

43 staff, 85 law enforcers at JS secretariat test Covid-19 positive

Most showed no symptom, were tested ahead of budget session

RASHIDUL HASAN

As many as 43 staffers and officials of parliament secretariat have been infected with Covid-19 so far while the Jatiya Sangsad Bhaban goes into budget session on Wednesday.

Apart from them, 82 members of Ansar Battalion and three members of police who were on duty at the Jatiya Sangsad Bhaban secretariat were also infected with Covid-19, sources at the parliament said.

Senior Secretary of the parliament secretariat Zafar Ahmed Khan said ahead of the budget session, they have carried out Covid-19 test of around 455 staffer and officials so far.

"Of them, 43 have tested positive for Covid-19," he said.

He also said most of those who tested Covid-19 positive said they did not have any symptoms.

The budget session for the 2020-21 fiscal is scheduled to start at 5pm today. Finance Minister AHM Mustafa Kamal will

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It's that time of the year again, when lychees fill up bazaars, enticing passersby with their vibrant red skin. Fruits are what make this hot and humid season somewhat bearable, and the sweetness and texture of lychees are a favourite for many. This photo was taken recently from the capital's Mirpur.

PHOTO: AMRAN HOSSAIN

BNP's BUDGET PROPOSAL

Focus on lives and livelihood, not the economy: Fakhru

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

BNP yesterday made a 13-point proposal on the budget for the upcoming fiscal, urging the government to focus on saving people's lives and livelihood.

The party also urged the government not to emphasise on economic growth when the whole world is fighting against the Covid-19 pandemic.

Party's Secretary General Mirza Fakhru Islam Alamgir at a virtual press conference unveiled the proposal from his residence.

"Importance should not be given on economic growth but to people's lives and livelihoods during the pandemic. If the corona situation is not properly handled, then it would not be possible to rescue the economy," said Fakhru, who used to teach economics earlier in his life.

He said his party thinks that a three-year long planning should be framed to rescue the economy from the disaster of the pandemic.

Fakhru said budgetary allocation should be increased in health, social safety net, labour welfare, agriculture, education, local government and rural development.

Presenting a gloomy picture of the health sector, the BNP leader said the pandemic has exposed how fragile the country's healthcare system is.

"To save the people of the country, the healthcare system should be restored, restructured and a long-term sustainable programme should be taken."

The party demanded that five percent of GDP should be allowed for healthcare system, and the poor should be brought under health allowance.

The party proposed for 6-7 percent of GDP allocation for marginalised and underprivileged people under the social safety net programmes.

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27 eminent citizens condemn police brutality in US, Bangladesh

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Twenty-seven noted citizens yesterday condemned incidents of police brutality that happened recently in the USA and Bangladesh.

In a statement, they expressed solidarity with US citizens who have been on the street protesting the recent killing of George Floyd, an African American, at the hands of police in Minneapolis.

They demanded justice for the killing of George and highest punishment for the perpetrators.

They said the incident happened at a time when unity was evident across the world to defeat a common enemy, the deadly coronavirus.

"The world is stunned seeing the gruesome killing. Such an image of the US is nothing new, but it has worsened in the 21st century. A clear example of this is the killing of George Floyd at the hands of a white cop," said the statement.

"Like the whole world, we are also stunned and aggrieved because of the mindless killing. Like in the past, people of

the US have stood firm against such racist identity of the state. And the whole world is raising their voice against the killing," they added.

They also addressed the death of Nikhil Talukder -- who died after a police official broke his backbone in Kotalipara -- and demanded that the perpetrators involved be brought to book.

The statement called for a combined fight against racism, fundamentalism, discrimination and communalism, and eliminating such intolerant views from the whole world.

Signatories to the statement are: Abdul Gaffar Chowdhury, Hasan Azizul Haque, Anupam Sen, Ramendu Majumdar, Ataur Rahman, Sarwar Ali, Ferdousi Majumdar, Abdus Selim, Inamul Haq, Mamunur Rashid, Habibullah Siraji, Mofidul Hoque, Shafi Ahmed, Nasiruddin Yousuff, Nurul Huda, Lucky Inam, Sara Zaker, Shimul Yousuf, Muhammad Samad, Raju Alauddin, Golam Kuddus, Mannan Hira, Hasan Arif, Kamal Bayezid, Akham Ullah, Tarik Sujat and Tarana Halim.

COVID-19

Legal notice served for proper medical waste management

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A Supreme Court lawyer yesterday served a legal notice to the authorities concerned to take necessary steps in 72 hours for proper management of coronavirus-related medical waste.

Advocate Md JR Khan Robin sent the legal notice through emails to the secretaries of the ministries of health, local government and rural development and environment and forest, mayors of Dhaka north and south city corporations and chief waste management officers and Directorate General of Health Services for taking steps to this effect.

In the legal notice, he said around 1,500 tonnes of coronavirus-related medical waste have so far been produced reportedly, which is harmful for the environment and people, particularly cleaners and conservancy workers.

Such medical waste has been left unaddressed, raising the possibility of infecting people with coronavirus, he said in the legal notice.

The advocate told The Daily Star that he will move a writ petition before the high court, seeking its necessary directives, if the respondents do not take necessary measures.

Fear trumps family ties

Brothers deny cremation of Covid-19 victim in village; wife, children unable to say goodbye

ASHIK ABDULLAH APU

Sudhangshu Kumar Saha, a deputy commissioner of taxes, passed away from Covid-19 recently. Tragically, his cremation could not be completed at his village home, nor did his wife and children bid him farewell.

His brothers objected to have the funeral at their village, fearing contamination.

The officer was serving as a deputy commissioner at Dhaka's Tax Zone-3 and last attended office on May 14, said National Board of Revenue sources. After symptoms of covid-19 started showing, he got himself tested and the result came positive.

His wife and children also contracted the virus, and were all recovering at home.

However, the tax official's condition deteriorated and he had to be admitted to Dhaka Medical College Hospital's ICU.

Sudhangshu was a member of 27th batch of Bangladesh Civil Service, said NBR in a statement.

Sudhangshu's body could not be taken to



Sudhangshu Kumar Saha

his village in Sirajganj, where he was born and raised, said brother-in-law Gautam Saha.

"His brothers were unwilling. We then went to my village home (Sudhangshu's in-laws' home) in Tangail's upazila," he said.

"But even there, locals tried to stop us from entering. But the Upazila Nirbahi Officer intervened and we could arrange his cremation at our house," a grieving Gautam explained.

The tax officer's wife and children did not get a chance to say a final goodbye, as they are under home isolation.

"My sister and niece were compelled to stay at home since they too have been infected. They gave their samples for another test but we have not received the new reports yet," said Gautam.

Local law enforcers and a humanitarian organisation named "Quantum" carried out the funeral formalities of Sudhangshu.

NBR Chairman Abu Hena Md Rahmatul Muneem expressed condolences for Sudhangshu's family.



Rabiul is a small-scale vendor who buys daily essentials from wholesale markets in Chawkbazar, then sells those to retail shops. He was unable to conduct this operation and support his family of four during the shutdown, but he's glad to finally be back in business after the economy reopened. He puts on gloves, mask, and a head cap every day and delivers goods on his bicycle.

PHOTO: PRABIR DAS

Virus spreading to Rajshahi villages

Experts blame cross-district travels, ineffective lockdown measures

ANWAR ALI, Rajshahi

The novel coronavirus has begun spreading to villages in Rajshahi district due to unabated cross-district travels and ineffective lockdown measures, health officials and development workers said.

However, the true scenario of the extent of the virus' spread cannot yet be ascertained due to a lack of testing, they added.

Though Rajshahi district was identified as a red zone, suggesting a total lockdown, offices, transports, and markets are still operating under "special measures", locals said.

"We are performing tests on those who have visited coronavirus affected districts and their first and second contacts, and in some cases, tertiary contacts. But even this is not sufficient," Dr Enamul Haque, civil surgeon of Rajshahi, said. "The tests should

be random and only then can we get a realistic picture," he said.

According to the health department reports, four people have died in the district till date, three of whom were from outside the city.

Out of the district's 86 infected people, 62 are from its nine upazilas.

In Tanore upazila, out of 13 infected persons, all but three had records of visiting coronavirus-affected districts. Three others were officials of a local police station.

At least 10 persons were identified Covid-19 positive in Puthia upazila while nine were from Mohonpur, seven each from Bagha and Charghat, six each from Paba and Bagmara and one from Godagari upazila.

Jahangir Hossain, project coordinator of DASCOH -- a non-government organisation

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Jashore-4 MP tests positive for Covid-19

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Benapole

Ranjit Kumar Roy, lawmaker from



Jashore-4 constituency, has tested Covid-19 positive.

Jashore Civil Surgeon Dr Sheikh Abu Shahin said Ranjit's sample was collected on Monday, and he tested positive last night.

The test was conducted at the lab at Jashore University of Science and Technology, he added.

Ranjit's son Rajib Roy said his father was admitted to Jashore Cantonment CMH yesterday.

Ranjit, also president of Bagharpara upazila Awami League, has been suffering from fever for the last few days, said the civil surgeon.

Joint commissioner who 'offered bribe to DMP chief' transferred

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The joint commissioner who allegedly offered bribe to the Dhaka Metropolitan Police commissioner was transferred yesterday.

Md Imam Hossain, joint commissioner (logistics), was made joint commissioner of DMP's Public Order Management Division, according to an order signed by DMP Commissioner Shafiqul Islam. This internal transfer came days after Shafiqul Islam in a letter to the inspector general of police sought transfer of Imam, an additional deputy inspector general of police, on charge of offering the DMP commissioner bribe.

According to rules, transfer of superintendent of police and above ranked officials from one unit to another rests on the home ministry but unit chiefs can transfer any official within their jurisdiction.

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'Sorry, no ICU beds'

Barishal physician, suffering from Covid-19, flown to Dhaka in vain

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Barishal

Barishal's eminent orthopedist Anwar Hossain died from novel coronavirus early yesterday.

Dr Anwar, chairman of Rahat Anwar Hospital in the city, had been suffering from asthma and undergoing treatment at his hospital, said Laskar Nurul Haque, director and legal adviser of the private healthcare institution, while talking to The Daily Star.

On Monday, the 55-year-old was taken to Dhaka by an air ambulance as he was having breathing complexities, Nurul quoted his family as saying.

The family took him to three private hospitals in the capital, but ICU beds were not available there, he said. "After a three-hour search, they found one at AMZ Hospital in South Badda around 9pm."

But by that time, his condition had deteriorated, he said.

Dr Rahat Anwar Chowdhury, joint secretary of Foundation for Safety Rights and Responsibility, said hospital authorities declared Dr Anwar dead at 2:45am. He tested Covid-19 positive before his death, he added.

His swab was collected and sent to Sher-e-Bangla Medical College Hospital lab when his body was brought to his Bandh Road residence in Barishal city yesterday, hospital sources said.

Dr Anwar's namaz-e-janaza was held at Rahat Anwar Hospital. He was buried at his village home in Binoykathi of Sadar upazila in Jhalakati after the second janaza.



Dr Anwar Hossain



Two men share a moment of leisure on a streetside, pulling down their face masks to the chin to facilitate a deadly bad habit. Apart from the fact that smoking impairs lung function -- an organ primarily attacked by Covid-19 -- smokers are also more prone to touching their fingers to their lips, and taking off their masks in public, thus putting them at a heightened risk of contracting the virus.

PHOTO: FIROZ AHMED