the Dhaka Medical College Hospital morgue. Bodies of 24 such victims, including this one, were handed over to the respective families yesterday, almost a month after the fire took place in the factory in Narayanganj's Rugganj upazila.

PHOTO: RASHED SHUMON

N'GANJ FACTORY FIRE All hope lost for 24 families

SHAHEEN MOLLAH and ZYMA ISLAM

The bodies of 24 of the workers who died in the Hashem Foods factory fire last month were handed over to their families yesterday.

Up until the phone calls yesterday, many of the families had some flickering hope that perhaps their loved one just went missing and was admitted to a hospital somewhere and they will eventually be found.

"I heard the DNA matching is done... is Shantamoni truly dead then?" asked the uncle of the 12-year-old who used to pack lollipops in the factory.

Shantamoni is not just dead, her body was so charred that she was one of three dead bodies whose bone samples had to be tested for DNA. The other two are 16-year-old Munna and 15-year-old Fatema.

The bone samples are tested when the tissue collected from the body is too damaged, said Rumana Akter, special superintendent of the forensic department of the Criminal Investigation Department (CID).

The rest of the 45 bodies, who were all burned alive after being trapped on the third floor of the six-storey building with its only exit locked, were identified by way of their tissue samples.

The others whose bodies were handed over yesterday include Ayat Hossain, 19; Md Naim Islam, Nusrat Jahan Tuktki, Hima Akhter, 16; Mosammat Shagarika Shaila, Khadeja Akhter, 16; Md Ali, Takia Akter, 14; Shahana Akter, 18; Mitu Akhter, Jahanara, 38; Fatzana, 14; Nazma Khatun, Ishrat Jahan Tuli, Nazma Begum, 35; Md Rashed, 25; Md Rakib Hossain, Feroza, 36; Md Tarek Zia, 15; Md Ripon Miah, 18; Mosammat Shahana Akter and Riya Akter, 30.

Each of the coffins was marked with a placard pointing out which way was the head of the body for ease of burial. "We had the bodies washed and wrapped in burial cloth

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