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Hawkers on one side of the road in front of Gulistan 5/A TCB office seem to be in-charge of controlling traffic when police are not around. They raise a rope, put up by traffic police as a stop-gap measure, and drop it at will. Sometimes they hold it up when they feel it is convenient for their business. Hawkers have been setting up their shops on all roads and footpaths, even though Dhaka city corporations were supposed to keep one side of all roads hawker-free. PHOTO: AMRAN HOSSAIN

## Five die after boat, bulk carrier collide mid-river

STAR REPORT

Five people died yesterday after a boat capsized following a collision with a bulk carrier amid dense fog in the Dakatia river off the coast of Chandpur.

The boat, which was carrying soil to a brickfield, had 11 onboard; six swam ashore and the rest drowned.

River police and firefighting units rushed to the spot and with the help of locals recovered a dead body and rescued an injured person, who later died on the way to a hospital, reports a Chandpur correspondent.

The rescue team recovered three bodies from inside the boat after they pulled out the sunken vessel from the river. Police have seized the bulk carrier MV Iqbal Hossain 1.

Meanwhile, police detained four people in this connection, reports UNB.

The detainees are workers of the bulk carrier Md Javed, Abul Bashar, Md Yunus and Didar, said Md Mujahidul Islam, officer-in-charge of Chandpur naval police station.

They have been held for interrogation and a case will be filed in this regard, he said.

## Only Tk 2,530, blank cheques in Evaly's lockers

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Some Tk 2,530 in cash, some blank cheques, and documents were recovered from inside two lockers of the e-commerce platform Evaly yesterday.

Asfia Sirat, executive magistrate of deputy commissioner office in Dhaka, was present when the lockers were broken into at the Evaly office in Dhanmondi. The members of the Evaly board formed by the High Court were also there.

The HC formed a five-member board of directors led by retired Justice of the Appellate Division AHM Shamsuddin Choudhury Manik after Evaly CEO Mohammad Russel and his wife Shamima Nasrin, also the chairman of the company, were arrested in mid-September on various charges, including fraud.

The new board took over the management on October 16.

"We expected that there will be a huge amount of money and important documents. But, what is found is useless."

"We expected that there will be a huge amount of money and important documents. But, what is found is useless," said Justice Manik afterwards.

Five members of the board had visited Russel in jail and had asked about the combination of the lockers.

However, they failed to get the combinations.

The board then decided to break the lockers. Justice Manik said they found Tk 2.45 crore of the company in Southeast Bank and City Bank last week and the High Court has given permission to withdraw it.

He said they are trying to get access to Evaly's server and appoint auditors to assess Evaly's assets and liabilities.

## Bangladesh deaths 4 times higher in Jan

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A total of 322 Covid-19 patients died in January — around four times higher than the 91 deaths in December.

In the last 24 hours ending at 8:00am yesterday, the health directorate reported 31 deaths from coronavirus infections.

After testing 45,358 samples, 13,501 patients were detected to have been infected with the virus. The positivity rate was 29.77 percent.

With this, the total number of deaths caused by Covid-19 rose to 28,394 and the total number of cases to 17,98,833.

Of those who died yesterday, 20 were male and 11 female.

The weekly analysis showed 100,196 confirmed cases in the seven days until Sunday — around 49 percent higher than 67,425 of the week before.

After Covid-19 was first detected in the country on March 8, 2020, there have so far been three waves of the pandemic.

## India's Covid cases dip

Spike in deaths cause for concern; Australia reports fewer deaths

AGENCIES

Weekly Covid-19 cases in India fell for the first time in the third wave of the pandemic while deaths from the virus continued to rise, registering a growth of 41% against the previous week's toll.

India recorded just over 17.5 lakh fresh cases during the week ending Sunday, down 19% from the preceding week, strengthening the view that the third wave may have peaked at the national level although some states may continue to report a surge in cases.

There was, however, a 10% drop in testing during the current week as compared to the previous seven days. Despite that, India's test positivity rate in the week dipped to 15.68% as opposed to 17.28% in the previous week, reports TOI.

Last week, the country had reported nearly 21.7 lakh new cases, the highest in the current surge. If nationwide cases do continue to fall in the coming days, the third wave would be by far the shortest yet, having peaked in just four weeks. Cases had started rising in the last week of December.

India reported more than 3,770 new deaths during the week, up from 2,680 in the previous seven days.

These figures do not include deaths from earlier periods added to the official count. If these fatalities are added to the count, India's toll rose by 5,203 during the current week. The

daily death toll stayed over 550 for the third day running, with 564 fatalities reported on Sunday.

The coronavirus has killed at least 5,661,274 million people since the outbreak emerged in China in December 2019, according to an AFP tally compiled from official sources yesterday.

Australia reported its lowest daily Covid-19 deaths in two weeks yesterday while cases continued to trend lower as authorities braced for staff shortages in schools due to likely outbreaks as thousands of students return after their summer break.

Most states will go through a staggered school reopening exercise this week as Australia battles the worst outbreak of the pandemic, with the fast-moving Omicron coronavirus variant spiralling cases to record levels, reports Reuters.

"There will be challenges and there will be bumps over these first few weeks," Victoria state Deputy Premier James Merlino said during a media briefing yesterday. Merlino said a pool of about 350 retired teachers have been set up to support schools when they have to furlough staff.

In China, Beijing recorded its highest number of new cases for a year and a half as it gears up to host the Winter Olympics in five days.

Thousands of Czechs massed in Prague's Wenceslas Square late on Sunday, waving flags and chanting slogans against Covid-19 restrictions, even as infections surge.

Protesters mainly objected to harsher restrictions for the unvaccinated, including a

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## TENSIONS OVER UKRAINE

### Russia, US to hold new talks

UNSC to meet; Washington warns of sanctions on Moscow

AFP, Washington

The Russian and US foreign ministers are set to hold fresh talks today after a UN Security Council meeting on Ukraine, with Washington vowing to work with Western allies to beef up sanctions should Moscow decide to invade its neighbor.

The Security Council was due to convene later yesterday over the crisis as fears of an imminent incursion grow, despite Kremlin denials.

Russia announced Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov will speak with US Secretary of State Antony Blinken.

"Lavrov and Blinken will have a telephone conversation on 'Tuesday [today].'" Russian foreign ministry spokeswoman Maria Zakharova told a press briefing.

The upcoming call is the latest in a flurry of diplomatic meetings between senior diplomats from Moscow, Brussels and Washington over the conflict in Ukraine and disagreements over security concerns in Europe.



Bangladesh Water Development Board conducts regular eviction drives to recover its land along Lalbagh's Beribadh in the capital, but illegal establishments, like this furniture market, keep reappearing there. The photo was taken yesterday. PHOTO: ANISUR RAHMAN

## ANIMALS' DEATHS

### 2 top safari park officials removed

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Gazipur

Authorities of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujib Safari Park in Gazipur have removed two top officials for negligence of duty over the deaths of 11 zebras and a tiger in the last month.

Md Tabibur Rahman, in charge of the park and veterinary surgeon Hatem Sazzad Md Zulkernine were removed and attached to Dhaka's Forest Department.

Rafiqul Islam from Faridpur Forest Department, replaced Tabibur while Mostafizur Rahman is the new veterinary surgeon.

Steps are being taken to remove Zahidul Kabir, project director of the park.

## Star HEALTHLINE

### How do kidney STONES FORM?

STAR HEALTH DESK

A kidney stone is solid deposit that is made from chemicals in the urine.

Urine has various wastes dissolved in it. Crystals begin to form when there is much more waste than liquid.

The chemicals which contribute to forming kidney stones are calcium, oxalate, urate, cystine, xanthine, and phosphate.

After it is formed, the stone may stay in the kidney or travel down the urinary tract into the ureter. Kidney stones can affect any part of one's urinary tract — from kidneys to bladder.

Sometimes, tiny stones move out of the body, with urine, without causing too much pain.

But stones that don't move may cause a build-up of urine in the kidney, ureter, the bladder, or the urethra. This is what causes the pain.

Calcium oxalate, uric acid, and struvite are the main types of kidney stones.

Calcium oxalate is the

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