

### Around 2 lakh

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Last year, Bangladesh's top three remittance-sending countries were Saudi Arabia, United Arab Emirates and the United States, shows BMET data.

Like elsewhere, Bangladeshis in Kuwait are already in peril due to the pandemic. Many of them have lost their jobs while many are getting low wages amid the economic crisis brought on by the coronavirus.

According to statistics of Prohashi Kalyan Desk set by the expatriates' welfare ministry at the Hazrat Shahjalal International Airport, nearly 4,900 migrant workers returned from Kuwait between April 1 and June 17.

Many of them returned under a general amnesty declared by the Kuwait government.

Remittance from expatriates is one of the main pillars of the Bangladesh economy. About one crore Bangladeshis migrants sent home \$18.35 billion last year.

**THE BILL**  
Amid a slump in oil prices and the coronavirus pandemic, there has been a spike in "anti-expatriates rhetoric" in Kuwait, as the country's lawmakers and government officials called for reducing the number of foreigners.

On July 5, Kuwait Times reported that the draft law was approved by the National Assembly's legal and legislative committee. The committee determined that the bill goes in line with the country's constitution.

On July 2, the committee decided to refer the bill to another committee concerned that would study all legislation on expatriates in the Gulf country with the aim to cut their numbers, reported the daily.

According to the bill, the largest foreign community in Kuwait, the Indians, must not exceed 15 percent of the Kuwaiti populace. If approved, the law would require some 8 lakh Indians to leave the country.

On June 3, Kuwait Prime Minister Sheikh Sabah Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah had said the country was facing a "big challenge" to address discrepancy in the structure of the populace, reported state-run Kuwait News Agency (KUNA).

"The ideal population structure is to have Kuwaitis being 70 percent and non-Kuwaitis 30 percent, so we have a big challenge in the future which is to address the discrepancy in population," said the Kuwait PM.

Contacted, Bangladesh Ambassador to Kuwait SM Abul Kalam on Monday said they did not receive any official word from the Kuwaiti government in this regard.

Citing media reports, he said the draft bill has proposed a quota of three percent of Kuwait's total populace for Bangladeshis.

"Kuwait is home to more or less 3.5 lakh Bangladeshis. Majority of them are involved in low-paid jobs, including driving, cleaning, construction and domestic work and domestic help," he told this newspaper over phone.

The ambassador, however, said some Kuwaiti media outlets have recently raised questions about the proposed law's implementation.

He said many low-paid foreign workers, including Bangladeshis, are involved in different jobs and services, and Kuwaitis are largely dependent on such foreign workers.

"The bill has not been passed yet. It will be circulated [to all] once it turns into a law," added the ambassador.

Talking on the issue, Syed Saiful Haque, co-chair of Bangladesh Civil Society for Migrants, also said, "As the bill is still at the initial stage, there is chance to observe the development and see what finally comes."

"Let's see what proposal they make in the bill," he told this newspaper over the phone.

Saiful, however, said the bill, once passed, would pose a great challenge to Bangladesh's labour market in the Gulf country.

### Shahed

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family after his father died on Friday.

"Different teams are working in the capital and other districts. We are hopeful that we will be able to arrest him soon," said Lt Col Ashique Billah, director of Rab's Legal and Media Wing.

Meanwhile, Rab yesterday arrested Masud Parvez, managing director of Regent Group, from Gazipur's Kapasia area.

Parvez, a close aide of Shahed, was held around 7:00pm, Ashique Billah, director of Rab's legal and media wing, told The Daily Star.

He is the second accused in a case filed by Rab for issuing fake Covid-19 test reports from Regent Hospital, said Ashique.

The Rab official said many people were coming to Rab to share the misdeeds of Shahed.

There has been a rumour since Monday that Shahed is hiding in a bordering area of Moulvibazar and trying to leave the country illegally as the immigration department is on alert to bar his departure.

Police have intensified their activity and started searching vehicles in different areas in the district.

Faruq Ahmed, superintendent of police in Moulvibazar, told our local correspondent that there was no specific information that Shahed was in the district but police were on alert.

Shahed was the prime accused in a case filed by Rab on the charge of issuing fake Covid-19 reports without testing samples and charging patients for the tests treatment, violating an agreement with the government.



Prof Rehman Sobhan



M Anis Ud Dowla



Asaduzzaman Noor



Rokia Afzal Rahman



Hossain Zillur Rahman

## A patriot, a symbol of ethical business

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It is one of the achievements of this generation that such a thing is possible in Bangladesh, noted the eminent economist.

"Shamim [Latifur] used to say that this is one of the core parts of my business practices -- that because I own newspapers, I need to keep myself clean. He was giving you [the editors] a degree of protection, by taking on his back what should have gone on your [the editors'] shoulders," he observed.

Rokia Afzal Rahman, chairperson of Mediaworld Ltd, the owning company of The Daily Star, said, "One of the qualities that I admire in him [Latifur] was his decisiveness. He was never a fence-sitter -- he either agreed or disagreed and always with reasons and facts."

"And having chosen his side, he would vigorously defend that position."

Quality services to the clients and customer satisfaction were his obsession. Everything his companies produced must be of the highest standard. Every employee must have the highest level of training -- that was his fundamental commitment, she pointed out.

"For him, paying taxes was a badge of honour -- the higher the more honourable. I remember him as a symbol of ethical business and as a patriot who believed in the future of his country," she mused.

M Anis Ud Dowla, chairman of the Advanced Chemical Industries (ACI), said Latifur was many things to many people.

"To his friends, he was a charming and caring person. To the young, he is a role model. To the beginners in business, his stories of struggle in initial years give them hope. For the established business houses, his policies and principles are an example to follow."

"To those who are in leadership position, his style is worth copying and to those who are already successful in some measures, he inspires them to create a vision that will last beyond them," he added.

Asaduzzaman Noor, a lawmaker and trustee of the Liberation War Museum, said Latifur once told him

that an independent Bangladesh is the greatest asset of the people.

"In all my exchanges with him [Latifur], he never uttered a word about politics, except this one time. He mentioned that people who had opposed Bangladesh in the Liberation War, raped women, killed freedom fighters and general people and later killed Bangabandhu should be punished for their misdeeds," Noor said.

Brac Chairperson Hossain Zillur Rahman termed Latifur a gentleman who had an adverse attitude towards publicity.

The country has lost an ethical businessman, he said.

"He had proved that a person can become successful doing business ethically. Youths can take lessons from his life and imitate his life."

Md Mahbub-ur Rahman, chief executive officer of the HSBC, narrated an incident to illustrate Latifur's sense of ethics.

"In 2005, we were the bankers for Eskayef Pharmaceuticals. We had told him many times to also let us handle their transactions for beverage business. But he said he could not do so because when he was struggling to make it flourish, some local banks came to his aid."

"He said he could not take that business away from them but told me that if they ever expand, I would get a business deal."

Five years later when Transcom expanded its business with the launching of Aquafina in the country, Latifur kept his word, said Mahbub-ur.

Monjurul Ahsan Bulbul, editor-in-chief of Ekushey TV, remembered Latifur as a pillar of independent media.

"Latifur Rahman is a rare person who had never impeded the independence of his media for his own gain. In all discussions, we are calling him an idol for the younger generation, but may I humbly suggest that other businesspeople also learn from him..."

"Can all our businesspeople say that they will not move about with two passports in their pockets? That they will pay their taxes? Our media world needs more people like Latifur Rahman."

## Minister passes buck to DGHS

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"The DG requested us not to go and said 'you too stay as there will be a contract signing ceremony. It [the deal signing] will be with Regent after lunch. So, we stayed. We were happy that a new hospital came forward to treat Covid-19 patients."

He said, "When private hospitals were hesitating to give treatment [to Covid-19 patients], they came forward and inked the deal. We were happy. And then we left."

The health minister said the events that followed were "unfortunate" and whatever the hospital did was wrong.

"Actions have been taken as per the law," he said, adding that there would have been some records had the ministry given any instructions in this regard."

"Let's see what the DG explains," the minister said.

The DGHS signed the MoU with Regent in March, turning it into a

dedicated Covid-19 hospital, in a ceremony attended by the health minister. The DGHS was aware that the hospital's licence had expired six years ago.

On July 7, a Rab mobile court raided Regent Hospital's Uttara branch and sealed it off.

The court said it found proof that the hospital issued several thousand fake Covid-19 test reports.

Amid widespread criticism, the DGHS on Saturday said it was the higher authorities at the health ministry who asked the directorate to sign the MoU.

Enraged, the ministry issued a show-cause notice to the DG the next day, asking him to explain the comment in three work days.

On another scam involving JKG Hospital, the minister said, "If there is any wrongdoing, the organisation concerned and relevant authorities are responsible for that."

On Sunday, police held JKG Health

Care Chairman Dr Sabrina Arif Chowdhury, also a government official, over issuing fake Covid-19 test reports, about three weeks after the scam came to light.

The minister said whenever any organisation is assigned for any task, certain procedures are followed and it is the DGHS that oversees them.

He also said a taskforce would be formed soon to scrutinise the licences of different hospitals and clinics.

"The taskforce will visit [hospitals and clinics] regularly and scrutinise their licences," he added.

After talking to reporters, the minister held meetings with Secretary to Health Services Abdul Mannan and Secretary to Health Education Md Ali Nur separately, among others.

He directed the secretaries to take steps immediately if any unethical practices are done by any hospital or clinic, said meeting sources.

Meanwhile, Ain o Salish Kendra

(ASK) has expressed deep concern over the "rampant corruption, irregularities, and mismanagement" in the health sector.

In a statement yesterday, the rights body criticised the DGHS's approval given to Regent Hospital, saying the hospital used to be a diagnostic centre before it was turned into a hospital.

It said questions arise how the DGHS gave a diagnostic centre the go-ahead to treat Covid-19 patients when Regent Hospital did not have a valid licence.

On the rift between the health ministry and the health directorate, the ASK said it manifested the widening gap between the two government entities.

The rights body said a judicial inquiry was must to stop recurrence of irregularities and corruption in the sector.

It also demanded punitive actions against those involved and their identities are disclosed before the public within five weeks.

## Many not helpful, offensive instead

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done with tools, and is hardly a comfortable examination. Disrespectful communication by the doctor can turn an already uncomfortable experience into a traumatic one.

Afsara Bushra, a 20-year-old student, went to visit an ob-gyn at Square Hospital Ltd on July 11, with her mother, as she suffers from vaginismus, a condition where any contact causes the muscle walls to spasm involuntarily, resulting in intense pain. Patients of this condition report pelvic exams to be particularly painful.

Afsara went to the doctor to seek treatment for her painful condition, but claimed that what she got instead was misogynistic misconduct. Her social media post has since then been shared over 7,000 times.

"The doctor kept asking me if I was married and if not then, whether my marriage has been fixed, several times. She said it was so shocking that a girl who isn't even married is so concerned about her sexual health. She said she was happy she didn't die from coronavirus, otherwise she wouldn't have come across such a funny case," claimed Afsara to this correspondent.

"She told me that I should not talk to anyone about my health concerns, and that me even knowing about vaginismus is going to create problems for me in the future. She said that women like me need 'wild husbands' who can rape at an instance because such women never want to give permission for intercourse, since the act is painful for them, and that once raped, everything will be okay," Afsara told The Daily Star.

For a woman with such a painful condition, this suggestion left her traumatised.

Under the Bangladeshi law, marital rape is not considered a crime and Bangladesh is one of the 36 countries in the world where marital rape is still legal.

When contacted for comments, Square Hospitals Ltd circulated a statement by the gynaecologist, where the doctor said "the patient and her mother expressed no dissent during the conversation that took place, nor did they file any complaint afterwards."

The doctor called the claims "baseless" and "intending to discredit her". Square Hospital questioned why the woman did not lodge a complaint with the hospital and took to Facebook instead. The statement is also available on Square Hospital's Facebook page.

Afsara, however, said, "I did not even know about the woman until two days ago and I have no benefit in trying to take down her career. I didn't say anything immediately because I was having anxiety and broke down in a panic attack at her words." Point to note, that the conversation also occurred right after the young woman had undergone an extremely painful pelvic exam.

This one post by Afsara opened the door for other women coming forward to talk about their experiences at the ob-gyn -- and why sexual and reproductive rights is still missing from the conversation of sexual and reproductive health.

Kazi Sumaita Nahar shared on social media about how her sister was

repeatedly harassed by a gynaecologist during a recent visit at a top-tier hospital in the capital.

"My sister had been sensing a lump-like growth inside her genital tract and we wanted to get it checked by a doctor. My sister is 30 and unmarried. The first thing the doctor asked was 'What problem could an unmarried girl have?' Then, when my sister described the symptom, the doctor disbelieved her and exclaimed 'Do you think flesh would hang from the sky down there?' She then proceeded to do a pelvic exam but threatened her by saying 'If I don't find anything you will be in trouble'," described Sumaita, speaking to this correspondent.

She did find a lump and told Sumaita and her sister it was a miscarried fetus. "We kept insisting that that is not possible, but she was not believing us. My sister had a panic attack and started screaming and crying on the chair. When she calmed down a little, the ob-gyn said there was a possibility it could be a cervical polyp. We just paid and left," narrated Sumaita.

It was a cervical polyp, they discovered during a follow-up visit to another doctor -- but the experience left the woman traumatised. Sumaita and her sister complained to the hospital but are yet to receive any proper apology.

Joining the bandwagon, multiple women who suffer from polycystic ovarian syndrome (PCOS) spoke on social media about how doctors told them that they need to marry and have children, disregarding their own life or career goals, to be healthy.

Women who suffer from PCOS

made by Latifur in the business world, his cousin and former ambassador to India Tareq Karim remembered him as a child he played with.

"I remember Shamim [Latifur] and I quietly sneaking out to go to see a Tarzan movie in Lion's Cinema in Armanitola. Shamim was allowed to go because he was going with his elder brother, Tareq bhaia," he reminisced.

"Shamim steadfastly refused to complete his studies in England. His parents asked my father to convince him to go for higher studies but Shamim wanted to start his own business. He lived up to his family's expectations and much, much more."

"I as his elder should have gone first," said Karim, breaking down in tears.

"We are all created from dust and ultimately the body must return to the dust, but the soul goes on to the Supreme Being, leaving behind a legacy on earth," he ended.

Tapan Chowdhury, managing director of Square Pharmaceuticals Ltd, said for a businessman, investing in newspapers and television channels in Bangladesh was very risky.

"Nobody can believe that a newspaper and TV channel can operate independently."

Latifur Rahman proved that there is no scope for having influence as owners in independent houses. For allowing the newspapers to run independently, he had to face a lot of suffering but Latifur never hesitated to call a spade a spade," he said.

Syed Nasim Manzur, managing director of Apex Footwear Ltd, said during his life, Latifur had a firm belief on the potential of Bangladesh.

"He showed us not only the potential of exports but also the huge potential in the local market," Nasim said.

He had shown how to build institutions by blending professionalism and affection.

Zaraif Ayaat Hossain also remembered his grandfather and the legacy of independent media he left behind.

Kutubuddin Ahmed, chairman of the Envoy Group, and Rezwana Choudhury Bannya, celebrated Rabintra Sangeet singer, also paid their respects.

## 1 lakh recover from Covid-19

33 more die, 3,163 reported infected

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

As over 4,910 patients recovered yesterday, the number of Covid-19 recoveries in the country crossed the one-lakh-mark, taking the total to 103,227.

This is around 54.31 percent of all confirmed cases.

In the last 24 hours till yesterday, 33 people died of Covid-19, taking the death toll at 2,424, according to the Directorate General of Health Services (DGHS).

During this period, 3,163 positive cases were recorded, taking the number of confirmed cases to 1,90,057, Prof Nasima Sultana, additional director general (admin) of the DGHS said during yesterday's briefing.

In the 24 hours till 8:00am yesterday, a total of 13,453 samples were tested in 77 labs across the country.

Yesterday's infection rate was 23.51 -- slightly lower than those of the past three consecutive days, which were over 24 percent.

Over the last nine days, the daily infection rate had been showing an increasing trend.

On July 5, the rate was 19.57 percent. Starting from January 21, 9,66,400 samples were tested for the deadly virus so far.

At yesterday's briefing, Prof Nasima said the death rate was at 1.28 percent -- the same as the previous day.

Of yesterday's deceased, 23 were male and 10 were female.

Of the total deceased, 1,913 were males and 511 were females.

Of those who died yesterday, 13 were from Dhaka division, three from Chattogram, four from Rajshahi, two from Rangpur, five from Sylhet, five from Khulna, and another from Barishal.

Two were aged between 31 and 40, four between 41 and 50, six between 51 and 60, nine between 61 and 70, 11 between 71 and 80, and another was aged between 81 and 90 years.

So far, Dhaka division witnessed the highest Covid-19 deaths -- 1,208 (around 50 percent) -- followed by Chattogram with 626 deaths (slightly over 26 percent).

## Six die showing Covid-19 symptoms

STAR REPORT

Six people died after showing Covid-19 symptoms in Cumilla and Faridpur in 24 hours till 8:00am yesterday.

According to the authorities of Cumilla Medical College Hospital, five people breathed their last at the hospital during the period.

The victims were admitted there with fever, cold, and breathing difficulties. They were aged between 50 and 85, said Dr Mojibur Rahman, director of the hospital.

With the five, 218 people have so far died at the hospital. Of them, 182 breathed their last after showing coronavirus symptoms and 36 after being diagnosed with Covid-19 since April.

The hospital authorities said 26 new patients were admitted to the Covid-19 unit in 24 hours till 8:00am yesterday, and 15 patients were discharged during the period.

There are 124 patients at the unit now. Of them, 55 are coronavirus positive and 69 have symptoms.

In another incident, a 75-year-old man, who was suffering from fever and cold, died at Faridpur Medical College Hospital.

Saiful Rahman, superintendent of the hospital, said the victim of Kuthbari area of Faridpur town was admitted to the hospital on Sunday. He breathed his last around 8:00am yesterday.

His samples were collected for coronavirus test, and he was buried as per the guidelines set by the World Health Organisation, added Saiful.

[Our correspondents in Cumilla and Faridpur contributed to this report]

## Kuwait

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company, Marafie Kuwaitia Group. He is the managing director and chief executive officer of the firm.

Over the last several years, he recruited some 20,000 foreign workers, mostly Bangladeshis, and charged them Tk 7 to 9 lakh each. But many of the workers were not given jobs as per the contracts and even had to pay for renewal of work permits.

Seeking anonymity, a Bangladeshi businessman, familiar with recruitment issues in Kuwait, said the latest move may result in deportation of several thousand Bangladeshis.

On Monday, Kuwaiti newspaper Al Qabas reported that all the documents related to Bangladeshis workers, which were signed by Al-Jarrah during his tenure in the citizenship and passports sector between 2014 and 2018, were withdrawn from the residence departments in the six governorates and the Department of Special Services.

The purpose of withdrawal is to review those to find out the number of Bangladeshis allowed by the official to enter the country during his tenure. He had approved thousands of visas, especially those related to Shahid's company, it mentioned quoting sources.

One of the sources also said the Public Prosecution decided to continue the detention of Al-Jarrah and detain a new suspect working as a director of a travel agency.