



Mask mandate back again

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

As Covid-19 cases are rising steeply in the country, the Cabinet Division yesterday instructed all officials concerned to enforce the “no mask, no service” policy everywhere and ensure that everyone follows health safety rules.

“Otherwise, people have to face a penalty,” read a circular, signed by Khorshed Alam Khan, deputy secretary at the Cabinet Division. In reference to the recommendations made by the National Technical Advisory Committee (NTAC) on Covid-19, the circular said, “... the Covid-19 infection rate has been increasing at a faster rate and it is observed that there has been a reluctance among people in wearing masks and maintaining health safety rules.”

On June 14, the NTAC in a meeting placed a set of recommendations before the government, including enforcing the “no mask, no service” policy everywhere, ensuring social distancing in all religious places, encouraging people with symptoms to have Covid-19 tests and undertaking media campaign to create awareness among people.

The NTAC also recommended strengthening the screening for the incoming passengers at all airports.

To enforce the NTAC recommendations and prevent Covid-19 infections, the Cabinet Division instructed all senior secretaries, secretaries, principal staff officer of the armed forces division, and all divisional directors to take necessary measures.

Meanwhile, the religious affairs ministry yesterday issued a set of instructions, including keeping soap or hand sanitisers at the entrance to mosques and people maintaining social distancing and health guidelines while offering prayers.

SEE PAGE 6 COL 1



Thousands of homes in Sylhet's Fenchuganj upazila remain inundated amid fears of further deterioration of the flood situation. One family is seen travelling on a raft made out of banana trees.

PHOTO: SHEIKH NASIR

SEE PAGE 6 COL 1

Floodwaters rise after heavy rains upstream

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Sylhet

Water levels rose in some low-lying areas of Sylhet and Sunamganj due to heavy rain in the country's northeastern region and water flowing in from the upstream of India's Meghalaya yesterday.

Stranded in floods for nearly two weeks, locals fear that the water may now take longer to recede.

Sylhet's Companiganj and Gowainghat upazilas, along with Sunamganj's Chhatak and Dowarabazar are the worst-affected.

“The water started to recede slowly four days ago. If the rain continues, we worry the town would be flooded again by tomorrow [today] morning,” said Mahub Alam, a resident of Chhatak municipality area.

Anwar Haque, a victim on the banks of Khasiamara river in Dowarabazar, said, “Floodwaters in all nearby villages had just begun receding. Within a week, water coming from the upstream is making them rise again.”

Jahurul Islam, executive engineer of Water Development Board in Sunamganj, said, “As it has been raining heavily, water from India has caused the floodwater level in our country to slightly go up. However, the rate at which it is rising is not alarming.”

The Water Development Board said the rain was seasonal and might continue for days.

Within 24 hours till 9:00am yesterday, 170mm rainfall was recorded in Chhatak, while 110 mm was recorded in Sunamganj's Tahirpur upazila, according to the Flood Forecasting and Warning Centre (FFWC).

Five rivers across the country were flowing above

SEE PAGE 2 COL 5

FLOODS IN NORTHEAST

Private relief efforts outpace govt's

ZYMA ISLAM and DWOHA CHOWDHURY

Around 3:00am last Wednesday, one family was seen hard at work making 400 bags of relief to be taken for distribution the next morning.

The medicine supplies had only arrived a few hours ago, collected by an organisation called Perceive.

Under the light of a single bulb, eight-year-old Sristi put two packets of orsaline and two strips of water purification tablets in each bag, while her father cut out cord ties, and her mother tied the sacks and set them aside.

Hours later, their relief boats would be the first to reach some of the most remote villages in Gowainghat and Jaintiapur.

According to data, the relief for flood victims provided through crowdfunds and the development sector heavily outweighs that given by the government.

More than seven million

people are in “desperate need” of shelter and aid, the Red Cross said in a statement yesterday.

Government allocation data from June 27, 2022, shows that it had spent Tk 7.11 crores in cash and given out 5,820 tonnes of rice (worth about Tk 23 crore) across 14 districts from April 1.

Of those, Tk 4.67 crore (half

According to data, the relief for flood victims provided through crowdfunds and the development sector heavily outweighs that given by the government.

million USD) and 3,720 tonnes of rice were mobilised during the June floods, according to a report published by Needs Assessment Working Group (NAWG) on June 26.

This means each affected person got only Tk 6.6 and less than half a kilogram of rice from

the government two weeks into the floods.

According to the disaster management and relief ministry's own data, no cash support was given to the whole of Sylhet and Moulvibazar yesterday.

Data also shows that Sylhet district received the least amount of food support – 55 tonnes of rice – yesterday.

The NAWG report said that humanitarian agencies have mobilised 4.7 million dollars, while Brac has allocated Tk 17 crore so far.

This is in addition to the crowdfunded relief distribution efforts that have been going on in full swing without getting counted, with each fund ranging from Tk five lakh to Tk 50 lakh.

A website called reliefmanagement.me, which is trying to track crowdfunded relief efforts, has so far counted 73 donors across Sylhet and Sunamganj.

However, the website relies

SEE PAGE 6 COL 5

Form commission within 30 days, identify them

HC orders govt about those behind ‘false graft allegations’ over Padma Bridge project

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The High Court yesterday ordered the government to form a commission in 30 days in order to identify those who made up stories about corruption involving the Padma Bridge project.

The authorities concerned have been directed to submit a report to the court in two months after receiving its order.

The HC bench of Justice Md Nazrul Islam Talukder and Justice Kazi Md Ejarul Haque Akondo also set August 28 for passing further orders on this issue.

The bench issued the directives after hearing arguments on a suo motu (voluntary) rule over formation of an enquiry commission to identify those who made up stories about corruption involving the Padma Bridge project.

During the hearing on the rule on Monday, the HC bench observed that those who opposed the Padma Bridge construction were enemies of the country and the nation, and they must be identified.

On February 15, 2017, another HC bench issued the suo motu rule asking the government to explain in two weeks why it should not be

SEE PAGE 6 COL 1



For many, it may appear unusual that a truck is rolling down a railway line carrying construction materials but conversions of such vehicles for building railway lines are quite common in the sector. The vehicle in question belongs to an Indian contractor building the Tongi-Joydevpur rail line in Gazipur.

PHOTO: ANISUR RAHMAN

Cops arrest 3, sue 170 over humiliation of teacher

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Bagerhat

Police filed a case accusing 170 to 180 people on charges of forcing acting principal of Mirzapur United College to wear a garland of shoes around his neck, setting a motorcycle on fire, and barring government work in the area.

Sub-inspector Sheikh Morshalin, in charge of Mirzapur Police Outpost, filed the case with Narail Sadar Police Station on Monday afternoon.

Three people have been arrested in this connection, said Mohammad Shawkat Kabir, officer-in-charge of Narail Sadar Police Station.

Shaon, 28, a phone technician from Mirzapur Bazar, Rimon, 22, and

SEE PAGE 2 COL 4

Nasa's CAPSTONE mission launches to the moon

AFP, Wellington

Nasa blasted a nanosatellite barely bigger than a microwave oven into outer space yesterday, part of a landmark mission to return humans to the Moon.

A rocket carrying the tiny CAPSTONE module successfully launched from New Zealand's eastern Mahia Peninsula to a deafening blast and a wash of fiery propulsion.

“We have liftoff!” Nasa said in a statement shortly after the 09:55 GMT launch, described by Bradley Smith, Nasa's director of launch services,

as “absolutely fantastic.”

“This incredible team has just sent CAPSTONE on a ballistic trajectory to the lunar orbit,” he said.

All being well, in four months CAPSTONE will be in a position to begin innovative surfboard-shaped “near rectilinear halo orbits” around the Moon.

