



In a festive mood, students of different schools and colleges gather at MA Aziz Stadium in Chattogram to receive Covid-19 jabs. The stadium was one of the three vaccination centres for children in the port city. The photo was taken yesterday.

PHOTO: RAJIB RAIHAN

NEO-JMB Financier now allowed to travel abroad

SHARIFUL ISLAM AND
MOHAMMAD JAMIL KHAN

Despite restrictions after her arrest, Dhaka's Anti-Terrorism Special Tribunal ordered the police to unblock the passport of Humaira Zakir Nabila, chief a "sister department" of Neo-JMB and it's financier.

Nabila was arrested in April 2018 in a case filed over a terror plan targeting a National Mourning Day event on August 15, 2017.

The plan was foiled following a police raid after suicide-bomber Saiful Islam blew himself up in a Panthapath hotel.

The SB blocked Nabila's passport so that she cannot leave the country upon CTTC's request in September 2018.

After investigation, the allegations were found to be true and a charge sheet against 14 militants, including Nabila, who is on bail now, was formed on November 14, 2019.

But on November 11 last year, the Anti-Terrorism Special Tribunal ordered the Special Branch of Police to unblock her passport and allow her to go abroad while the case is still under trial.

The order, signed by the tribunal's bench assistant Pervez Bhuiyan, came after Nabila's lawyer filed

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COVID SITUATION IN BANGLADESH

Things can get out of hand fast

Experts warn as positivity rate almost 9pc; 2,458 people get Covid in 24 hours

MOUDUD AHMED SUJAN AND SUMON ALI

With the health directorate reporting 2,458 new Covid cases yesterday, the highest in four months, experts warned that the pandemic situation, fuelled by community transmission of Omicron variant, may get worse fast.

In 24 hours preceding 8:00am yesterday, the positivity rate was 8.97 percent against 27,399 tests, up from the previous day's 8.53 percent.

"The community transmission of Omicron has started as the cases are jumping almost every day. The situation may get worse soon. A similar trend has been seen in other countries too," Dr Mushtuq Husain, consultant at the Institute of Epidemiology, Disease Control and Research, told The Daily Star yesterday.

During the 24-hour period, two Covid patients died, raising the total number of Covid fatalities in the country to 28,107.

Bangladesh reported its first two cases of Omicron on December 9. The number has now gone up to 30.

Different studies indicate that Omicron can transmit 70 times faster than the main variant of the novel coronavirus.

"The number of genome sequence to detect the variant is inadequate, but the clinical data indicates the Omicron is causing the rise in transmission," Prof Ridwanur Rahman, an infectious disease specialist, told this newspaper earlier this week.

On January 1, the Directorate General of Health Services (DGHS) reported 370 cases with positivity

rate of around 2 percent. Yesterday's figure was 2,458, which is around seven times higher than that of January 1.

To contain the transmission, the Cabinet Division on Monday issued a notice with an 11-point directive, including wearing masks outdoors, from January 13.

The government has also made producing vaccination proof mandatory in multiple cases including at restaurants, for drivers and other staffers while operating public transport, and in schools for students.

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otherwise.

"It will be tough initially. But the government has set up vaccination camps up to ward level. So, people can take vaccines easily," he added.

Warning that the transmission of Omicron would put pressure on hospitals soon, the public health expert stressed on ensuring that everyone wears masks outdoors and limiting large gatherings to slow down the transmission.

Meanwhile, the bed occupancy rate in the Covid-19 hospitals has increased to nine percent yesterday, up from 6 percent on January 1.

6 journos among 14 killed in road crash in Tanzania

AFP, DAR ES SALAAM

Fourteen people including six journalists were killed yesterday in a road crash near Lake Victoria in Tanzania, officials said.

Those who died in northern Tanzania were on a tour with the Mwanza regional commissioner, and included local communications officials and their driver as well as television and newspaper journalists.

"A minibus was trying to overtake another vehicle, then it collided with the vehicle carrying journalists and government officials," said Gabriel Zacharia, district commissioner for Busega, where the accident took place.

President Samia Suluhu Hassan issued a statement on Twitter expressing her condolences to the families of the dead and praying for the quick recovery of the injured people.

High-tech vessel shines hope on hilsa research

SUMON ALI

Researchers now have gotten an opportunity to promote hilsa production in the country, thanks to the introduction of a high-tech vessel by the Bangladesh Fisheries Research Institute.

Equipped with a hilsa research laboratory, netting system and a portable mini hatchery, the vessel named "MV BFR1 Research Boat" will act as a game changer in hilsa research, said experts.

They also said that the ship will play an effective role in getting a real picture of the hilsa population and its behaviour.

"Earlier, researches based on market value were conceptual. They

did not provide the real picture," Yamin Hossain, a professor of the fisheries department in Rajshahi University, told The Daily Star.

He said, "Through this ship, it is possible to know the nature of the movement of hilsa, where it lays its eggs, whether it is migrating or not and the level of oxygen in the deep sea.

The ship will also help protect other fish biodiversity." He also said it would help researchers assess the kind of impact climate change would have on reproduction of hilsa in future.

Yamin, however, said skilled researchers have to be recruited for

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Lata in ICU with Covid

OUR CORRESPONDENT,
NEW DELHI

Legendary playback singer Lata Mangeshkar has been admitted to a hospital in Mumbai after she tested positive for Covid-19. PTI reported quoting her niece Rachna and doctors. She has mild symptoms.

The singer "is doing fine and she has been kept in ICU as a precautionary reason considering her age," Rachna told the agency.

Pratit Samdhani, who is heading the team of experts treating Lata Mangeshkar, 92, at Breach Candy hospital, said she was brought early on Sunday morning and is suffering from Covid-19 and pneumonia.

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Half of Europe may catch Omicron

Warns WHO; 3rd China city locked down; US reports 1.35m cases in a day

AGENCIES

More than half of people in Europe are projected to catch Omicron in the next two months, the WHO said yesterday, as millions in China faced fresh lockdowns on the two-year anniversary of the world's first Covid death.

The highly-transmissible variant has ripped through countries at breakneck pace, forcing governments to impose fresh measures and scramble to roll out booster shots.

Europe has been at the epicentre of alarming new outbreaks -- hospital admissions and deaths are creeping up as well -- and the World Health Organization said yesterday Omicron could infect half of all people in the region at current infection rates.

"The Institute for Health Metrics and Evaluation (IHME) forecasts that more than 50 percent of the population in the region will be infected with Omicron in the next six to eight weeks," said Hans Kluge, regional director for WHO's European office.

Kluge confirmed that Omicron is more transmissible than previous variants, but stressed

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**Namaz-e-janaza Of
Late Zafar Ahmed**

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

Namaz-e-Janaza of Late Zafar Ahmed will be held today (Wednesday) 12/01/2022 at Gulshan Central Masjid (Azad Masjid) after Zohor prayers.

All relatives, friends & well-wishers are requested to attend the Namaz-e-Janaza and pray for his departed soul.

- Family members

আতিনন্দন

দেশের অন্যতম বৃহৎ শিল্প প্রতিষ্ঠান ইউনুহ গ্রুপ অফ ইন্ডাস্ট্রিজ এর ব্যবস্থাপনা পরিচালক
জনাব মোহাম্মদ ইউনুহ
শাহজালাল ইসলামী ব্যাংক লিমিটেডের চেয়ারম্যান নির্বাচিত হওয়ার
আন্তরিক শুভেচ্ছা ও অভিনন্দন।

ব্যাংক, বিমা, এডভান্সন, আইটি, কৃষি, নিরাপদ খাদ্য, সংবাদপত্র, শিক্ষা, নির্মাণ ও অবকাঠামো, হিমাগার, কাগজ, নদীর ড্রেজিং এবং দেশের বিভিন্ন শিল্প খাতের প্রসারে ২,৯৪৪ কর্মীর শ্রম আর মেধায় অর্থনৈতিক উন্নয়নের অগ্রগতি ও সমৃদ্ধির বাংলাদেশ বিনির্মাণে আমরা গর্বিত অংশীদার।

ইউনুহ গ্রুপ অফ ইন্ডাস্ট্রিজ

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