

**BANGLADESH UPDATE**



**4,136**  
New cases in 24hrs



**13,43,396**  
Total cases



**22,411**  
Deaths



**11,88,820**  
Recoveries



**GLOBAL UPDATE**

**4,296,361**  
Deaths



**202,733,416**  
Total cases

# Bangladesh sends Covid meds to Indonesia

DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT

Bangladesh has gifted emergency Covid-19 medicines to Indonesia, which has become Asia's new coronavirus epicenter reporting more than 3.57 million cases and more than 102,000 deaths as of yesterday.

On behalf of the government of Bangladesh, Air Vice Marshal Mohammad Mostafizur Rahman, Bangladesh ambassador to Indonesia, yesterday formally handed over the medicines to Wiendra Waworuntu, director (public medicines and health supplies management) of the Ministry of Health Affairs, Indonesia.

"This is a symbol of goodwill gesture for the people of Indonesia, a friendly country of Bangladesh," the ambassador told this correspondent.

The medicines have been provided as per the directive of Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina, according

to Bangladesh's Ministry of Foreign Affairs. "Bangladesh remains committed to standing beside Indonesia and other Southeast Asian countries," the ministry said in a statement.

Beacon Pharma, a leading pharmaceutical company of Bangladesh, provided with the emergency medicines.

Indonesia and Bangladesh enjoy a friendly relation, especially relating to the Rohingya crisis, in the international arena.

Meanwhile, Bangladesh High Commission in the Maldives yesterday organised a blood donation campaign at the high commission premises on the occasion of the birth centenary of Father of the Nation of Bangladesh Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman.

The high commission thanked all who participated in the campaign.



Despite the lockdown to curb the transmission of Covid-19, heavy traffic is seen on Airport Road near Banani around 6:00pm yesterday.

PHOTO: RASHED SHUMON

## Big fish under scanner

FROM PAGE 1

CID sources said they conducted special drives at six houses yesterday and seized electronic devices, including mobile phones, and passports.

The investigators also spoke to high officials -- one chairman and one managing director -- of two private banks, who were close to Pori. One of them gifted her a luxury car, sources said.

"If the investigation reveals the names of anyone associated with them, the person, no matter how influential, will be brought to book," CID Additional DIG Sheikh Omar Faruk told reporters at the CID headquarters in Malibagh.

He, however, did not name anyone when asked about the bank officials.

"We have already received the case documents. The arrestees are already in custody and being questioned as part of the investigation."

Investigators said they would conduct forensic tests on the phones of Pori Moni and others in custody to scrutinise their communications between them and other suspects.

Sheikh Omar said the CID has a variety of expert systems, such as a DNA lab, forensic lab and chemical lab so that it can carry out investigations thoroughly and efficiently.

"However, it will take time for us to complete the investigation."

About Pori Moni's interaction with a DB official, he said, "We will enquire into these matters thoroughly and find out the facts. No one is above the law. Whether he is the investigating supervisor or whoever, we want to find out the truth through an impartial investigation."

Pori was arrested at her Banani residence on August 4 and was placed on a four-day remand.

Police, during a raid, claimed to have seized a huge stash of narcotics from her house.

Meanwhile, Golam Saklain Shithil, an additional deputy commissioner (DB Gulshan Division), was withdrawn from the Dhaka Metropolitan Police's DB, following allegations of unprofessional conduct with the actor.

"ADC Golam Saklain has been restrained from all activities of the DB. He has been posted at the DMP's Public Order Management [west]

division," said a message sent by the DMP's media wing.

DMP Commissioner Shafiqul Islam told The Daily Star he has spoken to the Inspector General of Police Benazir Ahmed over this matter and that the Police Headquarters will probe the incident.

Officials at PHQ said no probe committee was formed yet as of 8:30pm yesterday.

When Shithil's government phone was contacted, another person picked up and said, "He [Shithil] is on leave. He has turned in his phone to the authorities."

Several media outlets reported that ADC Shithil had engaged in unprofessional conduct with Pori Moni while supervising a case filed by her in June.

In the case, she accused five persons, including Nasir U Mahmud, former president of Uttara Club Limited.

Shithil, however, refuted the allegations when speaking to reporters earlier.

Meanwhile, Pori Moni's membership of the Film Artist Association has been suspended yesterday, said Misha Sawdagor, president of the association, yesterday afternoon.

In another development, a Dhaka court yesterday placed Junayed Karim Jimmy, costume designer and one of Pori's associates, on a three-day remand in a case filed against him with Banani Police Station under the Narcotics Control Act.

Earlier on June 13, Pori Moni at a press conference alleged she had been a victim of attempted rape in Dhaka Boat Club by Nasir and his cohorts.

Film Producer Chayanika Chowdhury, who was interrogated by the DB officials on Friday, was seen at the press conference. Jimmy was seen accompanying Pori during the Boat Club incident in CCTV footages.

Jimmy was detained from Gulshan Shooting Club on Friday evening. Police also claimed to have recovered 225 pieces of yaba from his possession, court sources said.

Another accused in the case is one Sazzad, who is absconding.

In the ongoing week-long arrest spree, at least eight people, including Pori Moni, two models and Jimmy, were held.

## Australia scrape to first victory

FROM PAGE 1

the visitors lost skipper Matthew Wade to a Mahedi Hasan delivery in the very first over.

Christian made his intent clear, smashing 30 runs off Shakib Al Hasan in the fourth over as he hit the premier all-rounder for five massive sixes, making the challenge even steeper for the home side.

The Tigers, however, did spark a turnaround when Mustafizur Rahman, Nasum Ahmed and Mahedi picked up five quick wickets -- including those of Christian after a 15-ball 39 blitz and in-form Mitchell Marsh for a 15-ball 11 -- for just 18 runs at one stage of the game, reducing the visitors to a vulnerable position of 65 for six after 10.2 overs.

Bowling very economically, Mustafizur, Mahedi picked up two wickets each while Nasum and Shoriful Islam had one scalp each to their names but that could not stop Australia as a 34-run seventh-wicket stand between Ashton Agar (27 off 27) and Andrew Tye (4\* off 7) eventually saw the visitors home.

Earlier, Bangladesh's troubles with the bat, a constant feature of the team throughout the series but never highlighted due to the bowling prowess taking them over the line each time in the first three T20s, were laid bare.

Opener Soumya Sarkar's misery continued as he once again threw his

wicket away after a single-digit score, a 10-ball eight, for the fourth successive time in the series.

Experienced Shakib's arrival at No. 3 was supposed to bring stability to the Tigers' batting line-up. However, the all-rounder had his worst day of the series with the bat, departing to Hazlewood after a stuttering 26-ball 15, that included 18 dots and a solitary boundary which the all-rounder had to manufacture with a scoop shot past the wicketkeeper.

A slow Mirpur pitch that had a lot of zip in-store soon turned out to be the doom for the Tigers as Swepson's googlies had both skipper Mahmudullah Riyad and Nurul Hasan trapped in front in back-to-back deliveries, leaving Bangladesh reeling at 51 for four after 11 overs.

Swepson kept troubling the Bangladesh batters with his wrong ones, making Naim Sheikh (28 off 36) his third victim after the left-hander tried forcing a slog-sweep but ended up slicing it up and into the hands of the wicketkeeper. The leg-spinner finished with impressive figures of three for 12 in four overs.

With the pressure mounting due to a scoring rate below five, Bangladesh never looked on top while batting, but a cameo of 17-ball 20 from in-form Afif Hossain and Mahedi's quick-fire 16-ball 23 at the death somehow helped them past the three-figure score.

## Into a mire of mismanagement

FROM PAGE 1

upazila's Krishnanagar Abdul Jabbar School and College, people without masks crowded around the booths crying for vaccines after 12:00pm.

But there was none to go around, said Assistant Health Inspector Monirul Islam Bhuiyan.

At Bijoyagar upazila's Paharpur union parishad complex, Monju Akhter lamented how she stood in a line for 4 hours but was left without the jab. "People are standing chest-to-back without masks. This is going to further spread infection," she said.

At the vaccination points in Dinajpur's Birail upazila's Forkabad and Dhamoil union, vaccines ran out within two hours of starting.

Abu Sahadat Ripon, the secretary

of Farkabad Union Parishad, said that around 800 people registered to get the vaccines on Saturday morning, but only 266 could be vaccinated.

Our Gazipur correspondent reported a similar situation where many booths had to close shop in two hours.

At Sreepur's Pilot Girl's High School centre, people were told that the centre was out of vaccines at noon.

In Munshiganj's Louhajang, Upazila Health Officer Nur-e-Alam Khan told our correspondent that 5 unions out of 10 saw a shortage of doses. Meanwhile at Sirajdikhan, two out of nine unions saw a similar shortage.

CONFUSION AND PHOTO-OP Even though he is not trained for it, lawmaker Enamul Haque administers

There was shortage of doses in many vaccination centres in Chattogram. Each of the 123 centres in the city had 300 doses in stock, but over a thousand people stood in queues for the vaccine in many of the centres.

Citizens demonstrated at Chattogram City Corporation Hospital around noon demanding inoculation. Police had to charge at the crowds with truncheons.

Shatabdi Shome, said she did not receive the vaccine despite standing in the queue at 7:00am. "We did not know that only 300 people would get the shot," she said.

Sujan Dev also stood in a queue at 7:00am at a booth in Chandgaon, but had to leave without his jab as the officials ran out of stock within one and a half hour.

Similarly, in Mirzaganj, Patuakhali, people were seen clearing out by noon from the centre at Rampur Government Primary School.

Fifty-year-old Shakila Begum expressed her disappointment at having stood from morning until noon and failing to get a vaccine.

Civil Surgeon Jahangir Alam said a total of 600 doses were given to each of the 76 unions in Patuakhali. "It is true that some people had to leave without getting vaccinated because there were not enough to go around in some centres."

In Narayanganj's ward number 13, Monir Miah told The Daily Star, "I went in around noon and waited an hour. At 1:00pm, I was told that the vaccines were finished."

Narayanganj Civil Surgeon Muhammad Imtiaz said in many centres, vaccines were finished by 2:00pm, while at certain booths, vaccinators had to wait until 5:00pm to administer all 200 shots.

Premananda Mandal, the civil surgeon of Sylhet, told our correspondent that they had to turn people away.

"We planned to administer 200 shots at each booth. But almost twice the number of people showed up," he said.

In Khulna city, almost all booths were done vaccinating within 2 hours, said the city corporation's health officer Dr Swapan Kumar Haldar. "This resulted in a lot of commotion at the centres," he said.

In Brahmanbaria, at Nabinagar

a shot to a person at Baghmara of Rajshahi yesterday.

The photo of him giving the jab made the rounds in social media.

This paper could not reach the MP for Rajshahi-4 constituency for comments.

Dhamrai city mayor seemingly took the opportunity to administer a vaccine dose on a citizen himself according to a photo that went viral on social media, and caused an outcry.

Mayor Golam Kabir Mollah, who is also the chairperson of the poura Awami League, is not medically certified to push vaccines.

Contacted, said he was just posing. "I was simply pretending," he said.

In several places, certain individuals were mistakenly given two shots back



Even though he is not trained for it, lawmaker Enamul Haque administers a shot into an elderly person at Baghmara of Rajshahi yesterday.

PHOTO: COLLECTED

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to back.

In Brahmanbaria's Sarail upazila a 38-year-old woman named Rozina Begum got two jabs in 30 minutes. Her husband told journalists that she had taken the jab and was waiting for her vaccine card, when a health worker approached her and gave her another shot.

A similar incident happened in Rajbari where a woman got two doses. This happened in Baliakandi upazila's Narua Union.

Thirty-one-year-old Ismat Ara had taken the jab and was waiting for the designated half-an-hour to observe side-effects when a health worker came by and administered a second dose.

## Red Gold sparks hope

FROM PAGE 1

open terrain. And producing it in a temperature controlled room is expected to be even more expensive. But the chances of losing a yield is little in this process. And saffron can be harvested multiple times in a year in this method," Jamal Uddin told The Daily Star.

Considering its huge global demand and high price, he said, saffron can be produced commercially in Bangladesh if appropriate support is provided.

The scientific name of saffron is Crocus Sativus. It's a lily herb belonging to the Iridaceae family. The golden spice, which is called zafran in Urdu, kesar in Hindi, has a worldwide fame as an expensive cooking ingredient widely used in a variety of kitchens, starting from the Mughals and lavish hotels.

It is also one of the most revered ingredient used in beauty care. Its distinctive aroma, flavour and colour are also used in dyes and perfumes.

According to industry insiders, more than 90 percent of saffron used in Bangladesh is imported from Iran and the rest from Kashmir, Spain and Morocco.

The reason it's so expensive is that it needs intensive harvesting of tiny stigmas that are extremely delicate and require hand extraction. Here manual labour plays a bigger role than machines.

A large number of crocus flowers is needed to produce a significant amount of saffron. In the international market, each gram of saffron is sold for about \$4, meaning each kilogram of the spice costs over Tk 3 lakh.

Jamal Uddin said the popular method of cultivating saffron in wintry countries is to plant it on open terrains.

However, the same method cannot be adopted in Bangladesh, because heavy rainfall can cause the bulbs to rot easily. Also, due to the humidity



factor of the soil, even if the plant grows well, the flowers won't bloom as per expectations, he said.

The researcher brought more than 500 saffron bulbs from Japan last year.

"Initially, those were frozen at a specific temperature in order to get them prepared for sowing. Later, they were sown in trays made of plastic and tin and preserved indoors. Finally, flowers bloomed in almost all the plants," Jamal Uddin said.

"Usually, saffron cultivation requires a vast swathe of land, but we have examined that if we adapt the aeroponics procedure, we can produce enough saffron equivalent to the amount grown on a hectare of land in a small room. As the plant trays used in this method are arranged vertically, much less space is required," said the researcher.

Aeroponics is the process of growing plants in an air or mist environment without the use of soil or an aggregate medium.

PRODUCTION OF SAFFRON Jamal Uddin said each flower usually yields 30 milligrams of saffron, which weighs only around seven milligrams once dried.

Therefore, at least 150 flowers are required to get one gram of saffron and for one kg, 1.50 lakh flowers are required.

Once the bulbs become matured, each plant provides one flower in the

first year which rises up to seven or eight in subsequent years.

"In Iran and Kashmir, around two-kg of saffron are being yielded from a hectare of land. But it is possible to produce the same amount of saffron in a 100 square feet greenhouse or a temperature-controlled room," said the researcher.

LIMITATIONS Jamal Uddin said costs and collecting bulbs are the major challenges facing saffron cultivation in Bangladesh.

In order to get one kilogram of saffron, stigmas of around 1.50 lakh flowers are required. For sapping, each bulb costs at least Tk 60, so the cost of 1.50 lakh bulbs would be Tk 9 lakh, he said.

Besides, two air conditioners, lights and a person will be required for monitoring the production round the clock.

He, however, said the cost can be cut by collecting bulbs once and then making seedlings by tissue culture.

"Another benefit of cultivating saffron indoors is that we can get its yield throughout the year," Jamal Uddin said.

He said given the success achieved so far, they can easily go for commercial production if they have a sponsorship.

Enayet Ullah, chairman of Wholesale Spice Traders Association, said because of its high price, the number of saffron consumers in Bangladesh is very low.

The import is also less for the same reason, he told this newspaper.

The quality of saffron imported is not high, he said, adding that some people sell the spice by mixing it with lower quality of saffron.

## Israel strikes Gaza after incendiary balloon launches

AFP, Jerusalem

Israel conducted overnight air strikes against Hamas targets in Gaza in retaliation for the launching of incendiary balloons from the Palestinian enclave that caused fires in southern Israel, the country's military said early yesterday.

"In response to continual launches of incendiary balloons from Gaza into Israel throughout the day, a short while ago IDF fighter jets struck a Hamas military compound and a rocket launching site," the Israeli army said in a statement.

"The rocket launching site was located in close proximity to civilian surroundings, once again emphasising how Hamas continues to endanger Palestinian civilians."

There were no immediate reports of casualties.

Incendiary balloons caused four fires on Friday in the Eshkol region near Gaza, Israeli firefighters said.

The last time such an attack took place, on July 25, the Israeli army retaliated with air strikes on targets of the Islamist movement Hamas, which rules the Palestinian enclave.

There have been sporadic incidents, including a series of incendiary balloon launches, since a May 21 ceasefire ended 11 days of deadly fighting between Israel and Hamas.

That conflict killed 260 Palestinians including some fighters, according to Gaza authorities.

In Israel, 13 people were killed, including a soldier, by projectiles fired from Gaza, the police and army said.

Friday's balloon launches come after the Israeli army carried out retaliatory shelling in Lebanon in response to a volley of rockets fired by Hezbollah, a Hamas ally.

## New Asean envoy to Myanmar says he wants full access when he visits

REUTERS, Bandar Seri Begawan

The Brunei diplomat appointed by a Southeast Asian regional bloc as its special envoy to Myanmar yesterday said he should be given full access to all parties when he visits the strife-torn country, where the military overthrew an elected government.

Speaking days after his appointment by the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (Asean), Erywan Yusof gave no date for his visit to Myanmar, whose civilian leader Aung San Suu Kyi and other officials have been detained since the Feb. 1 coup.

## Hospital beds

FROM PAGE 1

the hospitals as the same doctors, nurses and other health staffers are treating all types of patients.

But the transmission of the coronavirus does not take place in hospitals or clinics.

"You know where it happens -- out in the streets, in shops, in ferries, in factories, in villages markets by those who are not wearing masks and not maintaining the social distance."

Maleque went on to call for people's cooperation in flattening the curve of coronavirus.

BSMMU FILED HOSPITAL

About the newly inaugurated field hospital, Maleque said: "This hospital has all the necessary treatment arrangements for Covid-19 patients. However, only new and critically ill patients will be treated here."

Those whose oxygen saturation level will be 80 or below will be treated at the facility, said Debabrata Banik, coordinator of the hospital.

"If other patients come, we will also provide them with primary care, but will send them back to their homes after that," he told The Daily Star.

At present, the facility has 357 beds, which will be increased to 1,000 in phases, according to the BSMMU officials.

Of the 357 beds, there are 20 ICU and 20 HDU beds; the general beds have a central oxygen supply.

## Country records

FROM PAGE 1

also increased by more than 23 percent during the period.

In the 24 hours to 8:00am yesterday, the country registered 8,136 new cases after testing 31,714 samples.

The positivity rate was 25.65 percent yesterday, a continuous downward trend since Monday when a positivity rate of 30 percent was reported.

On the previous day, the positivity rate was 26.25 percent.

With the latest count, the total number of fatalities from Covid-19 rose to 22,411 and the total confirmed cases to 13,43,396.

The Dhaka division saw the highest number of deaths yesterday (101), followed by Chattogram (62), Khulna (45), Mymensingh (16), Barishal (12), Rangpur (10), Rajshahi (8) and Sylhet (7).