











toll increased by 45 percent, while 488

of all detected cases in the country. From March 10 to 16, there was a 271

percent increase in the death rate. According to the Directorate General

of Health Services, the number of new

Covid-19 cases has risen by more than

people were detected as Covid-19

patients, while the number of detection

was 48,660. Experts apprehended that

the number of new cases, as well deaths, will continue rising for next few months

Incidentally, during the same week, the number of people recovering has also increased just as much as the death rate.

Meanwhile, the number of recoveries has

In the previous week, 38,471 Covid-19 patients recovered while this figure was 22,603 last week till yesterday.

Meantime, the number of total

confirmed cases has reached 6,78,937.

During the past 24 hours, the number

of tests has decreased to 26,077 and of

those, 20.49 percent were positive.

risen by more than 42 percent.

unless physical distancing is ensured.

În the previous week, a total of 38,471

With the latest death count, the total number of casualty due to Covid-19 reached 9,661, which was 1.42 percent

Three died

people died last week.

FROM PAGE 1

26 percent.

'Modi govt mismanaged Covid situation: Sonia

Says decision to export vaccines allowed shortage at home

OUR CORRESPONDENT, New Delhi

Congress President Sonia Gandhi yesterday accused Prime Minister Narendra Modi government of mismanaging the Covid19 situation in India and said India must focus on its own vaccination drive first before exporting them.

The (Narendra) Modi government has mismanaged the COVID situation. It has exported the vaccines and allowed a shortage to be created in India," she said while addressing a virtual meeting with Chief Ministers of Congress-ruled states and ministers of the party in states where it is in power in alliance with others.

"We must focus on India's vaccination drive first and foremost and then only export vaccines and gift them to other countries," Sonia said.

wife Beethi Begum, 35, went to the

police station on March 6 and filed a

complaint. She demanded Hasan be

home on March 12 and kept him in

custody for that night. The following

day, police asked us to go to the police

"On March 13, my wife Lipi and

Beethi went to the police station where

ASI [assistant sub-inspector] Md

Mossaraf and inspector [investigation]

Mojibur Rahman demanded the

money be paid to Rana. But they had

Hasan home but the police did not let

handed Hasan over to Rana.

paper to have Hasan released.

"Lipi and Beethi wanted to bring

Kollol alleged that police later

Beethi claimed that Rana, aided

"As I refused, police handed my

Inspector Mojibur refused to talk

by police, put pressure on her to sign

a blank cheque and a blank piece of

husband over to Rana again," she

station with Tk 2 lakh to free Hasan,

"Police rescued Hasan from Rana's

rescued from Rana's home.

said Kollol.

no money.

him go.

Trader ends up dead

She also reviewed the efforts to fight Covid situation, including the availability of vaccines, access to medicines and ventilators, chief spokesperson of the party Randeep Surjewala said.

"Mass gatherings for elections and religious events have accelerated COVID for which all of us are responsible to some extent. We need to accept this responsibility and keep the interest of the nation above our own," Sonia said and wanted all poll rallies to be cancelled.

Her remarks about cancellation poll rallies came four days after assembly elections in Assam, Kerala, Tamil Nadu and Puducherry came to an end.

Congress is a key player in Assam and Kerala seeking to return to power in the two states.

about the matter. He suggested this

Mahfuzar refuted

He said they held a meeting with

Hasan, his wife, and Rana at the police

station. During the meeting, the

couple failed to pay the debt and all

of them left the police station, he said.

superintendent of police (Gaibandha sadar circle), told The Daily Star

yesterday that police tried to broker a

Regarding the allegation, Ziku too

"Police wanted to hand Hasan over

said police did not hand Hasan over

to his wife Beethi but she did not take

him. Later, Hasan went out of the

police station and we do not know

where he went after that," said the

Kollol said that they would file an

abduction, torture, and murder case

against Rana and another case against

ASI Mossaraf and Inspector Mojibur

settlement at the police station.

"We did not hand Hasan over to

Ziku, additional

paper contacts OC Mahfuzar.

OC

allegation.

Rana," he said.

additional SP.

for harassment.

Md Elius

Ruins offer trip deep into Old Dhaka history

People, who struggle to make ends meet, sitting on a footpath under a scorching sun as they wait for a truck of

the kitchen markets. The photo was taken yesterday near Badda Government Primary School in the capital.

the Trading Corporation of Bangladesh to arrive with essential goods that will be sold at prices lower than that of

archaeological evidence from the Mughal, Sultanate and Sen eras or before these can be found at the old central jail.

itself Chawkbazar archaeologically significant among other places in Old Dhaka, researchers

For example, an ancient Basudev statue was recovered during an excavation on the Churihatta Mosque premises in the area in 1906. An inscription about the renovation

of Urdu Road Mosque was found in the late 19th century. According to the inscription, this mosque in Chawkbazar was built in 1459. In 2011, a Nateshwar statue was

recovered at Sarangodhor monastery in the area, opening up a new horizon of research. The Daily Star ran a report on this last year. According to different books,

Chawkbazar was the political and commercial hub during the Sultanate, Mughal, and Nawab periods. The Chawkbazar Fort

constructed during the rule of the Bengal Sultanate between the 14th and 16th centuries. Besides, palaces, treasury, courts and administrative offices were constructed in this region from the Sultanate-Nawab period. The area's political and commercial

importance started to decline with the beginning of East India Company rule. The office of the then nayeb-e-nazim, who was the administrative chief of Dhaka, was relocated to Nimtoli Palace from Chawkbazar Fort.

The fort eventually became a mental asylum and prison. The mental asylum was shut after a certain time but the prison was in operation till 45 years after Bangladesh's independence.

This jailhouse has a significant place in history -- it bears memories from events of the anti-British

movement, Language Movement, and the Liberation War. Father of the Nation Bangabandhu

Sheikh Mujibur Rahman and many key important figures in the country's politics served time here as political prisoners. The assassination of four national leaders took place here in

After July 2016, inmates were shifted to the newly built jail in Keraniganj and the government then took initiatives to preserve this historic site. The government formed a technical

committee comprising representatives from the home ministry, the prison authorities and Department of Archadeology of Bangladesh, architects, planners, and historians in 2016. It is now overseeing the work of converting the old prison into an The committee organised an

open competition to draft a design for preserving the history structure, landscape design, and overall development and three architects ranked top in this competition.

The old prison stands on around 38 acres of land. The urban oasis has been designed to be built on 25 acres of the southern part. The whole place will be divided

into three zones -- A, B, and C. Bangabandhu Memorial Museum, memorial museum for national four leaders, a prison museum, and a library will be set up in Zone C. Some 35 old structures, which

have much historical significance, will be preserved and 95 other old and semi pucca structures, which have comparatively less historical significance, will be demolished.

The technical committee has approved a proposal to preserve the Sultanate-era structure. Its members, including eminent historian Muntasir Mamun and architect Prof Abu

Sayeed M Ahmed, visited the spot in 2017 to chalk out a conservation

"We proposed to preserve the wall and an adjacent building," said architect Prof Abu Sayeed.

"Normally, the age of an object containing organic material can be determined through a scientific process called radiocarbon dating. But the process is not applicable in case of bricks. Rather, the age of bricks and brick-built walls can be determined by examining its design and bonding patterns. After examining bricks of the wall, it can surely be said that the wall was constructed in the Sultanate era," he added.

Prof Muntasir Mamun said, We have come to know about the existence of a fort in Chawkbazar during the Pathan [Sultanate] era. Many wrote about the fort in books. The wall might be part of that fort."
Prof Abu Sayeed opined that more

ancient archaeological evidence could be found in the area if the excavation could be done properly.

"Any kind of new construction is not allowed in the proposed design of the central jail area, as the foundation of new construction work might affect and destroy the archaeological evidence.' The technical committee proposed the name of Sufi Mostafizur Rahman,

a professor of the archaeology department at Jahangirnagar University, as the supervisor of the excavation and it was approved. Contacted, Prof Sufi said he

conducted the excavation for around Mominur Rahman Mamun called three months at four spots in the prison between 2017 and 2018.

"I have got some significant ancient archaeological evidence there. But the technical committee asked me not to publish my findings. Even, they are now barring me from

working there." However, Prof Muntasir Mamun, a member of the technical committee, denied the allegation, and said Prof Sufi personally published a brochure containing information on the excavation.

Prof Sufi wanted to hold a press conference to disclose the findings without taking the consent of the technical committee, he added.

"We repeatedly asked him [Sufi] to submit a report with the findings before the technical committee. But it is a matter of great regret that he did not do it."

Prof Muntasir added, "The old

prison area is historically significant. That is why, I emphasised on the importance of excavation. The technical committee approved my proposal and subsequently the excavation began.

"But it is a matter of great regret that the task is half-done. The next step may be taken after getting a report of the excavation.

But Prof Sufi said a complete report cannot be published without further excavation. It needs more funds to conduct further excavation and research. The funds are yet to be allocated.

Talking to The Daily Star, Prof Sufi admitted that he published a brochure that was submitted to a government department.

He, however, did not make any comment over his alleged attempt to hold a press conference.

Asked about this issue, Inspector General of Prions Brig Gen Md the issue an "unsolved problem" and said they were trying to solve it.

He declined to make any further comment.

[Tarun Sarkar is a freelance researcher and journalist who writes for The Daily Starl

IEDCR finds 17 high-risk

The data was collected and then the residents of the areas were reconfirmed

was found that Dhaka's Rupnagar were tested positive. The infection rate and Adabar thanas are the riskiest. Positivity rate was 46 and 44 percent respectively," the IEDCR report said.

"It is tough to enforce zonal lockdown in Dhaka but we have good examples of Tolerbagh and Razabazar. Those two were successful. "Seeing the data, the authorities can

areas," Mushtaq Hossain, an adviser to the IEDCR, told The Daily Star. also said community mobilisation can play a vital role in

think of taking special measures in those

tackling transmission in any specific "Local lawmakers and ward councilors can take action based on

this information," he suggested. A total of 14,332 tests were conducted in the Dhaka South City

infected. The infection rate was 36

On the other hand, a total of 36,771 tests were done in the Dhaka North "Analysing the information, it City Corporation area where 10,483

> was 29 percent. Places with a positivity rate above 30 percent included Rupnagar, Adabar, Shah Ali, Rampura, Turag, Mirpur, Kalabagan, Tejgaon, Mohammadpur, Mugda, Ganderia, Dhanmondi, Hazaribagh, Newmarket, Chawk Bazar, Sabujbagh, Motijheel, Darus Salam, and Khilgaon.

Places with an infection positivity rate above 20 percent included Bangshal, Shahbagh, Lalbagh, Shahjahanpur, Ramna, Kamrangirchar, Shyampur, Badda, Banani, Uttarkhan, Sher-e-Bangla Nagar, Sutrapur, Jatrabari, Pallabi, Kafrul, Demra, Wari, Bhatara, Dakkhin Khan, Khilkhet, Kadamtali, and Paltan.

The current positivity rate is 20.49 percent while the total positivity rate

4 were hired to kidnap

Mobarak of operation wing of Rab HQ, in the incident, said police sources, adding the two were on the

A high official at the Rab HQ said Tamzid borrowed money from many and never paid them back. Ranu was one of them.

Unable to get her money back, Ranu sought help from Rony, a man she knows. Rony contacted Dulal, who planned the abduction and realise money from Tamzid, said the official, wishing not to be named.

On Friday, police arrested the three Rab members and the member of the air force on charges of abducting, torturing, and demanding ransom from Tamzid. Ranu got arrested as well and is now on remand.

Police later handed the three arrested Rab officials to the elite force. Rab will now primarily investigate the allegations, said Rab officials.

The air force member was handed to the force concerned as well.

"You have heard it ... we also got to know many things. Our officials are verifying those information. The investigation is at a preliminary stage...We can't say anything conclusive now," Rab Legal and Media Wing Director Commander Khandaker Al Moin told The Daily Star vesterday.

About the investigation against the Rab official, he said, "The force currently employing the accused will investigate the incident on its own. If the investigation finds them guilty, they will be sent to their main forces for further probe. Based on the probe findings, legal action will be taken against them.

Rab members are drawn from police, army and other forces.

Meanwhile, the victim Tamzid gave a statement under section 164 of the CRPC before a Dhaka court yesterday evening. According to court sources, Tamzid gave a description of the abduction before the court. He described how he was held inside a

vehicle that roamed around various parts of the city.

On Friday, the victim's sister Rayana Hossain filed a case with Hatiriheel Police Station. However, she didn't mention the names and designations of the accused.

According to the First Information Report (FIR), Tamzid went out of their Mirbagh residence around 9:00am on Thursday for Uttara. Around noon, a man called the victim's sister from an unknown number and introduced himself as a senior Rab official and told her that her brother was in their custody. The caller also threatened to kill her brother if they informed police about the matter.

The caller called again around 1:30pm on Thursday and informed Rayana that her brother was being interrogated at Rab office by senior officials and that he might be killed in "crossfire" if they did not pay Tk 2

The man on the phone also let the plaintiff hear her brother's screams as he was being tortured. Tamzid then told her that he was blindfolded right after he was picked up. Later, twothree other men called her from the same number and wanted to know whether she had the cash.

Finally, they agreed to let Tamzid go for Tk 12 lakh. They told the victim's sister to go to Jamuna Future Park with Tk 12 lakh, according to the FIR. Although the Rab has been

successful in apprehending several high-profile criminals, the allegation of various abuse of human rights against the elite force is nothing new. Earlier, the Rab found involvement

of 21 of its staff including its former Commanding Officer Lt Col Tareque Sayeed and Maj Arif Hossain in the sensational seven murders of Narayanganj. The top officials were expelled from respective positions in the elite force and armed forces concerned.

Limon Hossain, a college student at Jamaddarhat at Rajapur Upazila in Jhalakati, was shot at

by Rab personnel near his house on March 23, 2011, triggering local and international outcry. His left leg had to be amoutated as a result. The battalion filed two cases that day with the Rajapur police implicating Limon in an arms case and accusing him of obstructing police duties. In the face of protests at home and abroad, the government in July 2013 withdrew the two cases.

TAMZID'S STATEMENT

In his statement at the court, Tamzid Hossain said he met Ranu Begum last year. They later met three times and discussed starting a business of garment products. Around a week before the incident, he told Ranu that he would buy garment products worth Tk 25 lakh. On Wednesday, Ranu called him and asked him to be in front of Rajlaxmi Market in Uttara on Thursday morning.

Tamzid said Ranu called him when he went in front of the market around 10:00am and she went there with a man named Rakib. A little later, another man named Igbal went there. Rakib then said they should sit and talk at a nearby hotel called the New

Tamzid said Ranu then asked him if he would buy the goods that very day. Tamjid replied, "Yes, you will get the money as soon as you deliver the goods." Right after that, six or seven men in Rab uniform appeared with handcuffs and walkie-talkies. They wanted to know who Rakib was. As Rakib raised his hand, the Rab men grabbed Tamzid and Iqbal by the collar and asked Ranu and Rakib to come with them.

were handcuffed and "We blindfolded. They slapped us and threatened to kill me if I said anything. They took us into a microbus which drove for one and a half hours. A Rab officer then told Ranu to get down. After five-six minutes, they got on the vehicle again. Someone told me that from my father. I asked how much. He accountability," he said.

"They called my father's number from my phone. My father asked whether I was okay. I said I was okay. but I got in trouble. They demanded Tk 2 crore. Then a man took the phone away and beat me up. I came to know that they had spoken to my sister. They settled for Tk 12 lakh and asked my sister to go to Jamuna Future Park. He threatened that he would put me in a crossfire if the money didn't

"Just before the evening, two of them named Rokon and Rony got out of the vehicle. After a while, two more people got down. Then Ranu's phone rang and she gave the phone to me. A man named Dulal said my sister had got two of their men detained. If they didn't release the two in five minutes, they would kill me and throw the body in the Turag river.

"Then I told my sister about it... When she asked where I was, I said --300 feet [road]. Then they took away the phone and drove to Uttara. Once there, all of them got down, except the driver, Ranu, Iqbal and me. I opened my eyes. A boy came and picked up the Rab equipment and left. Then a man named Mubarak came and said that there was no point in keeping these two alive. After that, I was taken to Hatirjheel where police rescued

Police sources said the microbus driver was in their custody and he may testify in the case.

Rights activist Nur Khan Liton told The Daily Star that this was not the first such incident. Among the sensational cases, he said there were the seven-murder case in Narayanganj in 2014 and embezzlement of over Tk 2 crore at a Chattogram shrine in 2011

"We don't know about the incidents that weren't reported. After every such incident, the accused are sent to the forces they belong in for further they will file an arms and narcotics probe. But these are criminal offences. case against me. He demanded money There should be transparency and

Corporation area where 5,103 were stands at 13.65 percent.

commodities from shops or to go to offices and businesses. People began to hangout at neighbourhood tea-stalls. Very few steps by the authority were visible to enforce the restrictions.

Experts wondered whether the halfhearted enforcement of restrictions would be effective at all.

Then two ministers on Friday announced that the country will be under a strict lockdown for a week from April 14. Except for emergency services, all

government and private offices and factories will remain closed during the lockdown and public transport services will be suspended, said State Minister for Public Administration Farhad

Hossain. **CONFUSION OVER**

APRIL 12 AND 13 As per the April 4 circular, the current restrictions will end today.

A government official on Friday night called this correspondent asking about the government decision for April 12 and 13 and wanted to know whether long-haul buses

Many members of the popular Traffic Alert page on Facebook also asked whether public transport would resume for the two days.

Contacted, Khondaker Enayet Ullah, secretary general of Bangladesh Road Transport Owners Association, said the association had yet to receive any directive in this regard.

"I have talked to the BRTA chairman,

either. Transport association leaders from different districts are also asking

Contacted, Bangladesh Road

Commodore Golam "We did not get any directive [about April 12 and 13]. However, I think restrictions on [long-route] public transport will remain in force."

'We may know about it tomorrow [today]," he told this correspondent.

(east) of Bangladesh Railway, said passenger trains were unlikely to operate in the two-day period. "We are expecting to get the directive tomorrow," he said.

Minister for Public State Administration Farhad Hossain said, "I have no idea about any decision about the two days.'

"Our main goal is to reduce the infection rate. So, I think there is no scope to relax the restrictions. So, the restrictions may remain unchanged [in the two days]," he told The Daily Star, "However, the prime minister will give a directive tomorrow [today]," he

Confusion reigns supreme but he could not give any decision me about the decision," Enayet told

> The Daily Star yesterday. Transport Authority (BRTA) Chairman Nur Mohammad Mazumder said a circular regarding restrictions is likely to be issued following a meeting

"I think everything will be clear once the circular is issued," he added. chairman of Bangladesh Inland Water Transport Authority (BIWTA), said,

Jahangir Hossain, general manager