



With the Padma Bridge open to the public, the usually noisy and packed Mawa ferry terminal in Munshiganj now wears a desolate look. As most people are opting to use the bridge for commute, ferries are not being used as often as they used to be. Over the past two days, no ferries left the terminal due to a lack of vehicles to carry. The photo was taken yesterday.

PHOTO: AMRAN HOSSAIN

Daily cases on the rise

2,241 infected with Covid

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

As the country logged 2,241 new Covid cases yesterday, the highest daily infections in more than four months, Health Minister Zahid Maleque said he was worried but not panicked by the upward trend of infections.

"The number of Covid patients in hospitals is not high. But arrangements for full-fledged treatment are there if the number of patients goes up," he said.

The minister was addressing the Annual Performance Agreement signing ceremony at his ministry at the secretariat.

On February 18, the Directorate General of Health Services (DGHS) reported 2,584 Covid cases.

No Covid patient died in the country in 24 hours preceding 8:00am yesterday. The daily positivity rate was 15.23 percent against 14,712 tests done countrywide, according to a DGHS press release.

A total of 152 Covid patients recovered during the 24-hour period.

With the latest count, the total number of confirmed cases in the country rose to 19,71,602.

The mortality rate remained unchanged at 1.48 percent. The recovery rate declined to 96.73 percent from Tuesday's 96.84 percent.

On Tuesday, the country recorded 2,087 cases with three deaths from Covid.

In May, Bangladesh reported only four Covid-linked deaths and 816 new cases, according to the DGHS.

The country reported its first zero Covid death in a single day on November 20 last year since the pandemic broke out here in March 2020.

FALLOUT FROM FLOODS

After rice, vegetables slipping out of reach

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

City dwellers are suffering as vegetable prices at kitchen markets across the capital have doubled in the fallout from the worst flood in the country since 2004.

According to the agriculture ministry, around 2,54,251 hectares of croplands have so far been damaged.

The floods came at a time when the Boro rice had already been harvested and farmers had planted vegetables.

This hike in vegetable prices comes as a double blow to consumers while the food inflation is at its highest in the last eight years, according to the Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics.

This means that prices that were already at their highest have gone higher.

Our correspondents visited the kitchen markets of Shewrapara, Kazipara, Senpara and the wholesale markets of Karwan Bazar, and found that green chilli was being sold at Tk 120, two times the price last week.

Similarly, the prices of leafy greens have also doubled.

Palong shaak (a spinach variant) now costs Tk 25 – double of what it used to. Prices of other spinach

variants, like laal shaak (red spinach), have also gone up by 50 percent.

A whole 20 taka increase per kilogram was stamped upon the price tags of summer vegetables like bitter melons, long beans, eggplants, okras and luffas.

Potatoes are fondly called the "poor man's vegetable" because of their affordability.

In middle-class kitchens, it is a practice as old as time to add potatoes in dishes to bulk up the meal without compromising on affordability.

The price of this poor man's vegetable has also increased from Tk 25 to Tk 35-40.

With the import of onions being at a stalemate for the last two and a half months, locally produced onions were already being sold at Tk 36 wholesale and Tk 45 at retail.

At the retail end, this has gone up by Tk 15 in just one week.

In May, food inflation had rocketed to 8.3 percent – an increase of more than two percentage points from April's 6.23, and also the highest since May 2014.

This was led by increased prices of wheat, pulses, fish, beef, and cooking oil prices.

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Woman dies as neighbours set her on fire

Her son ran away with a girl next door

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Mymensingh

A woman was burned to death allegedly by her neighbours after her son eloped with their daughter.

Laily Akhter, 38, of Mymensingh city's Char Ishwardia area, breathed her last in the capital's Sheikh Hasina National Burn and Plastic Surgery Institute on Tuesday.

Laily's husband Abdur Rashid filed a murder case with Kotwali Model Police Station accusing nine people, said Mohammad Shah Kamal Akanda, officer-in-charge of Kotwali Model Police Station.

Police arrested two persons in connection with the case, he added.

According to the police official, Sirajul Islam, 20, son of the victim, and Khuki, 18, daughter of Kajol Khoka, sought their families' permission for marriage.

When the families refused to accept their relationship, the duo fled home on June 26.

"Around 9:00am on Tuesday, the girl's mother Aysha Akter Kona, 38, and her two sisters-in-law – Nasreen Akter, 36, and Asma Akter, 38, – went to the Sirajul's house and got involved in an argument with Laily," said the OC, quoting the case statement.

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Giant fossil of ancient kangaroo species found

INDEPENDENT.CO.UK

A giant fossil of the ancestor of modern-day Australian kangaroos that went extinct around 42,000 years ago has been discovered by paleontologists in a finding that sheds more light on the evolution of the marsupials.

The new genus of the giant fossil kangaroo was found from the mountains of central Papua New Guinea.

The last species in the genus was a cousin of modern-day eastern grey and red kangaroos in Australia, said researchers, including those from Flinders University.

But rather than being closely related to its modern-day Australian descendants, it belonged to a unique genus of more primitive kangaroos that were found only in Papua New Guinea, said the findings described in the journal Transactions of the Royal Society of South Australia.

Scientists have renamed the animal Nombie nombie, after Nombie Rockshelter, an archaeological and palaeontological site in Papua New Guinea's Chimbu Province, where the fossil

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NILPHAMARI RAPE

HC stays acquittal by tribunal for 6 months

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The High Court yesterday stayed for six months a Nilphamari tribunal's order that acquitted an accused in a rape case filed by a 15-year-old victim.

It also directed the accused, Md Akhtaruzzaman, a member of Boarder Guard Bangladesh, to surrender before the Women and Children Repression Prevention Tribunal in Nilphamari within four weeks.

The bench of Justice Jahangir Hossain Selim and Justice Shahed Nuruddin passed the order after hearing an appeal in this regard.

On June 26, Buddrun Nahar, a panel lawyer of the Supreme Court Legal Aid Committee (SCLAC), on behalf of the victim, moved the appeal before the HC, seeking scrapping of the tribunal order.

It said the evidence from the medical report proves the rape and therefore, the accused cannot be acquitted and tribunal

order must be scrapped.

Deputy Attorney General Sarwar Hossain Bappi represented the state during the hearing.

On June 15, the teenage victim, along with her mother, directly appeared before the HC bench and sought justice, leaving the judges and lawyers present in the courtroom taken aback.

"Sir, I have been raped. We are very poor. We have no money for moving the case. I want justice from you," were her words.

When Justice Jahangir Hossain Selim, the presiding judge, asked her about the incident, she said she was raped by a BGB man and she came to seek justice with her mother. She was able to place all the necessary documents before the judges.

When the bench asked if any panel lawyer from the SCLAC was present in the courtroom to represent the 15-year-old, Buddrun Nahar stepped up to provide her with the legal assistance.



A cow being weighed on a scale at an agro-farm in Rupshi area of Narayanganj's Rupganj upazila yesterday. Farmers across the country are now busy readying and weighing their cattle to fix their prices for the upcoming Eid-ul-Azha.

PHOTO: ANISUR RAHMAN