



Even after a long wait, many vaccine-seekers had to go back from Chattogram City Corporation General Hospital without their jabs on Saturday. Fearing the same, they started coming in from 3:30 in the morning yesterday, with the gates scheduled to open at 9am. But by 5:30am, the hospital's gate was already crowded with vaccine-seekers who would rather arrive early than leave without their dose.

PHOTO: RAJIB RAIHAN



Always be prepared to defend country

Hasina tells armed forces

UNB, Dhaka

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina yesterday said Bangladesh Armed Forces must have necessary preparedness to protect the country's independence and sovereignty keeping pace with technological development.

The premier said this while addressing the Selection Board Meeting of Bangladesh Navy and Air Force at Dhaka Cantonment. She joined the meeting at the headquarters of the navy and air force through a video conference from her official residence Gono Bhaban.

Hasina said Bangladesh never wants war with any country, rather it wants peace as no country can achieve desired development without peace.

"We don't want to go down the path of destruction. But if anyone attacks us, we have to take all kinds of preparations to protect our country," she said.

Hasina said the government is building the armed forces in such a way so that it can protect the country's independence and sovereignty.

She also put emphasis on attaining new technology-based knowledge.



Referring to the foreign policy framed by Bangabandhu, the prime minister said Bangladesh follows the principle of "Friendship to all and Malice to none".

She mentioned that the country has been advancing by maintaining friendly relations efficiently with all countries in the region.

Hasina, however, made it clear that Bangladesh must have all necessary preparations to safeguard the country from any external attacks.

For that, she emphasised on ensuring training for the members of the armed forces and having modern equipment for them to keep pace with the developed world.

The premier highlighted that the National Defence Policy-2018 has been formulated in continuation of the defence policy of Bangabandhu, while the government is implementing the forces goal-2030 to modernise the armed forces.

About the promotion in the navy and air force, Hasina asked the authorities concerned to select qualified leaders for promotion who will be able to lead

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Another dies of dengue

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

One more dengue patient has died while 315 were hospitalised with dengue infection in the last 24 hours till 8am yesterday.

According to the Directorate General of Health Services (DGHS), among the 315 new cases of dengue infection, 53 are from outside the capital.

With the new cases, a total of 1,460 have been diagnosed during the current month, out of the total 11,816 infected this year. Of the total infected, 1,036 are from outside Dhaka.

At least 7,698 were diagnosed in August, 2,286 patients were hospitalised in July, 272 in June, while 43 were infected in May, according to the Directorate General of Health Services.

Meanwhile, 52 people have died of dengue infection in the country this year, all whom died in July, August, and September, according to DGHS data.

Twelve people died in July, 34 have died in August, while six have passed away from the mosquito-borne disease in September so far.

Among the deaths, 48 have died in Dhaka division, two in Chattogram, and one each in Rajshahi and Khulna divisions.

Though most hospitalised patients have so far been released, 1,280 are still undergoing treatment at hospitals in Dhaka.

Meanwhile, 149 are undergoing treatment outside the capital, the Directorate General of

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'We are nobody's priority'

AKLAKUR RAHMAN AKASH, Savar

In absence of any systematic plan from the government or the BGMEA, an overwhelming majority of workers in Ashulia and Savar industrial belt are yet to be registered for Covid-19 vaccines.

Only factories under the Dhaka Export Processing Zone (DEPZ) have thus far been directed to ensure Covid vaccine registration for all workers.

RMG workers demanded that an independent vaccination centre dedicated for them be set up to ease and fast track the vaccination process. At the very least, their factories should take initiatives to register them for the vaccines, they added.

The government, however, does not have a separate plan for garment workers.

Dr Shamsul Haque, member secretary of Vaccine Deployment Committee at the health directorate, told The Daily Star, "We had a plan to vaccinate RMG workers on a priority basis. But now all they have to do is



RMG workers wait in line to get vaccinated at a centre of Savar upazila health complex.

PHOTO: STAR

register. Those who are aged 25 and above can register and get vaccine."

Without registration no one will get vaccine, no matter which group they belong to, he added.

Faruque Hassan, president of Bangladesh Garment Manufacturers and Exporters Association, said so far some four lakh -- out of 40 lakh -- workers have been vaccinated in different factories all over the country.

However, some factories are getting priority and some are still lagging behind, Hassan said.

Khairul Mamun Mintu, organising secretary of Garments Worker Trade Union Centre, pointed out that the government is yet to bring the workers under a priority list, although they need to be vaccinated on an urgent basis.

"It is not possible to vaccinate over 15 lakh RMG workers of Savar, Ashulia and Dhamrai in three centres along with the rest of the population of this area, if an independent vaccine centre for workers is not set up."

It is better to vaccinate workers inside the factory, said Mintu, adding that factory authorities have to ensure vaccine registration of workers.

Workers who have no national ID need to be brought under vaccination, he added.

THE LONG ROAD TO VACCINATION The Daily Star spoke to over 50 workers from at least 25 factories in Savar and Ashulia outside of DEPZ; workers from only three factories said that their authorities have completed their vaccine registrations.

Emran Hossen, a worker of Al-Muslim Group, a manufacturing factory housing over 18,000 workers, said, "If we are the ones keeping the wheels of the economy going, then why weren't we vaccinated on an urgent basis?"

"When it comes to opening factories in the middle of lockdown, it is a matter of priority. But when it comes to our vaccination, we are nobody's priority. We feel hopeless."

Many workers are unaware and uneducated, and cannot complete the registration process without some guidance, he added.

Meanwhile, many workers are unable to register because they do not have national IDs.

"If the factory authorities do not register for us, or if there is no special

initiative from the government, there is no way we can do so on our own," said Moyna, a worker of Sharmin group.

This newspaper also spoke to some workers of AR Jeans Producers Ltd at Khatgora recently who said they completed vaccine registration weeks ago on their own initiative, but are yet to receive a date for the first dose.

Some of them said they did not register as many of their co-workers who did are yet to get a response.

Contacted, Dr Sayemul Huda, upazila health and family planning officer of Savar, said people will get dates based on first come first serve basis. Around 1.40 lakh people including RMG workers were vaccinated at the upazila health centre.

When asked if there are sufficient vaccines at his centre, Dr Huda said, "We have the capability to preserve some 2,000 to 3,000 vaccines at our centre. If needed, we can bring vaccines from Dhaka."

"Some factory authorities wrote to us demanding that we set up independent vaccine centres and we forwarded the application to the DG of health through the office of the civil surgeon," he informed.

RAK Liton, general manager (HR, Admin and Compliance) of AR Jeans Producers Ltd, housing around 2,700 workers, admitted that it is not possible to maintain social distance, even if all other restrictions or protocols are observed in the facilities.

"The only way to protect against this epidemic is to get all workers vaccinated. Our HR department helped a few workers to get registered but they did not get a date yet."

But vaccination of workers in this process poses a challenge for the factories, he added.

"If two or four people are absent in a production line of a garment factory, then it is not possible to complete the production of that line, so if every day garment workers are excused for vaccination, then the production of that factory will be hampered."

All workers should be vaccinated in booths inside the factories, he opined.

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COURT CORNER

Protect 3 families ostracised over land dispute: HC

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The HC yesterday ordered the government to ensure security of three families of Kulaura upazila of Moulvibazar, who were ostracised over a land issue in December last year, and to protect them from exploitation. The court also issued a rule asking the authorities to explain in four weeks why their inaction to ensure security of the families of brothers Kajal Ahmed, Akmal Hossain, and Shafiqul Islam should not be declared illegal.

SC stays trafficker's bail order

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The SC yesterday extended its chamber judge's order that stayed the HC bail for Md Azam Khan, alleged ringleader of a human trafficking gang, in a case filed over trafficking people abroad. Azam was involved in forcing 60 to 70 girls into prostitution in Dubai. Following a bail petition, the HC on July 19 granted him ad-interim bail. The state then filed a petition with the SC. The chamber judge then stayed the order for six weeks on July 27. Azam cannot get released from jail as the stay order will remain in force till disposal of the rule.

HC questions legality of demoting DU teacher

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The HC yesterday questioned the legality of Dhaka University authorities' decision to demote its teacher Samia Rahman on charge of plagiarism in a research paper, following a writ petition by her. On January 28, Samia, associate professor of DU's Mass Communication and Journalism, was demoted to assistant professor by a decision by DU syndicate. Samia's lawyer Hassan MS Azim said the research paper in question was not prepared by her and did not have her signature on it.

Global citizens condemn 'unconstitutional, illegal' takeover by Taliban

DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT

At least 107 rights activists and civil society members from 36 countries yesterday adopted a resolution at an international conference, calling for global civic resistance against Taliban and all militant groups and states.

They demanded that the UN General Assembly urgently table and endorse a resolution to unequivocally condemn the "unconstitutional, illegal takeover of state power by the terrorist extremist militant Taliban in Afghanistan".

At the online conference titled "Taliban takeover in Afghanistan: Call for Global Resistance against Terrorism" organised by the Forum for Secular Bangladesh (FSB), they pressed that no UN member state is permitted to recognise any future Taliban self-proclaimed "Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan".

Writer, filmmaker and human rights defender Shahriar Kabir chaired the conference that was attended by over 300 participants.

The resolution said that the Taliban, in spite of their new "moderate posture", have not forsaken their extremist

theocratic ideology and their disrespect for democratic values, equal rights of women and minorities, rule of law, and basic human rights guaranteed by the UN and international law.

The UN and all its member states must support a broad-based, all-inclusive negotiated peace, followed by a legally, democratically elected political dispensation as the true and legitimate representation of the Afghan people, it added.

The elected government must declare, and commit before the UN General Assembly, that henceforth its territory will not be used for sheltering any national or international terrorist organisations, and will also not be used for promoting cross-border terrorism.

The resolution said Afghanistan's neighbouring countries should open their borders for refugees and asylum seekers fleeing Afghanistan, while the developed countries, particularly USA, UK, NATO alliance involved militarily in the occupation of Afghanistan in the last 20 years, must be mandated by the UNGA to provide a direct response to the current

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A group of papad makers from Munshiganj live in the capital's Bashabo area. Everyday, they step out in groups, carrying the thin, crispy, savoury snacks typically made from peeled black gram flour on their heads, and sell them around town for Tk 5 each. They said they sell around Tk 300-500 worth of papads everyday. This photo was taken yesterday.

PHOTO: ANISUR RAHMAN

3 killed, 5 hurt as train hits microbus in Moulvibazar

STAR REPORT

Seven people were killed and nine injured in accidents in three districts yesterday, according to reports from our correspondents.

In Moulvibazar, three people were killed and at least five others injured when a Sylhet-bound "Parabat Express" train rammed into a microbus in Bhatera area under Kulaura upazila.

Two of the deceased were identified as Farid Uddin (52) and Afif Uddin (8). The identity of another could not be known immediately, said police.

Kulaura Police Station Officer-in-Charge Binoy Bhushan Roy said the injured were taken to Sylhet MAG Osmani Medical College Hospital.

Quoting locals and eyewitnesses, Kulaura Railway Station Master

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