

BANGLADESH
UPDATE



1,908
New cases in 24hrs



4,60,619
Total cases



6,580
Deaths



3,75,885
Recoveries

GLOBAL
UPDATE



1,452,645
Deaths



62,180,664
Total cases

ROHINGYA GENOCIDE

Bangladesh gives OIC \$500k for legal battle

BSS, Niumey

Bangladesh has disbursed \$500,000 to the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation as part of a fund-raising campaign initiated by foreign ministers of the 57-nation group for The Gambia's legal battle against Myanmar over the Rohingya genocide in the International Court of Justice (ICJ).

The Gambia is also a member state of the OIC.

"We have already disbursed the fund to the OIC in support of The Gambia in its legal battle," said Dr Mohammad Javed Patwary, Bangladesh's permanent representative to the OIC and ambassador to Saudi Arabia.

Patwary, who leads Dhaka at the OIC's Council of Foreign Ministers (CFM) in Niger, told the BSS that the OIC General Secretariat has by now opened up a dedicated account for the West-African country's battle at ICJ, as the nation also signalled its urgent need for funds.

"I call for urgent, voluntary and substantial contribution of the [OIC] member states for the legal case," The Gambia's Justice Minister Dawda A Jallow said while presenting the latest updates of the Rohingya case at the CFM, where the crisis appeared to be the key agenda.

He said The Gambia needed approximately US\$ 5 million to pay

particularly the lawyers to run the case, as it hired a reputed US-based law firm to stand by the prosecution in the case.

But Jallow said that "unfortunately" the law firm was yet to receive any significant payment for the legal services it rendered since September 2019 as "it is only this month that a sum of US\$ 300,000 was paid to the law firm, which is less than 10 percent of the amount owed".

He further said the case was aimed to seek a conclusive and lasting solution to the Rohingya crisis and cautioned that all potential OIC interventions to the ICJ regarding the Rohingya cause should be conducted in coordination with his country for the sake of the cause.

He warned that any uncoordinated OIC intervention could affect the case and "seriously complicate matters".

OIC General Secretariat officials said apart from Bangladesh, other OIC member states that have so far provided financial support to The Gambia over the case are Saudi Arabia, Turkey and Nigeria.

Foreign Minister Dr AK Abdul Momen was scheduled to lead the Bangladesh delegation at the OIC's two-day crucial 47th CFM session that began on Friday but Covid-19 detection at the last minute forced him to scrap his scheduled Niger visit.

IS-linked militants kill 4 Christians in Indonesia

AFP, Palu

Islamic State-linked extremists killed four people in a remote Christian community on the Indonesian island of Sulawesi, authorities said yesterday, with one victim beheaded and another burned to death.

The group of sword-and-gun wielding attackers ambushed Lembantongoa village in Central Sulawesi province Friday morning, killing several residents and torching half a dozen homes, including one used for regular prayers and services, police said.

No arrests had yet been made and the motive for the attack was not immediately clear.

But authorities pointed the finger at the Sulawesi-based East Indonesia Mujahideen (MIT), one of dozens of radical groups across the Southeast Asian archipelago that have pledged allegiance to IS.

Indonesia, the world's biggest Muslim majority nation, has long wrestled with Islamist militancy and terror attacks, while Central Sulawesi has seen intermittent violence between Christians and Muslims for decades.

"We reached the conclusion

that they (the attackers) were from MIT after showing pictures of its members to relatives of the victims" who witnessed the ambush, said Sigi Regency police chief Yoga Priyahutama.

The makeshift church was empty at the time of the early morning attack by around eight militants, he added.

"People were just in their homes when it happened," Priyahutama said.

Lembantongoa village head Rifai, who like many Indonesians goes by one name, said one victim was beheaded and another was nearly decapitated.

One of the other all-male victims was stabbed while a fourth was burned to death in his home, he added.

"Some residents managed to escape, but the victims didn't make it," Rifai told AFP.

Indonesia's Christians have been targeted in the past, including in 2018 when IS-linked group Jamaah Ansharut Daulah staged a wave of suicide bombings by families -- including young children -- at churches in the country's second-biggest city Surabaya, killing a dozen congregants.

36 more die, 1,908 infected

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number of positive cases to 4,60,619, added the release.

Against a number of 14,012 tests conducted in those 24 hours at 118 labs throughout the country, the positivity rate was 13.62 percent, while the overall positivity rate stood at 16.79 percent.

At least a total of 2,209 Covid-19 patients have recovered in the same 24 hours.

With this, the total number of recoveries rose to 3,75,885, while the recovery rate stood at 81.60 percent.

Among the 36 deceased yesterday, twenty-eight were males and eight were females. All of them died in hospitals, said the release.

One of them was aged between 11 and 20, one between 21 and 30, one between 41 and 50, ten between 51

and 60 while the rest 23 were above 60 years, according to the press release.

Of all the deceased so far, nearly 77 percent were males and Dhaka division saw more than half of the Covid-19 casualties.

At the beginning of the Covid-19 health emergency, the positivity rate was comparatively lower but it rose to the highest 25 percent late in May. Until the third week of August, the positivity rate was over 20 percent, which came down to 10 percent in October.

The positivity rate started to rise again since the beginning of November.

Experts predicted the rise in positive cases keeping in mind the lowering of the temperature in the advent of winter.

Frontliners to get quarantine

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then go through a mandatory quarantine period for the next 15 days, as per the Covid-19 guidelines.

During the pandemic, many healthcare professionals at public hospitals across the country worked from their homes and managed the self-quarantine period on their own due to the dearth of accommodation and other facilities in their respective areas.

A deputy secretary of the ministry said the prime minister approved the proposal in July and now they have sent it to the finance ministry for approval with retrospective effect.

The number of government health workers engaged in Covid-19 treatment in the country is 23,285. Of them, 5,726 are doctors, 10,044 are nurses and 8,515 are other staffers, the proposal read. The Daily Star has obtained a copy of the proposal.

If all of them receive the allowance at the prescribed rate, it will cost the government around Tk 39.50 crore per month, it read.

But the proposal did not say how many of them will be entitled for the quarantine allowance. Talking to the

Daily Star, a health ministry official said that they were working on the list.

Ever since the coronavirus pandemic hit the country in March, many public healthcare professionals stayed at different hotels during their quarantine period.

But there was a huge hue and cry over the abnormal hotel bills and also medical professionals raising questions about the quality of services at those government-designated hotels.

Later, the government arranged a number of training centres, including the Bangladesh Institute of Administration and Management (BIAM), as accommodation facilities for the frontline warriors in Dhaka city.

The cost for that purpose was around Taka 3,000 including food per person, according to health ministry officials.

AKM Mustafizur Rahman, civil surgeon of Habiganj, said outside the capital accommodation at hotels is not good in many places.

"So, the amount is tolerable. It is not too much or too less. The plus point is that health workers can stay at home and would get an allowance. So it's good," he said.



Children of the capital's Karail slum having snacks at an eatery while watching TV. With the schools closed, the children of low-income people hangout at such shops for hours.

PHOTO: PALASH KHAN

No payment for most frontliners

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allocated Tk 750 crore, of which Tk 16.25 crore have been disbursed.

Since the first three cases of coronavirus were reported on March 8, at least 42 government healthcare employees died of Covid-19 and 10,888 others got infected as of November 15, according to the Directorate General of Health Services (DGHS).

Among the deceased healthcare employees were 10 doctors and five nurses and among the infected were 2,302 doctors and 2,726 nurses.

DGHS officials said the family of only one dead doctor got compensation.

Ehteshamul Haque Chowdhury Dulal, secretary general of Bangladesh Medical Association (BMA), said, "We think this is a conspiracy by the bureaucrats; they do not want the doctors to get compensation. We are frustrated."

"The health minister said two days ago that doctors will get compensation soon. We, however, do not know the meaning of the word soon. Does it mean

200 more doctors will have to die?

"The compensation should have been sent to their families earlier."

DGHS Director (administration) Sheikh Mohammad Hasan Imam said his office sent to the health ministry a list of health workers and doctors, who died and got infected with Covid-19 until August.

"The ministry will scrutinise it and take steps to give the compensation," he said.

According to data from the police headquarters, 16,025 police and 2,453 Rab personnel tested positive and 75 police and five Rab members died as of November 26.

The family of only one dead cop had been compensated so far.

"The process of handing over compensation started with this one. We have sent a list to the ministry for further action," said a top police official.

At least 133 frontline workers have died with Covid-19, according to departments concerned.

Bangladesh Administrative Service Association (BASA) keeps track of how many current and retired BCS administration cadre officials get infected and die with coronavirus.

Its President Helal Uddin Ahmed, senior secretary at the Local Government Division, said 675 BCS administration cadre officials got infected as of November 26. Of them, around 10 percent are retired. Six current ones died and three of their families received compensation.

Meanwhile, the government has yet to provide incentives equivalent to two months' basic salaries to all healthcare professionals in public hospitals dedicated for Covid-19 treatment.

The finance ministry issued a circular on July 9, announcing the special incentives. Tk 100 crore was earmarked to this end.

"The health ministry is identifying the beneficiaries and we will provide the incentives once the process is complete," said a top finance ministry official.

Two years gone just to file case

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(DMC). They have received the autopsy report recently.

"We've registered a murder case based on the report," he said.

The autopsy report said the woman died due to damage to all her organs and both her kidneys were surgically removed.

Rafique stated the same in the case statement.

The statement says Rafique first admitted Rawshan to BIHS Hospital in the capital's Mirpur on June 27, 2018, after she felt pain in her left kidney. A doctor there -- Yusuf Ali -- said her right kidney was in normal condition but the left was one "affected".

Rawshan was referred to the BSMMU on July 1, 2018, for better treatment.

On the same day, Dr Dulal, one of the accused, treated her at the public hospital's urology department and she felt better. Two weeks later, she was discharged and the doctor advised her to conduct further tests.

The test reports came on August 12 that year and those suggested that Rawshan's right kidney was in normal state.

On August 27, BSMMU doctor Syed Sultan called Rafique over phone and told him that they needed to come to the hospital to get his mother's left kidney surgically removed.

On September 5, Dr Dulal, along with three other doctors, conducted a three-hour surgery on Rawshan.

When Rafique went to the post-operative room, a removed kidney was shown to him. Rawshan's condition, however, started deteriorating immediately. The duty doctor then

said she had an acute renal failure. As the ICU beds in the hospital were not empty, the patient was taken to Insaf Barakah Kidney and General Hospital in Moghbazar on the advice of the doctors on duty, said the statement.

After getting further test reports on September 8, Dr Fakhruul Islam, a professor at the urology department of the private hospital, told Rafique, "Your mother has no kidneys."

Dr Fakhruul immediately spoke to BSMMU's Dr Dulal over phone. Dulal advised him to send Rawshan back to the BSMMU, according to the case statement.

As Rafique asked Dulal about it, the physician told him not to "get confused" and that the right kidney became non-functional following the removal of the other one, the statement said.

While Rawshan was fighting for her life, she was taken to BRB Hospital in Panthapath where Dr Abdus Samad, a professor in the nephrology department, re-examined her.

Test reports there also revealed that she had no kidneys. Her body swelled and she was readmitted to the BSMMU.

However, Dr Dulal kept denying that the right kidney was removed.

After the incident came to light and following media reports, Dulal went to the Film Directors Association on October 1, 2018, and signed an agreement with Rafique. He accepted responsibility for the removal of the right kidney and promised him to transplant a new one, according to the case statement.

"Even after this agreement, Dr Dulal did not take any initiative although

Rawshan Ara's sister was ready to donate a kidney. Then on October 31, Rawshan Ara died around 9:45pm at the BSMMU."

A day after her death, Rafique filed a general diary (GD) with the Shahbagh Police Station. Talking to The Daily Star yesterday, Rafique said he went to the police and the DMC forensic department time and again, but to no avail.

"On Thursday, after two years, I got to see a part of the report. But I was yet to get the complete one then," Rafique said.

The Daily Star called BSMMU Prof Dulal over phone for comments on the matter, but his mobile phone was found switched off.

Other accused doctors were not available as well.

Sohel Mahmud, chief of the forensic department of the DMC, didn't receive phone calls despite repeated attempts.

BSMMU Vice-chancellor Kanak Kanti Barua told The Daily Star that they have heard about filing of the case. "We will comment on this after getting the postmortem report," he added.

National Human Rights Commission's Public Relations Officer Farhana Sayeed told The Daily Star the police station registered the case after the commission intervened.

A two-member committee was also formed to investigate the incident, she added.

Asked about the allegations, Shahbagh OC Mamun-or-Rashid said they were investigating the matter.

None of the accused was arrested when this report was filed last night.

Conflict looms as Trump exits

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of the political life of their ... ally (Trump), the Zionists seek to intensify pressure on Iran and create a full-blown war," Hossein Dehghan tweeted.

Channels of the Telegram encrypted messaging app believed to be close to Iran's elite Revolutionary Guards reported that the top security body, the Supreme National Security Council, convened an emergency meeting with senior military commanders present.

Israel declined to comment. The White House, Pentagon, US State Department and CIA also declined to comment, as did Biden's transition team.

The former head of the CIA labelled the assassination a "criminal" act that risks inflaming conflict in the region, reports AFP.

John Brennan said he did not know who was to blame for the murder of Fakhrizadeh, as Tehran pointed its finger at Israel.

"This was a criminal act & highly reckless. It risks lethal retaliation & a new round of regional conflict," Brennan said in a series of tweets.

"I do not know whether a foreign government authorized or carried out the murder of Fakhrizadeh," he said.

"Such an act of state-sponsored terrorism would be a flagrant violation of international law & encourage more governments to carry out lethal attacks against foreign officials."

Fakhrizadeh has been described by Western and Israeli intelligence services

for years as the mysterious leader of a covert atomic bomb programme halted in 2003, which Israel and the United States accuse Tehran of trying to restore. Iran has long denied seeking to weaponise nuclear energy.

"Unfortunately, the medical team did not succeed in reviving (Fakhrizadeh), and a few minutes ago, this manager and scientist achieved the high status of martyrdom after years of effort and struggle," Iran's armed forces said in a statement.

The semi-official news agency Tasnim said "terrorists blew up another car" before firing on a vehicle carrying Fakhrizadeh and his bodyguards in an ambush outside the capital.

In the aftermath, there was a heavy presence of security forces stopping cars in Tehran in an apparent search for the killers, witnesses said.

Trump, who lost his re-election bid to Biden on November 3 and leaves office on January 20, pulled the United States from a deal reached under Obama, his predecessor, that lifted sanctions on Iran in return for curbs on its nuclear programme.

Biden has said he will aim to restore that agreement, although many analysts say this will be a challenging goal.

Robert Malley, who served as Iran adviser to Obama and has informally advised Biden's team, said Fakhrizadeh's killing was among a series of moves that have occurred

during Trump's final weeks that appear aimed at making it harder for Biden to re-engage with Iran.

"One purpose is simply to inflict as much damage to Iran economically and to its nuclear program while they can, and the other could be to complicate President Biden's ability to resume diplomacy and resume the nuclear deal," said Malley, adding that he would not speculate on who was behind Friday's killing.

A US official confirmed this month that Trump asked military aides for a plan for a possible strike on Iran. Trump decided against it to avoid a wider Middle East conflict, reports Reuters.

In January, Trump ordered a US drone strike in Baghdad that killed Qassem Soleimani, Iran's most powerful military commander. Iran retaliated by firing missiles at a US base in Iraq.

US Senator Chris Murphy, the top Democrat on the US Senate's Middle East subcommittee, said on Twitter "this assassination does not make America, Israel or the world safer."

UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres urged restraint to avoid an escalation of tensions, his spokesman said.

Michael Mulroy, a senior Pentagon official earlier during Trump's administration, said Fakhrizadeh's killing would set back Iran's nuclear programme and alert levels should be raised in countries where Iran could retaliate.

Ex-BCL leader held for raping 10th grader

STAR REPORT

An expelled leader of Bangladesh Chhatra League (BCL) was arrested on Friday night for raping a 10th grader in Narsingdi.

In a separate incident, law enforcers on Wednesday arrested two youths over gang-raping a teenager and trying to sell her to a brothel in Bagerhat.

The arrestee in the Narsingdi incident is Asadul Haque Chowdhury Shakil, expelled president of Raipura upazila BCL, said police.

They said Shakil developed a romantic relationship with the girl. On the evening of October 22, he took her to Government Raju Auditorium in the upazila's Srirampur area and raped her with the help of the auditorium's caretaker Sumon.

As the girl kept screaming for help, some locals rushed there and rescued her. Shakil, however, managed to flee.

Hours later, the victim's father filed a case against Shakil and Sumon with Raipura Police Station. Shakil had been absconding since then.

The day after the incident, Shakil was expelled from the BCL for violating the code of discipline of the pro-Awami League student organisation.

On Friday night, police arrested Shakil at a restaurant in Brahmanbaria's Sarail upazila, said Mohsin Quadir, officer-in-charge of Raipura Police Station.

In Bagerhat, a 19-year-old girl was allegedly gang-raped by two youths who also tried to sell her as a sex worker to a local brothel, police said.

The accused are Sumon Sharif and Mehedi Hasan, both from Mongla upazila of the district.

Quoting the victim, Mongla OC Iqbal Bahar Chowdhury said the two previously knew the girl, who is from Mahalchhari area of Khagrachhari. They lured her into going to Jhenidah with them last week, falsely promising her of giving a job.

They allegedly raped the teenager multiple times at different places, he said, adding that they later brought her to Mongla and tried to sell her to a brothel.

On information, police arrested the two and rescued the victim, he added.

A case was filed against the two with the police station.

[Our correspondents in Brahmanbaria and Bagerhat contributed to this report.]

US sanctions Chinese, Russian firms over Iran dealings

AFP, Washington

The US on Friday announced economic sanctions on Chinese and Russian companies that Washington said had supported the development of Iran's missile program.

The four firms, accused of "transferring sensitive technology and items to Iran's missile program," will be subject to restrictions on US government aid and on their exports for two years, Secretary of State Mike Pompeo said in a statement.

The sanctions, imposed Wednesday, were against two Chinese-based companies, Chengdu Best New Materials and Zibo Elim Trade, as well as Russia-based Nilco Group and Joint Stock Company Elecon.

"We will continue to work to impede Iran's missile development efforts and use our sanctions authorities to spotlight the foreign suppliers, such as these entities in the PRC (China) and Russia, that provide missile-related materials and technology to Iran," Pompeo added.

President Donald Trump withdrew the US in 2018 from the Iran nuclear deal established three years prior under then-President Barack Obama.

Trump has since reimposed crippling sanctions on the Islamic republic in what he calls a campaign of "maximum pressure."

The Trump administration has also since shown its determination to sanction any foreign country or company that does not comply with its Iran policies.

Radicals fussing

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regarding the sculptures of Bangabandhu, the architect of independent Bangladesh, to spread hatred among religious people.

"Don't take the government's liberalism as weakness. Any comments against the spirit of country's Liberation War and the constitution will not be tolerated. Any evil attempt to destroy the people's peace and comfort will be resisted," he said.

The minister urged the people who believe in the country's independence to build a united resistance against all evil efforts.

Quader said that the head of the government earlier said there will be no law that will be conflict the Quran and the Sunnah.

So, an iron fist will be used to deal with those who are making ill attempts to create an issue to destroy the country's religious tolerance, he said.