



The street in front of Holy Cross College in the capital is packed with people, a majority of whom are not wearing masks. Most of them are guardians of students who sat for an admission test of the institution yesterday. Although health guidelines were followed inside the centre, they were disregarded outside, increasing the risk of Covid-19 transmission.

PHOTO: PRABIR DAS

## Prof Tajmeri sent to jail

COURT CORRESPONDENT

Prof Tajmeri SA Islam, adviser to BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia, has been sent to jail in a case filed over obstructing police from performing duties during an anti-government demonstration of the party in the capital's Uttara in 2018.

Dhaka Metropolitan Magistrate Arafatul Rakib rejected her bail plea after she was produced before the court on Thursday, her lawyer Masud Ahmed Talukdar told The Daily Star.

On September 23, 2018, the case was filed with Uttara (West) Police Station, accusing 134 people.

The High Court granted bail to Prof Tajmeri, a former teacher at Dhaka University, on October 18 the same year in the case till submission of probe report.

On March 4, 2020, police submitted a charge sheet against 75 people, including Prof Tajmeri. Accepting the charge sheet, a

Dhaka court issued an arrest warrant against her on May 7 that year, Prof Tajmeri's lawyer added.

Later, Uttara police arrested her on Thursday. She was sent to Kashimpur Central Jail yesterday, according to Uttara (West) Police Station.

Prof Tajmeri was involved with White Panel, pro-BNP teachers' association of Dhaka University.

She was also the former dean of science faculty, chairperson of Chemistry department and provost of Ruqayyah Hall.



## BNP rescheduling 32 rallies due to Covid surge

UNB, Dhaka

The BNP has decided to reschedule its 32 rallies in different districts due to a sharp rise in Covid infection rate.

"We earlier said the restriction [on public rallies in open spaces] imposed by the government is illogical and ineffective," said BNP standing committee member Nazrul Islam Khan.

"Even then, we've decided to reschedule our rallies, taking into account the public interest," he added.

The BNP leader was speaking at a press conference at the party chief's Gulshan office yesterday.

The rallies were scheduled to be held in six days on January 8, 12, 15, 17, 22 and 24 to mount pressure on the government to allow ailing BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia to go abroad for better treatment.

Replying to a question, Nazrul said they did not postpone their rallies as they have only rescheduled those.

The fresh dates for the rallies in 32 districts will be announced later.

Amid the spike in Covid cases due to the transmission of the Omicron variant, the government imposed fresh restrictions on public gatherings, social programmes, political and religious events, which came into effect on Thursday.

BNP leader Nazrul, however, said, "The main purpose of the restrictions is to obstruct our programmes of the ongoing movement as the government has failed to thwart those by imposing section 144."

## WHO approves two new Covid treatments

China suspends more int'l flights over Omicron surge; HK bans transit passengers from most of world

AGENCIES

The World Health Organization approved two new Covid-19 treatments yesterday, growing the arsenal of tools along with vaccines to stave off severe illness and death from the virus.

The news comes as Omicron cases fill hospitals around the world with the WHO predicting half of Europe will be infected by March.

In their recommendation in British medical Journal the BMJ, WHO experts said arthritis drug baricitinib used with corticosteroids to treat severe or critical Covid patients led to better survival rates and reduced need for ventilators.

Experts also recommended synthetic antibody treatment Sotrovimab for people with non-serious Covid at highest risk of hospitalisation, such as the elderly, people with immunodeficiencies or chronic diseases such as diabetes.

Sotrovimab's benefits for people not at risk of hospitalisation were deemed insignificant and the WHO said its effectiveness against new variants like Omicron was "still uncertain".

Only three other treatments for Covid-19 have received WHO approval, starting with corticosteroids for severely ill patients in September 2020.

Corticosteroids are inexpensive and widely available and fight inflammation that commonly

accompanies severe cases.

The coronavirus has killed at least 5,540,918 people worldwide since the outbreak emerged in China in December 2019, according to an AFP tally compiled from official sources yesterday.

China suspended dozens of international flights yesterday amid a global surge in Omicron cases, while the city of Shanghai curbed tourist activity as it rushed to head off local Covid-19 infections as imported cases rose.

Hong Kong authorities said the city's airport will suspend operations of transit flights from around 150 countries and territories considered high risk because of the coronavirus for a month, deepening the global financial hub's isolation, reports Reuters.

Schools in the Philippine capital Manila were ordered yesterday to suspend online classes for a week, as an Omicron-driven record surge in infections ravages the metropolis of 13 million. US President Joe Biden on Thursday said he would send more military health workers to hospitals in six states.

He also promised to provide free masks and more free tests to help Americans tackle the fast-spreading Omicron variant.

British researchers, meanwhile, said young children and babies are proportionally more likely to be hospitalised with Omicron compared to older children than with previous variants but the cases are still mild, adding the overall picture was reassuring.

## HELIUM CYLINDER BLAST Five injured brought to Dhaka

STAR REPORT

Five people, severely injured in a helium cylinder explosion in Nangalkot upazila of Cumilla, were brought to Sheikh Hasina National Institute of Burn and Plastic Surgery yesterday for better treatment.

The victims are Saiful Islam, 12, Sabbir, 13, Emran Hossain Emon, 15, Abdur Rouf, 32, and Anwar Hossain, 35.

Dr Samanta Lal Sen, coordinator of the institute, said two patients -- Saiful and Rouf -- had around 35 percent burns on their bodies and that they were in critical condition.

Dr Sefayet Ullah, assistant prof of the Department of Surgery at Cumilla Medical College Hospital, said two children underwent surgeries there on Thursday night.

Some 10 to 11 patients, mostly children, were undergoing treatment at the hospital, he said.

Meanwhile, Nangalkot upazila administration yesterday formed a three-member probe committee to investigate the incident.

Ashraful Haque, assistant commissioner (land) of the upazila, was made the chief of the probe body.



A view of an abandoned building inside the staff quarters of the deputy postmaster general's office in Tangail. Locals said for the last two decades, it has been a den for unsavoury activities such as drug abuse and other crimes. The photo was taken yesterday. Story on page 5.

PHOTO: MIRZA SHAKIL

## 5 arrested over gang rape of teenage girl

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Natore

Five people were arrested in Natore on Thursday night over the gang rape of a teenage girl.

Acting on a tip-off, police conducted drives in Chhatni area of Natore Sadar upazila and arrested the five, said Monsur Rahman, officer in charge of Natore Sadar Police Station.

Police also rescued the 16-year-old victim from the same area early yesterday, he added.

In the afternoon, a Natore court sent the arrestees to jail after police produced them before it in a case filed by the victim's father.



Children with ADHD can thrive with parent-teacher SUPPORT

STAR HEALTH DESK

Attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) is the most common neurodevelopmental disorder in childhood, which often continues into adulthood.

ADHD includes a combination of persistent issues such as difficulty sustaining attention, hyperactivity and impulsive behaviour.

Children with ADHD may struggle with low self-esteem, troubled relationships and poor performance in school.

They might daydream, lose things, squirm or fidget, talk too much, make careless mistakes, have a hard time resisting temptation and have difficulty getting along with others.

But that does not mean children with ADHD cannot succeed in school. There are many things both parents and teachers can do to help children with ADHD thrive in the classroom.

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