



## Covid positivity rate falls slightly

1,790 more infected

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The health directorate yesterday reported 1,790 cases of Covid-19, up from 1,728 the previous day.

In the past 24 hours till 8:00am yesterday, three Covid-19 patients died, according to a press release of the Directorate General of Health Services.

The positivity rate, however, declined to 16.54 percent yesterday from 16.89 percent the previous day.

In those 24 hours, a total of 678 Covid-19 patients recovered from their illness. The overall recovery rate was 96.17 percent.

With the latest count, the total number of confirmed cases of Covid-19 rose to 1,986,490 and the total number of fatalities to 29,188.

Of yesterday's dead, one was male and two females.

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Pilgrims arrive in Mina near the Saudi holy city of Makkah during the annual hajj pilgrimage yesterday. Worshippers will ascend Mount Arafat today for the climax of the annual hajj which brings together one million people from around the world.

PHOTO: AFP

## NARAIL TEACHER'S ASSAULT Governing body, teacher asked to show cause Student expelled

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The National University yesterday expelled a student and served separate show-cause notices on a teacher and the governing body of a college over the attack and humiliation of a teacher in Narail.

The decisions were made by the university syndicate during a meeting on Wednesday night, said a university statement yesterday.

Locals in presence of police forced acting principal of Mirzapur United College Swapan Kumar Biswas to wear a garland of shoes around his neck on June 18.

There was widespread criticism after a video of the incident went viral.

According to the university's decision, Rahmatullah, a fourth year honours student of Islamic history and culture department of Government Brajalal College, Khulna, was expelled for his involvement in the incident.

Police arrested Rahmatullah, 22, from Boyra area of Khulna on June 29.

Akhter Hossain, a teacher of political science department at the Mirzapur United College, was asked by the university to show the reason for his "negative" role during the incident.

The university also asked the governing body of United College why it had "an indifferent

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### COVID-INDUCED CLOSURE

## Students suffer heavy learning losses

MOHIUDDIN ALAMGIR

The pandemic-induced school closures took a heavy toll on education as 80 percent of class-8 students suffered learning losses in the subject of Bangla.

About 76 percent students in the same class had suffered losses in English and 69 percent in Mathematics, shows a government study by Bangladesh Examination Development Unit (BEDU) under Dhaka education board.

The study was done to assess learning losses caused by the closure of in-person classes in 2020 and 2021.

In-person classes in schools resumed in full swing in mid-March this year after over 720 days of closure in two phases between March 17, 2020 and March 2022. Closure of educational institutions to curb coronavirus spread in Bangladesh was among the longest in the world.

"Officials have submitted the report to the education ministry last week," said Tapan Kumar Sarkar, chairman of Dhaka education board.

BEDU did the assessment after taking online exams of about 14,000 class-8 students of 2021 and based on comments of 6,000 teachers.

BEDU held three online exams on Bangla, English and Mathematics in February.

### LEARNING LOSS

In Bangla, 25 percent students had low levels of learning deficit, 31 percent medium levels and 24 percent high levels.

In English, 20 percent of the students had low levels of learning losses, 38 percent medium levels and 18 percent

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### NORTHEAST FLOOD VICTIMS

## Anything but Eid on their minds

STAR REPORT

For people in the northeast, who are struggling through the worst flood in decades, the upcoming Eid-ul-Azha is barely bring them any joy.

While some people have been stuck in floodwaters for at least three weeks, others have become homeless or landless.

Many have also lost their cattle, most of which either drowned or fell sick due to a fodder crisis.

Farmers of many areas have been starving as their crops have been damaged by the water.

Meanwhile, many flood-hit victims claimed they did not get sufficient relief from the government or even private organisations.

The recent flashfloods hit the country's north-eastern region in the second week of June. Northern areas and other districts were also gradually affected.

While water started receding in some districts, many areas remain waterlogged. In many others, river erosion has wreaked

further havoc.

"Our land, house, furniture -- everything has been swallowed by the Jamuna. We don't have a place to live in or any food to eat. How are we supposed to celebrate Eid?" Jahura Begum, a resident of Chituliapara village in Tangail's Bhuapur upazila, told The Daily Star.

"We did not get any relief assistance. Local representatives visited our area on boats but didn't bring anything anything for us," said Insan Ali, another victim of erosion in the same village.

Sadek Ali, of Moulvibazar's Kulaura upazila, said, "My crops are damaged. Of the two cows that I have been rearing for the upcoming Eid, one has drowned and the other has been starving due to the fodder crisis. Celebrating Eid is the last thing on my mind this year."

Sadek's residence has been submerged for over three weeks.

Rehana Begum, an SSC candidate and resident of Sadekpur village in the upazila, moved to a local shelter with her family after their home was

inundated on June 17.

"All my textbooks and papers have been washed away. We have been passing our days in misery. Forget celebrating, we don't even know if we can go back home for Eid."

Rahmat Ullah, 70, from Sylhet's Fenchuganj upazila, said that while floodwaters in the area have been receding, it has been slow. "We don't know when we will get our regular lives back. Eid is not bringing us any joy."

Kawsar Ahmed, of Sunamganj's Chhatak upazila, said, "We are need of relief. Preparing for Eid celebrations is out of the question."

Shahabul Islam, a flood victim in Kurigram Sadar upazila, used to support his family by fishing. The flood, however, completely damaged his fishing boat.

"I could not buy anything for my children ahead of the festival. How could I, knowing that we might not even be able to eat?"

### TWO MORE DEATHS

Two more people have died by drowning in Moulvibazar, in last 24 hours till yesterday

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### SPACE JUNK REMOVAL

## China carries out successful test of giant sail

MAIL ONLINE

In space no one can keep it clean, with the total mass of all objects in orbit said to equate to around 9,900 tonnes.



To combat this, Chinese scientists have developed a huge sail, which they say can be used to change the orbit of dead rockets and satellites so they burn up in Earth's atmosphere and don't become space junk.

The 269-square-foot "de-orbiting sail" works by slowly decelerating its defunct payload until it is moved out of orbit.

The debris will then burn up within the Earth's atmosphere within a few years -- a process that could otherwise take over a hundred years.

The sail has been developed and successfully tested by Institute 805 of the Shanghai Academy of Spacecraft Technology (SAST) in China, according to English-language Chinese newspaper Global Times.

The news comes after the British Government announced last month that it wants to start tackling the millions of bits of debris in Earth's orbit.

This includes regulating commercial satellite launches, rewarding companies that minimise

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### 'PILOT ERROR' IN DOHA FLIGHT

## Biman's delay in probe may cost it dearly

RASHIDUL HASAN

Biman may face serious consequences for neglecting Qatar Civil Aviation Authority's request for a probe into a close call between a Biman and a Qatar aircraft at Doha airport in January.

Aircraft of Biman and Qatar Airways narrowly escaped a mid-air collision after the Biman pilot deviated from his flight path during simultaneous take-off of the planes from two runways, a top Biman official told The Daily Star.

The planes came within a nautical mile of each other at the Doha International Airport.

A source told this correspondent that

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the two aircraft came so close to each other that the Traffic Collision Avoidance System (TCAS), which both the planes were equipped with, was triggered in the Qatar aircraft cockpit.

A top Biman official, wishing anonymity, said the most disturbing matter was that the Biman pilot and the first officer deliberately suppressed the incident. They did not mention the incident anywhere in Doha and Dhaka.

"They were supposed to log the incident ... this is sheer negligence in carrying out their duties," he added.

After the incident, QCAA informed Biman's top officials of the matter and

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PHOTO: MOSABBER HOSSAIN RIBON

**THE QUINTESSENTIAL 'BIRDIE' ...** The Coppersmith Barbet is a small bird known for its unique call that sounds similar to a coppersmith striking metal with a hammer. Popular for its size and "cuteness", the bird is commonly found in the Indian subcontinent and parts of Southeast Asia. It carves out holes inside a tree to build its nest. It is known to feed on insects, especially winged termites. The photo was taken at the Natore Sadar Government Girls' School.



## BCL leader stabbed to death

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Noakhali

A leader of Bangladesh Chhatra League was stabbed to death allegedly by his rivals in the party in Noakhali's Begumganj upazila yesterday.



Hasibul

Hasibul Bashar, 25, member of the upazila unit BCL's executive committee, was murdered over establishing supremacy in the area, said locals.

Police arrested a man in connection with the incident, said Mir Jahedul Haque Rony, officer-in-charge of Begumganj Model Police Station.

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