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Your Right to Know

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BANGLADESH
UPDATE2,617
New cases in 24hrs2,69,115
Total cases3,557
Deaths1,54,871
RecoveriesGLOBAL
UPDATE748,578
Deaths20,890,805
Total cases

COMPLAINTS AGAINST COPS

Floodgates flung open

Good deeds by police overshadowed by activities of some rogue colleagues

WASIM BIN HABIB and TUHIN SHUBHRA ADHIKARY

“Seven policemen sent to jail”, “Drama by cops’ gone wrong”, “Bamna OC withdrawn from slapping ASI”, “Kotwali OC, 4 cops sued for extortion”, and “Durgapur OC withdrawn over torturing Jubo League leader”, were some of the headlines over the last few days.

Of late, complaints against police over various acts of brutalities and misdeeds have been pouring in.

Intimidation, extortion, detention of people without any valid reason, bribery, and threatening to kill people were the common allegations raised against members of police.

The sudden rise in the number of allegations against the force members overshadowed their feats and somewhat sullied the image the force earned by being on the Covid-19 frontline. Police were on the streets to ensure people’s safety and helped working people during the shutdown.

The killing of a former army officer in police firing reinforced the belief of many that the force is trigger-happy and it has dented people’s trust in the police.

Ex-major Sinha Md Rashed Khan, who served in the Special Security Force (SSF) and took voluntary retirement two years ago, was killed in police firing on the night of July 31 at Shamlapur police check-post. The police gave a different version to the ones given by witnesses.

The killing triggered widespread criticism, leading the authorities to form a high-powered enquiry committee. As an immediate measure, 21 policemen were closed. Later, seven cops were arrested. Of them, four were placed on remand.

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A bus helper wearing a face mask on his wrist looks for commuters to pick up at Poribagh in the capital. People refusing to use any face covering are becoming more common by the day even though there is no scientific data proving that the coronavirus outbreak in the country, especially in Dhaka, has been contained. The photo was taken yesterday.

PHOTO: FIROZ AHMED

Ex-Reliance Finance MD embezzled Tk 3,000cr

Finds ACC; 83 bank accounts frozen

MAHBUBUR RAHMAN KHAN

While he was the managing director of Reliance Finance Ltd, a non-bank financial institution, Proshanta Kumar Halder made his relatives directors of three other leasing companies to swindle money.

Together, they misappropriated Tk 3,000 crore of depositors, finds the Anti-Corruption Commission in its enquiry.

“The money was transferred to 83 accounts ...,” said an ACC official, preferring to be unnamed, adding that the accounts belong to companies and people that exist only on paper.

The anti-graft body yesterday froze the 83 accounts where Tk 3,000 crore had been transferred.

The three leasing companies in which

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FARMERS BANK SCAM

Charges framed against ex-CJ Sinha, 10 others

COURT CORRESPONDENT

A Dhaka court yesterday framed charges against former chief justice Surendra Kumar Sinha and 10 others in a case filed over misappropriating and laundering about Tk 4 crore from the erstwhile Farmers Bank in 2016.

Among the accused, six are former officials of the bank, later renamed Padma Bank. They are former managing director AKM Shamim, senior executive vice-president and head of Credit Division Gazi Salahuddin, first vice-president of Credit Division Swapan Kumar Roy, first vice-president Shafiuddin Askary, former chairman of the bank’s audit committee Mahbubul Haque Chisty and vice-president Lutful Haque.

The four other accused are Shahjahan of Tangail’s Sreehoripur village, Ranjit Chandra Saha of the district’s Jodunathpur village, and his wife Santri Roy and nephew Niranjana Chandra Saha.

AKM Shamim and Gazi Salahuddin are now on bail while Mahbubul Haque Chisty is behind bars. The eight other accused were shown fugitives in the charge sheet of the case.

Claiming themselves to be innocent,

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DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS

Where disorder reigns supreme

Planning ministry expresses discontent

REJAUL KARIM BYRON AND MOHIUDDIN ALAMGIR

The planning ministry yesterday expressed disappointment over frequent amendments in projects, one after another missed deadlines, and the directors’ absence at project sites.

Implementation of projects gets delayed because of this, said top officials at a meeting of secretaries from all ministries and divisions.

In many cases, one person is becoming the director for as many as eight or nine projects while officials design the project without properly testing its feasibility.

The officials said the health ministry’s performance in implementing the Annual Development Project for 2019-2020 fiscal as well as the last few years has been the worst.

The planning ministry in a working paper for the meeting said that the Executive Committee of the National Economic Council (Ecne) approved 18 amended projects worth Tk 51,113 crore under nine ministries in June and July this year.

“On an average the cost of these projects increased by 34.86 percent. In some cases, cost increased by 100 percent,” said the working paper.

Revised ADP implementation was slow in 2019-20 fiscal. All ministries and divisions managed to spend 80.45 per cent of the money allocated in the revised ADP budget of Tk 2,01,198 crore.

Most of the projects are designed small in the beginning, but with time, the project expands and the cost rises. Meanwhile, people get deprived of the services, said the working paper.

Although the Ecne directive asking for proper feasibility tests and technical designs are barely followed. “As a result, the projects need multiple extensions.”

Planning Minister MA Mannan at a virtual press briefing said, “Rules are ignored on some occasions.”

The rules that one person cannot be the director for multiple projects and that the director should not be transferred were often ignored, he said.

Cabinet Secretary Khandker Anwarul Islam at the meeting reminded

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ACTIVE COVID CASES

Bangladesh now eighth in world

Govt to cut number of dedicated hospitals by month’s end

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Bangladesh is now on the eighth position of the countries’ list with most active Covid-19 cases as the health directorate reported 2,617 new cases yesterday.

Among all other Asian countries, only neighbouring India is ahead of Bangladesh with 6,58,417 active cases, with USA topping the list with 23,78,426 active cases, according to www.worldometers.info.

As of yesterday, the number of active Covid-19 cases in Bangladesh was 1,09,896.

Against this backdrop, Health Minister Zahid Maleque said some Covid-19 dedicated hospitals will be reverted to non-Covid-19 hospitals at the end of August as the number of Covid-19 patients are decreasing.

“The severity of the Covid-19 outbreak is decreasing. Patients who are not infected with

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SINHA MURDER CASE

Accused to face quizzing Sunday

STAR REPORT

Major (ret) Sinha was the operation officer of Border Guard Bangladesh in Teknaf and played an active role in the anti-narcotics operations.

Lt Col Md Faisal Hasan Khan, commanding officer of BGB Battalion-2 in Teknaf, said Sinha served as acting operations officer at Teknaf BGB from October 2017 to January 2018.

“He was a smart and brilliant officer. So, definitely he played important role in the drives against narcotics,” he added.

Despite repeated attempts, no Rab officer could be contacted to comment on whether Sinha’s posting in Teknaf BGB had any links to his murder, which his sister claimed was “a planned and cold-blooded murder” in the case she filed.

Meanwhile, Rab yesterday did not take any of the 10 accused arrested so far in the Major (ret) Sinha murder case in their custody from jail to interrogate them.

Asked, Rab said the reason they postponed the interrogation was that they had stumbled upon some additional information about the Sinha murder on social media. “We have to verify those informations before we go into questioning,” Rab said.

It added that they would interrogate Shipra Debnath and Shahadul Islam Sefat, witnesses to the Sinha killing, on Sunday and that too is when they will bring in the 10 accused on remand.

“We don’t know if Sinha’s recruitment in the BGB was a reason for the murder. We are investigating every possible angle,” a Rab official said.

A Rab team went to Cox’s Bazar jail in several vehicles around 11:00am yesterday, but they returned after around 15 minutes without taking any of the accused with them,

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‘Ill-efforts’ on to put 2 forces face to face

Bangladesh Police Service Association voices concern

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Bangladesh Police Service Association (BPSA) has expressed concerns over a vested quarter’s “ill-efforts” to bring two professional forces of the state face to face over the recent killing of Major (ret) Sinha Mohammad Rashed Khan in Cox’s Bazar.

In a press statement yesterday, the organisation said a vested group is active to influence and hinder the legal process of the Sinha murder case by using various social media platforms, including Facebook, Youtube, and also some print and electronic media outlets.

“In such a situation, such ill-efforts of bringing the two professional forces face to face is very unfortunate and unexpected,” said the statement.

It appears that tension grew between the police and the Rapid Action Battalion over the

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Shubhadda Khal, which flows to the Buriganga river, has turned into a stream of garbage by the road in Aganagar, Keraniganj of Dhaka. This mindless littering not only affects the overall hygiene in the area but also deprives people of the choice of travelling by boats. The photo was taken yesterday.

PHOTO: AMRAN HOSSAIN

