



**COVID TEST
IN KHULNA**
Medical college
lab sees backlog
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A fraudster in myriad guises

This is how a home ministry letter described Shahed 4 years ago, but he kept working the system to make it big

PARTHA PRATIM BHATTACHARJEE

"He is a man of dangerous fraudulent nature."

This is how a home ministry letter back in 2016 described Mohammad Shahed, a person with many "identities".

The letter, sent to the inspector general of police on September 29, read, "Shahed committed various misdeeds at different times by introducing himself as major/lieutenant colonel, former cadet college student and ADC of the then prime minister during 1996-2001."

The letter also asked the IGP to take action against him, but he somehow managed to get away with it.

Recently, Shahed has once again hit the headlines after it was found that the capital's Regent Hospital, owned by him, allegedly issued several thousand fake Covid-19 test reports.

Once a close aide to BNP leaders, Shahed made his way in Awami League politics. But that's just a little part of his "identity". He is the editor and publisher of a daily, according to his accreditation card. Besides, he frequently claimed to be a political analyst, a regular talk-show panelist, a retired army officer and a high official of the Prime Minister's Office.

He also has got a rich collection of photos where he is seen with the president, different past and incumbent ministers, top AL and BNP leaders, top journalists, and high officials of the government and law enforcement agencies.

Shahed also possesses several identity cards, almost all of which are fake, according to law enforcers.



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Drives on to arrest Shahed

Immigration police put on alert; BB orders freezing his accounts

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Immigration police have been asked to remain alert so that Regent Group Chairman Md Shahed, who is accused in a case over false Covid-19 certificates, cannot leave the country.

"We have received an official letter to bar him from leaving the country. We are acting accordingly," said an immigration police official at Hazrat Shahjalal International Airport.

"All immigration points have been alerted," he added.

Lt Col Ashique Billah, director of Rab's Legal and Media Wing, said they wrote to the investigation officer to take steps so that Shahed cannot leave the country.

"Drive is on to arrest him," he added.

Also yesterday, Bangladesh Bank asked all banks to freeze the accounts of Regent Group chairman and those of his business establishments for 30 days.

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Even a few months ago, the yard of Phulkuri Kindergarten and High School in the capital's Basila used to buzz with children playing. But the pandemic has changed everything. The school has remained closed since March, the owner has run out of money and can no longer pay the teachers and make rent. Recently, he has decided to sell the school along with all the furniture to repay bank loans. *Inset*, a notice in this regard next to the school gate.

PHOTO: RASHED SHUMON

BANGLADESH
UPDATE



3,360
New cases in 24hrs



1,75,494
Total cases



2,238
Deaths



84,544
Recoveries

GLOBAL
UPDATE



554,042
Deaths



12,255,929
Total cases

MEDICAL SUPPLIES

Over Tk 100cr embezzled by 14 contractors

DGHS blacklists them

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

More than Tk 100 crore was misappropriated by 14 contractors from the coffers of various government medical colleges and hospitals, as per a list sent out by the Directorate General of Health Services (DGHS) yesterday.

The 14 contractors were blacklisted by DGHS towards the end of June, a whole six months after the Anti-Corruption Commission (ACC) asked them to do so. The anti-graft body had submitted an investigation report piling evidence against them.

According to the list distributed by DGHS, a Topkhana-based medical equipment supplier called Bengal Scientific and Surgical Company tops the list with the most amount of money embezzled.

It embezzled Tk 44.9 million from Rangpur Medical College Hospital, Tk 16.6 crore from Sathkira Medical College Hospital in one instance, and a further

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Govt is blamed despite catching the corrupt: PM

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Saying that her government won't tolerate any corruption and irregularities, Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina yesterday told parliament that action would continue against the corrupt people irrespective of their identities.

While delivering her winding up speech in the shortest ever budget session in the recent history of parliament, she said, "Certainly, we will not tolerate these irregularities. We are taking actions no matter who they are. And our actions will continue."

Hasina, also Leader of the House, made the statement after several opposition lawmakers, including Jatiya Party Chairman and Deputy Leader of the Opposition GM Quader, criticised the government for corruption and irregularities in the health sector.

Describing in details of different charity activities carried out by the ruling Awami League and its associate bodies, Hasina questioned the role of other parties and organisations in helping the people in this tough time.

"There are many political parties, NGOs, and voluntary

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Bangladesh has to pay dearly for it

GM Quader tells House about fake Covid-19 reports

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Deputy leader of the opposition and Jatiya Party Chairman GM Quader yesterday told parliament that the nation would have to bear the brunt of Regent Hospital's Covid-19 test scam as various countries have already banned Bangladeshis from entering their territories.

"We have been affected on a personal level due to fake certificates of Covid-19 test. But Bangladesh as a state has been affected much more," he said.

He came up with the remarks during the 8th budget session of 11th parliament yesterday as Italy, Japan and South Korea put restrictions on Bangladeshi passengers in the last two days.

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When there is already too much stress due to the pandemic, some grim reports have added to the nation's woes. A lawmaker detained in Kuwait; the country's ineligibility for Schengen visas; restriction on travel to South Korea and Japan, and headlines in Italian media for wrong reason -- all have come as heartbreaks and also put Bangladesh's image at stake abroad. In light of these developments, Foreign Minister AK Abdul Momen talks to The Daily Star's Golam Mortoza on the challenges the country is facing on the global stage.

MP's arrest abroad tainted our image

Action if Shahid's role in human trafficking is proved, foreign minister tells Star

The Daily Star (TDS): Lawmaker Shahid Islam has been arrested in Kuwait on charges of human trafficking and money laundering. What steps have you taken in this regard?

AK Abdul Momen (AAM): If the Kuwait authorities inform us, if we can gather information that he was involved in human trafficking and money laundering, then we will take legal action against him.

TDS: Is there any other way of collecting intelligence, in case Kuwait doesn't provide the information?

AAM: The ACC [Anti-Corruption Commission] has started an investigation. We may get information from there.

TDS: How damaging is this for a country when its lawmaker gets arrested abroad on such serious charges? Is there anything we can do right now?

AAM: Of course, our image has been tarnished and we have zero tolerance for such crimes.



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MP Shahid not Kuwaiti citizen

Says interior ministry of the ME country

DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT

Bangladeshi lawmaker Shahid Islam Papul is not a Kuwaiti citizen, Kuwait's interior ministry said yesterday.

The ministry's comment came a day after Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina said in parliament that the lawmaker's seat would be vacated if he was found to have secured Kuwaiti citizenship.

"We are talking with the Kuwait government about whether he [Papul] is a citizen of Kuwait or not ... we'll look into it. If he is a citizen of Kuwait, then we will have to vacate his seat because law will take its own course," Hasina said on Wednesday.

Kuwait's General Administration of Relations and Security Media at

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Coronavirus transmission on the rise

Show DGHS data; 41 deaths, 3,360 cases recorded in a day

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

With 3,360 more coronavirus cases recorded in the last 24 hours until yesterday, the country reached another sad milestone of 1,75,000 positive cases since the outbreak began.

Bangladesh remains the 17th worst affected country in the world in terms of the number of cases with 1,75,494 confirmed cases. The position is one step ahead of France and one step behind Germany, according to worldometer.info.

In the last four days, there was an increase in the overall rate of infection

On Monday, 19.25 percent of those tested reported positive for the virus while the rate rose to 21.49 percent yesterday.

In the past 24 hours till 2:30pm yesterday, 41 patients died of Covid-19, taking the tally to 2,238, according to the

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A vessel near a bridge in the Padma in Kathalbari Matbarchar area of Madaripur. No vessel can go under the bridge now that the water level of the river has risen. The photo was taken yesterday.

PHOTO:
ANISUR RAHMAN

CENTRALISED OXYGEN SUPPLY

51 more public hospitals to have the system soon

TUHIN SHUBHRA ADHIKARY

With the number of Covid-19 cases increasing sharply in the country, the government is going to set up centralised oxygen supply system in 50 more public hospitals to ensure uninterrupted oxygen supply to patients.

According to experts, uninterrupted oxygen supply in hospitals is a very crucial component in the fight against the Covid-19 pandemic and it can save many lives.

Officials said the authorities are now installing liquid oxygen tanks in 23 public hospitals. Besides, the health ministry last week ordered the Health Engineering Department (HED) to install central gas pipeline and liquid oxygen tanks in 21 more public hospitals.

Centralised oxygen supply system would be set up in 30 more public hospitals under a project funded by World Bank and the plan is now awaiting approval, the officials added.

A total of 22 public hospitals had centralised oxygen supply system before the Covid-19 hit the country in March. The system was installed in five more hospitals after the pandemic started.

Once all the ongoing works are completed, a total of 101 public hospitals would have centralised oxygen supply system, officials said.

Earlier last month, a health ministry document painted a grim picture of centralised oxygen supply in public hospitals.

In a letter to the National Electro-Medical Equipment Maintenance Workshop and Training Centre (NEMEMW and TC) on June 2, the health ministry said most of the 39 major public hospitals, including those dedicated to

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