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BANGLADESH
UPDATE3,200
New cases in 24hrs2,82,344
Total cases3,740
Deaths1,62,825
RecoveriesGLOBAL
UPDATE778,865
Deaths22,120,645
Total cases

INDIAN FOREIGN SECY IN DHAKA

Sudden visit aims to cement ties

Shringla conveys Modi's message to Hasina that Delhi continues to be Dhaka's partner in dev; post-Covid economic recovery discussed

DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT

Indian Foreign Secretary Harsh Vardhan Shringla arrived in the capital yesterday on a sudden visit and conveyed a message to Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina that Delhi has special relations with Dhaka and it will continue to be its development partner.

He called on the prime minister at her official residence the Gono Bhaban around 7:30pm and discussed post-Covid-19 economic recovery and assistance, officials said.

"India has special and close relations with Bangladesh. Therefore, the foreign secretary has come to meet the prime minister with this message in an unofficial visit even during this pandemic," Indian High Commissioner to Bangladesh Riva Ganguly Das said at a short media briefing at Hotel Shonargaon last night.

Indian officials said Hasina appreciated the visit, adding she was happy that Prime



Minister Narendra Modi sent a top official to convey the message.

Shringla landed in Dhaka in a special flight of the Indian Air Force at 11:30am. He met the PM at the Gono Bhaban around 7:30pm, although the meeting was scheduled to begin at 3:00pm. It lasted for about an hour.

Earlier, Indian media reported that Shringla would carry a personal message from Modi to Hasina.

The visit, which was officially announced only after Shringla's arrival, is meant to warm up Indo-Bangla relations, amid New Delhi's concerns that China is expanding its footprints in Bangladesh, diplomatic sources said.

An Indian diplomat said it was an "unofficial" visit by Foreign Secretary Shringla, who is a former Indian high commissioner to Bangladesh. After joining as the Indian foreign secretary in January,

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Holding passports and confirmed Biman tickets for Middle Eastern countries in their hand, passengers stage a protest in front of the Motijheel office of the national carrier yesterday demanding refunds. The airport immigration authorities barred them from leaving the country saying that they had no permission from their destination countries for flying.

PHOTO:
ANISUR RAHMAN

HC asks why Shahid's JS membership shouldn't be cancelled

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The High Court yesterday wanted to know why the parliamentary membership of Kazi Shahid Islam Papul, who has been elected from Laxmipur-2 constituency, should not be cancelled for providing false information to the Election Commission through his affidavit.

The court issued a rule asking the respondents to explain to this effect in four weeks. Speaker to the Jatiya Sangsad, its secretary, Election Commission and its secretary, deputy commissioner of Laxmipur and Kazi Shahid Islam Papul have been made respondents to the rule.

The High Court bench of Justice Obaidul Hassan and Justice AKM Zahurul Huq came up with the

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ASPIRING MIGRANTS

Uncertainty clouds fate of over 85,000

JAMIL MAHMUD

Jahangir Alam got an employment visa in late February and was preparing to fly to Saudi Arabia the following month to work as a cleaner.

But the 24-year-old man from Tangail couldn't take a flight as the government in March announced suspension of all scheduled flights to and from Bangladesh amid the global coronavirus outbreak.

This brought to a near halt the country's efforts to send fresh migrant workers abroad.

According to Bangladesh Association of International Recruiting Agencies (Baira), the pandemic has either delayed or stalled the process of sending at least 85,405 aspiring migrants to different countries till mid-July. Of them, 85 percent was expected to have jobs in Saudi Arabia.

Of the workers, 22,987 got visas and completed all procedures but could not fly to their destinations. Jahangir had borrowed Tk 3 lakh from a moneylender to pay for his employment visa. He also had to fork out another Tk 70,000 from his own savings.

"Now, I am paying interest on the debt but there is no indication of when I'll be able to catch a flight," he told this correspondent over phone recently.

Jahangir, the eldest of his parents' three children,



is now unsure when he will be able to help his labourer father run the family.

Like him, thousands of low-income people have invested their borrowed or hard-earned money for "lucrative" overseas jobs. But the pandemic has thrown their plans into uncertainty.

The government last month announced resumption of international flights on a limited scale. But fresh migrant workers could not fly abroad as scheduled flights to Saudi Arabia, the largest overseas labour market for Bangladesh, and most other countries remain suspended.

Currently, scheduled flights are being operated to only 11 destinations in Malaysia, the UAE, Qatar, the UK, China, Sri Lanka, Maldives and Turkey, Civil Aviation Authority of Bangladesh (CAAB)

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MAJ SINHA'S KILLING

3 APBn men held

Placed on 7-day remand; new 'crossfire' case filed against OC Pradip; bank accounts of SP, Pradip, his wife, brother frozen

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Three members of Armed Police Battalion were arrested and placed on a seven-day remand in a case filed in connection with the killing of Major (ret'd) Sinha Md Rashed Khan, bringing the total number of arrested to 13 yesterday.

The trio are Assistant Sub-inspector Md Shahjahan and constables Razib and Md Abdullah. They were on duty at the Shamlapur checkpoint at 9:30pm on July 31, yards away from the spot where Maj (ret'd) Sinha was killed, said Lt Col Ashiq Billah, director of Rapid Action Battalion's legal and media wing during a press conference at Jol Torongo resort in Cox's Bazar on Monday night.

Judge of Teknaf Upazila Senior Magistrate Court Tamanna Farah passed the order after Senior Assistant Superintendent of Police Khairul Islam of Rab, also the investigation officer of the murder case, produced them before the court with 10-day remand prayer for each.

Speaking to reporters at the court premises, the investigation officer of the case, Rab's Assistant Director Khairul Islam said, "During primary interrogation we found that they were actively involved in the incident."

Rab will take them into remand at a suitable time, he added.

The three have been suspended from their duties. APBn-16 Commanding Officer Md Hemayetul Islam said, "According to government rules, APBn members get suspended upon arrest."

Sources said Islam himself was interviewed yesterday by the home ministry's four-member high-level investigation committee tasked with looking into the murder.

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Sayeeda Khanam
(1937-2020)

Photography trailblazer passes away

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Sayeeda Khanam, the first female professional photographer of Bangladesh, passed away in the capital early yesterday.

She was 83. She had been suffering from old-age complications and breathed her last at her Banani home around 3:00am.

Born in Pabna on December 29, 1937, Sayeeda completed her

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Cases pass 3k a day first time this month

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The country yesterday saw daily Covid-19 cases cross the 3,000-mark for the first time this month with 3,200 people testing positive for the virus.

Earlier, 3,009 coronavirus cases were recorded on July 29, and the number remained below the 3000-mark since then, thanks to inadequate testing.

In 24 hours till 8:30am yesterday, the virus claimed 46 lives -- the second highest number of daily deaths this month. On August 4, the country saw 50 deaths from Covid.

In most of the days this month, the daily deaths were below 40.

As of yesterday, the total number of deaths was 3,740 and that of confirmed cases 282,344.

With 14,630 tests done yesterday, 13,78,819 samples have been tested in 91 laboratories across the country since January 21.

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Fire service divers try to salvage a sunken microbus from a pond along Mymensingh-Sherpur highway in Mymensingh's Banshati area yesterday. The vehicle, bound for Sherpur, veered off the road, hit a roadside tree and plunged into the pond. The accident left eight people dead and six others injured.

PHOTO:
COLLECTED

MICROBUS CRASHES INTO POND

8 of a family killed on the way to funeral

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Mymensingh

Saudi expatriate Ratan Mia and his cousin Shahjahan were heading to Nalitabari of Sherpur along with their families in a microbus to be at the funeral of their cousin.

Their cousin, Hasen Ali, 45, died of heart attack Monday night.

Saddened and shocked, the grief-stricken families were yet to process the loss. But before they could reach, the microbus carrying 14 passengers, hit a roadside tree and fell into a pond, killing eight of them and injuring six others.

The accident took place in Banshati area on Mymensingh-Sherpur highway in Mymensingh around 7:45am yesterday.

"My whole world turned upside down. Where have you gone my daughter? How would my three children live now?" said an inconsolable Shahjahan, 45. The father of four lost his mother, wife, and the seven-year-old daughter.

Ratan, 54, came to Bangladesh early this year and got stuck due to the pandemic. He sustained critical injuries and was sent to Mymensingh Medical College Hospital.

His mother, wife and uncle were killed in the crash.

Narrating the accident, Rubel Mia, one of the surviving members of Shahjahan's family, said the driver Nazrul Islam, 40, dozed off for a moment. He opened his eyes and saw an oncoming truck which he tried to avoid by swerving to the left. But he lost control.

Nazrul fled the scene. On information, police and fire service personnel rushed to the spot and recovered the bodies and rescued the injured.

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