

# Rangpur, M'singh to begin testing for Covid-19 soon

STAR REPORT

Rangpur Medical College has started installing polymerase chain reaction (PCR) machine, a required component for Covid-19 diagnosis. However, the kits required for testing have not arrived yet.

After everything is set up, individuals residing in eight northern districts of Rangpur division will be able to get tested.

The device, which arrived in Rangpur on Thursday from Institute of Epidemiology, Disease Control and Research (IEDCR), is being installed at the microbiology department of RMC. Public Works Department is overseeing the installation.

RMC Principal Dr Nurunnabi Lyzu said the machine will be ready to work in a couple of days. "We hope to start testing from April 1 or 2," he said.

About test kits, the principal said they are yet to receive them, but kits will be sent from Dhaka within a few days.

Meanwhile, IEDCR members collected samples from six more patients of Rangpur Medical College Hospital yesterday.

Dr Amin Ahmed, health director in Rangpur, said three of the individuals returned from abroad, while others were being tested because they came in contact with them. They are showing Covid-19-like symptoms, but nothing can be definitively

said until test results come back, he said.

A total of 53 people were put in home isolation in the eight districts during the last 24 hours.

Besides, seven people entered the country from India, and nine others were admitted to different hospitals in the last 24 hours, the director said.

Mymensingh Medical College (MMC) has installed their PCR machine on Saturday, said its Principal Prof Chitta Ranjan Debnath.

Necessary work to ready the laboratory for testing is ongoing. Testing will start from Tuesday, the principal hoped.

A team of experts from IEDCR visited the lab and installed the machine, he said.

Necessary test-kits and equipment, including personal protective equipment, were also handed over to MMC authorities, said the principal.

The laboratory, at MMC's microbiology department, will be supervised by IEDCR. Necessary staff, including doctors and technicians, were trained by the institute.

"We'll be able to deliver test reports within two to three hours after getting samples," Prof Chitta said.

The lab will serve residents of the whole division, said Dr Laxmi Narayan Majumder, deputy director of Mymensingh Medical College Hospital.

# Seven-month-old tests coronavirus negative

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Kushtia

A seven-month-old baby, who was put in an isolation ward at Kushtia General Hospital on suspicion of coronavirus infection, tested negative according to a test report by IEDCR.

Kushtia General Hospital received a letter from IEDCR yesterday afternoon reporting the result, Tapas Kumar Sarkar, residential medical officer (RMO) of the hospital confirmed.

The baby, affected by fever, cold, and cough -- all symptoms of Covid-19, was brought to the hospital on March 25.

Initially admitted to the pediatric ward for treatment, the baby's condition deteriorated and by Thursday had to be administered treatment for pneumonia-like symptoms.

The RMO said on-duty doctors and nurses repeatedly asked family members whether any of their relatives had returned to the country recently, but family members denied. On March 26, they finally admitted that the baby's father was an expatriate who returned to Bangladesh from Singapore on March 9 and had been living with the family ever since, the RMO said.

Hearing this, the hospital authority immediately took the baby to an isolation unit and sent nasal and throat swab to IEDCR on the same day.

Following this, everyone other than baby's mother fled hospital premises, including the father.

Kushtia district administration proceeded to lockdown the family's house on the same day.

Now that the baby has tested coronavirus negative, "We are giving the baby treatment as per disease," the RMO said.

# Roushan Begum passes away

CITY DESK

Roushan Begum passed away yesterday morning at her home of old-age complications, says a press release. She was 87.

Roushan Begum was mother of The Daily Star columnist Prof Dr Rubaiul Murshed, also editor of Sasthoshaily and founder chairman of Shomman Foundation.

She was the wife of renowned surgeon Late Prof Dr Nawab Ali Ahmad, who wrote the first book on healthcare in Bangla in 1952. That same year, he also treated language martyr Abul Barakat in Dhaka Medical College Hospital, as a young surgeon.

Roushan Begum was laid to rest yesterday at the Mirpur Martyred Intellectuals' Graveyard, following a namaz-e-janaza.

The bereaved family sought prayers for her eternal salvation.

# Police, public admin

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"This will benefit my family greatly as I have not been able to work in the past few days," said Rajab Ali, a rickshaw puller of the area.

Meanwhile, army and officials of district administration in Bagerhat are conducting awareness campaign through loudspeaker.

In Jashore, police distributed food items and daily essentials among poor people in the district town.

The district's Superintendent of Police Muhammad Ashraf Hossain yesterday visited different slums at Nazir Shankarpur, Ishaq road, Railgate and its adjacent areas in the town and distributed the items among 250 poor families. Each family got 10 kg rice, 5 kg lentil, 2 litre oil and one soap.

In Cox's Bazar, the district's deputy commissioner Md Kamal Hossain has started visiting different streets in the town and distributing food items to destitute and poor people. "Besides, the district administration has already started distributing rice to poor families. Initially, we are giving 20 kg rice to each family," said the DC.

Our correspondents from Sylhet, Bagerhat, Benapole and Cox's Bazar contributed to the story.

# From cooks to crooks

FROM PAGE 3

preparing food for the function," said the police official. After the robbery was done, they used to leave the district quickly.

For example, police said, Sohrab worked as an informer for robberies in Turag, as he had been living in the area for last 15 years. He did not take part in the robbery but used other members, said police.

"We also got names of some others gang members and are conducting drives to arrest them," added Mofizul.

# Locked in

FROM PAGE 3

wailing beside the ravaged rooms.

"We told our granddaughter [Jannatul] to lock the door as my daughter [Kalpana] used to go out in the middle of the night without telling anyone..." she said in a choked voice. Some were trying to console her, but to no avail.

A pall of gloom descended on the area after the incident. Neighbours said Kalpana had been looking after her two children by herself after her husband left them since she became ill. He remarried a few years back and stayed separately.

"Despite all odds, my daughter loved and looked after her children... She used to sell toys on footpaths to provide for her family," said Aleya, who lived close by with her son.

They were buried at Kalshi graveyard, she added.

# First day draws

FROM PAGE 3

Sonia Khan, in her lecture on sixth-grade science, used photos and video clips.

Later, Abdul Hasan gave a lecture on Bangladesh and Global Studies for the sixth grade; he was followed by Masud Hasan who gave a lesson on ICT to students of class VII.

Shahanara Begum Poly, who watched the broadcast on a live session from the Facebook page of Access to Information, alleged in a comment that lecture audio was poor, while background music was loud. It was difficult to understand what was written on the whiteboard, she added.

"Camera focus should be on the board rather than teacher most of the time," said Mostafizur Rahman Joseem, who also followed the page.

Ziaul Kabir Dulu, president of Dhaka-based association of school-goers' parents Abhibhabak Oikya Forum, welcomed the move, but said beside Sangsad TV government can consider airing the lecture through Bangladesh Television and some other private TV channels.

Prof Shahedul Khair Chowdhury, director (college and administration) of DSHE, told The Daily Star teachers will give homework to the students during the lectures, which students will need to submit after their schools reopen.

Today, eight more lectures -- two each for sixth to ninth grade, will be aired from 9am to 12 noon, and repeated from 2pm to 5pm.

The government on March 16 closed down all schools till March 31 and on Tuesday extended the closure till April 9.

Several DSHE officials said with the Covid-19 situation evolving every day, this closure might be prolonged.



**Incepta pharmaceuticals Ltd donated 3,000,000 hydroxychloroquine tablets, 1,000 units of TYVAC Personal Protective Equipment (PPE), 2,000 pieces of protective gloves, 2,000 pieces of masks and 200 pieces of goggles to the Directorate General of Drug Administration (DGDA).**

# United Hospital sets up telemedicine service

CITY DESK

Amidst the ongoing Covid-19 crisis, United Hospital has set up a telemedicine service for those those with urgent medical needs or those needing routine follow-up.

Through this service, patients can avail video consultation by connecting to the hospital's consultants through Skype from the comfort and convenience of their home.

To avail the service, appointments can be booked by calling hotlines at 10666 or 02-9852466, after which patients can connect to their preferred consultants via Skype from their device of choice. Patients can take pictures and share their patient records with the consultants via Skype or email prior to a session.

Consultants of Internal Medicine, Cardiology, Nephrology, General & Laparoscopic Surgery, Paediatrics & Neonatology, Obs. & Gynaecology, ENT, Respiratory Medicine, Orthopaedics, Endocrinology, Neurosciences, Oncology and Ophthalmology will be available through the telemedicine service.

Currently, United Hospital operates Telemedicine services for patients in Chattogram and Sylhet through local Information Centres.

# Made for poor, eco-friendly too

FROM PAGE 12

"The masks made of plastic are not washable and biodegradable. If everyone wears it, can you imagine how much plastic we will generate?" asks Mamunur.

Ella's face masks are made at a low cost from textile scraps and can be reused after washing, he said.

When asked about the mask design, Mamunur said, "We researched different sources [on the internet] such as WHO [the World Health Organization] and CDC [the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention in the United States].

"We tried to understand how the masks should be made to cover the basics [face parts], just like the mask they have made. There are videos about these on YouTube."

The alliance coordinator expressed willingness to share the design with tailors across the country and provide them with processed textile scraps, if deputy commissioners of districts and upazila nirbahi officers help them

with the liaison.

Meanwhile, the workers of the Ella alliance factories are also happy to be part of the good cause and have been producing the masks alongside their regular work.

"When I heard that these will be distributed for free among the poor, I felt very happy to make the masks. I have been making 150-200 masks a day for the past four days," Rina Begum, a 26-year-old worker at the Radisson Casual Wear Ltd in Dhamrai, told this correspondent on March 26.

Till Wednesday, the alliance has produced and handed over around 25,000 masks to the BIDA.

Beximco Textiles, one of the 10 alliance members, has provided a lion's share of the masks, while Radisson Casual Wear Ltd supplied around 3000 masks.

According to Khalid Shahrior, general manager of Beximco Textiles, till March 25, they have already produced and distributed 30,000 eco-friendly masks to their

employees, 1,500 masks to the Prime Minister's Office and about 22,000 to the BIDA for countrywide distribution.

"If we don't have to shut down our factories, we are hoping to produce 25,000 to 50,000 masks a day, alongside our regular work. Initially, we planned to provide 10 lakh free masks. But if needed, we will produce another 10 lakh," he said.

Beximco Textiles has involved its seven factories to produce face masks.

Syed Fardeen Hashemi, director of Radisson Casual Wear Ltd, said, initially, they promised to produce 25,000 face masks but due to massive absenteeism among the workers in fear of the coronavirus outbreak, they have produced 3,000 masks as of March 25.

"If everything goes well, we are hoping to fulfill our target and we are trying to involve other businessmen to do this," said Fardeen.

The BIDA will distribute the

masks in all 64 districts as it has a training programme titled "Entrepreneurship Creation and Skill Development" in every district.

The programme has a nine-member committee headed by the district's deputy commissioner, who will decide how to distribute the masks to those who need it, said Mohammad Hafizullah Khan, project director of BIDA's Entrepreneurship Creation and Skill Development programme.

"I received around 28,000 masks from the Beximco Textiles, Radisson Casual Wear Ltd and my personal connections," he added.

"Already, I have distributed around 3500 masks to BIDA employees, the Prime Minister's Office and the Dhaka Reporters' Unity," added Hafizullah, also the assistant secretary at Prime Minister's Office.

As of Saturday, 2,000 masks were sent to Rangpur and Sirajganj, 1000 to Pabna and another 1,000 to Bogura, said the BIDA official.

# Time to teach values

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The educationist said as there is plenty of time, parents can help their children with subjects. Some parents can encourage their kids to read and write more during this time.

Renowned curriculum expert Siddiqur said although it is not widely practiced, online schooling or distance schooling is the other option, which many countries have adopted.

"There are many online lessons available on the internet, which parents can choose for their children," he said.

Most importantly, parents need to make sure their children are not bored.

"There should be room for fun and games. Kids can also learn through fun and games."

He made the comments against the backdrop that test transmission of recorded classes for secondary students of Class VI to X through Sangsad Bangladesh Television that started yesterday morning, aiming to minimise academic session loss as all educational institutions are now closed due to the Covid-19 pandemic.

# Earnings of Bede dry

FROM PAGE 12

community in Domshar union, said, "We have been isolated for the last 10 days without any help from the government or anyone else."

"We are extremely vulnerable and marginalised people. If we do not get assistance, we will not survive."

He said he contacted the Domshar Union Parishad seeking help, but the authorities did not respond.

Ziaul Haque, sardar of another Bede community in Angaria union, said, "We did not receive any assistance either."

"All our income sources are off and if the government does not help us during the pandemic, there is no chance for us to survive."

Contacted, Chan Mia Madbor, chairman of Domshar Union Parishad, said they helped 55 families with 10 kg rice each but could not help the Bede yet.

He promised that the Bede people would get assistance as soon as the government allocates further financial aid.

Asked, Anwar Hossain Howladar, chairman of Angaria Union Parishad, echoed Madbor's statement.

Mahabur Rahman Sheikh, upazila nirbahi officer (UNO) of Shariatpur Sadar, said, "We are making a list of 150 families of extreme vulnerable and underprivileged people including the Bede families for help. We hope we can help them soon."

Kazi Abu Taher, deputy commissioner of Shariatpur, said they helped 3,900 families in Shariatpur with 10 kg rice each and some essential products worth Tk 200.

"But this help is insufficient."

He also said that some HM Rasel Howladar, an expatriate in Spain, donated Tk 2 lakh for helping underprivileged people and the district administration was trying to make right uses of the money.

# Construction of Covid-19

FROM PAGE 12

of Tejgaon Industrial Police Station, said the construction of the proposed hospital was resumed yesterday.

Earlier on Saturday night, Home Minister Asaduzzaman Khan reportedly said the hospital would be built at the previously fixed place.

Permission is needed to build a hospital and the process will be completed soon, he told a Bangla

daily.

Talking to this newspaper, Gonoshasthaya Kendra founder Dr Zafrullah Chowdhury yesterday said, "It cannot be an issue. The hospital will provide treatment for coronavirus [patients]."

The hospital will have 20 intensive care units (ICUs), 30 isolation facilities in line with the World Health Organization standard, and

250 general beds, he said, adding it would have the capacity to examine around 1,000 patients a day.

The hospital would be able to accept patients within two weeks if the government extends its support and will remain open round the clock, Zafrullah added.

Akij Group will provide the estimated budget for the hospital which is about Tk 20 crore, he said.

Locals said the protesters attempted to vandalise the existing building where Akij Group, in association with Gonoshasthaya Kendra, is planning to set up the hospital.

The demonstrators, followers of local ward councillor Shafiqullah Shafi, also prevented two trucks carrying beds and other equipment from entering the compound.

# Bangabandhu calls for mass education

FROM PAGE 12

education system has so long failed to produce men. The existing education system can only produce bureaucrats, he regrets.

Speaking on the need to carry the light of education to the masses, Bangabandhu says that teachers and students should spend some time in villages every year and work for to spread education among the rural people.

**FORM OF GOVERNMENT WILL BE PARLIAMENTARY: CONSTITUTION**

The Constitution of Bangladesh will provide the country a parliamentary form of government, enshrining all the basic principles of democracy, socialism, nationalism and secularism, the Minister for Law and Parliamentary Affairs Dr Kamal Hussain says today. He adds that the draft constitution will adequately include all the ramifications of democracy and guarantee the fundamental rights and privileges of the

people irrespective of cast and religion. The Law Minister informs that the working draft of the Constitution, which is under the process of finalization, will be placed for approval before the session of the Constituent Assembly when it meets on April 10.

**CALCUTTA UNIVERSITY TO HONOUR BANGABANDHU**

The Calcutta University Senate has decided to confer an honorary D Litt. degree on Bangabandhu. Justice Ramaprasad Mukherjee raised the proposal in the Senate's meeting and it was unanimously adopted.

**85 PERCENT INDUSTRIES UNDER NATIONALISATION**

The nationalisation programme launched by the government will cover over 85 percent of the total capital and fixed assets in the whole of the country's industrial sector, says the Planning Commission. Explaining the working of the

organisational structure for the nationalised industries, the Planning Commission source says that there will be one corporation for each of the industries such as jute, sugar and cotton. Each industrial unit will again have its own management board or board of directors to plan and execute its production and other programmes. The boards will consist of representatives of workers, financing institutions and members with management experience.

**BANGLADESH NOT 'PURBA PAKISTAN'**

The director of public instruction, West Bengal has requested all heads of institutions in West Bengal to instruct teachers and students to henceforth read Bangladesh and Pakistan in place of Purba Pakistan and Paschim Pakistan in textbooks.

SOURCES: March 31, 1972 issues of Ittefaq, The Bangladesh Observer, Azad, Morning News, Dainik Bangla and Purbodesh.

গণপ্রজাতন্ত্রী বাংলাদেশ সরকার		
নির্বাহী প্রকৌশলীর কার্যালয়, সওজ		
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E-mail: eemym@rhd.gov.bd		
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