



Bangladeshi student dies after Kolkata road accident

OUR CORRESPONDENT, New Delhi

A Bangladeshi student passed away on Tuesday, two days after she was injured in a road accident in Kolkata.



The student – Shazmila Jishman Moon, 22, hailing from Chattogram – breathed her last around 10:20pm local time at the SSKM hospital, after a special team of doctors failed to save her, police said. She was in Kolkata on her way to New Delhi with her mother Shirin Ara Chowdhury, 55, a professor at Chattogram University, for the latter's cancer treatment at the All India Institute of Medical Sciences.

Shazmila and Shirin were hit by a bus while they were crossing a road near the Birla Planetarium.

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People headed to India through Benapole are having to wait in line for almost 17-18 hours for immigration. The delay is mainly due to the land port's struggle to cope with a huge rush of travellers after two years of pandemic restrictions. The situation has been the same since a week before Eid-ul-Azha. Many are going for treatment purposes, and the long wait under an open sky can worsen their health. The photo was taken yesterday.

PHOTO: COLLECTED

Covid positivity rate goes up slightly

UNB, Dhaka

Bangladesh logged five more Covid-linked deaths and 1,027 new cases in 24 hours till yesterday morning amid a rise in infections.

The new numbers took the country's total fatalities to 29,217 and the caseload to 1,992,058, according to the Directorate General of Health Services (DGHS).

The daily case positivity rate increased to 13.79 percent from Tuesday's 13.78 percent as 7,523 samples were tested during the 24-hour period.

Four of the deceased were men while the other was a woman.

The mortality rate remained unchanged at 1.47 percent. The recovery rate rose to 96.25 percent as 1,559 Covid patients recovered during the period.

In June, the country reported 18 Covid-related deaths and 20,201 new cases, according to DGHS data.

Bangladesh reported its first zero Covid death on November 20 last year since the pandemic broke out here in March 2020.

The country registered its highest daily caseload of 16,230 on July 28 last year and the highest daily fatalities of 264 on August 10 in the same year.

Red tape stalls vaccine plant work

MOUDUD AHMED SUJAN and RASHIDUL HASAN

The vaccine manufacturing and research plant project in Gopalganj saw no progress over one year due to red tape.

So far, only a few meetings have been held and a delegation visited the site, raising concerns that the plant – one of the top priority projects of the country – may not see the light of day anytime soon.

The parliamentary committee on the health ministry in a meeting recently even asked the officials concerned to get a move on.

"Due to the government's complex official procedures, the project has seen almost no progress and I don't think the construction of the vaccine plant will start in one year," an Awami League MP, also a member of the parliamentary watchdog, told The Daily Star.

The MP said, "The to-do list they have placed will require a year to complete; then they will float the tender for the main project."

"But we [committee] have issued instruction to complete all the work within the next six months."

The lawmaker opined that the implementation of the project could have been faster if the government took the matter seriously.

In July last year, the government moved to set up a fully-fledged vaccine plant and research institute following the Covid-19 vaccine supply debacle earlier that year.

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina had also announced that her government was going to set up the institute as soon as possible.

But in reality, the development project proposal (DPP), the primary and crucial part of this project, has not been done even in a year.

In April, officials said they had submitted a pre-DPP to the health ministry, based on which they have been going ahead with other related work, including training people and sending them abroad for skill development.

Now officials are looking for an international consultancy firm to formulate the DPP, as per the requirement of the financier, Asian Development Bank (ADB), according to the officials.

The parliamentary standing committee during its meeting on April 3 had asked this issue to be solved as quickly as possible but the officials reported no progress made during the next meeting on May 22.

The institute, the first of its kind here, would have three components – a vaccine institute, a vaccine packaging plant, and a research and development site.

The government-owned Essential

Drugs Company Ltd (EDCL), which was given the responsibility to implement the project, was to acquire 6.85 acres near its factory in Gopalganj.

In reality, no progress could be made in this regard, apart from a few meetings between officials of the EDCL, ADB, and the finance ministry.

BSMMU Vice-Chancellor Prof Sharfuddin Ahmed attended one of the meetings held on April 3 as a member of the EDCL Board of Directors.

He had asked if the tender could be floated immediately. He also recommended an amendment to the Public Procurement Rules-2008 as the existing law prevents quick project implementation.

Asked why the EDCL could not finalise the DPP in 11 months, Sharfuddin said, "There are many rules to be followed. But we in the next meeting will talk about ways to make the process faster."

Contacted yesterday, the VC told The Daily Star, "There was no meeting since the last meeting of the parliamentary committee. And I know nothing new about any progress made."

Asked, Sheikh Fazlul Karim Selim, president of the parliamentary committee on the health ministry, said, "If we can complete all the [background] tasks by August, we can start the main project."

Rishi Sunak tops first vote to be next UK PM

REUTERS, London



Former finance minister Rishi Sunak won the biggest backing from Conservative lawmakers yesterday in the first vote to choose who will succeed Boris Johnson as party leader and British prime minister, while two more rivals were eliminated. Sunak, whose resignation as

finance minister last week helped precipitate Johnson's fall, secured support from 88 of the party's 358 Members of Parliament (MPs), with junior trade minister Penny Mordaunt second with 67 votes and foreign minister Liz Truss third with 50.

Nadhim Zahawi, who took over as finance minister from Sunak last week, and former foreign minister Jeremy Hunt were knocked out after failing to get the required minimum of 30 votes. They join three other contenders who dropped out the day before.

Those remaining – which also includes former equalities minister Kemi Badenoch, Attorney General Suella Braverman, Tom Tugendhat, chair of parliament's Foreign Affairs Committee – will go through to a second round on Thursday.

Subsequent ballots will be held among the Conservative lawmakers, eliminating the

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Webb Telescope detects water on distant planet

INDEPENDENT.CO.UK



Nasa has revealed that the James Webb Space Telescope has detected signs of water on a planet more than a thousand light years away.

The US space agency said it's multi-billion dollar space telescope "captured the signature of water" on the giant gas planet WASP 96-b, which orbits a star 1,150 light years away.

"For the first time, we've detected evidence of clouds in this exoplanet's atmosphere," Nasa tweeted.

The revelation comes as Nasa, ESA (European Space Agency) and CSA (Canadian Space Agency) share the first set of full-colour images taken by the telescope, which capture the deepest images of the universe ever made.

The ultra high-resolution images also show stellar life cycles and interacting galaxies.

The latest discovery offers hope that the most-powerful space telescope ever built could help in the hunt for alien life, or even uncover potential habitable planets for future humans to live on.

"Exploring exoplanets is now a major component of the mission," a Nasa spokesperson said.

The unveiling of the first set of images from the

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Twitter sues Elon Musk

Accuses him of breaching contract

AFP, San Francisco

Twitter has sued Elon Musk for breaching the \$44 billion contract he signed to buy the tech firm, calling his exit strategy "a model of hypocrisy," court documents showed.



The suit filed in the US state of Delaware on Tuesday urges the court to order the billionaire to complete his deal to buy Twitter, arguing that no financial penalty could repair the damage he has caused.

"Musk's conduct simply confirms that he wants to escape the binding contract he freely signed, and to damage Twitter in the process," the lawsuit contended. "Twitter has suffered and will continue to suffer irreparable harm as a result of Musk's breaches."

The social media company's shares edged up slightly in after-market trading when the news broke.

Legal experts and market analysts see Twitter as having a strong upper hand heading into court, Wedbush analyst Dan Ives said in a note to investors.

"This will be a Game of Thrones battle in court with the fake account/bot issue front and center, but ultimately Twitter's board is holding Musk's feet to the fire to finish the deal at the agreed upon price," Ives said.

"Overall this has been a black eye for Musk and horror movie for Twitter (and its employees) with no winners since the soap opera began in April."

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Battery-run auto-rickshaws haphazardly plying a road near the Padma Bridge toll plaza at the Mawa point yesterday, increasing the risk of accidents. While such three-wheelers are illegal on highways, they are now a common sight there as the authorities are failing to control the situation.

PHOTO: ANISUR RAHMAN

Biman gets new managing director

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The country's national flag carrier, Biman Bangladesh Airlines, got a new managing director and CEO yesterday.

Zahid Hossain, director (additional secretary) of Biman, was made the new boss of the national airliner.

The public administration ministry in a circular yesterday announced the change in the vital post.

The previous holder of the post of MD and CEO of Biman, Dr Abu Saleh Mostafa Kamal, has been made DG of the social welfare department, according to circular.