

Govt to set up two liquid oxygen plants

Says health minister

STAR REPORT

Despite Covid-19 booster doses being readily available for free at vaccination centers, people aren't interested in taking their doses, said Health Minister Zahid Maleque yesterday.

"Although almost 13 crore people received their first and second doses, only three crore have taken booster doses. We're giving away vaccines for free, but there are no takers... This is unfortunate," said the health minister at a day-long surgical skill workshop for intern doctors at Manikganj's Colonel Malek Medical College.

The statement came up five days following the countrywide special inoculation campaign with a target to jab 75 lakh people with the second dose and booster dose.

During the campaign on Tuesday, around 56 lakh people received their booster dose, while around two lakh received their second dose, according to DGHS data.

Different campaigns were arranged to encourage people to take booster, the minister said.

He also informed that the government will set up two liquefied oxygen production plants – one in Manikganj and another

in one of the northern districts, to be self sufficient in meeting the oxygen demand.

"We are going to set up two liquid oxygen plants aiming to take the medical sector a step further," he said.

"During Covid-19 pandemic, medical sector needed huge amounts of oxygen. We had to import oxygen from India due

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ZAHID MALEQUE

to a shortage. At the moment, some 150 to 200 tonnes of oxygen are being produced in Bangladesh," he added.

As the country's hospitals stretched to their limit with the higher number of critically ill Covid-19 patients, the demand for medical oxygen also surpassed the

SEE PAGE 4 COL 8



For months now, Old Dhaka's Islampur road has been dug up by DSCC to install a sewerage line, causing great peril to pedestrians. However, with no progress of the construction work in sight, salespeople of the clothing markets have set up shop on concrete pipes, left on the road -- having no other way of conducting business.

PHOTO: ANISUR RAHMAN



He stood tall during the nation's darkest hours

CRI remembers Tajuddin Ahmed on his 97th birth anniversary

UNB, Dhaka

Paying respect to Bangladesh's first prime minister on his birth anniversary, the Centre for Research and Information (CRI) yesterday said Tajuddin Ahmed would stand tall in the nation's darkest hours.

Tajuddin Ahmed is remembered for his farsighted leadership, it said.

"His belief in politics as a tool for public welfare was demonstrated through numerous examples he set in his lifetime," said the Centre for Research and Information in a Facebook post shared from its verified page.

The CRI also shared a four-minute video on Tajuddin Ahmed.

July 23 marked the 97th birth anniversary of Tajuddin Ahmad, a close associate of Bangabandhu.

He was also the general secretary of Awami League (AL) during the Liberation War in 1971.

Yarn, machines on paper, liquor in reality

Two truckloads of illegally imported liquor seized in Narayanganj

MOHAMMAD SUMAN

Customs and law enforcement agencies seized a huge amount of liquor, imported on the false declaration of being machines and yarn, from inside two container trucks at Narayanganj's Sonargaon upazila in the early hours of yesterday.

Two importers who got the goods released from Chattogram port on Friday night used forged "import permissions", a document Bangladesh Export Processing Zones Authority (Bepza) issues to every company inside export processing zones (EPZs).

Import permissions enable making imports duty free. As per the rules, goods imported wholly for the manufacture of exports are exempt from duty.

However, even if anyone has permission to import liquor, they have to pay a duty of 605.80 percent, said customs officials.

Officials could not determine how much liquor was actually



It is clear that this is a syndicated crime. Such crimes cannot be organised without the involvement of related customs officials.

MOBARA KHANAM
Director general of the Customs Intelligence

seized at the time of filing this report. Law enforcers were making a list of the seized items as of 6:00pm yesterday. Primarily the two truck drivers were arrested, Tanvir Mahmud Pasha, commanding officer of Rapid Action Battalion-11, told The Daily Star.

In import documents, Hashy Tiger Company, located at Cumilla EPZ, stated it was importing 15.7 tonnes of yarn worth \$19,800 from a Chinese company.

Meanwhile, BHK Textile, located at Ishwardi EPZ, stated it was importing 20 tonnes of roving bobbins worth \$20,900 from another Chinese company.

Zafar Ahmed, a clearing and forwarding (C&F) agent, was responsible for unloading the goods from the port on behalf of the importers as per the documents.

Despite repeated attempts, this newspaper could not reach the importers and C&F agent over phone for comments.

Related documents collected by The Daily Star show that both consignments had been assessed by Revenue Officer Nasir Uddin of Chattogram Customs House at 8:34pm on Thursday. He refused to comment on the issue.

The consignments were released from the port on Friday between 6:19pm and 6:25pm.

According to the Bepza server, Hashy Tiger does not have an import permission, while BHK's one expired a year ago, said customs intelligence officials.

"We received information from a source about four and a half hours after the consignments had been released from the port,"

SEE PAGE 4 COL 7

'MISBEHAVING WITH PASSENGERS' Biman grounds 4 cabin crew

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Biman Bangladesh Airlines yesterday grounded four cabin crew for allegedly misbehaving with passengers on board of a Dhaka-bound flight. The crew members will not be able to join duty until the passengers' complaints are resolved, sources at the national flag carrier said.

The incident took place onboard a Biman flight from Kolkata to Dhaka on Thursday. A passenger of the flight said the flight took off from Netaji Subhash Chandra Bose International Airport after 9:00pm for Dhaka.

When some passengers fell sick as the AC was not working inside the aircraft, they asked the cabin crew to give them water. A crew member reportedly said he was not a "servant of passengers and not a machine".

He also allegedly quarreled several times with the passengers.

As soon as they landed in Dhaka, the passengers brought the matter to the attention of Biman authorities.

An airline official brought the crew in front of the baggage belt for a solution. The cabin crew also misbehaved with the passengers at that time. At one stage, the cabin crew left the scene.

Biman authorities formed an investigation committee to investigate the incident.

BNP's anti-state role now clear

Says Quader

BSS, Dhaka

Awami League General Secretary Obaidul Quader yesterday said BNP is clearly showing its anti-state characteristic through its anti-AL activities.

"Desperate, BNP has been continuing its conspiracy to tarnish the country's image abroad," he said in a statement.

He said they expect that BNP would act as a responsible political party and shun working against public interest.

Quader, also road transport and bridges minister, said the main responsibility of a democratic political party is to come forward in any crisis to stand beside the people.

The irony is that BNP hatches conspiracy capitalising on crises.

When BNP's strength in the streets is reducing,

SEE PAGE 4 COL 4



Accept our polls-time govt demand or get ousted

Fakhrul warns AL

UNB, Dhaka

BNP Secretary General Mirza Fakhrul Islam Alamgir yesterday warned that Awami League will be ousted from power through a street movement if it fails to accept their demand for election-time government.


He also said there is no scope for their party to engage in talks with the government on any other issue except the election-time government.

"If the government doesn't take any steps to accept our demands, then the solution will come only through a street movement," he said.

Fakhrul came up with the remarks while speaking at "Meet the Ocab" programme at the

SEE PAGE 4 COL 4





Death toll **5**

Total number of patients **2,081**

319 still undergoing treatment

Number of recovered patients **1,756**

67 more hospitalised yesterday


SOURCE: DGHS

PRAYER TIMING

JULY 24

Fazr	Zohr	Asr	Maghrib	Esha
AZAN 4:15	12:45	5:00	6:54	8:15
JAMAAAT 4:50	1:15	5:15	6:58	8:45

SOURCE: ISLAMIC FOUNDATION





Prepping their fishing hooks with bait, local youths catch fish in the Turag river yesterday. With the water level rising due to the recent rains, the fish population also increased in the river. This photo was taken in the capital's Bosila area.

PHOTO: RASHED SHUMON

'Centralisation of power ominous sign for democracy'

Says Akbar Ali Khan at event marking death anniv of former DU VC Emajuddin Ahmed

DU CORRESPONDENT

Pointing to the present governance system, former finance secretary and adviser to the caretaker government Akbar Ali Khan yesterday said it is necessary to nurture democracy in the country.

"Centralisation of power is an ominous sign for democracy. A country where the people can keep the government under control is a democracy," he said.

Whether or not voting takes place, a country whose government is not under the control of the people cannot arrange a real election. "And from this point of view, we need to nurture democracy in our country," he added.

Akbar Ali Khan made the remarks while addressing a programme marking the second death anniversary of Prof Emajuddin Ahmed, former vice chancellor of Dhaka University, at Jatiya Press Club.

He also said secularism is not possible without democracy, and economic progress is not possible without a democratic governance system.

Reminiscing his memories of Prof Emajuddin, he said the late professor's ethical values were high, and he did not compromise his principles. He was not only a genius teacher but also a great political analyst.

Speaking at the programme, Prof Abdul Latif Masum of Jahangirnagar University

SEE PAGE 4 COL 4

“ Secularism is not possible without democracy, and economic progress is not possible without a democratic governance system. ”

AKBAR ALI KHAN