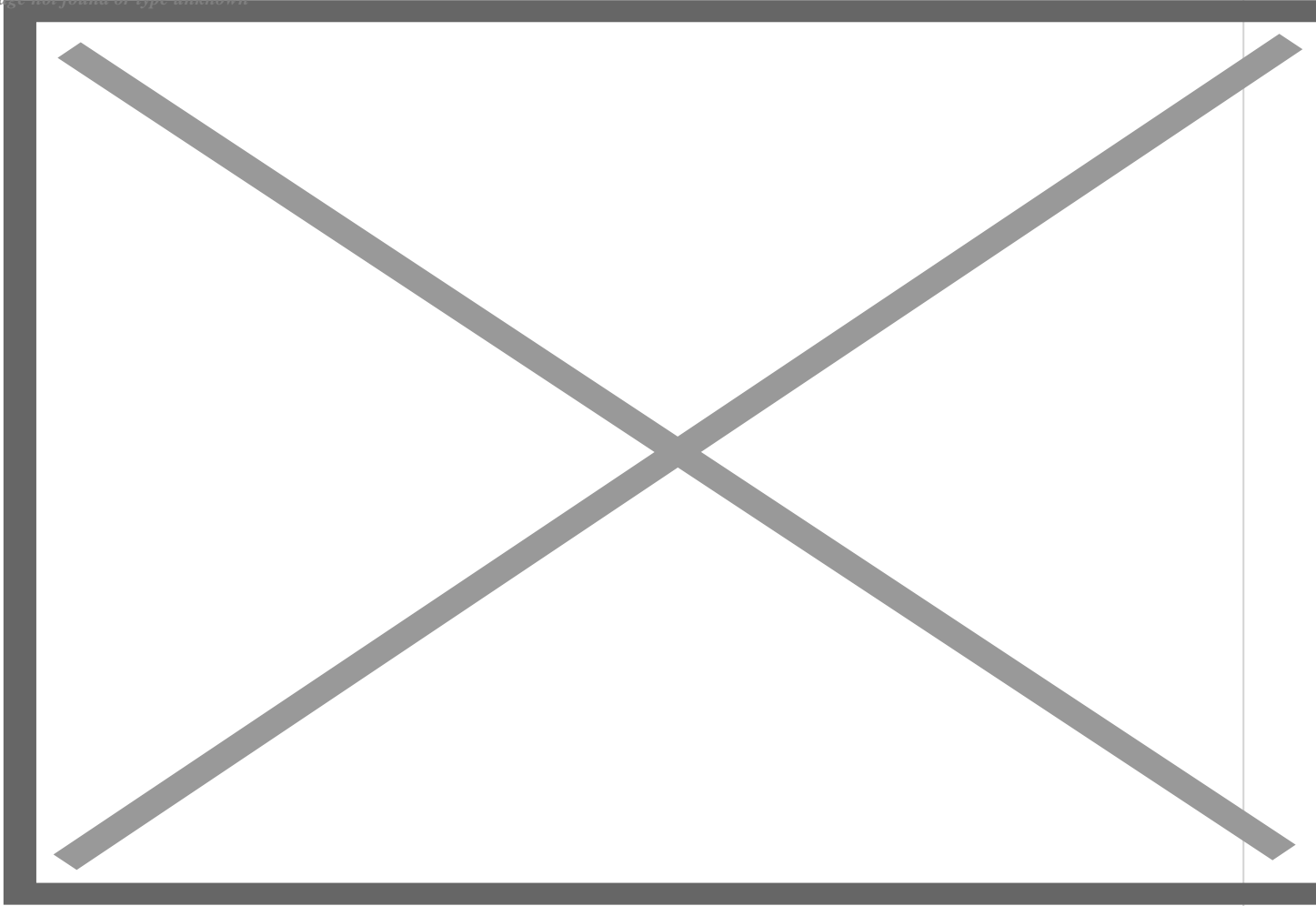


Dozens die of COVID over past five days in Bangladesh

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A patient infected with the coronavirus arrives for treatment at the Dhaka North City Corporation COVID-19 temporary hospital, in Dhaka, Bangladesh [File: Mohammad Ponir Hossain/Reuters]

Dhaka, July 7 (RHC)-- At least 32 people have died of the coronavirus disease in Bangladesh in the first five days of July, data compiled by Al Jazeera shows, as the country reports a sharp rise in infections which experts say is due to a new sub-variant of the virus.

The South Asian nation reported nearly 2,000 new cases and seven of those COVID-related deaths on Tuesday, with the trend showing a positivity rate of 16.74 percent, according to a daily bulletin issued by

the Directorate General of Health Services (DGHS).

Only a month ago, Bangladesh detected just 43 new cases with a daily positivity rate of less than one percent.

Experts fear it could be the arrival of a fourth wave of the coronavirus in Bangladesh, saying a new sub-variant of the deadly Omicron variant is responsible for the spike in cases.

A study conducted by the International Centre for Diarrhoeal Disease Research, Bangladesh (icddr,b) found the sub-variant BA.5 is spreading rapidly in the country. The sub-variants are classified as variants of concern by the European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control (ECDC).

“The recent countrywide upsurge of COVID-19 cases as well as hospitalisation warrants continuation of public health and social measures,” the icddr,b said in a statement.

In six weeks – between May 14 and June 24 – Omicron BA.5 “became the most predominant subvariant,” said the statement. “During this period, 51 out of 52 COVID-19 positive cases were identified as BA.5 subvariants and one BA.2 by using complete genome sequencing,” it added.

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