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# Follow health protocols to contain Covid

Says health minister amid steady rise in virus cases

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Health Minister Zahid Maleque yesterday urged all to maintain health protocols as Covid cases in the country rose for the 12th consecutive day.

The Directorate General of Health Services (DGHS) reported 128 new cases yesterday. The number was 109 the previous day.

The test positivity rate, however, declined slightly yesterday. It stood at 1.91 percent after 6,668 samples were tested across the country. The previous day, the rate was 2.06 percent.

No death from the virus was reported yesterday.

“Covid has not yet been eradicated... though the situation is normal now, it may take an alarming turn any time,” said Zahid at the Secretariat, reports UNB.

“Everyone must follow the health rules and wear a mask,” he said after a meeting on the automation of admission process at private medical and dental colleges.

Since June 2, the country has been seeing a steady rise in Covid cases.

Amid such a situation, Zahid urged those who are yet to be vaccinated to get jabs immediately.

The minister further said that in the proposed budget, the health sector received an allocation of around Tk 4,000 crore which is higher than that in the previous fiscal year.

About the automation of student admission at private medical and dental colleges, he said this will make the admission process transparent.



PHOTO: AMRAN HOSSAIN

For just Tk 600 each a day, these men offload huge logs from boats in Kamrangirchar. The logs are brought to Dhaka from distant places to feed the city's need for furniture, windows and doors. A slip by even one of the workers could lead to the log crushing them all.

## Khaleda under close observation in hospital



UNB, Dhaka

The medical board at Evercare Hospital yesterday decided to keep BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia under close observation for a few more days.

AZM Zahid Hossain, a personal physician of the 76-year-old former prime minister, informed UNB about this after the board, formed for ensuring her proper treatment, held a meeting.

“The medical board today [yesterday] reviewed madam's latest condition and various medical test reports. They've decided to keep her under close observation for some more

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## Give pointers on polls-time govt

TIB asks EC

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Transparency International Bangladesh yesterday said the Election Commission can give suggestions to the government or the authorities concerned on how the polls-time government should conduct itself.

The Bangladesh chapter of the Berlin-based anti-corruption watchdog, which also carries out research on various election issues, also proposed that the EC should decide to use electronic voting machine (EVM) only after ensuring that it is accepted by all stakeholders and is technically faultless.

“Election Commission said that they are still thinking about it [use of EVM] and they are yet to take any decision regarding the matter,” TIB Executive Director Itekhharuzzaman told reporters after holding a meeting with Chief Election Commissioner Kazi Habibur Awal at the EC office in the capital.

“People of the country have expectations and concerns about the character, behaviour, shape and composition of the election-time government... The EC can give its suggestions to the government or the authorities concerned on how the polls-time government should behave during elections. The Election Commission can also propose to reform laws if needed,” he said.

A polls-time government usually works to perform routine functions after the election schedule is announced. In November 17, 2013, the then government formed a polls-time cabinet ahead of January 5, 2014 elections.

No such government was formed ahead of the last national election held on December 30, 2018.

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## OTT draft rules prohibit news, talk-show broadcast

Info ministry submits outline to HC

ASHUTOSH SARKAR

The information ministry yesterday submitted to the High Court a draft of the OTT (Over-The-Top) regulations prohibiting broadcast of news or talk-shows, except for the contents defined in the draft, on the OTT platforms.

The HC bench of Justice JBM Hassan and Justice Razik-Al-Jalil fixed October 19 for passing an order on the issue, and asked the ministry and Bangladesh Telecommunication Regulatory Commission (BTRC) to keep it updated about future developments.

According to the draft, OTT is a type of media service that broadcasts entertainment programmes, drama, movie, documentary, sports, infotainment, advertisement and video on demand or telecast permitted contents of television channels live through internet or equivalent technology in Bangladesh.

It further said no news and talk-shows, except for the

contents defined in the draft, can be run on the OTT platforms in any manner.

It has also banned all contents that go against the spirit of the Liberation War, the country's culture and social values; damage communal harmony; create threats to state discipline and its unitary form; and contradict the existing laws.

Complying with an earlier HC directive, Deputy Attorney General Tushar Kanti Roy placed the draft, “Over-The-Top (OTT) Content Based Service Providing and Conduct Regulation-2021”, before the HC.

The BTRC also submitted a draft on “the Regulation for Digital and Social Media Platforms, 2021” through its lawyer Khandaker Reza-E-Raquib to the HC during the hearing on a writ petition filed over the issue.

Talking to The Daily Star, writ petitioner and Supreme Court lawyer Md Tanvir Ahmed said the information ministry drafted the OTT regulations prohibiting the publication and broadcast of

news or talk-shows, except for the contents defined in the draft, on digital platforms, which may be passed as a law by parliament.

“I am not competent enough to say whether the regulations may hamper the freedom of press and expression,” he said.

DAG Tushar Kanti Roy declined to comment on the regulations, saying he was yet to go through the draft.

In July 2020, Tanvir submitted to the HC the writ petition as a public interest litigation saying several OTT platforms contain questionable and obscene contents and films from Bangladesh and India. Those contents cause moral degradation of people, particularly the juvenile and the youths.

The ministry's draft said the national anthem, the national flag, the state principles and the spirit of the Liberation War cannot be insulted by any content intentionally or out of prejudice.

The OTT platforms cannot

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## INVOLVEMENT IN CRIME

## Opposition MPs blast law enforcers

STAFF CORRESPONDENT


Opposition lawmakers from the BNP, Jatiya Party and Gonoforum yesterday blasted the law enforcement agencies for their “involvement in various offences”, including enforced disappearances and extrajudicial killings.

The MPs criticised the agencies in parliament while placing their cut motions over an additional allocation of Tk 178 crore for the Public Security Division of the home ministry in the supplementary budget for 2021-22 fiscal year.

Participating in the discussion, BNP lawmaker Harunur Rashid said there are allegations against police over extrajudicial killings, enforced disappearances and human rights violations. “These allegations are not untrue.”

He said the institution named Election Commission should be abolished. “Hand it [its responsibilities] over to the police. What is its necessity? There is no need for the Election

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**PADMA BRIDGE**  
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Standstill traffic on both sides of the Kazi Nazrul Islam Avenue at Farmgate yesterday. Traffic has become horrendous in the capital. The prime minister yesterday asked officials concerned to take effective steps to ease congestion.

PHOTO: SK ENAMUL HAQ

## Illegal migrant crossings to EU up 82pc

Says Frontex

AFP, Warsaw

Illegal migrant crossings into the European Union rose by 82 percent between January and May compared to the same period in 2021, the European border agency said yesterday.

Frontex said there were 86,420 irregular crossings into the 27-nation bloc in the first five months of the year, according to its initial calculations.

In May alone, 23,500 irregular migrants made the journey, a rise of 75 percent on the previous May, it said.

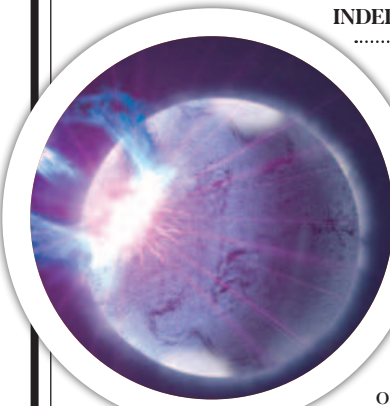
Ukrainians entering the EU via recognised border crossing points were not included in the data.

Five and a half million Ukrainians have reached the EU directly from

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## Stars experience ‘quakes’ like on Earth

INDEPENDENT.CO.UK



Stars experience quakes like we have on Earth, scientists have discovered, after data revealed new information on nearly two billion stars in the Milky Way.

These “starquakes” – known as non-radial oscillations – are tsunami-like movements on stars’ crusts which cause

the shape of the star to change with their force. This was an unexpected discovery from the latest data release from the Gaia space observatory, which is located about 1.5 million kilometres from Earth and carries two telescopes to document the galaxy, as it was only designed to pick up radial oscillations which cause stars to change their size.

The data which has been collected forms

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