

Covid-19: We can't let our guard down yet



A CLOSER
LOOK

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Bangladesh might potentially be experiencing a new wave of Covid-19 right now. The previous wave, which saw a rise in the second week of June last year and started losing momentum towards the end of July, was considered the fifth wave. During that period, around 160 people died due to the respiratory disease. Since the last week of August this year, the Covid infection rate has spiked again. As of writing this piece on Monday, the infection rate stands at 13.58 percent, and fatalities are being reported every day.

Now, this development might come as a surprise to many who had felt optimistic about the “end” of Covid, especially after WHO

down or become complacent.

The recent rise in cases – dominated by the Omicron BA.5 and BA.2 subtypes, as revealed by a study by the International Centre for Diarrhoeal Disease Research, Bangladesh (icddr,b), based on genome sequencing of 38 samples collected between July 23 and September 9, as reported by Prothom Alo – can be attributed to our relaxed attitude towards the coronavirus in recent months. With fatalities declining and people getting used to living with the virus, adherence to social distancing protocols has been mostly absent from public life. One would see people hanging out in cramped spaces, or entering lifts



After a brief lull, Covid infections seem to be on the rise again in Bangladesh.

FILE PHOTO: AMRAN HOSSAIN

can cause autism – and conspiracy theories involving the intention of drug-manufacturing companies and countries are some of the issues that are keeping people from taking the Covid vaccine shots, especially in the rural areas. And even if one is willing to take the vaccine, access is not always easily available, especially in remote areas, affecting the overall vaccination coverage.

Another study, titled “Covid-19 vaccination coverage is extremely low among older population in Bangladesh: Findings from a cross-sectional study,” also available on the website of the National Library of Medicine, based on the study of a sample of 1,045 Bangladeshi individuals aged 60 years or above, indicate that older adults have a higher risk of remaining unvaccinated for various reasons, including limited access to vaccines and lack of information.

These issues need to be looked at by the authorities very seriously in order to encourage every single individual to get vaccinated. Behavioural and perception change among the public about Covid vaccines and easy access should be top priorities for the government right now.

The National Technical Advisory Committee on Covid-19 has recently, in the light of the new developments, issued five recommendations for the public, which include wearing masks and maintaining basic hygiene practices, discouraging social gatherings, and getting vaccine jabs. The government could also consider giving a fourth booster dose to the elderly and those working in the frontlines in order to boost their immunity as they fall in the high-risk category.

People should also play their part by adhering to the Covid safety protocols. While the government is organising multiple vaccination drives, it is up to the people to act responsibly and get the jabs, to keep themselves and their loved ones safe. The responsibility falls on all of us. After all, as the saying goes, “No one is safe until everyone is safe.” While it would be nice to see the end of Covid, in reality, we are not there yet.

The recent rise in cases – dominated by the Omicron BA.5 and BA.2 subtypes, as revealed by a study by the International Centre for Diarrhoeal Disease Research, Bangladesh (icddr,b), based on genome sequencing of 38 samples collected between July 23 and September 9, as reported by Prothom Alo – can be attributed to our relaxed attitude towards the coronavirus in recent months.

Director-General Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus said earlier this month that the end of Covid was in sight. “We are not there yet. But the end is in sight,” he said. And although we focused on the second part of that statement due to our innate optimism, perhaps it is the first that should have grabbed our attention and given us a reality check. The truth is, at this point in time, there is no reason for us to let our guard

without a care for wearing masks. Even in restaurants or shops or other service-providing hotspots, where “No mask, no entry” or “No mask, no service” is written in big, bold letters, people hardly bother to keep their masks on. Meetings and public gatherings are taking place in full swing, increasing people’s risks of catching the virus even more. With the election coming up, such gatherings are expected to

only increase in frequency and size, exacerbating the risk of infection further.

Another issue that needs immediate attention is the unwillingness of people to get vaccinated. While the government has done a commendable job of organising mass vaccination campaigns across the country, in phases, including special vaccination programmes for children aged 5-12, people in general are still somewhat reluctant to avail this opportunity to boost their immunity against the virus. According to media reports, around 3.3 million people across Bangladesh are yet to take their first vaccine shot. About 9.4 million people have not opted to take the second dose. While 77 percent of the country’s population have taken the first dose of Covid vaccine and 71 percent have taken the second dose, a meagre 26 percent have taken the third dose, so far. This figure paints a grim picture and defeats the overarching purpose of the



national immunisation programme of eliminating the virus through reinforced immunity.

Unfortunately, even after full immunisation (comprising the three standard doses), the risk of the sneaky Omicron subvariants dodging the immune system and infecting people remains, though the intensity of such virus attacks are not always severe.

To address this risk, the government should consider including the US FDA-authorised bivalent vaccines as an “updated booster” dose in the national immunisation plan. According to the FDA, the bivalent vaccines contain two messenger RNA (mRNA) components of Sars-CoV-2 virus: one of the original strain of the virus and the other one common between the BA.4 and BA.5 lineages of the Omicron variant. It is expected that this booster will help in significantly curbing the risk of being infected with the Omicron subvariants. A study by *The New England Journal of Medicine* assessing the efficacy and safety of

the bivalent vaccines suggests that it provides better immunogenicity and safety.

While securing bivalent vaccines would be tough, given the demand, the bigger challenge perhaps is getting people to get vaccinated in the first place. Along with the immunisation drives, the government should run awareness campaigns to promote behavioural change and encourage people to take Covid jabs. And the target groups should be those who have not availed the booster shots, and also those who have remained outside the purview of the immunisation programme. A study titled “Covid-19 vaccine hesitancy among the adult population in Bangladesh: A nationwide cross-sectional survey,” available on the website of the National Library of Medicine in the US, suggests that the country faces vaccine hesitancy among the population at a rate of 46.2 percent. Trust in the efficacy of the vaccines, concerns about its side effects – including the notion that it



Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh
Prime Minister's Office
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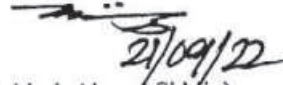
Ref. No. 03.06.0158.333.18.153.17-549(1)Date 21-09-2022

Auction Notice (2nd Time)

Scaled auctions are hereby invited from the interested National/Foreign Buyers/companies in order to sell Inventoried & Valuated Machineries, Raw Materials & Other Equipments (as and where basis) of terminated Lighters manufacturing industry named-M/s. Billion Castle (Bangladesh) Industrial Limited [SFB#03 (Ground Floor)] or to operate the enterprise. To participate in the auction the terms & conditions are stated below:


Terms & conditions:

- Interested Persons/Organizations/Existing enterprise of EPZs (Local/Joint Venture/Foreign) or any other interested persons/organizations from outside EPZ can take part in this auction who are interested to purchase the Machineries, Raw Materials & Other Equipments “as and where basis” of the company by observing the existing rules and regulations in this regard.
- Successful bidder will have to pay VAT, TAX and other payable fees as per custom rules for the duty free imported Assets of existing Assets of industry to be taken out to the Domestic Tariff Area (DTA).
- Auction documents attached with a single pay order/bank draft/FDD from any schedule bank of an amount of 15% as earnest money (non-refundable for successful bidder & refundable for unsuccessful bidder) must be submitted in favour of BEPZA. Auction documents without earnest money will be treated as rejected.
- Inventoried Machineries, Raw Materials & Other Equipments under the inventory list may be seen on 20.10.2022 within office hours. Information regarding the visit and the list of Assets may be collected by contacting with the Executive Director, Mongla EPZ directly.
- If the auction is accepted by the Authority, the successful bidder will have to pay the remaining 85% amount of the quoted price along with applicable TAX & VAT within 15 days to BEPZA through pay order/bank draft/FDD. Accordingly, the delivery of Machineries, Raw Materials & other equipments will have to be taken as per Customs & BEPZA rules.
- Auction Schedule may be bought by paying Tk. 5000 (non-refundable) within 24.10.2022 during office hours from the Accounts Department of Mongla EPZ & Dhaka/ Adamjee/ Kumilla/ Chattogram/ Karnafuli/ Uttara/ Ishwardi EPZ and Accounts Department of BEPZA Executive Office, Dhaka.
- Auction schedule may be dropped into the auction box kept at the office of Executive Director, Mongla EPZ on 25.10.2022 from 09.00 am to 12.00 pm and submitted auction documents will be opened in the same date at 12.30 pm at the office of Executive Director, Mongla EPZ in presence of the bidders (if any). Updated copy of VAT, TIN and Trade License shall have to be attached with the auction schedule; but this condition may be relaxed by the Authority in case of fully new 100% foreign owned company interested to invest in the EPZ.
- Persons/Organization/Investors who are interested to operate the closed industry will get priority in auction.
- Successful bidder will have to take permission to operate the industrial unit in the EPZ by following the project sanctioning procedure of BEPZA as per rules.
- The Authority reserves the right to accept any auction or reject any or all of the submitted auctions without showing any reason. The Authority also reserves the right to cancel the Auction and accordingly take next auction if the desired rates are not obtained.



(Mahbub Ahmed Siddiq)
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GD-1803



Bangladesh Bank
Common Services Department-2
(Mechanical Engineering Wing)
Head Office, Dhaka-1000.

Invitation for Tender (Goods & related works) through Web.	
01. Procuring Entity	Common Services Department-2, Bangladesh Bank, Head Office, Dhaka- 1000.
02. Procurement Method	Open Tendering Method (OTM)
03. Invitation ref. No. & Date	CSD-2(MES): 6/1/2022-49 Date: 25/09/2022
04. Source of Funds	Bangladesh Bank's own fund.
05. Name of the work	Supply, Installation, Testing & Commissioning of 14 nos. AC Machine and 08 nos. Geyser for renovation of 2 nd storied old building (A type) at Bangladesh Bank Colony, Sylhet Office, Sylhet.
06. Address of the web for submission e-tender.	From web: www.bangladeshbank.org.bd www.bangladeshbank-bank.org (e-Tender)
07. Last date & time e-tenders through web	11/10/2022 on or before 3:00PM.
08. Last Date & Time and Name & Address of the office for receiving Original tender security and other documents	11/10/2022 on or before 3: 15 PM Director (Engineering-E/M), Common Services Department-2 (7 th floor of 30 th storied Building), Bangladesh Bank, Head office, Dhaka-1000.
09. Name & Address of the office Opening Tender.	Director (Engineering-E/M), Common Services Department-2 (7 th floor of 30 th storied Building), Bangladesh Bank, Head office, Dhaka-1000 on 11/10/2022 at 3.30 PM. (intending tenders or their authorized representatives are allowed to attend the tender opening).
10. Eligibility of the Tenderer	(a) The minimum of years of general experience of the Tenderer in the supply of Goods and related services as Supplier shall be 10 years. (b) Tenderer shall have minimum specific experience as Supplier in supply of Proposed brand Air conditioner machine in any Govt./Semi-Govt./Autonomous organization in single contracts having total value not less than Tk.14.00 Lac successfully completed within the last 05 years (a) Tenderer shall have agency/distributorship of the proposed brand Air conditioner Machine. Scanned Copy of original Distributor/Agencyship certificate shall be enclosed with the offer. (b) The Tenderer shall have to furnish the certificate in this respect from an officer not below the rank of Executive Engineer or equivalent and shall meet all other criteria, terms & conditions as specified in the tender documents without which the tender will not be considered. (c) The minimum amount of liquid asset i.e. working capital or credit line(s) of the Tenderer shall be Tk 14.00 Lac only. In case of credit facilities, Bank shall ensure that the above mentioned credit limits will be given if the said work is awarded to the contractor.
11. Tender Security	Tender Security amounting Taka 40,000/- (Forty Thousand) only will be required in the form of Pay Order/ Bank Draft/ Bank Guarantee in favour of Director (Engineering-E/M), Common Services Department-2, Bangladesh Bank, Head Office, Dhaka
12. Work completion Time	45 days from the date of Award of Contract.
13. Address of Official Inviting Tender	Sudhangshu Kumar Sarker , Director (Engineering-E/M), Common Services Department-2 (7 th floor, 30 th storied Building), Bangladesh Bank, Head office, Dhaka-1000.
14. Contact details of Official Inviting Tender	Phone: 88-02-9530490, Fax: +88-029530321
15. Special Instructions	(i) The Tenderer shall submit the tender through Bangladesh Bank Website (e-Tendering) & shall have a valid e-mail address for participating in e-Tendering. (ii) Original PO/BD/BG as Tender Security has to be send to Director (Engineering-E/M), Common Services Department-2 within stipulated date and time of TDS. (iii) Scanned copy of the tender security shall be submitted with the tender through web. (iv) Tenderer shall submit all documentary evidence (attested or original), failing which the Tender may be considered as non-responsive. (v) Tenderer shall duly fill in the Form PG3-1 (Tender Submission Letter) and Form PG3-2 (Tender Information sheet) as per format given in Tender Document. (vi) PG3-1 form shall be completed and signed by the Authorized Signatory on the Letter-Head Pad and scanned copy of it shall be attached during submitting tender and original will have to send to Director (Engineering-E/M), CSD-2 at scheduled time as per TDS. (vii) Furnishing of any false, misleading documents shall result in rejection of the tender and may lead to action under Rules 127 of PPR 2008. (viii) All sorts of Security and Safety measures shall be carried out by the Contractor during execution of the work. (ix) Bangladesh Bank reserves all right to accept or reject any or all the tender without assigning any reason whatsoever. No claim will be entertained in this regard.

DCP:48/2022-3169
Date : 27-09-2022

ব্যাবিক ও আর্থিক সেবা পেতে হয়রানির শিকার হলে কিংবা
কোনো অভিযোগ থাকলে ১৬২৩৬ নম্বরে ফোন করুন।

(Sudhangshu Kumar Sarker)
Director (Engineering-E/M)
Phone: 02-9530490

GD-1805