

BANGLADESH
UPDATE



1,193
New cases in 24hrs



3,78,266
Total cases



5,524
Deaths



2,92,860
Recoveries

GLOBAL
UPDATE



1,078,930
Deaths



37,583,231
Total cases

Nightmare in Jordan

FROM PAGE 1
relative of a broker, promised her the job in Jordan.

“Milon told me that my financial hardship would end if I could go abroad,” she recalled.

The monthly salary that she was promised was 250 Jordanian Dinar, equivalent to around Tk 30,000. But she did not know the details like the recruiting agency and employer. She knows only a few names and some phone numbers.

Milon sent Nazma to Alam, one of his relatives in Faridpur Sadar. Alam and his brother Jahangir are brokers and send financially vulnerable women abroad, promising jobs.

Nazma stayed at Alam's house in Baharmor at Koijhuri union for two months where she was treated well.

She alleged she paid Alam and Jahangir Tk 50,000 she borrowed from relatives and locals for “arranging the trip”, while the duo gave Milon Tk 5,000.

During the two months, the two brokers arranged Nazma's passport, visa and other documents, she added.

Then came the day.

On December 12 last year, she said, Alam sent her to Hazrat Shahjalal International Airport in Dhaka. There, a man with black-beard handed her the passport and all other documents.

Nazma flew to Amman, the capital of Jordan.

C H E A T E D ,
DEVASTATED

Reaching Amman, she felt something was very wrong. Soon, she came to know that she was trapped and fell victim to an international human trafficking gang.

Soon after her arrival, a Jordanian citizen named Ashraf took her from the airport to an apartment where she was kept captive, she alleged.

“Ashraf later sold me out on a two-year contract to another local citizen named Mohammad.”

In Mohammad's two-storey house, she found some 20 to 30 other young women already held captive.

Eight to nine of them were Bangladeshis while the rest from different other countries like the Philippines and Ethiopia, she added.

Mohammad used to send some of those women in his five minibuses to different hotels and houses on calls for the job of sex worker. Some were sent to different houses for domestic work, she alleged.

As she refused to serve the clients, Mohammad beat her up mercilessly and took away her mobile phone and smashed it up so that she couldn't contact her relatives in Bangladesh, she alleged.

“They tried to abuse me like others, but I refused and somehow saved myself. I told them I would rather die than doing the acts.”

Enraged, they locked her in a room and tortured her severely. “Because of the torture, blood oozes out from my nose sometimes,” she said.

Yet, she considers herself somewhat lucky as she was later engaged in household work. She was given the task of housekeeping at Mohammad's place, but she was forced to work from 10:00am and till late night, she claimed.

Despite working hard, she did not get a single penny.

“I gave Tk 50,000 to Alam for going abroad, but what I got there was torture,” she said.

Contacted, Alam claimed he did not charge Nazma anything for sending her to Jordan as she became like a relative.

The allegation of torture and abuse is not true either, he said.

“I talked to Nazma several times after her return, but she never told me anything like that,” he said.

But Nazma said he did not even speak to her once after her return.

Alam said, “I have been sending

women overseas for the last several years through JSK Recruiting Agency in the capital's Fakirapool, but none ever bring allegations of torture and abuse at their workplace.”

HER RESCUE

As torture became severe, a Philippine woman at the apartment secretly filmed Nazma being tortured and sent the clips to her sister in Jhenaidah using a video calling and messaging app.

Nazma's relatives then sought help from rights body Ain o Salish Kendra (ASK) through Human Rights Defender Forum in Jhenaidah.

ASK wrote to the foreign ministry and to the Ambassador to Jordan Nahida Sobhan. The embassy quickly intervened and rescued Nazma.

Contacted, Nahida Sobhan said Nazma did not bring any complaint against anyone though she was assured that her name would not be disclosed anywhere and she can disclose everything without any fear.

“If we get information about captivity of any other Bangladeshi woman, we will intervene quickly as the government is serious about it,” the ambassador told this correspondent over phone when her

attention was drawn to other Bangladeshi women in captivity.

Nazma said the embassy contacted Mohammad and asked him to take her to the embassy which he complied. But she was threatened with dire consequences if she disclosed anything to the embassy officials.

Nina Goswami, senior deputy director of ASK, said all the allegations Nazma brought up are true. They will file a case in connection with the incident soon.

In this process, one Zahidul, an owner of a Paltan-based recruiting agency in Dhaka, has been found to have played a key role in sending her to Jordan.

Contacted, Zahidul claimed they changed Nazma's workplace four to five times, but she was unwilling to work.

He, however, declined to disclose any information relating to his recruiting agency. “You better talk to the broker,” he said.

SAME OLD SAD STORY

An estimated 75,000 women and 25,000 male Bangladeshis work in Jordan, according to government sources.

Nazma's is a prime example of unsafe migration and her tale reflects that of hundreds of abused women returning to Bangladesh from the host countries in the Middle East in recent times.

Industry insiders say the number of abused women workers in the Middle East is growing as more women go abroad for domestic work. However, the Bangladesh government does not have any data on how many women are returning home after facing abuse.

One of the reasons is the system depends largely on unlicensed brokers working in rural areas and opens the door to trafficking and cheating.

A special report of Brac Migration programme says that in recent years, women domestic helps returned from different Middle East countries facing various problems and falling victim to fraudulence and torture.

Citing media reports, it says 13,000 women returned home from Saudi Arabia in the last four years. According to Brac Migration programme from January 2018 to October last year, 2,315 women house helps came back from Saudi Arabia alone.

Most of the returnees alleged they were tortured physically, mentally and sexually, given insufficient foods, denied salary as per agreement or forced to work beyond the agreed time.

But they have little redress for the crimes they have suffered.

Ananta Jalil backtracks

FROM PAGE 1
from other countries, cinemas, television and social media. People look at your figures instead of your faces because of the indecent dresses. They make indecent comments [about women] and think of rape,” he had said. “Do you [women] consider yourselves modern? Is the dress you're wearing modern, or is it indecent? A modern dress means only showing your face and covering your body which will make you look good,” the actor said in the video.

He went on to say that any dress that does not cover the whole body makes women look “very bad”.

NZ PM Ardern touts success in tackling pandemic in poll push

REUTERS, Wellington

New Zealand Prime Minister Jacinda Ardern yesterday burnished her leadership credentials on the back of her successful response to the coronavirus pandemic at a campaign rally six days ahead of the country's

election on October 17.

Polls show Ardern's Labour Party is expected to win the election with a wide lead over the conservative National Party, and could form government in a coalition with the Greens and New Zealand First.



A tea garden worker, surrounded by her fellows, shouting to make her voice heard during a protest demanding bonuses and payment of arrears before Durga Puja. This photo was taken on Saturday on the Sylhet-Companiganj highway.

PHOTO: SHEIKH NASIR

Eight held over rape incidents

FROM PAGE 1

members are tenants of the accused.

On Saturday evening, the girl was alone at home as her parents went out for shopping. The accused broke into the house and raped her.

Later, the girl told her parents about the incident. The victim's father then filed a rape case and the accused was arrested from his house, said Habibur Rahman Howladar, OC of Badarganj Police Station.

Meanwhile, police on Saturday night arrested Md Sohag Ali, 24, a resident of Sheikhpura village, for raping a teenage girl in Dinajpur Sadar upazila.

The incident took place on Saturday evening. Later, the victim's father lodged a rape case and police arrested Sohag, said Md Asaduzzaman, inspector (investigation) of Dinajpur Sadar Police Station.

In the meantime, police have arrested a man for raping his 12-year-old speech-impaired niece in Ashuganj upazila of Brahmanbaria.

Quoting the victim's family members, Javed Mahmud, OC of Ashuganj Police Station, said the man picked up the girl while she was going

to a neighbour's house to deliver vegetables on Friday night.

He later took the girl to a deserted place and raped her. As the girl screamed for help, locals rushed to the spot, caught the man and rescued the girl, said the OC.

On information, a police team went to the spot on Saturday morning and arrested the man, added the police officer.

In Kurigram, police arrested four persons on Saturday night for gang-raping a housewife in Ulipur upazila.

On September 25 night, Rabiul Islam, 30, a neighbour of the victim, forcibly took the housewife to a secluded place in Rajarghat village. He and his four cohorts raped the woman.

Later, the victim filed a case against the five.

Ruhul Amin, OC (investigation) of Ulipur Police Station, said they arrested Rabiul's four cohorts but were yet to track down Rabiul.

The arrestees are -- Kaisar Ali, 40; Sobhan Ali Liton, 42; Mominul Islam, 38; and Anu Najjar, 42.

Meanwhile, a Sunamganj court yesterday placed six accused on

remand in a case over the abduction and gang rape of a woman in Jagannathpur upazila.

The incident came to light a month after the accused abducted and raped the woman in September. A video clip of the victim's father calling for justice surfaced on social media on October 5 after the accused forcibly entered his house, beat him up and threatened him.

Later, police took the victim into safe custody, and the victim's father filed a gang-rape and abduction case against six people.

Police arrested the prime accused, Shamim Miah, and his five cohorts -- Liton Mia, Ilak Uddin, Akka Hossain, Shah Alam Khan and Kajal Mia.

Yesterday, they were produced before the Sunamganj Judicial Magistrate's Court.

The court placed Shamim on a seven-day remand and the others on one-day remand after the investigation officer in the case prayed for their remand, said Selim Newaj, court inspector of Sunamganj police.

[Our correspondents from Rangamati, Lalmonirhat, Dinajpur, Brahmanbaria and Sylhet contributed to the report]

‘Disappointed’, two top law officials quit

FROM PAGE 1

Lawyer AM Mahbub Uddin Khokon, who has been elected secretary of the Supreme Court Bar Association for seven times consecutively, told this correspondent that Murad and Momtaz stepped down perhaps they felt they could not adjust to new Attorney General AM Amin Uddin and would not feel comfortable to work with him.

The president appoints the attorney general as per the prime minister's advice.

“The president appoints a person in the post who has the quality to become a judge of the Supreme Court under the constitution of the country,” Mahbub added.

Contacted, Law Minister Anisul Huq said, “I know that two additional attorney generals have resigned. I don't know the reasons for which they have stepped down.

“These posts will not remain vacant. New additional attorney generals must be appointed now.”

Replying to a query, he said the activities of the attorney general's office would not be hampered following the additional attorney generals' resignations.

“Murad Reza and Momtaz Uddin Fakir had been discharging their responsibilities as additional attorney generals for a long period of time. They have done good work. I thank them. The newly appointed attorney

general is a senior lawyer and he is very competent and experienced. I think the functions of the attorney general's office will not be hampered due to the resignations of Murad Reza and Momtaz Uddin Fakir as additional attorney generals,” the minister said.

Murad, who had been serving as additional attorney general since 2009, told The Daily Star that he resigned as he wished to do so.

He refused to say more.

Momtaz, who was appointed an additional attorney general in 2010, told this correspondent that he decided much earlier to resign from his post as he has some personal issues.

Responding to a query, Momtaz said there was no relation between his resignation and Amin Uddin's appointment as the attorney general.

On October 8, President Md Abdul Hamid appointed senior lawyer and Supreme Court Bar Association President AM Amin Uddin as the country's 14th attorney general.

The post left vacant after Attorney General Mahbubey Alam passed away on September 27.

For moving cases before the Supreme Court, the state now has an attorney general, an additional attorney general, and 67 deputy attorney generals and 151 assistant attorney generals.

Meanwhile, newly appointed

Attorney General Amin Uddin talked to reporters at his office yesterday afternoon and sought their assistance in stamping out corruption from the court arena.

“If I receive information from the media about corruption and irregularities, I will take necessary steps to remove them,” he said.

Amin Uddin said he would try to uphold the dignity of the attorney general's office established by his predecessor Mahbubey Alam.

Replying to a query, the new attorney general said he does not know why Murad and Momtaz resigned.

“I have not yet talked to them. They might have personal issues. Appointment and resignation in the attorney general's office are normal phenomena,” Amin Uddin said.

He said reducing the backlog of pending cases is the most challenging job and he will take necessary steps to this effect.

Answering another question, Amin Uddin said a proposal for amending the existing law enhancing punishment for rape from life imprisonment to death sentence could be placed before the cabinet today.

If the law is amended, the offenders will think before committing the crime of rape and gradually the incidents of rape will reduce, he opined.

are blaming social degradation for the rising incident of rape to avert their liability,” he said.

Protests outside Dhaka

In Brahmanbaria, leaders and activists of Bangladesh Chhatra Moitree held a protest rally on rape incidents and violence against women across the country.

Students formed a human chain in front of the office of the deputy commissioner in Brahmanbaria town.

Muhayee Sharad, convener of Chhatra Moitree, Brahmanbaria district unit, said, “No one is above the law in the country. If the perpetrators think they will be able to roam freely after committing heinous crimes like rape, they are living in a fool's paradise.”

Chhatra Moitree called for the incorporation of capital punishment in the law for rapists.

In Pabna, various organisations carried out protest programmes over rape incidents.

Demanding capital punishment of rapists, youths formed a human chain in Pabna's Chatmohar upazila.

24 more die, 1,193 infected

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Twenty-four people died of Covid-19 in the last 24 hours till 8:00am yesterday, read a press release of the Directorate General of Health Services (DGHS).

With this, the total number of deaths from coronavirus infection rose to 5,524 and the death rate stands at 1.46 percent against the total number of confirmed cases.

As a total of 1,193 people were found to be positive for the virus in rt-PCR tests in those 24 hours, the total number of confirmed cases rose to 378,266, added the release.

Yesterday, both the number of daily cases and the daily tests decreased compared to the previous day.

In the previous day, a total of 1,203 people were found to be positive for the viral infection against 10,859 tests.

Yesterday, a total of 9,467 samples were tested and the positivity rate was 12.60 percent. The overall positivity rate stands at 18.26 percent.

Bangladesh is currently on the 16th position in the list of worst affected countries in the world in terms of the number of confirmed cases, according to the reference website -- worldometers.info.

The position is one step behind Iraq and one step ahead of Italy.

Meanwhile, 1,495 Covid-19 patients have recovered in the same 24 hours yesterday.

With this, the total number of recoveries stands at 292,860 which is around 77.42 percent of all confirmed cases.

Among the 24 deceased, 19 were males and five were females. One but all of them died in hospital, according to the press release.

One of them aged between 31 and 40 years, one between 41 and 50, five between 51 and 60, and the rest 17 were above 60, added the release.

One each was from Mymensingh, Rangpur and Sylhet divisions, two each were from Chattogram and Khulna while the highest 17 were from Dhaka division.

3 die, 11 hurt as bus-train collide

OUR CORRESPONDENT, CUMILLA

At least three people were killed and 11 more injured as a bus collided head-on with a mail train at Fatehpur level crossing on Dhaka-Chattogram Highway in Feni around 5:45am yesterday.

According to police, some of the injured were in critical condition whereas some were discharged from local hospitals after providing them with primary treatment.

One of the deceased was identified as Saddam Hossain, 29, of Cumilla's Sadar Dakshin upazila, whereas rest of the two could not be identified immediately, said police.

A five-member probe committee, headed by Snehashish Das Gupta, divisional transportation officer (Chattogram) of Bangladesh Railways, was also formed to investigate the incident, confirmed Feni Railway Station Master Mahbubur Rahman.

The station master also claimed that the accident happened for broken crossing bars on the level crossing.

The bodies were kept at Feni 250-bed District Sadar Hospital morgue after autopsies, said Sub-inspector Saiful Islam of Feni Railway Police.

The injured are Monirul, 20, of Rajshahi; Faruk Hossain, 20, Belal, 55, Sajol, 22, Ariful Islam, 35, Ashik, 17 of Natore; Rubel, 30, of Chapainawabganj; Dulal, 50, of Feni's Sonagazi; Ajharul Islam, 22, of Kishoregonj; Randukhan, 24, of Pabna; and Abdul Kuddus, of Cumilla's Chaudhogram, said police.

According to locals, they rushed to the accident spot hearing a bang near the level crossing. Seeing the situation, they immediately started conducting a rescue operation.

After some time, members of district police, railway police and fire service joined them and continued.

All the injured were sent to local hospitals one by one but two people died on the spot, they said.

Remain cautious

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help the people again,” she said.

In this connection, Sheikh Hasina said that the government has to provide treatment, procure medicines, maybe more doctors and nurses will be needed.

“Considering these, we need to maintain austerity, we must not spend even a single paisa extra without any need. We've to take this step keeping an eye on the future,” she said.

The prime minister also put emphasis on continuing the production of food so that the food crisis does not hit Bangladesh.

She said that many countries are suffering from food shortage amid the coronavirus pandemic. “But in Bangladesh, we made the right decision at the right time. As a result, we aren't facing that crisis,” she said.

She also briefly described various steps of the government taken at the initial stage of coronavirus in the country. “We all have to work so that we can face any sort of calamity,” she said.