



People wait for their turn to give sample for Covid-19 test at Barishal Sher-e-Bangla Medical College Hospital recently.

PHOTO: TITU DAS

CORONA UNIT OF BARISHAL SBMCH

Death of other patients twice the Covid-19 victims

Doctors say severe conditions led to the high number of deaths; patients' relatives allege lack of quick response

SUSHANTA GHOSH, Barishal

Almost two-thirds of the treatment seekers, who died after admission to the Corona unit of Barisal Sher-e-Bangla Medical College Hospital (SBMCH) during the last four months, were actually suffering from diseases other than Covid-19.

A staggering 91 of the total 613 patients, who were admitted to the Corona unit with Covid-19 symptoms since March, died so far.

Of them, 32 people were tested Covid-19 positive while 59 others came to the hospital with other complexities like asthma, heart diseases, and kidney failure, said the hospital's Assistant Director Dr Maniruzzaman Shahin, also in-charge of the unit.

Most of the patients who came to the ward had severe conditions, and so, the number of deaths is high, said doctors serving there.

On the other hand, several relatives and attendants of patients complained that very few doctors serve in the Corona unit and there is often lack of quick response for serious patients.

When a patient with Covid-19 symptom is admitted to the observation section of Corona unit, he has to wait for test report before starting proper treatment, said a few patients.

Amal Das, a cameraman of a private TV channel in Barisal city, alleged that his wife died within an hour after admission to the hospital due to delay in providing oxygen and essential medicines.

"She was taken to SBMCH's emergency corner with respiratory problems early Sunday, but on-duty doctors sent her to observation section of Corona unit instead of the medicine ward," he said. Another patient, who was admitted for

coronavirus infection in first week of June and released from the hospital one week ago, said very few doctors were seen at observation and other sections of Corona unit.

Often doctors monitor the situation using mobile phone instead of coming in person, said an attendant of a patient at the unit.

According to the doctors and patients of SBMCH, all those who were admitted to the emergency section with severe problems including respiratory and kidney problems were sent to the Corona unit. A couple of days later, after testing for coronavirus, they were sent to their respective wards.

Dulal Das, a 55-year-old patient from Kawnia area of the city, said he was suffering from respiratory problems but no doctor saw him for two days. Only nurses came to him when he needed oxygen.

Several patients complained that treatment is much delayed if they do not have Covid-19 test certificate.

Sudip Halder, president of Indoor Doctors Association of SBMCH, said, "As a good number of people, including doctors, nurses and health workers were infected with Covid-19, the Department of Medicine and Orthopaedics was locked down two months ago, and we decided to keep the patients under observation to confirm whether they are infected."

"Only 97 doctors are currently appointed here against 224 sanctioned posts. Around 150 interne doctors are working with them. On an average, 20 doctors here are infected by Covid-19 every month and so, testing is essential to prevent spread of infection among doctors and others," said SBMCH Director Dr Bakir Hossain.

SUNDARBANS

Two months ban on fishing starts today

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Bagerhat

The forest department has decided to ban the netting of fishes from all rivers and canals in the Sundarbans for the next two months, starting from today.

The ban will continue till August 30.

The decision was taken as part of an initiative to help safe breeding of fish in these two months, said a forest official.

Due to this, the authorities concerned have also stopped giving passes and permits to enter the world's largest mangrove forest from June 24, he said.

The Sundarbans Forest Department made an agreement in 2019, as per the recommendations of the Integrated Resources Management Plans (IRMP), to protect fishery resources in the Sundarbans, said East Sundarbans Divisional Forest Officer (DFO) Mohammad Belayet Hossain.

As a part of that, the netting of fishes in all the rivers and canals of the Sundarbans remains halted from July 1 to August 30 every year, said the DFO.

As a part of that, the netting of fishes in all the rivers and canals in the forest remains halted from July 1 to August 30 every year, he added.

These two months are the breeding season of most of the fishes in the rivers and canals of the forest. If the netting of fishes is stopped at this time, fishes will be increased in the rivers and the canals of the Sundarbans.

Patrolling in the area has been intensified so that poachers do not get a chance to do that, said the DFO.

Those who have been given permits to enter by June 23 must return by June 30; if anyone defies the instruction, authorities will take stern action against them, the official added.

The mangrove forest is home to around 210 varieties of local fish like bhetki, poopchanda, datina, chitra, pangas, leyte, churi, med, parese, poya, tapsay, lakhna, koi, magur, shol, kain and hilsa.

Schoolgirl raped in Noakhali

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Noakhali

A schoolgirl was raped allegedly by one of her neighbours in Kabirhat upazila on Monday.

Meanwhile, mother of the victim girl, also a Class X student at a local school, filed a case with Kabirhat Police Station accusing Abdur Rahim Robin, 20, son of Samsuzzaman, the same night, Officer in Charge (investigation) of the police station Fazlul Kader said.

According to the case statement, Robin, who often used to stalk the girl on her way to and from the school, entered the victim's house when none of her family members were present on Monday evening and raped her forcibly.

Hearing her screams, when a neighbouring woman entered the room the culprit fled the scene, police said.

The girl was sent to Noakhali Medical College Hospital for medical test yesterday.

Police said they were raiding different areas to arrest the culprit.

COVID-19 FALLOUT

Srimangal pineapples going unsold

MINTU DESHWARA, Moulvibazar

Unsold stock of country's favourite Srimangal pineapple continues to grow larger at wholesale warehouses in Moulvibazar's Srimangal upazila town.

Even though the delicious seasonal fruit of Srimangal is in high demand among end consumers all over the country and its growers saw a good yield this year, lack of buyers from different districts amid novel coronavirus scare has resulted in the fall in sales at the wholesale warehouses in Srimangal, said its wholesalers.

During a visit to New Market area of Srimangal town recently, this correspondent witnessed arrival of a good amount of pineapples all throughout the day at the wholesale stores. However, the market was almost devoid of wholesale buyers from other districts.

At the market, the largest of the pineapples was being sold for Tk 30 to 35 each, medium size for Tk 20 to 25 and small for Tk 10 to 12.

Pineapple farmer Fahid Mia from Mirzapur said, "I grew pineapple on five acres of land this year and I got a good yield too. But thanks to coronavirus, pineapple prices are much lower this time -- at least Tk 10 to 20 lower than that in the previous year."

Nasir Mia, another farmer from the same area, said, "Compared to other years, the prices have fallen this time. The wholesale buyers are not coming to pineapple gardens amid the fear of Covid-19. So I'm selling it at a lower price to any customer."

"Sales have been poor due to the coronavirus. But the business would've been better this year as the harvest has been pretty good," said Ayat Ali, a pineapple trader at the market.

Abdul Bashit Malek, a pineapple grower in Srimangal, said pineapple is widely cultivated in hilly areas of Moulvibazar as the growers can reap good profits from its sale. The pineapples from the district



Stockpile of pineapple, grown famously in Moulvibazar's Srimangal upazila, continue to grow larger with wholesale buyers being unable to visit pineapple warehouses in the upazila town. The photo was taken from the town's New Market area recently.

PHOTO: STAR

are sold at markets across the country, including those in Dhaka. However, a large amount of the fruit gets spoiled without adequate cold storages and food processing facilities in the area, he added.

As such, many farmers, including himself, have no other alternative but to incur losses through selling their produce at low prices that do not cover for the cost of production this year, said pineapple grower Mohammad Shahed Ahmed, a resident of Jalalia Road in Srimangal town.

Pineapple farmers in Mokam Bazar, Satagaon, Muchai, Mirzapur, Bhunbi, Bhairab Bazar, Dalubari, Radhanagar and Mohajerabad areas are also facing the same situation, he also said.

Nirmal Aditya, proprietor of Nepal Aditya & Sons, a wholesaler in Srimangal town, said they are having a difficult time making profit from selling pineapple at current prices. He also said their wholesale buyers,

from different districts including Dhaka, Narsingdi and Bogura, usually check the quality of the fruits themselves before placing orders in bulk quantities. But this time around, they were unable to come to the town amid transport shutdown due to the coronavirus.

Kazi Lutful Bari, deputy director of Department of Agricultural Extension in Moulvibazar, said pineapple was cultivated on 1,201 hectares of land in the district while it was cultivated on 625 hectares of land in Srimangal upazila alone.

Like years before, the harvest of pineapple has been good this year. But unfortunately, farmers' profits are dampened now due to the coronavirus.

Both seasonal fruit growers and fruit traders would benefit greatly if sufficient cold storages as well as food processing factories were built in the area, he further said.

Advertisement for Bangladesh Bank (বাংলাদেশ ব্যাংক) regarding the liquidation of Rupali Bank. It lists a long list of account numbers and provides contact information for the liquidation committee.