



The liberator's epic return

MOHIUDDIN ALAMGIR

A liberated Bangladesh was in a state of euphoria following the surrender of the Pakistani occupational forces on December 16, 1971.

But a sense of incompleteness lingered as Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, the undisputed leader of independence, was not present for the momentous occasion.

The nation, nay the entire world, eagerly waited for the return of Father of the Nation, who

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A JOURNEY FROM DARKNESS TO LIGHT - P8, P9

Unvaccinated can't attend classes

Says circular about school students

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Students aged between 12 and 18 will not be allowed to attend classes in person unless they are vaccinated against Covid-19, the Directorate of Secondary and Higher Education said in a circular yesterday.

"All students aged between 12 and 18 have been instructed to get vaccinated by January 15," the circular reads.

The DSHE also issued five instructions for the successful implementation

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Students swarm the gate of Motijheel Ideal School and College to get jabbed yesterday. In a circular, the Directorate of Secondary and Higher Education said students between 12 and 18 will not be allowed to attend classes in person unless they are vaccinated against Covid-19.

PHOTO: PRABIR DAS

COVID-19 SITUATION

Not alarming yet, but it's getting there

MOUDUD AHMED SUJAN

Everything is under control – still. But the ticking hospital bed occupancy rate from the turn of the year presages a storm ahead, not too dissimilar from the one witnessed about six months ago.

On the first of January, 9 percent of the intensive care unit-equivalent wards were occupied by Covid-19 patients. Yesterday, it was 19 percent, according to the COVID-19 Dynamic Facility Dashboard of the health directorate.

Similarly, the occupancy rates for ICUs and high dependency units (HDU) crept up:

from 12 percent to 15 percent and from 11 percent to 13 percent respectively.

The caseload has shot up 115 percent in the last week. And in the 24 hours to 8 am yesterday, 1,491 fresh cases were recorded – the highest since Sept 21 last year, according to data from the Directorate General of Health Services (DGHS).

And the reason for the surge is the latest variant of the coronavirus: Omicron.

The variant has undergone 50 genetic changes, making it more transmissible than the dominant Delta variant and more likely to evade the immune protection provided by vaccines or previous infection.

Subsequently, it is causing a fresh wave of coronavirus cases the world over, compelling governments to enforce measures to restrict social mixing.

In Bangladesh, the official tally of Omicron cases stands at 21 as of yesterday. But health officials believe the fast-multiplying variant is causing the spike in cases witnessed in recent days.

Vaccinated patients are more likely to experience milder disease, and a vast majority of Omicron patients who require intensive care are unvaccinated or have severely compromised immune systems,

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Thick smoke billowing out of shanties being ravaged by a fire at Rohingya Camp-16 in Ukhiya of Cox's Bazar yesterday. At least 1,200 homes of the Rohingyas were destroyed in the fire, which broke out around 4:45pm and was doused at 9:10pm.

PHOTO: COLLECTED

Fire ravages Rohingya camp again 1,200 homes destroyed

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A massive fire swept through shanties in Kata area of Camp-16 in Ukhiya yesterday, leaving thousands displaced.

Additional Superintendent of Police Kamran Hossen of Armed Police Battalion-8, said the fire broke out around 4:55pm and rapidly spread, destroying around 1,200 homes of Rohingya refugees.

It was doused around 9:10pm, said Emdadul Haque, station officer of Ukhiya Fire Station in Cox's Bazar.

Enamul Hossen, a firefighter, said four units of the fire station and dozens more from Cox's Bazar rushed to the spot on being informed around 4:50pm.

In a video footage of the incident shared on social media, the fire was seen spreading rapidly and engulfing hundreds of shanties while dozens of Rohingya refugees ran for safety.

Saddam Hossain, a local of Shafiullah Kata area, told The Daily Star that they found the thick smoke billowing over Camp-16 around 5:00pm and saw hundreds of homes gutted in the fire.

"Fire service along with other government agencies are trying hard to douse the fire," he said last night.

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GENDER SENSITIVITY

Judiciary not trained enough Say experts

NILIMA JAHAN

Rights activists have long been demanding effective gender sensitivity training for judges and lawyers dealing with cases of sexual violence so the victims, especially rape survivors, are treated with gender responsiveness and sensitivity throughout the legal process.

But there is still a lack of gender sensitivity within the judiciary and one of the reasons is that there is hardly any training exclusively on gender issues and sensitivity during their professional training, experts say.

They said if the judges, lawyers and others falter, especially in gender-related crimes, they imperil fairness and inflict damage on the survivors' quest for justice.

The verbal observations that former judge Mosammat Qumrunnahar of Women and Children Repression Prevention Tribunal-7 of Dhaka made on Banani Raintree double rape case have once again raised questions about the sensitivity especially among those who hold women and children repression prevention tribunals.

While delivering the verdict on November 11, she verbally recommended that police not register any rape case if the complainant goes to them 72 hours or longer after the incident, which drew flak from different quarters.

In light of the situation, experts stressed the need for providing regular training to the judges and lawyers as it would help them avoid stereotyping and unconscious biases that can creep into judicial reasoning. It will also make them better aware of the laws and the constitution, of their powers and jurisdiction, they added.

"As rape and other forms of sexual violence are normalised to problematic extents in the society, it is necessary to ensure that the judges and lawyers involved in the trial of sexual offence cases are gender-sensitive enough to not be swayed by gender biases, which re-traumatise survivors and perpetuate the culture of impunity," said Taqbir Huda, advocacy lead of Brac's Gender Justice Programme.

"There are numbers of examples of judgments, which feature the gender insensitive language used in rape cases," he said.

Taqbir, a member of the Rape Law Reform Coalition, a body of 17 leading rights organisations, said the training must include a comprehensive breakdown on what counts and does not count as consent in sexual relations so that the key question in any sexual offence trial is properly guided by the questions of capacity and consent, instead of a complainant's character or lifestyle choices.

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WE MOURN

Zafar Ahmed, the honorable chairman of Apex Holdings Limited, a renowned industrialist breathed his last on Sunday 09/01/2022 at 2.50 pm, due to brain hemorrhage (Inna Lillahi Wa Inna Ilaihi Rajeon). He was 73.

He is survived by his wife, son & two grandsons.

Mr. Ahmed is a renowned entrepreneur, contributed to country's economic development and created Job opportunities, around 25 thousand people are working in his organizations at present. His established readymade Garments & Frozen Foods industries are in leading position in Bangladesh for many years. His companies received numerous export trophies and high Tax paid awards several times.

We request all relatives, friends & well-wishers to pray for his departed soul.

Family members, Board of Directors and all employees.

32nd Death Anniversary

DEATH: 10TH JANUARY 1990

We deeply mourn the death of our beloved mother Late "**Masuda Begum**" wife of Late Mr. Abul Khair, founder of Abul Khair Group (Abul Co.). Today with due respect, we remember her works, ideals and memories and pray to Almighty for His divine blessings.

We request all our relatives and well-wishers to pray for her eternal peace.

BELOVED SONS & DAUGHTERS

