

**BANGLADESH UPDATE**



**2,198**  
New cases in 24hrs



**4,79,743**  
Total cases



**6,874**  
Deaths



**3,98,623**  
Recoveries



**1,546,888**  
Deaths



**67,717,705**  
Total cases

**67,717,705**  
Total cases

## JASHORE CORRECTION FACILITY

# Eight teens flee

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Benapole

Eight inmates, aged between 13 and 15, fled from Jashore juvenile correction centre early yesterday.

Asraf Islam, superintendent of Jashore police, said the eight were staying at the guard building next to the main building of the correction centre.

They broke the window grills of a bathroom and escaped going down a ladder used for fixing electricity problems, he added.

Zakir Hossain, caretaker of the centre, said the inmates fled around 4:15am. They were from Jashore,

Khulna, Narail, Gopalganj and Barisal districts.

He, however, refused to give further details about the eight.

The police superintendent said they were trying to confirm the inmates' whereabouts.

Eighteen inmates of the juvenile correction centre were brutally tortured, allegedly by some staffers and fellow inmates, over a trivial matter on August 13.

Three of the victims died of their wounds and 15 were hospitalised.

Later, a case was filed against five staffers and seven inmates in connection with the incident.



The wreckage of a battery-run three-wheeler after it was crushed by a bus on Bangabandhu Bridge approach road at Shalla of Tangail's Kalihati upazila yesterday. The driver of the three-wheeler was killed. PHOTO: COLLECTED

## DEFACED BANGABANDHU SCULPTURE

# Arrest the culprits immediately

15 eminent citizens demand in joint statement

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Fifteen eminent citizens, mostly cultural personalities, yesterday demanded immediate arrest of culprits who recently vandalised an under-construction sculpture of Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman in Kushtia.

In a joint statement, they said opposing setting up of sculptures and damaging Bangabandhu's sculpture are anti-constitutional and are also against the spirit of a secular and democratic Bangladesh.

Termining the defacers of Bangabandhu's sculpture "enemies of humanity and traitors", the eminent personalities demanded their immediate arrest.

"These bigoted fundamentalist forces are delivering anti-culture sermons with false interpretation of the Holy Quran and announcing that they would root out the sculptures," said the statement, signed by cultural activist and valiant freedom fighter Nasiruddin

Yousuff.

Sculpture is one of the oldest media of art. Sculptures give testimony of time and human civilizations artistically. Fundamentalist forces want to turn Bangladesh into a backward country by rejecting the significance of sculpture and science, the eminent citizens added.

They said they were "stunned and shocked" to see that fundamentalists had dared to vandalise Bangabandhu's sculpture in Kushtia on Saturday.

"We urge the government and the people to resist this anti-human civilization bigoted militant force unitedly. We demand the government strongly resist these evil forces," the statement said.

Among the signatories to the statement are: Abdul Gaffar Choudhury, Shamsuzzaman Khan, Hasan Azizul Haque, Anupam Sen, Sarwar Ali, Ramendu Majumdar, Ferdousi Majumdar, Abdus Selim, Mamunur Rashid, Mofidul Hoque, Shofi Ahmed, Abul Momen, Sara Zaker, and Shimul Yousuff.

## Ensure security

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premises of Muktiyoddha Council in 380 upazilas of 63 districts.

During yesterday's hearing, petitioner Bashir prayed to the HC bench to pass necessary directives on the authorities concerned to ensure proper security of Bangabandhu's monuments and murals, considering the incident of damaging his under-construction sculpture in Kushtia.

DAG Abdullah and petitioner Bashir told The Daily Star yesterday that the government has already declared March 7 as "National Historic Day" in line with the HC's earlier order and also submitted a compliance report before the HC to this effect.

During the hearing of the same petition, the HC on February 25 this year directed the government to declare March 7 as "National Historic

Day" since Bangabandhu delivered his historic speech on March 7, 1971, inspiring the nation to go for the Liberation War.

In the speech at the then Race-course Maidan (now Suhrawardy Udyan), Bangabandhu called on the freedom-loving Bengalis to wage a decisive struggle against the Pakistani rulers.

The HC also asked the authorities concerned to set up Bangabandhu's murals in all upazilas and districts across the country during the Mujib Borsho and to submit a compliance report in a month.

Besides, the court issued a rule asking the government to explain as to why it should not be directed to include Bangabandhu's historic March 7 Speech in textbooks for all students so that they can learn about the significance of the speech.

## Govt to revise textbook

FROM PAGE 1

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina joined the weekly cabinet meeting from the Gono Bhaban virtually and chaired it.

The cabinet secretary said, "Our future depends on the way of handling the fourth industrial revolution. If we fail to handle it, we'll face problems. ... We'll fall behind the international competition in economy and technology."

Total technology and system of production will change. "In some sectors, manpower will be reduced, while the demand for manpower will increase in other sectors. We have to develop our workforce in light of that."

Of the multiple problems, three problems of the upcoming revolution have been pointed out. These are replacement of workforce by machines or robots, outdated curriculum and bulk investment.

"We would not be able to cope with the technology with our existing curriculum. Therefore, we need to introduce advanced education system to increase knowledge [of students]," he said, adding that financial stimulus packages and proper training will solve other problems.

He said 10 technologies will dominate the fourth industrial revolution, he said, adding that the country needs to emphasise on the 10 technologies.

These are: advanced materials, cloud technology, autonomous vehicle including drone, synthetic biology, virtual augmented reality, artificial intelligence, robot, blockchain, 3D printing and internet of things.

"To deal with the fourth industrial revolution, one must have knowledge on these technologies," he said.

Replying to a query, he said the authorities concerned have been instructed to form a national steering committee to include these in the curriculum.

Meanwhile, the cabinet in principle

approved the draft of the Jatiya Muktiyoddha Council Bill-2020, aiming to replace the existing Jatiya Muktiyoddha Council Act-2002.

"The Liberation War affairs ministry placed the draft law as the existing act can't fulfil the demand of present time completely. With the passage of the proposed law, the existing act of 2002 will be annulled," said the secretary.

The provisions related to the operation and formulation of the Jatiya Muktiyoddha Council (National Freedom Fighter Council) have been made more precise in the proposed law.

As per the bill, the council could prepare the list of the collaborators and recommend that the government publish it.

Anwarul said the council will have the authority to recommend the list of those who had opposed the Liberation War of Bangladesh, acting as members of Razakar, Al Badr and Al Shams or engaging in the war as members of the para-military forces from March 26 to December 16 in 1971.

In another development, the cabinet also okayed the drafts of revised memorandum of association and articles of association of a company titled "Bangladesh Data Centre Company Limited".

The cabinet secretary said from now on, data of all government servers will be stored at Kaliakoir Hi-Tech City.

Private organisations can also do so on payment, he said, adding that it will be more secure.

There will be a backup in Jashore. As a result, there is no fear of losing data if any disaster takes place at Kaliakoir Hi-Tech City.

Replying to a question, he said all government organisations have been instructed to store their data at the Hi-Tech City.

The cabinet also gave the nod to a proposal to observe December 18 as the national and international migration day every year.

## Most banks ill-prepared

FROM PAGE 1

He said a lack of skilled manpower is one of the main reasons for most of the banks' failure to put the system in place.

Many banks may have financial capabilities to set up SOC, but they don't have trained manpower to run such a centre, he mentioned.

Asked why most of the banks failed to create skilled manpower despite the BB initiative about five years ago, he said many of the banks lack willingness to do so.

"We have written to the banks from time to time, asking them to put in place the cyber security system. We also conveyed it to bank officials at various meetings."

The central bank is now thinking of fixing a deadline for the banks for setting up SOC once the coronavirus pandemic comes under control, he noted.

Debdul further said the IT security units of the government agencies should help create skilled manpower in the banking sector.

"The police and the Rapid Action Battalion have strong wings to tackle cyber-attacks. Such government agencies can play a positive role in improving the skills of IT officials in banks," added the BB official.

SOC is a centralised function within an organisation employing people, processes and technology to continuously monitor and improve its security posture while preventing, detecting, analysing and responding to cyber security incidents.

It acts like a hub or a central command post, taking in telemetry

from across an organisation's IT infrastructure, including its networks, devices, appliances and information stores.

For instance, if anyone tries to steal money from an automated teller machine (ATM) booth of a bank with SOC, the central security system of the bank will be alerted and the fund transfer will be stopped automatically.

Zoha said the IT departments of banks are largely dedicating themselves for setting up infrastructure or fixing the existing IT-related problems.

"Risks will deepen further in the days ahead due to the rapid expansion of digital banking. The banks should take immediate measures to this end," he added.

Except for the branches of three specialised banks, the branches of almost all other banks (99.21 percent) had online banking facilities last year, according to BB data.

The foreign commercial banks had 100 percent online banking facilities, followed by private commercial banks (99.98 percent) and state-run commercial banks (98.12 percent).

In September and November this year, the central bank and the finance ministry issued cyber security alerts for banks soon after receiving information from different local and global agencies.

Following the BB's alert in September, almost all banks suspended the service of ATMs and point of sales (POS) from 12:00am to 7:00am for the time being.

Talking to this newspaper, Syed Mahbubur Rahman, managing director of Mutual Trust Bank, said

all stakeholders of the banking sector should make a concerted effort to strengthen the IT security.

"Banks enjoy profits from their loan disbursement immediately. But they do not see any profit from investment on the IT security in the short term," he said.

Several executives of IT departments at three banks said a good number of banks are now on track to set up SOC.

It's a tough job for the banks as they have to upgrade their digital systems and also make a huge investment, they pointed out.

The bank officials said they are now trying to mitigate the risks of cyber-attacks by using various manual and digital tools in the absence of SOC.

Many banks are using two-factor authentication and SMS alert system for every financial transaction. Imposition of a ceiling on each card transaction is another option to reduce the risks, they mentioned.

They, however, admitted that SOC is the most effective way to protect a bank from cyber-attacks.

Syed Almas Kabir, president of Bangladesh Association of Software and Information Services (BASIS), said it is alarming that most of the banks don't have SOC.

"The government needs to have policies to encourage and ensure cyber security. Currently, there are high import duties on security hardware and this is detrimental to the industry."

"We expect the government will heed our request [to lower duties] so that the country can benefit in the long run," he said.

## Fresh crisis over Covid testing

FROM PAGE 1

days from December 3, said the medical college's virology department head, Akbar Hossain.

"This is the only PCR machine in the entire Barishal division. So, when the machine went out of order, the whole testing process got stuck. We need another machine to ensure uninterrupted testing," he said, adding that the machine was fixed and the testing would resume today.

Take another example. Cumilla Medical College Hospital has the only RT-PCR in the district. But lately, the machine started malfunctioning and giving false results. The testing there was suspended on November 30 and resumed yesterday, Md Niatuzzaman, civil surgeon of Cumilla, told The Daily Star.

The Daily Star visited Muga General Hospital in the capital yesterday and found a notice on the hospital gate that said, "Covid-19 testing remains suspended due to unavoidable reasons." A staffer of the hospital's emergency department said the RT-PCR machine there was out of service. Every day, the machine would test 180-200 samples, he said.

Contacted, Dr Md Habibur Rahman, director of Management Information System (MIS) of the Directorate General of Health Services (DGHS), said, "Machines sometimes go out of order and we try our best to repair them within the shortest possible time. It takes two to five days to repair a RT-PCR machine."

RT-PCR machines needed regular

maintenance. Otherwise, they start to give false results, he said.

DGHS Additional DG Nasima Sultana said the RT-PCR machine in Barishal had already been fixed. Others would be repaired soon too.

"Normally, RT-PCR machines are supposed to be run once a day. But we are using them multiples times since the testing begun. So, these machines would go out of service and it is normal. We, however, are carrying out the tests at other labs to cope with the demand," she added.

Be-Nazir Ahmed, former director (disease control) of the DGHS, said it was extremely important to ensure uninterrupted testing to fight any possible second wave of the Covid-19 outbreak. He stressed on expanding testing facilities immediately.

Testing is important because it lowers the risk of infection, he said.

"The number of daily tests is low in Bangladesh. We need to test around 50,000-60,000 samples every day. When the number remains so low the situation can go out of hand if the RT-PCR machines become non-functional," he warned.

He reminded that the number of Covid-19 infections and deaths caused by the virus was going up as the cold intensified.

On Saturday, Health Minister Zahid Maleque urged people to get tested for Covid-19. "Patients have to come for tests," he said, adding that people were not coming for tests.

As of yesterday, the country tested 28,77,538 samples, shows data from the DGHS.

Currently, the total Covid-19 positivity rate in Bangladesh stands at 16.67 percent while the death rate at 1.43pc.

According to www.worldometers.info, 17,398 out of every one million people in the country have so far been tested, whereas the number is 625,164 in the United States, 382,729 in Italy and 106,639 in India.

RT-PCR, in which samples from nose and throat are swabbed, is considered the gold standard for Covid-19 tests.

Health officials, however, said one of the major challenges with PCR machines was that they could not do a huge number of tests in a single day.

**YESTERDAY'S UPDATE** Thirty-six people died from Covid-19 and at least 2,198 people tested positive for the virus in 24 hours till 8:30am yesterday, according to a DGHS press release.

The total number of deaths climbed to 6,874 and the death rate stood at 1.43 percent. The country has so far reported 4,79,743 infections, added the release.

The current positivity rate is 15.3 percent while the total positivity rate stands at 16.67 percent.

At least 14,369 samples were tested across the country in those 24 hours. In the meantime, 2,663 Covid-19 patients have recovered, the DGHS added in the release.

## 2 women raped in Gazipur, Noakhali

STAR REPORT

Two women were allegedly raped in Gazipur and Noakhali while a youth in Gazipur's Sreepur was sued over spreading secretly-recorded video footage of a teenage girl on social media.

In another incident, a madrasa teacher was arrested yesterday over raping a 16-year-old male student in Feni's Daganbhuiyan upazila.

Quoting the case statement, Moniruzzaman, inspector (investigation) of Sreepur Police Station, said Tauhidul Hasan Rakib, 25, of the upazila's Tepirbari village, gave an indecent proposal to an 18-year-old girl on Saturday.

As she declined the proposal, Rakib threatened to spread her secretly-recorded video footage, which he later did from his Facebook account, said the police official. The girl then filed the case with the police station yesterday.

A housewife, 32, filed a separate case with the police station yesterday, accusing Selim, son of Md Rafiq, of raping her.

In the case statement, she said her family have been having a land-related dispute with Selim for the last 25 years. Recently, Selim came to the house of one of her neighbours to discuss a case filed over the land issue. After the housewife went there, Selim raped her holding a knife to her throat.

The woman also accused him of threatening to gang-rape her if she disclosed the matter to anyone. Two others were also made accused for abetting the crime.

Inspector Moniruzzaman said they were investigating the cases. "We are trying to arrest the accused in the two cases," he said.

In Noakhali, a woman, 35, filed a rape case on Sunday night against a former expatriate, Md Ripon, who now lives in Chatkhil upazila.

The case statement says Ripon developed an intimate relationship with the victim after promising that he would marry her. But he married someone else three weeks ago and then went into hiding.

Chatkhil OC Anwarul Islam said they were trying to arrest Ripon.

In Feni, madrasa teacher Emdad Ullah, 27, was arrested over raping one of his students on multiple occasions in the past few months.

Police sources said law enforcers held the teacher after the 16-year-old boy informed the matter to some of his other teachers at the residential madrasa in Yeakubpur union of Daganbhuiyan.

The victim said he was raped in a room of the madrasa, where the teacher lived.

## Councillor, publisher feud now talk of Sylhet city

Cases they filed against each other under investigation

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Sylhet

The feud between a city corporation councillor and a local daily resulting in cases filed under Digital Security Act in Sylhet have been the talk of the town over the last few days.

The dispute started over a report published in the Ekattorer Kotha on November 28 alleging that ward-22 Councillor Saleh Ahmed Shalim grabbed land of a government school.

The first case was filed by a personal secretary of Nazrul Islam Babul, the publisher of Ekattorer Kotha, on December 2 against Shalim and four others with Kotwali Police Station on charges of spreading "defamatory speech" against the publisher on Facebook.

The other case filed by Shalim two days later with Shahporan Police Station accused Babul and 17 others of publishing and spreading fake news.

The others accused in the case filed by Babul's personal secretary Rana Miah are umayun Rashid Sumon, Kamal Uddin, Kazi Jubayer Ahmed and Ehsan Ahmed, who also shared the defamatory posts on Facebook.

Rana said, "The accused defamed the newspaper's publisher and editor in social media and I filed the case on behalf of the publisher."

The councillor on the other hand accused the publisher and others who shared the news on Facebook.

The news in question mentioned that the councillor was trying to grab the land of a government primary school and extorting the local land owners.

Contacted, Councillor Shalim, also a ruling Awami League Leader, said, "I saw the news online the day they published it. My supporters protested against the news on Facebook. In several interviews on Facebook, I said the publisher of the newspaper himself is a controversial industrialist. The news was published to defame me and I will take legal action against them."

"But to my surprise, they filed a case against me. Then I filed the case against them. I believe that the report intended to defame me," he said.

Officials said both the cases were being investigated.

## 2 Hefajat leaders sued

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The cases mentioned that the statements made by Babunagari, Mamunul and Faizul tantamount to sedition.

The complainants appealed to the court to issue arrest warrants against the accused for "tarnishing the image of the government and creating anarchy".

Accused Mamunul made anti-state remarks on November 13 at the BMA Auditorium in the capital's Topkhana Road area, while Faizul made similar comments at an event in Dhaka's Gandaria the same day, the complaints said.

Hefajat Amir Babunagari also made anti-state remarks at an event in Hathazari, Chattogram on November 27.

On a live programme on his verified Facebook page, Mamunul last night termed Muktiyoddha Moncho an extremist organisation and said he

never made a disrespectful comment against Bangabandhu.

He added that Muktiyoddha Moncho was creating unrest in the country.

A lower court lawyer said the court might summon or issue arrest warrant against the accused if the PBI probe found the allegations to be true.

No one has been convicted for sedition in recent past, sources said.

Talking to reporters at his secretariat office, Obaidul Quader said the attackers of Bangabandhu's sculpture in Kushtia must be guilty of sedition as Bangabandhu is the father of the nation.

About Hefajat leaders, Quader said, "It is not right to take action against anyone without concrete evidence. If we find any evidence... we will take action. We are in the government, in power. We have to move forward with a cool head... We don't want to create unrest in the country by taking action

against anyone.

"Religion is a very sensitive [issue] in Bangladesh. We do not want a hasty decision to create a volatile situation in the country. The government wants to resolve the crisis politically."

He added, "The prime minister is looking into the matter herself."

Quader said there was no political understanding between the government and Hefajat.

**FOUR SENT TO JAIL, REMAND HEARING TODAY**

The four suspects arrested on charges of damaging the sculpture of Bangabandhu in Kushtia were sent to jail yesterday.

Additional Chief Judicial Magistrate Rezaul Islam passed the order in the afternoon.

The court will hear today the police's appeal to place them on remand.