

WELCOME BACK!

STAR REPORT

"It's hard to explain. Honestly speaking, I still cannot believe we're back at the campus seeing each other again," said an elated Adil Nuri.

A student of the port city's Kazem Ali School and College, Adil had spent the last 18 months away from campus, and yesterday was the first time she was meeting most of her friends after all these days.

A similar feeling echoed across the country, as school and college students attended in-person classes for the first time after the pandemic-induced 543-day break. During this time, they had only attended classes virtually.

Visiting institutions across the country, our correspondents saw students and guardians flock to their beloved campuses, almost all of them donning face masks according to the health guidelines, though some deviations were also observed.

Some students complained of the toll it took to wear face masks throughout school hours.

In Chattogram, schools and colleges took several initiatives, such as temperature checks at the gates, handwashing facilities etc. to address the possible spread of coronavirus. The authorities were also seen monitoring the situation.

Inside the classrooms, students sat in a "zig zag" manner, one student per seat, to ensure physical distance. Many schools hung banners saying "No Mask, No Entry".

Rashedul Hasan Tushar, father of twin school-going boys in the city, said, "My sons were excited to wake up really early in the morning. I instructed them to keep the mask on inside class and follow the health rules," he said.

In Barishal, almost one third of more than a million primary school students attended school.

The scene in the city was no different from other places. One guardian of a Government Girls' High School said her daughter could not even sleep at night from the excitement of returning to school.

Meanwhile, some 2,000 educational institutions across Rajshahi district were abuzz as they welcomed students back to campus.

Authorities of some schools decorated the streets to welcome the students, while others greeted them with flowers.

Government officials were seen visiting several schools to monitor adherence to health rules.

In Rangpur, a correspondent of this newspaper visited Taraganj upazila's Jogodishpur Government Primary School and saw students undergoing temperature check at the gate.

Across Dinajpur, the attendance was around 80 percent, the district education office said.

In Sylhet Government Kindergarten Primary School, the festivities were taken up a notch, as a band party with their drums and flute welcomed students to the Zindabazar campus.

In fact, almost every school and college in Sylhet city arranged similar welcoming acts.

Nasima Akther Chowdhury, head teacher of Sylhet Government Kindergarten Primary School, said, "It's been really long since our students last attended school, so we wanted to do something special to make it a memorable day for them, and for us."

"We've also planned to make classes more interactive and entertaining so that students can recover from their pandemic-induced trauma faster," she said.

However, though schools and colleges followed strict mask wearing rules inside the campuses, negligence was seen among students and their guardians outside the campus.

Many students commuting via public transport were seen without masks, while guardians were seen huddling too close to each other in front of the institutions, some of them without sporting masks.

The scenario was a little different for Khulna and Tangail, where students had to deal with flooded streets to reach campus.

Khulna District Education Officer Ruhul Amin said many schools were damaged due to the Amphan and Yaas cyclones in several areas, including in Koyra, Dacope, and Paikgacha upazilas.

"Several schools are undergoing renovations. But we're still trying our best to resume classes," Ruhul Amin said.

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It was easy for frustration to take hold during the days of being stuck at home without friends. This is why yesterday acted as such a release, when students got the chance to get back to their beloved campuses after a 543-day break. At the very first sight, they rushed in to greet each other, as they were welcomed with balloons, flowers, fellow students holding up artworks, and even band parties. The promise of yesterday held such sway, that students from some flood-affected areas didn't hesitate to plough through the water to reach their campuses. These photos were taken from Chattogram, Barishal, and Narayanganj.

PHOTO: RAJIB RAIHAN, TITU DAS, SANAD SAHA

It was the first day of school and I didn't want to miss the chance to meet my friends and teachers. So I took a boat with a couple of neighbouring students to come to school.

SALMA AKTER

FIFTH GRADER AT BASAIL SOUTH GOVT PRIMARY SCHOOL IN FLOOD-AFFECTED TANGAIL

My sons were excited to wake up really early in the morning. I instructed them to keep the mask on inside class and follow the health rules.

RASHEDUL HASAN TUSHAR

FATHER OF TWO SCHOOL-GOING BOYS IN CTG

It's been really long since our students last attended school, so we wanted to do something special to make it a memorable day for them, and for us.

NASIMA AKTHER CHOWDHURY

HEAD TEACHER OF SYLHET GOVT KINDERGARTEN PRIMARY SCHOOL

319 more hospitalised with dengue

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

At least 319 patients were hospitalised with dengue in the last 24 hours till 8am yesterday.

According to the Directorate General of Health Services (DGHS), among the new cases of dengue infection, 75 are from outside Dhaka.

With the new cases, a total of 3,519 patients were diagnosed during the running month out of the total 13,875 infected.

Of the total infected, 1,407 are from outside Dhaka.

At least 7,698 patients were diagnosed in August, 2,286 were hospitalised in July, 272 in June while 43 were infected in May.

According to the DGHS, 54 people have died of dengue infection in the country this year. Of them, 12 people have died in July while 34 in August and eight in September so far.

Among the deaths, 54 have died in Dhaka division, two in Chattogram and one each in Rajshahi and Khulna divisions.

Though most of the patients who were hospitalised have so far been released, 1,260 are still undergoing treatment at hospitals in Dhaka.



COURT CHRONICLES

Ensure emergency services to patients at all hospitals: HC

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The High Court yesterday directed the government to ensure that hospitals, clinics and medical practitioners provide emergency medical services to every patient when brought to them.

The High Court bench of Justice Farah Mahubb and Justice SM Maniruzzaman asked the respondents in the directive to submit a report within three months after complying with its directives.

The HC bench came up with the directives and a rule following a petition filed by rights organisations Bangladesh Legal Aid and Services Trust (BLAST) and Academy of Law and Policy (ALAP), seeking directives for judicial intervention to develop a supportive legal framework for emergency medical services in Bangladesh.

The health secretary, director general of Directorate General of Health Services (DGHS), and president of Bangladesh Medical and Dental Council (BMDC) have been made respondents in the directive.

In response to the petition, the bench also ordered the respondents to compile a list of all private and government hospitals and clinics in Bangladesh and a separate list of hospitals and clinics that have emergency departments along with a general description of the condition of such departments and to submit the lists to the court in three months.

The court also questioned the failure of the respondents in ensuring emergency medical services to all patients across the country and issued a rule asking them (respondents) to show causes in four weeks why their failure to this effect should not be declared illegal and unconstitutional.

The bench fixed January 18, 2022, for further hearing and passing order on this issue.

The refusal of hospitals and clinics to treat emergency patients for one reason or another has become a phenomenon in Bangladesh, mentioned the petitioners.

MP Shimul, wife bought property in Canada

Natore activist tells HC

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Md Rezaul Chowdhury, a social welfare activist in Natore, submitted an application to the High Court yesterday, saying that Awami League lawmaker Shafiqul Islam Shimul and his wife Shamima Sultana Jannati have purchased property, including a luxurious residence, in Canada.

The property has been purchased at Scarborough in Toronto through illegal means, he claimed.

But their names have not been included in the list of dual citizens -- submitted to the HC, he said in the application.

Rezaul, president of Sunrise Samaj Kalyan Sangstha, a social welfare organisation in Natore, prayed to the HC to allow him to become a party to the suo moto (voluntary) rule issued by the court on November 22 last year.

The HC bench of Justice Md Nazrul Islam Talukder and Justice SM Mozibur Rahman asked Rezaul to submit the documents in support of the allegations through swearing affidavit.

The HC bench also asked Rezaul to supply the documents to the Anti-Corruption Commission and the state council.

The bench adjourned hearing on the suo moto rule till submission of the documents.

Lawyers Abdur Razzak and Md Belal Hossain appeared for Rezaul while lawyer Khurshid Alam Khan and Deputy Attorney General AKM Amin Uddin Manik

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'Small vehicles, big problems'

Quader directs authorities to strengthen monitoring on highways to curb road accidents



World Bank on several occasions expressed interest to invest in a road safety project, but it is now delaying its decision. If they make any further delay, we have to go ahead with our own fund.

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Road Transport and Bridges Minister Obaidul Quader yesterday directed the authorities concerned for strengthening monitoring on highways to control small vehicles, which are considered to be the major reason behind the sharp rise in road accidents.

"The number of road accident is continuing to rise. This is a matter of grave concern," Quader said at a programme organised virtually to inaugurate nine bridges of Roads and Highways Department (RHD).

The Daily Star, citing police report, yesterday published a report that road accidents and deaths saw a 40 percent rise this year, compare to the same period last year.

A total of 3,095 people were killed in 3,259 road crashes in the first seven months of this year while 2,211 people were killed in 2,291 road accidents in between January and July last year.

Quader, also the general secretary of ruling Awami League, drew attention to the Road Transport and Highway Division secretary Nazrul Islam and others joined the programme virtually about the media report.

As per the report, Quader said, small vehicles and motorcycles are mainly responsible for the rise in road

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A visa scam run from abroad

Promising permanent residency, Australian expat duped people of huge sums of money, says CID

MUNTAKIM SAAD

Introducing herself at times as a consular general at Australian immigration services and at times as a ruling party leader aspiring to be an MP in Bangladesh, she would lure people to apply for permanent residency in Australia for Tk 20-25 lakh per visa.

Umme Fatema Rosy (35), an Australian expat, would tell her targets that she had received awards from the Australian prime minister and she was well connected with the country's immigration minister.

She would then tempt them to apply for family-based permanent residency visas. But after receiving the money, she would cut off all ties with the visa aspirants.

More than two dozen people, including a Supreme Court lawyer in Bangladesh, fell victim to her scam. They filed two cases -- one with the Dhaka Chief Metropolitan Magistrate Court and another with the Cyber Tribunal of Bangladesh -- in July.

Rosy is the prime accused in both cases. An immigrant with an Australian passport, the Jhalakathi native ran the racket, according to the first information report (FIR) in one of the cases.

Rosy's mother Farida Yesmin and brother Rakib Hasan Mitul were also accused in the case.

Rosy is also accused in four other cases filed over allegations of human trafficking and fraudulence, police said.

One of the victims, MABM Khairul Islam, an advocate at the Supreme Court, paid more than Tk 75 lakh for nine of his

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A mobile transformer has been left parked at Mugdapara's CNG Station area in the capital. Not only is it obstructing traffic on the busy road, but also posing electrocution risk for commuters of the area. This photo was taken yesterday.

PHOTO: SK ENAMUL HAQ



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