

**BANGLADESH UPDATE**



**1,699**  
New cases in 24hrs



**4,23,620**  
Total cases



**6,108**  
Deaths



**3,41,416**  
Recoveries



**1,275,472**  
Deaths



**51,635,791**  
Total cases

## MPs laud Bangabandhu's extraordinary leadership, sacrifice for the nation

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Treasury and opposition bench MPs yesterday lauded Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman for his extraordinary political life and leadership, and sacrifice for liberating Bangladesh.

However, a number of MPs, including Workers Party President Rashed Khan Menon, said Bangladesh had deviated from the path dreamt by Bangabandhu.

They cited widespread corruption and said secular nature of the state must be ensured.

The MPs were participating on the resolution for discussion brought by Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina in parliament on Monday.

Hasina brought the resolution, under section-147 of the rules of procedure of parliament, to pay solemn tribute to Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman through a special discussion on his political life, activities, and philosophy.

Hasina in the resolution said Bangabandhu presented an independent country, the red-green flag, and the constitution. Bangabandhu created the scope for the Bangalee nation to move into the international arena with its head held up high.

"Let us pay our solemn respect to the greatest Bangalee of all time Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman through a special discussion in parliament over his colorful political and work life and philosophy on the occasion of Mujib Borsho celebration marking his birth centenary in 2020," said the leader of the house.

Taking part in the discussion, Menon said Bangabandhu had said in parliament that politics based on religion would not work in this country.

"Bangabandhu's remark is very relevant now in Mujib Year. I see on YouTube that 'Amar Sonar Bangla' is being Islamised. Hefajat is saying that the country will have to be run according to their words. The demand for enacting blasphemy law is now rising," he said.

The Workers Party president also said Bangabandhu was strict against corruption. Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina has declared zero-tolerance policy against corruption. The society must stand up against corruption.

Menon said, "If we really want to remember Bangabandhu, we have to be in favour of the oppressed. Thanks to the prime minister that we are on the path of development during this Covid period. But at the same time inequality in the society is growing. The poor are getting poorer. I also saw that business interests were fulfilled regarding vaccines of Covid-19."

"Bangabandhu does not belong only to the Awami League. Bangabandhu is not a property of any party. He is the father of the nation."

Liberation War Affairs Minister AKM Mozammel Haq in his speech said that Ziaur Rahman-Mushtaq clique not only protected the killers of Bangabandhu, but also encouraged them by providing them with jobs.

"The assassination of Bangabandhu is not just the assassination of any person. Those who did not believe in Bangladesh killed him."

He demanded revelation of the real killers of Bangabandhu through a truth commission.

Ruling AL MPs Tofail Ahmed, land minister Saifuzzaman Chowdhury, and Abul Hasan Mahmood Ali, Jatiya Party MP Fakhru Imam among others took part in yesterday's discussion.



PHOTO: COLLECTED

**A cop checks the lock at the main gate of Mind Aid Psychiatry and De-Addiction Hospital in the capital's Adabor area yesterday. Law enforcers closed the medical facility, which was running without a licence, after Senior Assistant Superintendent of Police Anisul Karim died there on Monday allegedly due to beating by some hospital staffers.**

## It was a murder

FROM PAGE 1

hospital. Anisul was taken to the room on the first floor. The small air-conditioned room, with foam attached to the interior walls, is fitted with a closed-circuit television (CCTV) camera.

Monday's incident, during which Anisul was wrestled to the floor and his hands were tied by hospital staffers, was captured on the CCTV camera.

Visiting the hospital around 1:00pm yesterday, this correspondent found no management personnel or staffers -- all the rooms were empty.

Situated on Road 2 at Baitul Aman Housing Society, 17 patients were admitted at the hospital till Monday. But all had left by yesterday.

Anisul's father Faijuddin Ahmed has filed a murder case with Adabor Police Station, accusing 15 people, including five management personnel, of killing his son.

Police yesterday arrested 10 employees of the hospital involved in the incident, terming it an "obvious murder".

The arrestees are: the hospital's Marketing Manager Arif Mahmud Joy, Coordinator Redwan Sabbir, Kitchen staffer Masud, ward boys Jobayer Hossain, Tanif Mollah, Sajeeb Chowdhury, Asim Chandra Pal, Liton Ahmed, Saiful Islam Palash and pharmacist Tanvir Hasan.

A Dhaka court yesterday placed the 10 accused on seven days' remand each. "After analysing the CCTV footage, we think it's an obvious murder. Eight to nine people were beating the police officer. There was not a doctor among those handling the patient," Dhaka Metropolitan Police (DMP) Tejaon Division Deputy Commissioner (DC) Harun-Ur-Rashid told a press conference at his office around noon yesterday.

He said the hospital authorities could not show any legal documents and licence required to run a mental hospital. "It will be sealed off," he added.

Police will also investigate why and how ASP Anisul was transferred to the hospital from the National Institute of Mental Health and Hospital. "We will investigate whether there was involvement of any middle man in it," he said.

A family member of the deceased police official said they shifted the patient because they thought the environment of the government hospital was not suitable.

"We wanted a comfortable room with an AC. We were informed that we would get 24/7 doctor's service along with the consultation of a psychiatrist."

"But we are shocked to see their patient management service... Anisul was not violent at all at that moment," a family member said.

This correspondent found several business cards of psychiatrists of National Institute of Mental Health, Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujib Medical University, Holy Family Red Crescent Medical College, Central Drug Addiction Treatment Centre, Enam Medical College and Hospital, at the Mind Aid Psychiatry and De-Addiction Hospital.

According to the case document, the hospital was run by five people in the management -- Dr Muhammad Niaz Morshed, Abdullah Al Mamun, Sakhawat Hossain, Sazzad Amin and Fatema Khatun Moyna.

The Daily Star made several phone calls to Dr Niaz, but he did not answer. The Tejaon DC said action would be taken against all those involved in the incident, including the hospital management.

Inspector Faruk Mollah, investigation officer of the case, told The Daily Star last night that Dr Niaz Morshed is under their surveillance.

"He is not physically stable. He can't move from his waist to toe. We will inform the court in this regard," the IO said.

Family members of the victim said he had been suffering from mental health complications and was "quiet" for three to four days.

Describing the incident, DC Harun-Ur-Rashid said Anisul went to the Mind Aid Hospital around 11:35am. Ten minutes after the patient had breakfast, hospital staffer Arif told Anisul's family members that they would take Anisul to washroom. When his sister Umme Salma wanted to go with them, they barred her.

Around 12:00pm, Arif called Umme Salma when she found her brother lying numb on the floor, the DC said,

adding that he was declared dead at the National Institute of Cardiovascular Diseases (NICVD) at 12:58pm.

Analysing the CCTV footage, it was seen that Anisul was dragged into a soundproof room by several hospital staffers and thrown to the ground by six employees of the hospital. Two more employees dressed in blue grabbed his leg and two others hit him with their elbows. Hospital staffer Arif was present all the while. Anisul's hands were tied behind his back with a piece of blue cloth.

There were no doctors, but all were hospital staffers, ward boys and cleaners, the police official said.

Referring to remain unnamed, a batchmate of the deceased police official said Anisul became angry when he was being taken to the soundproof room. He then hit a staffer, at which point several staffers dragged him into the soundproof room.

Expressing grave concern over the death of the Senior ASP, rights body Ain o Salish Kendra yesterday demanded that the authorities bring all mental health hospitals and service providers under regular monitoring and ensure they are accountable for their activities.

ASK demanded a fair probe into the allegations, proper legal action against the responsible persons and hospital authorities in this regard.

Meanwhile, senior ASP Anisul was buried at Gazipur City Central Graveyard around 9:30am yesterday. His namaj-e-janaza was held at Bhawal Rajbari ground.

Anisul Karim, appointed as a police officer in the 31st BCS, was working in Barishal Metropolitan Police (Traffic). He secured first position in his batch. Earlier he served Dhaka Metropolitan Police, Rapid Action Battalion, and Police Headquarters.

Hailing from Kapasia, Gazipur, he has one child. Anisul was a 33rd-batch student of the Department of Biochemistry and Molecular Biology at Jahangirnagar University.

Around 2:30pm yesterday, his friends, seniors and juniors at Jahangirnagar University, formed a human chain in front of the private hospital and demanded exemplary punishment of those involved in the murder.

## PMO asks rail ministry to cut costs

FROM PAGE 1

Officials said the PMO sent the directives to the railways ministry last week but they are yet to reach Bangladesh Railway, the implementing agency of the projects.

"The ministry has received the directives but we are yet to get it," Md Shamsuzzaman, director general of BR, told The Daily Star yesterday.

The Daily Star could not ascertain whether the directives asked the cost to be cut from different parts of the projects or by changing their plans. It also could not be determined what directive was issued for the Joydebpur-Mymensingh-Jamalpur dual-gauge double line project.

On September 30, the PMO formed the committee to review the three railway project costs and whether they should go ahead as planned. The projects were supposed to be implemented with Chinese finance and by Chinese companies.

The committee, led by Shamima Nargis, the then member (physical infrastructure division) of the Planning Commission, submitted its reports within seven working days, sources said.

Following the submission, Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina issued the directives, the sources added.

The committee had representatives from the railways ministry, Bangladesh Railway, Economic Relations Division (ERD), and Implementation Monitoring and Evaluation Division (IMED).

The committee also gave several observations and suggestions and the PMO asked for necessary changes in the projects following them, they added.

Of the three projects, Executive Committee of the National Economic Council (Ecne) has approved the first

two projects and Chinese companies have been selected and contract costs have also been negotiated.

Final loan and commercial deals were yet to be signed.

The third project has not been approved by Ecne yet.

However, a Chinese company has already been selected and a tentative contract cost has been negotiated.

The Ecne in April last year approved the project to convert the Akhaura-Sylhet metre-gauge rail line to dual-gauge for Tk 16,104 crore.

The contract cost negotiated with China Railway Construction Bridge Engineering Bureau Group Co Ltd is Tk 12,079 crore.

But many questioned the "huge cost" while others asked as to why the government would convert the existing line when it was possible to build a new dual-gauge lines with some extra money.

The government took up the Tk 14,250 crore project in January last year to turn Joydebpur-Ishwardi line into a dual-gauge double line. It is scheduled to be completed by December, 2024.

The negotiated contract cost for this project is Tk 9,839 crore and the selected company is China Civil Engineering Construction Corporation.

The tentative negotiated cost for constructing the dual-gauge double line alongside the existing Joydebpur-Mymensingh-Jamalpur metre-gauge section is Tk 8,808 crore and the selected company is China Railway International Group.

The Daily Star failed to reach the railways minister and secretary for comments despite repeated attempts.

## GOP backs Trump

FROM PAGE 1

Judges have tossed out lawsuits in Michigan and Georgia, and experts say Trump's legal efforts have little chance of changing the election result.

The leading Republican in Congress, Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell, on Monday carefully backed Trump, saying that he was "100% within his rights to look into allegations of irregularities," without citing any evidence.

McConnell's comments represent the thinking of most Senate Republicans for now, said a senior Senate Republican aide. "The position is tenable until it isn't and might last for a week or two before it becomes untenable," the aide said.

The support apparently made Trump go on the offensive yesterday.

"WE WILL WIN!" the Republican president tweeted early in the morning. "WATCH FOR MASSIVE BALLOT COUNTING ABUSE."

That's a big contrast from what he received from the outgoing president Barack Obama after being elected as the president of the United States.

Exactly four years ago yesterday, Trump had just scored his surprise victory against Hillary Clinton and toured the White House for the first time as a guest of Obama.

That courtesy to a presidents-elect is an old tradition, highlighting the nation's near sacred respect for the peaceful transfer of power.

Trump has not only failed to invite Biden for a chat in the Oval Office, he is blocking the Democrat from access to facilities, funding and expertise that usually come in a ready made package to help the incoming leader.

A Trump appointee who heads the office charged with recognizing election results has yet to do so, preventing the Biden transition team from moving into federal government office space or accessing funds to hire staff.

The General Services Administrator Emily Murphy, appointed by Trump in 2017, has yet to determine that "a winner

is clear," a spokeswoman said. Biden's team is considering legal action.

Emphasizing the atmosphere of intrusiveness, Secretary of State Mike Pompeo yesterday said in a testy news conference that he was preparing for "a smooth transition to a second Trump administration."

**BARR MOVE PROMPTS RESIGNATION** US Attorney General William Barr on Monday told federal prosecutors to "pursue substantial allegations" of irregularities of voting and the counting of ballots.

He also told them that "fanciful or far-fetched claims" should not be a basis for investigation. His letter did not indicate the Justice Department had uncovered voting irregularities affecting the outcome of the election.

Richard Pilger, who for years has served as director of the Election Crimes Branch in the Justice Department, said in an internal email he was resigning from his post after he read "the new policy and its ramifications".

The previous Justice Department policy, designed to avoid interjecting the federal government into election campaigns, had discouraged overt investigations "until the election in question has been concluded, its results certified, and all recounts and election contests concluded."

Biden's campaign said Barr was fueling Trump's far-fetched allegations of fraud.

"Those are the very kind of claims that the president and his lawyers are making unsuccessfully every day, as their lawsuits are laughed out of one court after another," said Bob Bauer, a senior adviser to Biden.

A bipartisan group of six former US Justice Department officials blasted Barr's move.

"The voters decide the winner in an election, not the President, and not the Attorney General," wrote the group, which includes Don Ayer, a deputy attorney general under former President George HW Bush.

## Blighted by graft, partisanship

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able to verify details of the rest of the beneficiaries.

The anti-graft watchdog also took 960 interviews of OMS (open market sales) card holders, and 36.8 percent of them said they got less rice than they were supposed to receive. Ninety-two people said they never managed to get any rice even after having the cards.

The involvement of local parliamentarians, chairmen, union parishad members, councillors or mayors was found in an overwhelming majority of cases of corruption in this regard, according to the TIB findings.

The TIB found that 79.2 percent of the people eligible for the cash assistance and 65.7 percent of the OMS card holders said they faced corrupt practices from the above-mentioned actors.

"The basic standards for transparency have not been upheld," said Dr Iftekharuzzaman, executive director of TIB. "There is no accountability, supervision or control."

The lists of all beneficiaries of social safety net programmes must be

made open data, and published in the government websites, recommended the organisation.

TIB also surveyed 37 hospitals from 35 districts and found that 49.6 percent of doctors and 45.9 percent of nurses there were still not getting adequate PPE and other protection materials to safeguard them from Covid-19. Staffers working in non-coronavirus units faced this the most.

As many as 48.6 percent of the interviewees said they were given normal surgical masks instead of K95 or other varieties, which are considered standard masks for protection against Covid-19 transmission.

In addition, all the hospitals had vacant positions for doctors while 89.1 percent of the hospitals had vacancies for nurses, the survey found. "But no doctor was appointed in 56.8 percent of the hospitals and no nurse in 48.5 percent of the hospitals," stated the survey report.

Of the hospitals under survey, 51.4 percent reported shortage of safety equipment.

## No decision yet, parents worried

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brought a completely different situation for both school authorities and parents. NO SIGN OF ADMISSION PROCESS IN SIGHT

Schools take fresh students for all classes based on vacancy. But they enrol the bulk of students in class-1, at the beginning of students' academic life, and in class-6, after completion of primary education.

Each year, several million students get fresh admission to schools in the capital.

Admission to class-1 takes place through lottery all over the country. Students at class-9 get admitted based on their results of Junior School Certificate (JSC) or Junior Dakhil Certificate (JDC) examinations.

Top-ranking private schools usually start the admission process before government schools.

Viqarunnisa Noon School and College, for example, started distributing admission forms of class-1 students between October 29 and November 12 last year. Ideal School and College, Motijheel, distributed admission forms between November 9 and 18.

But this year, the school authorities have not taken any decisions yet. "We are waiting for the government's

decision," said Ideal School and College principal Shahana Ara Begum.

The school has about 1,400 seats. Last year, government schools distributed admission forms from December 1 to 14. Lottery for class-1 took place on December 24 while admission tests for rest of the classes on December 18 to 20.

Benjir Ahmed, district education officer of Dhaka, said, "We are yet to start discussion on admitting students to non-government schools."

The admission process at government primary schools is completely different. The schools enrol all students who apply and no admission test is required.

According to the Directorate of Primary Education, 31,97,713 students enrolled in class-1 across the country. Of them, 1,87,188 were enrolled in schools of Dhaka district last year.

Secondary-level government schools, which also have primary sections, witness stiff competition for enrolling students. About 3.75 lakh students collected admission forms against 71,263 vacancies for class-1 to 9.

According to the Bangladesh Bureau of Educational Information and Statistics, there were 23,68,057 class-6

students last year. Of them, 1.10 lakh were in Dhaka district, according to the district education office.

Prof Syed Md Golam Faruk, director general of Directorate of Secondary and Higher Education (DSHE), told The Daily Star yesterday that they have sent a proposal to the education ministry on holding admission tests at government high schools with a wide range of options.

"We proposed face-to-face exams and online tests. Admission tests with MCQ is also an option. But nothing is final yet," he said.

Belal Hossain, director (secondary) of DSHE, said, "We are working on the issue of admitting students at non-government schools."

He, however, said the guideline for enrolling students at public school has already been finalised.

Earlier at a press conference, Education Minister Dipu Moni said there is an apprehension that there could be a rise in the Covid-19 infections during December and January.

"So, we will have to consider the entire admission process. We are in discussion about the matter and will let all know soon," she told reporters.

## CORRECTION

In our lead caption yesterday, we mistakenly mentioned that the metro rail line would go over the Raju Bhaskaria on the Dhaka University campus. MAN Siddique, managing director of the Dhaka Mass Transit Company Limited, has informed that the Mass Rapid Transit or MRT Line-6 would stand 17 metres east of the centre point of the sculpture and seven metres from its edge.

## RAYHAN'S DEATH IN CUSTODY

## Suspended SI Akbar placed on 7-day remand

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Sylhet

Suspended sub-inspector Akbar Hossain Bhuian of Sylhet Metropolitan Police was placed on a seven-day remand in connection with the custodial death of Rayhan Ahmed.

Sylhet Chief Metropolitan Magistrate Abul Kashem granted the remand, said the case's investigation officer Awlad Hossain, who is an inspector with Police Bureau of Investigation (PBI).

According to Border Guard Bangladesh (BGB) and multiple footages that went viral on social media, Akbar was detained by the members of Khasi community in India's Meghalaya.

Mohammad Farid Uddin, superintendent of Sylhet police, however, claimed that one of their teams detained Akbar while he was trying to flee the country.

Akbar was detained in Dona area along Bangladesh-India border in the district's Kanaighat upazila around 9:00am on Monday, he added.

Rayhan, 33, of Akhalia Neharipara area in Sylhet city, was allegedly detained and tortured by police on early October 11.

He died at Sylhet MAG Osmani Medical College Hospital at 7:50am. His wife filed a case with Kotwali Police Station accusing several unnamed people the next day.

On October 12, Sylhet Metropolitan Police suspended four personnel including sub-inspector Akbar, who was the in-charge of a police outpost.

On October 13, PBI was tasked with the investigation of the case.

Including Akbar, a sub-inspector, an assistant sub-inspector and two constables were arrested in the case. WHO ASKED AKBAR TO FLEE?

In a footage that went viral on social media, Akbar was seen telling his detainees (Khasi detainees in Meghalaya) that some high official asked him to run away.

However, a day after his detention and 15 days after the submission of a probe report by Police Headquarters' committee, no senior officer of Sylhet Metropolitan Police was in question.

The probe body, headed by Assistant Inspector General (AIG) Mohammed Ayub, was formed on October 19 and the body submitted report on October 27.

During probing, Sub-inspector Hasan Uddin, newly appointed in-charge of the outpost, was suspended on October 21 for helping Akbar to run away.

Contacted, Azbahar Ali Sheikh, deputy commissioner (north) of Sylhet Metropolitan Police, said, "We still haven't got any further instruction based on the probe report. No senior officer is still in question but we've heard that Akbar told about a senior officer in a video."

"As Akbar is now on a seven-day remand with PBI, we'll also try to quiz him about the senior officer who suggested him to flee," he said.

## 16 more die from Covid in a day

1,699 test positive

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Sixteen patients with Covid-19 died in the 24 hours ending at 8:00am yesterday, according to a press release from the Directorate General of Health Services (DGHS).

The total number of deaths due to this highly transmissible virus rose to 6,108 -- 1.44 percent of all cases so far.

During the same 24 hours, the DGHS reported 1,699 new cases, taking the overall number of Covid-19 cases in the country to 4,23,620.

Against a total of 13,520 tests in 114 labs over the period, the positivity rate was 12.57 percent. The overall positivity rate was 17.15 percent against all tests.

Meanwhile, a total of 1,648 patients recovered, taking the total recoveries to 3,41,416 with a recovery rate of 80.59 percent.

On March 8, the health directorate reported the first three Covid-19 cases in the country and the first death occurred on March 18.

On August 26, the number of confirmed cases in the country surged past the 300,000 mark while the death toll exceeded 6,000 on November 4.

Of the deceased in the 24-hour period, 15 were male.

All except one died in hospitals, according to the press release.

Two were aged between 41 and 50,