

BANGLADESH UPDATE

11,164
New cases in 24hrs

13,76,322
Total cases

23,161
Deaths

12,34,762
Recoveries

GLOBAL UPDATE

4,322,361
Deaths

204,509,677
Total cases

Dengue, Covid Double Blow

DGHS starts training docs tomorrow

HEMUL ALAM

As a person's chance of being infected with both dengue and Covid-19 is rising, the health directorate has taken an initiative to train doctors involved in dengue treatment across the country tomorrow.

"We are going to hold an online training programme on August 12 for the doctors of public and private hospitals who are providing treatment to dengue patients. They will be trained on what to do when a person contracts both dengue and coronavirus," said Afsana Alamgir Khan, deputy programme manager (malaria and Aedes transmitted diseases) of the Directorate General of Health Services (DGHS).

Bangladesh Society of Medicine will conduct the training. In the event, doctors will be guided on what they should do when a patient carries both the viruses and remain in normal and critical conditions, she said.

"We don't have any data about the cases of carrying both the viruses, but we are informed by Bangladesh Society of Medicine that there are some cases like this. For this, we are going to hold the training," said Afsana.

According to the DGHS data, 226 people with dengue fever were hospitalised in the country in 24 hours ending at 8:00am yesterday. Of them, 15 are from outside Dhaka.

With them, 4,979 patients have so far been diagnosed with dengue this year, of which only 214 are from outside Dhaka.

Among 4,979 infected, 2,321 were detected in the current month, while 2,286 were hospitalised in July, 272 in June and 43 were infected in May, according to the DGHS data.

There is a national guideline on dengue treatment, updated in 2021, which all the doctors and nurses of public and private hospitals follow. But there is no guideline about the treatment for a patient carrying both the viruses, said Afsana.

Health and Family Welfare Minister Zahid Maleque is expected to inaugurate the training at Hotel InterContinental Dhaka around 11:00am tomorrow, she added.

Doctors from 137 public and private medical college hospitals, over 100 Sadar hospitals and 492 upazila health complexes will join the training from their institutes virtually, she said.

Afsana said they will make the link of the programme available in the DGHS website and Facebook page and if anyone wants to join the training, he or she can.

"We will also record the programme and upload it in DGHS website and anyone can watch it from there anytime," she said.

Experts opined that the recovery battle for patients infected with both the diseases -- considered life threatening -- could be difficult.

Abdul Rahim, consultant of department of medicine of DNCC Covid-19 dedicated hospital, said he got two patients suffering from both the diseases in the hospital during Eid-ul-Azha. The number of this type of patients are now increasing, he added.

Patients suffering from fever and pain have Covid or dengue test. If they are diagnosed with any of the disease, they do not usually go for the test of the other disease. But the patients should undergo both tests, he added.

HM Nazmul Ahsan, associate professor at Shaheed Suhrawardy Medical College and Hospital, said doctors will struggle to handle patients infected with both dengue and Covid-19.

"A dengue patient faces bleeding while a coronavirus patient faces blood clotting. We use an injection of anti-coagulation for coronavirus patients when it is needed to prevent blood clots. But we cannot do it when the same patient also carries dengue virus and his platelet counts remain under one lakh," he explained.

DENGUE CORNER

Afsana said dengue corner has already been opened in all public hospitals.

"We are providing free NS1 testing at the dengue corner in all public hospitals and health complexes across the country and a patient will get proper advice after the test. They will be advised where to go for their admission or will be referred to go home with necessary prescription," she said.

Afsana said the government has already started their treatment in six hospitals dedicated for dengue patients and the service has started last week.

The hospitals are: Mitford Hospital, Lalkuthi Maternity Hospital in Mirpur, Kamalapur Railway General Hospital, Kamrangirchar 31-bed hospital, Aminbazar 20-bed hospital and Shaheed Ahsan Ullah Master General Hospital in Tongi.



A stone-laden truck lies on its side in a canal in Shariatpur yesterday after the Bailey bridge, not designed to carry so much weight, collapsed. Most Bailey bridges were built on temporary basis with a standard load capacity of 7.50 tonnes.

PHOTO: STAR

Passport delivery stumbles

FROM PAGE 1

Shihab said the DIP has already signed a new contract with the Malaysian company, IRIS Corporation, for an additional 60 lakh passports and the server will be upgraded at the soonest.

Sources in the home ministry and DIP, meanwhile, said the capacity of the server exhausted in early June but neither IRIS nor the DIP took initiatives to address it in time.

"No passports were printed in the last four weeks," a source said on Saturday.

The Bangladesh high commissions in Malaysia, Singapore, Maldives, and Lebanon even issued circulars saying there was a shortage of passport supply due to a technical issue in the MRP server.

On July 30, the Bangladesh High Commission in Singapore issued a notice on its Facebook page, saying the renewed passports of those who had applied after June 8, had not reached the southeast country. It requested the passport seekers to wait until further notice.

The Bangladesh High Commission in Malaysia on August 7 in a circular said a huge number of applications were in the pipeline as "the capacity of the server at the Department of Immigration and Passport has died out."

The high commission said this was beyond its jurisdiction and that the home ministry and the DIP were

trying to address it.

A Bangladeshi embassy official in Riyadh told The Daily Star that they wrote to the DG of DIP several months back, detailing the problems the migrants were facing for the delay in passport delivery and requesting a quick supply of passports, but there was no solution.

"MONTHS' DELAY" Against this backdrop, Bangladeshi migrants have expressed sheer frustration and anger.

They said more than one crore Bangladeshi migrants send home annually \$18 billion remittance, keeping the country's economy vibrant, but their concerns are not being addressed by the authorities on an urgent basis.

Waheed Nizam from Malaysia said it was taking four to six months to get passports while the migrants were passing days in uncertainty and in fear of detention by Malaysian police.

"With no timely passport delivery, many of us are not able to apply for work permit renewals. Some are even not being able to apply for the recalibration programme [amnesty] meant for the undocumented ones," he told The Daily Star by phone.

Rashidul Islam, a Bangladeshi in Singapore, said it was a matter of huge concern that they were not getting passports even three to four months after submitting applications.

OxyJet: the long road to approval

FROM PAGE 1

development bubble CPAP for adults. Realising that we need a higher flow of oxygen, we took up a plan to develop a CPAP using a Venturi-mechanism [which speeds up flow of a fluid] for the treatment of Covid-19 patients.

"Using this technique, the device can generate high-flow oxygenated air at a normal hospital bed with central oxygen supply and without any electricity."

Usually, general hospital beds are equipped with one oxygen flow metre which can supply only up to 15 litres per minute.

With OxyJet, two flow metres can be used simultaneously -- one that gives 15 litres per minute while the other delivers 50 litres per minute. OxyJet is also fitted with a peep valve to regulate the CPAP pressure as required by the patient, Dr Taufiq said.

Besides, viral filters in the inlet and outlet of OxyJet prevent infection and contamination, he added.

Once the design phase was done, it was time for clinical trials.

Over three phases, OxyJet was tried out on 26 patients and researchers found the device to be clinically "non-inferior" compared to HFNC treatment.

Prof Dr Mohammed Robed Amin, spokesperson of the Directorate General of Health Services (DGHS) and who was involved in the clinical trials, said he found OxyJet very effective and "non-inferior" to HFNC.

"While using OxyJet, we could avoid mechanical ventilation of critical Covid-19 patients for more than seven days whereas with HFNC, the number was 6.5. The recovery rate with OxyJet is 38 percent and with HFNC was 27 percent.

"Patients requiring mechanical ventilation after using OxyJet is 38 percent whereas with HFNC, it is 59 percent. We did not find any toxicity after using OxyJet and HFNC as well," stated Prof Dr Amin.

On July 28, approval of the device was signed by the directorate general of drug administration (DGDA), which allowed the production of 200 units of OxyJet for use in hospitals on a limited scale.

But this approval came with conditions -- the researchers will have to monitor 200 patients for benefits, side-effects, and potential risks. The researchers also have to monitor how this device can be improved further.

"At present, we have sufficient equipment to produce 50 units. But

production of further 150 units, distribution of those to hospitals, and collecting all the data will take time," Dr Taufiq said.

The limited permission is valid under the condition that the device performs well during this interim period.

Permission for further production or emergency use authorisation of OxyJet will require another clinical performance trial through a contracted research organisation followed by ethical clearance from the Bangladesh Medical Research Council and the National Research Ethics Committee.

"Industrialists would have been more interested to fund this if there was less uncertainty regarding its future approval," observed Dr Taufiq.

Contacted, Md Salahuddin, deputy director of DGDA, said, "According to our rules, we have given some conditions to them and approved the limited use of OxyJet. If they fulfil these conditions, we shall proceed for its further production."

On the other hand, the researchers emphasise the importance of the device for patients in need.

"If this device can help the poor and the sick in this pandemic time, that is our success," said Dr Taufiq.

Its waiver will help global herd immunity

FROM PAGE 1

Five other authors of the statement are: Parsa Erfani, Fogarty global health scholar of Harvard Medical School; Agnes Binagwaho, vice-chancellor of University of Global Health Equity in Rwanda; Mohamed Juldeh Jalloh, vice-president, Sierra Leone; Paul Farmer, professor of Global Health and Social Medicine, Harvard Medical School; and Vanessa Kerry, associate professor, Division of Global Health Equity, Brigham and Women's Hospital.

The article was published on August 3. "This inequity has been driven by a global political economy that has permitted some countries to purchase more vaccine than they require while others have very limited supplies," it said.

The article said Canada, for example, has enough vaccines for 434 percent of its population, whereas Jordan, which has twice the incidence of Covid-19 only has doses for 6 percent of its people.

"As Covid-19 variants are already showing some ability to evade the current vaccines, it is evident that without global vaccine equity and immunity, our efforts against Covid-19

are in jeopardy.

"At the current global vaccination rate, it will take years to achieve the needed level of global immunity," said the statement.

The barrier to adequate vaccine supply today is not lack of vaccine options, nor even theoretical production capacity, but rather the intellectual property (IP) protection governing production and access to vaccines, said global health and poverty experts.

Without waiving such protections, there will not be enough vaccine fast enough to prevent the spread of variants, the avoidable deaths, and the continued choking of low and middle-income countries through poor health.

The experts pointed out that Covax is underfunded by vaccine scarcity and underfunding. The initiative which brings countries together to contribute vaccines aims to vaccinate 20 percent of the population in 92 low- and middle-income countries by the end of 2021, but had only shipped one-fifth of its projected estimates by the end of April.

In October 2020, South Africa and India submitted a proposal to the World Trade Organisation to temporarily waive

certain provisions of the TRIPS (Trade Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights) agreement for Covid-19 health products and technologies, the article mentioned.

"The waiver would prevent companies that hold the IP for Covid-19 vaccines from blocking vaccine production elsewhere on the grounds of IP and allow countries to produce Covid-19 medical goods locally and import or export them expeditiously," the article said.

The authors declared that the manufacturing capabilities of such countries have been underestimated, even though many have the scientific and manufacturing capacity to produce complex Covid-19 vaccines.

An IP waiver is, however, only the first step, said the authors. "Originator companies must transfer vaccine technology and share know-how with WHO Covid-19 Technology Access Pool (C-TAP), transfer hubs, or individual manufacturers to help suppliers begin production," they added.

To date, none have shared IP protected vaccine information with C-TAP, established last year, said the authors.

RMP ASI closed for sexually harassing woman

OUR CORRESPONDENT, RU

An assistant sub-inspector of Rajshahi Metropolitan Police (RMP) was closed on Monday on charges of sexually harassing a woman at a police outpost.

Nibaran Chandra Barman, officer-in-charge of Boalia Model Police Station, confirmed the information to The Daily Star.

According to sources, on Friday, a woman called the police emergency service number 999 and sought help, informing that she was abused by her husband.

Quoting the victim's family, OC Nibaran said, ASI Shamim of Bospara Model Police Outpost, met the woman at her house right after the call.

Listening to her allegations, he asked her to meet him at the police outpost for further procedure.

On Sunday, the woman went to the outpost with her mother. At that time, ASI Shamim allegedly told the woman's mother to go out of the room and sexually harassed the woman.

Hearing the incident, the woman's family filed a written complaint with Boalia Police Station on that day.

Later at night, local Ward Councillor Arman Ali called the girl's family and ASI Shamim to settle the matter.

However, the victim's family denied settling the matter and met the police commissioner in Rajshahi to report about the incident on Monday.

According to the OC, once informed, he shared the incident with the senior officers.

"The police commissioner then withdrew the accused. We have already started an investigation. The accused was withdrawn so that he could not influence the investigation," he said.

Police would take further steps after investigation, he added.

Curbs relaxed amid

FROM PAGE 1

and launches -- will be allowed to carry passengers at full capacity from today.

However, only half of any transport fleet will be allowed to ply the roads, raising concern over shortage of transports on weekdays.

All public, private and autonomous offices, banks and financial institutions will reopen.

Shopping malls, markets, shops and restaurants will be allowed to stay open from 10:00am to 8:00pm every day.

All restaurants will have to keep half the seats vacant. Earlier, those were allowed to offer only takeaway services from 8:00am to 8:00pm every day.

All mills and factories will be allowed to be reopened.

Earlier, the government allowed only export-oriented mills and factories to reopen from August 1 after nine days of shutdown from July 23.

In all cases, wearing of facemasks and adherence to the health safety guidelines issued by the DGHS have to be ensured.

The authorities concerned have to bear responsibility if there is any negligence in following the guidelines for public transport, offices and markets, and legal action will be taken against them, read the government circular.

The Supreme Court will give necessary directives regarding courts, it mentioned.

Messi gets

FROM PAGE 1

Messi, the fans cheered and let off firecrackers.

Messi gave no details of the deal, which was reached days after Barcelona said it could not afford to keep the midfielder because of Spain's La Liga's fair play rules.

But his father, speaking to reporters at Barcelona's airport, confirmed reports by French newspaper L'Equipe and Spanish newspaper Mundo Deportivo that Messi had reached an agreement with PSG, which is owned by Qatar Sports Investment.

L'Equipe said the deal would be for two years. It also said Messi would have medical tests on Tuesday, and that a news conference to mark his arrival was likely on Wednesday.

No first dose

FROM PAGE 1

city corporation areas last month.

Bangladesh received 25 lakh doses of Moderna vaccine under the Covax facility on July 2. Later, it received another 30 lakh doses.

So far, 19,08,549 doses of Moderna vaccine have been administered as first dose and 403 doses as second shot.

The country has also received 81 lakh doses of Sinopharm vaccine. Of those, 66,71,763 were administered as first dose and 1,72,322 shots as second dose.

The government launched a special vaccination campaign on August 7 to inoculate people in the rural areas to curb Covid deaths and infections. It had planned to administer one crore doses in six days but later revised down the target to 32 lakh.

Preserve all documents

FROM PAGE 1

research opportunities for researchers, students, and filmmakers in specialised archives and film libraries, seminars, and symposiums on various Liberation War topics will also be held, reads the project proposal.

Additionally, a film museum will be established and Bangladesh Film Archive's technical capacity will be enhanced, according to the project proposal.

Mannan said that a total of 10 projects were approved yesterday involving about Tk 7,985.51 crore. Of the approved 10 projects, nine are new while one is a revised project.

While approving a project replacing existing bailey and other risky bridges at dilapidated, narrow and important points of Rangpur Zone with a cost Tk 861.39 crore, Mannan said the PM asked the authorities concerned to find out such dilapidated bridges across the country and for replacing those.

Mannan also said that ECNEC approved another project titled Madarganj 100MW Solar Power Plant at Solar Park, Jamalpur with Tk 1,511.79 crore.

He said that ECNEC had earlier proposed to name this plant after the name of the PM since it would be the country's largest and iconic solar power plant, but the premier opposed the proposal and asked to name it Madarganj solar power plant at Solar Park.

Organising regular exhibitions from the archives of audio-visual documents related to the Liberation War, expanding

Heavy vehicles banned on ferry

FROM PAGE 1

Heavier vehicles will be carried across the river via the Paturia-Douladia and Harina-Alubazar routes.

The decision was put into effect immediately, BIWTC Chairman Syed Tajul Islam told The Daily Star.

It's difficult to control large ferries with heavy vehicles during strong currents, he said, adding that the number of ferries on the two aforesaid routes will be increased.

On Monday night, BIWTC suspended acting master Delwarul Islam and helmsman Abul Kalam Azad of the ferry Bir Shrestha Jahangir, "for failing to conduct the ferry properly".

The BIWTC formed a five-member committee headed by Rashedul Islam, director (technical) of BIWTC, to investigate the incident and submit its findings in three days.

Project Director Shafiqul Islam told The Daily Star yesterday that officials who inspected the site said the ferry caused "little damage" to the structure.

Asked whether the latest crash caused more damage than that of

previous ones, he said, "There is nothing to compare here."

Around 6:30pm on Monday, Bir Shrestha Jahangir was overtaking a boat between pillars 10 and 11 when the rear end of the ferry collided with the pillar as the master tried to avoid hitting the boat, which had four to five people on board.

Four or five people in a car on the ferry were injured, he said.

On July 20, the lower part of the ferry, Shah Makhdum, was damaged due to collision with a pillar of the bridge.

On July 23, the Shah Jalal hit another pillar and got damaged.

After the second incident, a probe committee recommended moving a ferry terminal. But the authorities did not find the recommendation viable, sources said.

The three incidents have been widely discussed and found traction in social media.

The 6.15-kilometre bridge being constructed at a cost of Tk 30,000 crore is expected to be open to traffic in June next year.