

Bangladesh to extend military lockdown over COVID

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?Members of Border Guard Bangladesh (BGB) check commuters at a checkpoint during a countrywide lockdown in Dhaka, Bangladesh, July 1, 2021. © REUTERS/Mohammad Ponir Hossain

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Dhaka, July 6 (RHC)-- Following a spike in COVID cases, Bangladesh has decided to retain its strict stay-at-home orders, enforced by the army, until July 14th. New evidence shows 78% of domestic cases are

the highly transmissible Delta variant.

The Cabinet Division of Bangladesh has prolonged the country's lockdown for just over another week in order to curb coronavirus cases, as infection rates show no sign of abating.

As part of the continuation of lockdown measures, all offices and other places of work will be shut, as well as public transport. Factories, on the other hand, will be allowed to operate, on the condition that special health and safety protocols are followed to stop the virus from spreading.

Bangladesh's government enforced a strict national lockdown from July 1, with its citizens ordered to stay at home unless an emergency warranted breaking the mandate. During the lockdown, police and the army were granted special powers to ensure that these restrictions were being adhered to.

Despite these severe measures, cases have skyrocketed throughout the South Asian country. Since the lockdown came into force last Thursday, over 8,000 coronavirus cases were reported daily in Bangladesh, while on July 3 a slightly lower total of 6,214 cases were reported.

In an attempt to seal out the highly transmissible Delta variant entering the country from neighboring India, Bangladesh closed its shared border for all purposes bar trade. The Institute of Epidemiology, Disease Control and Research (IEDCR) released a statement on Sunday which shows that 78% of infections sampled during the month of June were the Delta variant.

Just over 3.6% of Bangladesh's population has received one coronavirus vaccine, while 2.6% are fully vaccinated. India's temporary vaccine export ban partially contributed to delays in Bangladesh's vaccination campaign.

Since the beginning of the pandemic, Bangladesh has recorded 944,917 confirmed coronavirus cases and 15,065 deaths, according to World Health Organization data.

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