



"Invasion will only lead to a terrible quagmire and loss of life, as we know from the Soviet-Afghan war and conflict in Chechnya."

UK Foreign Secretary Liz Truss warns Russia over Ukraine

"We cannot allow the political situation to lead to an even worse humanitarian disaster."

Norwegian FM Anniken Huitfeldt on Afghanistan crisis



SCHOOLS CLOSED as Covid curbs back again

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The government yesterday announced closure of schools and colleges until February 6 and prohibited any kind of gathering of over 100 people to curb the spread of Covid-19 amid a rapid surge in new cases. Issuing a gazette notification with a five-point directive, the Cabinet Division said government and private company employees must show vaccine certificates at work.

Schools and colleges will be closed from January 21 to February 6, the notification said.

Authorities of universities will take their own decisions about closures, it said.

Soon after the directives, Dhaka University and Jagannath University authorities suspended in-person classes. National University suspended all exams.

Public offices will be instructed to operate with half the manpower at workplaces and a circular will soon be issued in this regard, Health Minister Zahid Maleque told The Daily Star.

"The official activities will be operated in a hybrid manner -- half will be working from home and the rest will be in person. There will be a rotation every week," he said.

Speaking at a press briefing at the Directorate General of Health Services (DGHS) yesterday, the health minister said a fresh decision will be taken on schools and colleges after two weeks considering the Covid-19 situation in the country.

Health experts however said the directives are not sufficient

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5-POINT DIRECTIVE

- Schools and colleges shut till Feb 6
- Gathering of over 100 at any programme prohibited
- Attendees of a programme must have Covid vaccine certificates
- Govt and pvt employees have to show Covid vaccine certificates at work
- All have to wear masks and maintain health rules at public places



The life of Bristy Akhter has turned upside down after a road crash claimed the lives of her parents and grandfather in the capital's Matuail yesterday morning. The six-year-old, being consoled by a relative, is now undergoing treatment at Dhaka Medical College Hospital for injuries.

PHOTO: ANISUR RAHMAN

Crash ravages little girl's world

Six-year-old survives but loses three of her family as bus rams auto-rickshaw in capital

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Six-year-old Bristy Akhter, her parents and grandfather came to the capital by launch yesterday morning to visit her ailing grandmother in a hospital.

At the Sadarghat terminal, they hired a CNG-run auto-rickshaw to reach her uncle's home in Matuail. They were supposed to go to the hospital in Mohakhali later in the day.

But as the auto-rickshaw was making a U-turn in front of Matuail Child and Maternal Health Institute around 7:00am, it was hit by a Saintmartin Paribahan bus, said police.

Bristy's mother Sharmin Akhter, 35, father Riazul Islam, 45, and grandfather Abdur Rahman, 65, all residents of Barishal's Wazirpur upazila, were critically injured. They were declared dead after being rushed

to Dhaka Medical College Hospital, said Bishwajit Sarker, a sub-inspector of Jatrabari Police Station.

Bristy and the auto-rickshaw driver, Mohammad Rafique, 42, were also injured. Bristy was undergoing treatment at the hospital while Rafique was discharged from it.

Bristy's grandmother Shahida Begum is being treated at the National Institute of Cancer Research

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Sust hunger strike on, 12 hospitalised

Education minister seeks discussion

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Sylhet

Twenty-three students of Shahjalal University of Science and Technology continued their hunger strike yesterday, demanding the VC's resignation as Education Minister Dipu Moni invited them for a discussion.

Twenty-four students began the strike at 2:50pm on Wednesday. One of them had to leave after his father had a heart attack, hearing that his son embarked on a fast unto death.

The students are being given intravenous rehydration and nutrition supplements.

Twelve of them were taken to hospitals as they fell ill after spending days out in the open in front of Vice-Chancellor Farid Uddin Ahmed's residence without food and water. One of them returned to the scene yesterday afternoon.

The education minister in a video call with the protesters yesterday urged five of them to meet her for talks in Dhaka. But the protesters said they might invite the minister to visit them on campus.

On January 13, a group of resident students began demonstrating, alleging that their provost, Zafrin

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