

BANGLADESH  
UPDATE



404

New cases in 24hrs



5,39,975

Total cases



8,253

Deaths



4,86,393

Recoveries

GLOBAL  
UPDATE



2,380,990

Deaths



108,395,485

Total cases

# Conflicting versions of Wari murder crop up

Quoting accused, cops say she committed the murder to protect her daughter; victim's family claims it was a crime of passion

SHAHEEN MOLLAH

Family members of a man whose body was found by police by chance on Thursday said the woman with whom he had an affair had killed him because he wanted to break up.

A police team looking for the woman in connection with a general diary unexpectedly ended up at the scene of the gruesome murder of Sajib Hasan, 35, at an apartment near Sayedabad Bus Terminal in the capital.

Naznin Akter, an aunt of Sajib, said Sajib met Shahnaz Parveen, 52, in a bus 11 years ago while returning to Dhaka from his village home in Kushtia.

Not long after they met each other, Sajib took her to a relative's house in Gazipur and introduced her as his wife. During the visit, Shahnaz identified herself as an officer of the Criminal Investigation Department (CID), said Naznin while talking to this correspondent at Sir Salimullah Medical College (SSMC) morgue yesterday.

She added that couple said they lived in Chattogram because Shahnaz worked there.

Sajib's uncle Nazrul Islam filed a case accusing Shahnaz of killing Sajib with Wari Police Station yesterday, said Officer-in-Charge Azizur Rahman.

At the scene of the murder on Thursday, police found transport worker Sajib's body cut into five pieces.

Earlier last week, Shahnaz's husband, who is a wealthy businessman, lodged a diary with the police station stating that his wife went missing with gold ornaments.

Policemen found that Shahnaz's phone was last used in an apartment of a building on KM Das Lane near Sayedabad Bus Terminal and located her there.

Cops were talking to her at the door of an apartment when one of the officers noticed parts of a human body by the side of a bed in the living room. She then admitted to police that she had killed the man that morning.

SSMC morgue employees told this newspaper that Sajib was killed by a sharp weapon and that his limbs were cut at the joints.

Sajib's uncle Nazrul said, "Shahnaz and Sajib visited our house a dozen

times in the last 11 years. Around three to four months ago, Shahnaz told us to buy Sajib's land and house in Kushtia for Tk 20 lakh.

"But they left when we demanded that the land be registered to us. Actually, Sajib's mother Surjo Banu would not agree to break up."

Nazrul claimed that Sajib wanted to break up with her at least twice before. She once went to Sajib's village home in Khushia and brought him back to Dhaka.

On the day of the killing, Shahnaz called Sajib's mother around 11:30am and said she and Sajib were leaving for Canada and sent her Tk 1,000 and asked her not to worry, Nazrul said.

But Shahnaz didn't let Surjo Banu speak to Sajib and switched off the phone instead.

Surjo Banu learnt about her son's death around 2:00pm from police, Nazrul added.

During interrogation, Shahnaz told police that Sajib convinced her to leave her home with money and gold ornaments so that they can settle somewhere and start a business.

When Shahnaz went to the apartment on KM Das Lane with around 20 vori of gold, Sajib tried to take the gold away from her, she said.

Around 10:00am on Thursday, Sajib first attacked Shahnaz with a hammer and then with a knife, she said, adding that she was somehow able to get hold of the knife and in self defense stabbed Sajib on the stomach, Shah Iftekhar Ahmed, deputy commissioner of Wari Division of Dhaka Metropolitan Police, who was present during the interrogation, told The Daily Star yesterday.

Shahnaz also told police that Sajib used to stalk one of her two daughters. Shahnaz first contacted him to ask him to stop the stalking. But eventually Sajib seduced her and later blackmailed her into having a relationship with him, said the DC.

"We saw marks of injuries caused by a hammer and a knife on Shanz's body. She said those were from Sajib's attack."

Shahnaz confessed to killing Sajib before a court yesterday evening after she was placed on a 10-day remand.

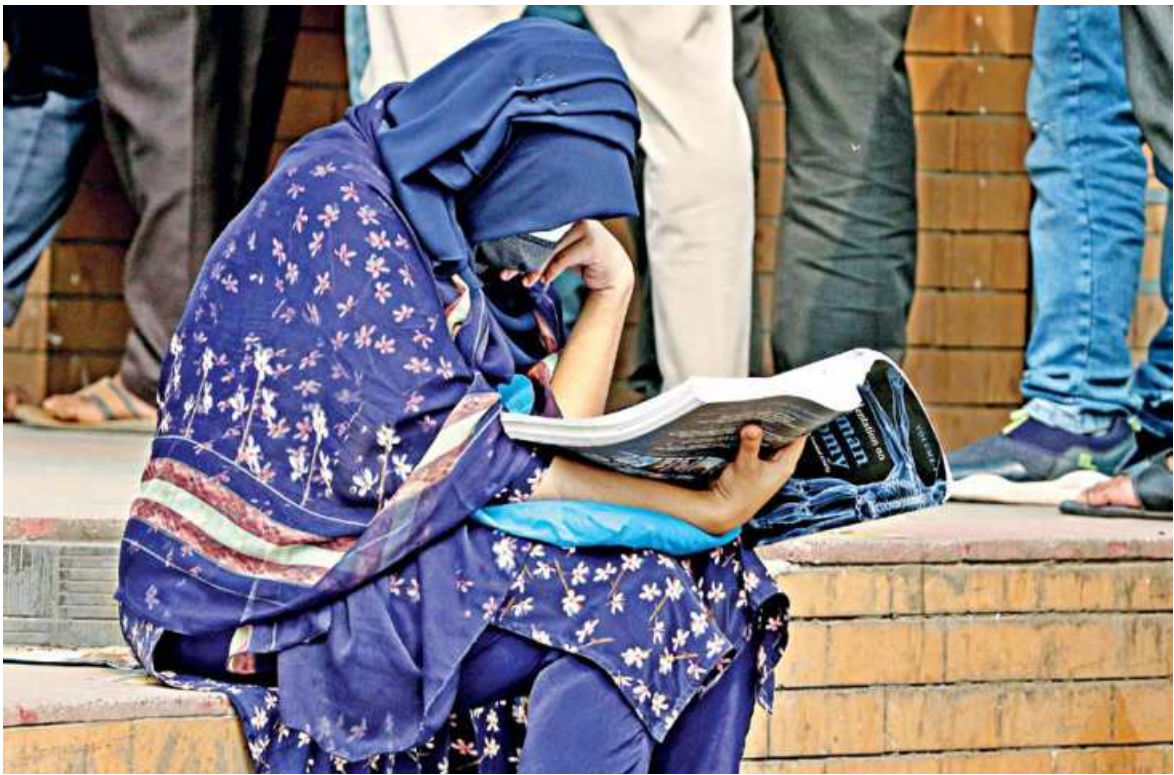


PHOTO: ANISUR RAHMAN

Sabrina Islam, an MBBS student of Dr Sirajul Islam Medical College, makes good use of her time reading a course book while waiting to be tested for novel coronavirus at Mugda General Hospital yesterday. To be able to take the second year final exams of her MBBS course on February 22, she must have a Covid-19 negative test.

## First month's target may be revised

FROM PAGE 1

response to the online registration, they added.

The government launched the vaccination campaign with 70 lakh doses in hand. It is expected to get the second instalment of 50 lakh shots from Serum Institute of India (SII) later this month. Around the same time, another 1.31 lakh doses under the COVAX programme are scheduled to arrive here.

The government has purchased three crore doses of the vaccine from SII.

In Dhaka, several vaccination centres, including those in Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujib Medical University (BSMMU) and Kurmitola General Hospital, have almost completed administering their allocated doses, DGHS officials said.

"We will send additional shots from our existing stocks to the centres which need them. We have directed the centres to increase their capacity to vaccinate more people," Prof ABM Khurshid Alam said.

According to DGHS officials, the National Immunization Technical Committee (NITAC) would sit today evening to decide on the new target for the first month of the vaccination.

After the government lowered the minimum age ceiling to 40 from 55 for the vaccination, the number of people in its priority list has gone up.

The government has also reduced the interval period between the administration of two doses to four weeks from eight.

A DGHS official, wishing not to be named, told this newspaper that the NITAC meeting today might also discuss whether the interval period could be increased.

AstraZeneca on Thursday said the key to the success of the Oxford-AstraZeneca vaccine is a longer gap between the two doses, reports The Telegraph newspaper of the UK.

The World Health Organisation (WHO) also recommended extending the time between the first and second dose to improve efficacy.

"In light of the observation that two-dose efficacy and immunogenicity increase with a longer inter-dose interval, WHO recommends an interval of eight to 12 weeks between the doses," it said.

There are 2,400 vaccination centres across Bangladesh and they have the capacity to inoculate 3.6 lakh people every day.

On the first day of the mass campaign, on February 7, some 31,000 people were given their first shot of the vaccine. More than two lakh people took the jabs on Thursday, which took the total number of vaccine recipients in the country to 5,42,309.

Of them 68,901 received the shots in

46 centres in Dhaka city, show DGHS data.

For Dhaka district and Dhaka city, the DGHS allocated six lakh vaccine jabs. Ahead of the campaign, the government had distributed 50 lakh doses among 61 districts

The rush for vaccine has resulted in many failing to find a date for taking the jabs even after they received confirmation of their registration.

More than nine lakh people were waiting to get vaccinated as of yesterday afternoon after completing the registration.

"We are observing that people have been rushing to some certain vaccination centres. As we allowed on-spot registration, there are backlogs in many centres. For this reason, many of those who registered are not getting their confirmation SMS. This will be solved soon," Dr Shamsul Haque Mridha, member secretary of the National Covid-19 Vaccination Campaign of the DGHS, told The Daily Star yesterday.

"There were several technical complexities people were reporting. Almost all of them have been fixed. The process is getting smoother every day contributing to the rising number of registrations," Md Toufiq Hassan Shawon, medical officer at the management information system (MIS) at the DGHS, told The Daily Star.

## Arrested on arrival, gets bail in 5 hours

FROM PAGE 1

Shahjalal International Airport around 10:00am, Golam Saqlain, additional deputy commissioner (Gulshan division) of DB police, told The Daily Star.

He came to Dhaka from Dubai due to the death of his father, he added.

Later in the day, DB Sub-inspector Md Ripon Uddin, also the investigation officer of the case, produced Ron before the court of Metropolitan Magistrate Md Ashek Imam.

The court granted him bail at 3:15pm upon a bond of Tk 5,000 with two guarantors after he was produced before the court with a forwarding report.

In the forwarding report, the IO said the accused along with his brother Dipu Haque Sikder left the country on May 25 last year to avoid arrest.

So, he appealed to the court to keep him in jail until the investigation is completed, the IO added.

General Recording Officer SI Md Alamgir Hossain told the court that Ron is an accused in an attempted murder case and went abroad to evade arrest and so should be sent to jail.

The defence lawyer, on the other

hand, submitted a petition seeking bail on grounds that his client's father died recently and his namaz-e-janaza will be held tomorrow. Moreover, Ron is ill and so his bail petition should be granted on humanitarian grounds, the lawyer added.

The magistrate granted bail to the accused until the next scheduled date set on March 10.

On May 19 last year, Exim Bank Director Lt Col (retd) Serajul Islam filed the case accusing Ron and his brother Dipu of torturing and trying to kill the bank's Managing Director Mohammed Haider Ali Miah and Additional Managing Director Mohammad Feroz Hossain.

The two top officials were attacked after they refused to falsely inflate the value of Sikder brothers' property that would be mortgaged for a loan of Tk 500 crore, according to the case statement.

The brothers also tortured the two officials while confining them to a house in Banani and forced them to sign on a blank paper at gunpoint, reads the case.

On May 25 last year, six days

after the case was registered, the two brothers fled to Bangkok on an air ambulance that left Hazrat Shahjalal International Airport with government permission.

Police on June 1 last year seized Ron's Range Rover which was allegedly used during the attempted murder.

A team of Gulshan division police seized the white SUV from Sikder House on Banani Road-11 of Dhaka.

On July 20 the same year, the High Court fined Ron and his brother for seeking anticipatory bail from abroad in the case.

Rejecting their bail petition, an HC virtual bench ordered the siblings to give 5,000 personal protective equipment (PPE) each as fine to the Prime Minister's Relief and Welfare Fund in two weeks to contain the Covid-19 pandemic.

Ron and Dipu have also been asked to file a report with the Supreme Court registrar general's office after submitting the PPE to the fund.

The HC bench of Justice Md Ashraf Kamal passed the order after holding hearing on the anticipatory bail petition filed by the two brothers.

## Govt plans tour for diplomats

FROM PAGE 1

Char, told The Daily Star during a visit by a group of journalists to the project on February 9-10.

Bangladesh Navy has implemented the Tk 3,100 crore housing project at Bhasan Char in Noakhali's Hatiya upazila for 100,000 Rohingyas from Cox's Bazar. The initiative was taken after some 750,000 Rohingyas fled a military crackdown in Myanmar's Rakhine State in 2017 and took shelter in Teknaf and Ukhiya.

Apart from the risk of landslides in the hilly terrain, the government cited issues such as drug peddling, human trafficking, gender-based violence, conflicts between factions of the refugee communities in Cox's Bazar, and environmental degradation as major reasons for the relocation to Bhasan Char.

While the UN and other international aid agencies have been reluctant to give thumbs up to the project citing risks of tidal surge and cyclone, the government said 120 brick-built cluster villages and 120 cyclone shelters, facilities for education, hospital, farming and fishing, playground, and presence of law enforcers make it a much better living place for Rohingyas than the Cox's Bazar camps.

The houses are built four feet above the ground while the height of the flood protection embankment around the project is now being raised from nine

feet to 19 feet. So, there is no risk at all for those living in Bhasan Char, said Commodore Mamun.

Separate buildings for the UN and international aid agencies have also been constructed, he added.

Initially, after relocation of the first batch of Rohingyas in early December last year, some 22 NGOs volunteered to go there and provide humanitarian assistance. Later, 20 more joined them. All of them are spending from own fund.

The UN and other international aid agencies are yet to join the Bangladeshi NGOs. A western diplomat recently told this correspondent that the media reports suggest Bhasan Char is a good facility, but they cannot support it before a technical assessment is done by the UN.

Asked about it, Mamun said the ministries of foreign affairs and disaster management were coordinating on the issue.

Meanwhile, there is a pertinent question as to how long the Bangladeshi NGOs can continue to provide funding for the thousands of Rohingyas in Bhasan Char unless the international community comes forward to provide funding.

Mamun said foreign agencies are now willing to provide financial assistance to those being shifted to Bhasan Char, but they need physical presence.

"For this, we need to make a plan.

We are doing it."

Meanwhile, the local NGOs are providing skills training to the willing Rohingyas on sewing, embroidery, fishing, agriculture, poultry and dairy farming. Bangladesh Rural Development Board has also got involved in such activities in Bhasan Char.

"Once they get involved in these activities, the produce can be used for their consumption. They can also earn money," Mamun said.

The Navy officer stressed on better coordination among various agencies under the supervision of the office of the Refugee Rehabilitation and Repatriation Commissioner (RRRC).

Prof Imtiaz Ahmed, a teacher of international relations at Dhaka University, said any communication gap between the government and UN over the Bhasan Char project should be resolved at the earliest.

He said Bangladesh as the host country has the right to shelter the refugees in locations best suited for it. The international community should congratulate Bangladesh for spent so much money of its own and preparing such a quality living facility for the Rohingyas in Bhasan Char.

"All must remember that this is a temporary shelter for Rohingyas. The international community should continue to create pressure on Myanmar for the repatriation," Imtiaz said.

# Action against Al Jazeera if HC directs govt

Says information minister

Bss, Chattogram

Information Minister Hasan Mahmud has said the government will take action against Al Jazeera if the High Court directs it to this end.

He said the present government is media-friendly and it firmly believes in freedom of press.

The minister was responding to queries from journalists during a briefing on current affairs at his residence in the port city yesterday evening.

"We could have shut down Al Jazeera in our country if we wanted it. Even in India it was closed for a while. The telecast of Al Jazeera is still closed in six to seven countries in the world. But the government, led by Sheikh Hasina, did not take such initiatives as it believes in freedom of press," he added.

Hasan said independence is needed for any organisation, but it also needs such responsibility. "Freedom does not mean airing wrong, false, biased and motivated news items which deprive others of freedom."

MUNICIPALITY POLLS

## Jubo League leader jailed over threat to mayoral candidates

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Kushtia

A mobile court has jailed a local Jubo League leader and two of his associates for different terms for threatening mayoral candidates in tomorrow's Jibannagar municipality polls in Chuadanga.

Jummat Mandal, president of Hashanah union Jubo League and also a former UP member, was handed two months' imprisonment, while Ayub Mandal and Pannu Mandal were jailed for six and two months respectively.

After they were produced before the judicial magistrate's court in the district yesterday afternoon, it sent them to jail.

Members of the mobile court, led by Executive Magistrate Firoz Hossain, said on Thursday night they, along with police personnel, rushed to local Tentulia Bazar on information that Jummat, Ayub and Pannu were threatening mayor runners from rival parties while seeking vote for "boat", the electoral symbol of the ruling Awami League-nominated mayor candidate Rafiqul Islam.

SEE PAGE 4 COL 6

## Over 100 aided

FROM PAGE 1

Central Jail in Keraniganj after recording his statement, an ACC official told The Daily Star.

Sukumar, a lawyer who owns Sukumar & Associates, told the magistrate that he used to file tax returns for PK Halder and his family members.

"PK Halder established over 50 companies that existed only on papers. Owners of these companies were his relatives. He borrowed 100 crore Taka in the name of those non-existent companies," he said in the statement.

The ACC official said Sukumar bought over 4,000 decimals of land in Narayanganj's Rupganj, Bagerhat, Dhaka's Purbachal, and Pirojpur while PK Halder bought over 10,000 decimals of land in his village home of Pirojpur.

Sukumar built a two-story building on five katha of land at Ashoke Nagar in 24 Parganas of India for his daughter. He also laundered money in the name of those non-existent companies, according to the statement.

Sukumar's daughter Anindita Mridha, one of the directors of Wintel International, told a magistrate on February 11 that a total of Tk 80 crore was taken from FAS Finance and International Leasing in her name without her knowledge.

Dhaka Metropolitan Magistrate Sadrir Yasir Ahsan Chowdhury recorded her statement.

She also claimed that her father took her signature on various documents at different times. But she did not know why he was doing that.

She was also sent to Dhaka Central Jail in Keraniganj.

ACC Deputy Director Salauddin questioned the duo at his office before arresting them on January 21.

Later, they were placed on a three-day remand each.

According to the remand petition, Sukumar and Anindita acquired assets by using aliases in collusion with PK Halder.

Sukumar and Anindita looked after PK Halder's illegal assets after he fled abroad. Sukumar also looked after several organisations linked to PK Halder, according to ACC officials.

Bangladesh Financial Intelligence Unit (BFIU), the state's anti-money laundering agency, asked all banks that the accounts of 64 persons, operated in their own name or in their interest should remain blocked for the next 30 days.

On August 12, 2020, the accounts of 83 people were frozen for the sake of investigation into a money laundering case. The accounts of 19 people were later dropped from this list.