

1,504 New cases in 24hrs



7,86,698 Total cases



12,310 Deaths



7,29,039 Recoveries

3,451,222 Deaths



166,210,995 Total cases

# 83 eminent citizens

FROM PAGE 1 newspapers of the world, which had raised questions about the country and government's image in the context of freedom of expression and democracy."

The 83 signatories to this statement include educationist Serajul Islam Choudhury, former caretaker government advisers Wahiduddin Mahmud, Sultana Kamal, Hafizuddin Khan, Rasheda K Choudhury, Hossain Zillur Rahman, economist Debapriya Bhattacharya, human rights activist Sultana Kamal, former cabinet secretary Ali Imam Majumdar, Transparency International Bangladesh's Executive Director Iftekharuzzaman, Gonoshasthaya Kendra's Zafullah Chowdhury, Bangladesh Supreme Court lawyers Shahdeen Malik, ZI Khan Panna, Sara Hossain, Nijera Kori Coordinator Khushi Kabir, Shujan Secretary Badiul Alam Majumdar, Bangladesh Environmental Lawyers Association Chief Executive Syeda Rizwana Hasan, professors Ali Riaz, Swapan Adnan and ALRD Executive Director Shamsul Huda.

The teachers signing the statement include Dhaka University's CR Abrar, Asif Nazul, Geeti Ara Nasreen, Robaet Ferdous, Samina Lutfa, Tanzimuddin Khan, Shahnaz Huda, Sumaiya Khair, Zohaida Nasrin, Kazi Maruful Islam, Gobinda Chakraborty, Jahangirnagar University's Anu Muhammad, Mirza Taslima Sultana, Sayeed Ferdous, Nasrin Khandakar and Saima Khatun, Chittagong University's Maudul Islam and Sadaf Noor, and researchers Meghna Guhathakurta and Nova Ahmed.

Also signatories of the statement are photographers Shahidul Alam, Parveen Hasan, Firdous Azim, Akmal Hossain, Asiatic Society of Bangladesh President Mahfuza Khanam, human rights activists Sharmeen Morshed, Shireen P Huq, Sanjeeb Drong, Pallab Chakma, Faustina Pereira, Arup Rabi, Muktasree Chakma, Noor Khan, Rehnuna Ahmed, Ilira Dewan, Subrata Chowdhury, Ijazul Islam, Hana Shams Ahmed, Rezaur Rahman and Salma Ali.

Other signatories are Selim Jahan, Shameem Azad, Bina D'Costa, Abu Sayeed Khan, Tabarak Hossain, Parsa Sajid, Lubna Marium, Naila Z Khan, Saidia Gulrukh, Fauzia Khandakar, Kazi Suha Akhter, Sushmita Pritha, Phillip Gain, Rezanur Rahman, Kanak Chakma, Mahbubur Rahman, Shimul Saha, Kamar Ahmed, Sara Afrin, Nasimul Ara Huq, Rozina Begum and Ahmed Kabir Kishore.

In another development, journalist leaders yesterday threatened to launch tougher programmes if Rozina is not released by tomorrow.

The speakers gave the warning while addressing a rally in protest of Rozina's arrest in front of Dhaka Reporters Unity.

Speaking at the programme, organised by DRU, Deep Azad, treasurer of a faction of Bangladesh Federal Union of Journalists (BFUJ), said they would wait till tomorrow for the bail of journalist Rozina, who was arrested in a case filed under the Official Secrets Act-1923.

DRU General Secretary Mashiur Rahman Khan said they will sit today with the leaders of other organisations like the National Press Club, BFUJ and Dhaka Union of Journalists to set their next course of action.

Expressing distrust over the probe committee formed by the health ministry, he said they have already informed the information minister to form a neutral probe body dissolving the health ministry's one to investigate the incident,

but they were yet to see any progress.

Termining the probe body one-sided, the journalist leader said if a neutral committee is not formed, DRU members will launch an investigation and reveal what happened with Rozina.

Shahidul Islam, general secretary of a Dhaka Union of Journalists faction, said though the case is a bailable one, the victim is still in jail. "It is very important to continue our protest for the interest of free journalism."

Ashish Kumar Dey, president of Shipping and Communication Reporters Forum, said during the BNP-Jamaat government, a state minister of energy and mineral resources was forced to step down following news of bribe scam involving him was published in media. But in the case of Rozina, she was tortured to take revenge for her reports, he added.

Shahanaz Sharmeen, former DRU welfare secretary, asked, "Did you do any investigation based on the reports written by Rozina on corruption and take any action so far?"

An attempt to murder case should be filed against the health ministry's officials involved in torturing Rozina and the DRU should come forward to do this, said senior journalist Omar Faruk.

DRU Vice-president Osman Gani Babul presided over the protest rally.

Meanwhile, Sushashoner Jonno Nagorik (Shujan) at a virtual discussion also demanded Rozina's immediate release and protested curbing the freedom of press.

In a press release, Shujan Secretary Badiul Alam Majumdar said there were some myths in the country and one of them was that freedom of press will not be curbed.

But now that myth has gone away and even a journalist was assaulted after being confined.

Eminent jurist Shahdeen Malik said this Official Secrets Act was enacted to ensure punishment for providing information to enemies on defence of the government. It is a law for military secret affairs, he said.

It seems that the case under the act was filed hurriedly to get Rozina in trouble, he said.

Military soldiers can arrest a person in restricted areas such as cantonment or its adjoining areas if a case is filed under the act, he said.

Cases under the act cannot be applicable to a journalist who has the right to enter the secretariat for gathering information, he added.

M Hafiz Uddin Khan, president of Shujan, said everyone will have to protest by rising above political affiliation to ensure freedom and the rule of law; otherwise such incidents will increase.

Among others, Manabzamin Editor-in-chief Matiur Rahman Chowdhury and Bangladesh Adivasi Forum leader Sanjeeb Drong also spoke.

"ROZINA WILL GET FAIR TREATMENT" Foreign Minister AK Abdul Momen yesterday said Rozina will get fair treatment and judgment.

"Bangladesh's judiciary is very independent, she [Rozina] will get fair treatment, and judgment. We don't want anyone to suffer," he told CNN in a live interview.

He also mentioned that this is a legal issue and they do not intend to interfere in the process.

Momen said there is law in the country and they honour the law and that is why they do not want to talk about it much since it is now before the court. "Rozina will get a fair judgment... no doubt about that."



Workers sort out litchis at a garden in Gazipur's Sreepur upazila. A hundred pieces of this popular summer fruit is sold for Tk 160 in the district. The photo was taken on Wednesday.

PHOTO: STAR

# Hospital suffers, so do patients

FROM PAGE 1 year to support Covid-19 patients.

"The ICU is yet to be functional due to the manpower crisis," said the report of the government project monitoring agency, following a field visit in March last year.

It also noted the overall responsibility for procurement of equipment was with the Central Medical Stores Depot (CMSD) and the failure to install the equipment on time hampered the delivery of healthcare services.

Each ARV machine was purchased at a cost of Tk 70 lakh "but these were not used a single time," the report stated.

Transparency International Bangladesh Executive Director Dr Iftekharuzzaman told The Daily Star that this oversight shows the many faces of corruption and irregularities.

"There was clearly a lack of proper planning and more importantly a remorseless absence of accountability. This also shows the priorities attached to procurement per se in the name of project implementation because that is where lies the scope of making illicit profits by collusion with vendors."

Contacted, Dr Farid Hossain Miah, director (hospitals and clinics) of the Directorate General of Health Services, said the equipment was purchased to turn the National Institute of ENT into a "complete" organisation.

"Those were probably not required and that's why they were not used. But one cannot say it is a wastage of public money," he told The Daily Star on Wednesday.

TIB's Iftekharuzzaman said, "The story also shows a lack of a minimum sense of responsibility, taking advantage of the absence of internal control and accountability."

The TIB boss added those responsible for such ruthless wastage of public resources must be brought to justice in an exemplary manner, failing which such instances will continue to be replicated.

The hospital also desperately needs radiotherapy and chemotherapy facilities for ENT cancer patients. "From hospital statistics, it was found that out of the total operated patients 56 percent are cancer patients. In many cases, radiotherapy is needed before and after operation," the IMED report observed.

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina inaugurated the hospital on June 19, 2013. It started as a 100-bed hospital before being upgraded.

By now a popular destination for ENT patients, it treats around 500-600 patients daily at its outdoor facility. The occupancy rate at the indoor unit of the now 135-bed hospital is 100 percent, according to hospital authorities.

STAFF APPOINTMENT REQUESTS UNHEEDED Patients continue to suffer in the absence of the necessary workforce to operate the equipment and run the unit, said Prof Dr Mohammad Abu Hanif, director and principal of National Institute of ENT.

He said they have sent a number of letters to the health ministry these last five years for the allotment of doctors and nurses so that they could start ICU operations.

The hospital authorities sent a letter on January 12, 2020 to the secretary of health services department of the health ministry, seeking appointments of one associate professor and three junior consultants for vacant posts in the anaesthesia department and

another eight medical officers/consultants.

In another letter on the same day sent to the director general of the nursing and midwife directorate, the hospital authorities sought the deployment of eight senior staff nurses to start the ICU.

The National Institute of ENT also sent two separate letters to the secretary of the health ministry in 2016, seeking anaesthetists and nurses to launch the ICU.

The first letter, dated April 3, signed by the then director of the institute Prof Dr Mahmudul Hasan, said, "In the absence of necessary anaesthetists and trained nurses the authority is facing difficulties to start the ICU service."

It also sought allotment of one associate professor (anaesthesiology) for a vacant post and some anaesthetists/nurses on emergency basis to ensure treatment of patients.

The second letter on November 3, also signed by Prof Dr Mahmudul Hasan, asked for 23 nurses including one superintendent, two deputy superintendent, and 10 nursing supervisors.

However, these staff appointment requests are yet to be heeded. Asked, Prof Abu Hanif said, "We are yet to get any deployment of nurses and anaesthesiologists."

He said that since joining the institute in February 2019 he tried to start the ICU on a limited scale with the support of the anaesthesia department. It was at that time they came to know that not all the ARV machines were totally functional.

Regarding the radiotherapy department needs, Prof Abu Hanif said they have also written to the authorities concerned in this regard.

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## World leaders hail

FROM PAGE 1 Few analysts believe there will be progress towards resolving the fundamental issues in the immediate future. There were no signals of an end to Israel's decades-old military grip over the Palestinian territories and its blockade on the already-devastated Gaza enclave, within which 2 million people live under headline Hamas rule.

However, Guterres said the UN was ready to work with Israel, the Palestinians, and others to return to "meaningful negotiations" on a two-state settlement based on territorial lines before

the 1967 war. World leaders welcomed the ceasefire deal.

"I believe we have a genuine opportunity to make progress and I'm committed to working towards it," US President Joe Biden said. He said the US would work together with the UN agencies and the Palestinian authority, but not Hamas, to rebuild Gaza.

The European Union insisted that working towards a "two-state solution" was the only viable option. Russia and China called for a return to peace talks.

Palestinians rallied by the thousands early yesterday to mark the truce after a bombardment

which Palestinian health officials said killed 243 people, including 66 children. More than 1,900 were wounded.

At least 25 Palestinians also have been killed by Security forces in the West Bank and east Jerusalem. Gaza officials said 16,800 homes and key utility facilities were damaged.

Israeli authorities put the country's death toll to date at 12, including two children.

The violence erupted on May 10, triggered by Palestinians' anger at what they saw as Israeli curbs on their rights in Jerusalem.

Fresh clashes between Palestinians and Israeli police broke out at Al-Aqsa mosque compound yesterday.

**গণপ্রজাতন্ত্রী বাংলাদেশ সরকার**  
 অধ্যক্ষের কার্যালয়  
 আব্দুল মালেক উকিল মেডিকেল কলেজ, নোয়াখালী  
 স্মারক নং-আমাউমেক/নোয়া/২১/১৬ তারিখঃ ২০/০৫/২০২১ইং

**নোটিশ**

২০২১-২০২২ইং শিক্ষাবর্ষে এমবিবিএস কোর্সে আব্দুল মালেক উকিল মেডিকেল কলেজ, নোয়াখালীতে ভর্তি জন্য নির্বাচিত ছাত্র-ছাত্রীদের অবগতির জন্য জানানো যাচ্ছে যে, আগামী ২২/০৫/২০২১ইং তারিখ হইতে ২৭/০৫/২০২১ইং তারিখ পর্যন্ত অফিস চলাকালীন সময়ে স্থানীয়ভাবে ভর্তি কার্যক্রম চলবে। নির্বাচিত ছাত্র/ছাত্রীগণ সকাল ৯.৩০ ঘটিকার মধ্যে প্রশাসনিক কক্ষ হতে ভর্তি ফরম সংগ্রহ করে সঠিকভাবে পূরণ করে প্রয়োজনীয় কাগজপত্রসহ যাচাই-বাছাই কমিটির নিকট জমা দিতে হবে এবং একই দিনে কাগজপত্র যাচাই-বাছাই ও স্বাস্থ্য পরীক্ষা করা হবে।

ভর্তির সময় নিম্নলিখিত কাগজপত্রের মূল কপি জমা দিতে হবে-

- ০১। ভর্তি পরীক্ষার মূল প্রবেশপত্র।
- ০২। ভর্তি পরীক্ষার ফলাফলের মূলকপি।
- ০৩। এসএসসি বা সমমান পরীক্ষা পাশের মূল সনদপত্র।
- ০৪। এসএসসি বা সমমান পরীক্ষা পাশের মূল একাডেমিক ট্রান্সক্রিপ্ট।
- ০৫। এইচএসসি বা সমমান পরীক্ষা পাশের মূল সনদপত্র অথবা প্রশংসাপত্র।
- ০৬। এইচএসসি বা সমমান পরীক্ষা পাশের মূল একাডেমিক ট্রান্সক্রিপ্ট।
- ০৭। জেলা কোর্টার জন্য স্থানীয় সিটি কর্পোরেশনের মেয়র/পৌরসভার/ইউনিয়ন পরিষদের চেয়ারম্যান/ওয়ার্ড কমিশনার প্রদত্ত নাগরিকত্বের মূল সনদপত্র।
- ০৮। ০৪ কপি সদ্য তোলা পাসপোর্ট সাইজের সত্যায়িত রঙিন কপি।
- ০৯। পার্বত্য জেলার উপজাতীয় প্রার্থীদের ক্ষেত্রে সার্কেল চীফ এবং জেলা প্রশাসকের সনদপত্র ও অ-উপজাতীয় প্রার্থীদের ক্ষেত্রে সার্কেল চীফ এবং জেলা প্রশাসক প্রদত্ত মূল সনদপত্র। অন্যান্য জেলার উপজাতীয় প্রার্থীদের ক্ষেত্রে উপাধ্যক্ষ জেলা প্রশাসক প্রদত্ত মূল সনদপত্র।
- ১০। মুক্তিযোদ্ধা মূল সনদপত্র (২০১১ এর জারিকৃত বিধি অনুসরণ করা হবে)।
- ১১। ও লেভেল এবং এ লেভেল পাশকৃত শিক্ষার্থীদের ক্ষেত্রে স্বাস্থ্য অধিদপ্তর অফিস কর্তৃক কৃত স্বাক্ষরিত মূল নম্বর পত্র ও সনদপত্র/প্রশংসাপত্র (প্রয়োজ্য ক্ষেত্রে)।

উল্লেখ্য যে, নির্ধারিত কমিটি কর্তৃক ভর্তি সক্ষমতা কাগজপত্র যাচাই-বাছাই করার পর স্বাস্থ্য পরীক্ষার উপযুক্ত বলে বিবেচিত হলে এবং ভর্তি ফি (সরকারি/অভ্যন্তরীণ) ব্যাংকের মাধ্যমে ২৫,০০০/- টাকা জমা দেওয়ার সাপেক্ষে ভর্তি করা হবে।

যোগাযোগঃ ০১৮২৫-৮৭০৬৫৭, ০১৮১৮-১৭৬২৫৭।

**অধ্যাপক ডাঃ মোঃ আব্দুল হালিম**  
 অধ্যক্ষ  
 আব্দুল মালেক উকিল মেডিকেল কলেজ, নোয়াখালী  
 জিডি-১০২৪

## Accused killed in 'gunfight' with Rab

FROM PAGE 1 Federation, a component of the Awami League-led 14-party alliance. He was later sacked from his party. He was elected lawmaker in the 2014 general elections.

Awal had planned the murder following a feud with Shahinuddin and his family over a piece of land in the capital's Ali Nagar where the former MP is implementing a land development project, said Rab.

Simon was tasked with executing the murder plan. Led by him, a team of 10-12 people, including Monir, Manik, Hasan, Iqbal, and Murad, directly took part in the killing mission. Several others were around the killing spot.

Shahinuddin was asked to go to Mirpur Section-12 on the pretext of resolving the land dispute. The assailants hacked him indiscriminately with sharp weapons, leaving him dead on the spot. Monir and Manik continued hacking the victim till death, according to Rab.

A CCTV camera installed nearby recorded the incident. Footage of the murder created a stir on social media after it went viral.

On May 17, victim's mother Aklima Begum filed the

murder case against 20 named and 13 to 14 unnamed accused with Pallabi Police Station.

Law enforcers have so far arrested seven of the accused.

'GUNFIGHT' Muzammel Haque, commanding officer of Rab-4, said their patrol team rushed to Eastern Housing area around 2:30am yesterday on information that a group of armed criminals gathered there.

"As the patrol team reached there, criminals opened fire on the team members who were forced to return shots for their safety," Muzammel told The Daily Star.

After eight to 10 minutes, the criminals fled the area. The Rab members then searched the spot and found one lying on the ground with bullet wounds.

Rupnagar police went to the spot and sent the injured to Shaheed Suhrawardy Medical College Hospital where doctors declared him dead.

The Rab-4 CO said they took fingerprints of the man and using technology came to know that the dead was Manik. Police and locals identified him as an accused in Shahinuddin murder case.

The Rab claimed to have recovered a pistol and two bullets from the spot.

## China to give another six lakh doses as gift

FROM PAGE 1 "It is believed that the arrival of the second batch of Chinese gift vaccine will definitely help the Bangladeshi government and people build a strong line of defense against the epidemic."

Last week, China gifted the first batch of 500,000 doses of Sinopharm vaccine to Bangladesh.

This fully reflects that China attaches great importance to the friendly relations between the two countries, the Chinese embassy said.

In future, China is willing to provide the necessary support for Bangladesh and South Asian countries to fight the epidemic, deepen anti-epidemic cooperation with Bangladesh, and effectively protect the health and life safety of the people of the two countries, it added.

seeking to import Covid-19 vaccines from different countries.

The country is in the final stage of signing deals with China and Russia to buy vaccines and eventually go for co-production.

Bangladesh has also requested the US and Canada for AstraZeneca vaccines for second dose of some 2 lakh people who got the first dose but are not getting the second one amid shortage of AstraZeneca vaccines.

Bangladesh purchased three crore doses of Covishield, the coronavirus vaccine developed by the University of Oxford and drugmaker AstraZeneca and manufactured by Serum Institute of India.

Amid a steep rise in Covid cases in India and reports of shortage of vaccines, the Indian government reportedly paused vaccine exports in March to meet domestic demand.

## RISE IN COVID CASES

# Five Rohingya camps under strict lockdown

UNB, Cox's Bazar

Amid a huge surge in Covid-19 cases in the region, a 10-day complete lockdown has been imposed in Cox's Bazar's Teknaf upazila while a week-long similar restrictions have been announced in five Rohingya camps in the district's Ukhiya and Teknaf upazilas.

"Cox's Bazar District Corona Prevention Committee has decided to impose the lockdown from May 21 to 30 in the wake of a rise in the number of infections in the region," Mohammod Parvez Chowdhury, Upazila Nirbahi Officer of Teknaf, said yesterday.

Meanwhile, a strict lockdown has been imposed in Ukhiya camps -- 2, 3, 4, and 15 -- and Teknaf camp number 24 for a week from May 21, said additional refugee relief and repatriation commissioner Mohammad Shamsuddouza.

All activities in these camps have been suspended from yesterday, except emergency services like medicine and food supplies, officials said.

According to the health department in Cox's Bazar, 823 Rohingyas have been infected with the virus to date and 12 have died.

Bangladesh is currently hosting over 1.1 million Rohingyas across 34 camps in Cox's Bazar and Bhasan Char.

Most of them have arrived in this country since August 25, 2017, when the Myanmar military launched a brutal offensive targeting the mainly-Muslim ethnic minority.

## Pandemic curbs

FROM PAGE 1 active mobile phone subscribers entered the capital while 10,645,697 subscribers left Dhaka between May 7 and May 15, according to Bangladesh Telecommunication Regulatory Commission data.

The numbers are an indication of how many people have been travelling despite the restrictions on operation of long-haul buses, trains and launches.

Yesterday, not much activities from the law enforcers were visible at different entry points of the capital.

On the Padma river, 18 ferries have been operating between Shimulia and Banglabazar, 16 between Paturia and Daulatdia, and four between Aricha and Kazirhat terminals, according to the Bangladesh Inland Water Transport Authority (BIWTA).

Faisal Ahmed, BIWTA manager in Shimulia, said the ferries have been packed with people and vehicles. Sometimes several ferries had to carry only people to ease the rush.

Seeking anonymity, an official of Dhaka Metropolitan Police said police do not check everyone on the road to avoid causing traffic congestion.

Yesterday, there were moderate to heavy traffic congestion at different intersections on the capital's Airport Road, and in Pragati Sarani, Bhatara, Natun Bazar, Gulshan, Banani, Bijoy Sarani, and Farmgate areas.

Many restaurants were open despite the restrictions and there were large congregations at mosques.

Infectious disease specialist Prof Ridwanur Rahman said, "The government took many measures from the beginning of the pandemic. But the existed on paper only... There is little action. The lockdown here is an empty word, it means no action."

There are no inter-district buses, but people know how to travel without those, he said.

"The orders regarding the lockdown say that people can't do this or that. But it does not specifically say people can't travel unless there is an emergency. It's a problem of the system. If people knew that they can't travel by any means, they wouldn't attempt to do so," he said.

The Indian variant is a concern because it transmits more rapidly than other variants, he noted.

"We have vaccinated four percent of our population. If there is a third wave, infections may suddenly rise because of the Indian variant."

## 26 more die

FROM PAGE 1 on May 10. He tested positive on May 12 and died around 11:00am yesterday.

Chudanga Civil Surgeon ASM Maruf Hasan told our Kustia Correspondent that it will be tested whether the deceased was infected by the Indian variant of coronavirus.

The infant and the 11-year-old, who has blood cancer, tested positive at Jashore General Hospital.

Doctors in Jashore said this was the first time a child returning from India tested positive for Covid-19.

YESTERDAY'S BRIEFING A total of 18,294 samples were tested across the country in 24 hours preceding 8:00am yesterday. The current positivity rate is 8.22 percent while the total positivity rate stands at 13.58 percent.

At least 1,529 patients recovered in this period.

The total number of recoveries stood at 7,29,039 and the recovery rate at 92.67 percent as of yesterday.

Among the 26 deceased, 19 were men and seven women. One was aged between 21 and 30 years, one between 31 and 40, two between 41 and 50, eight between 51 and 60, the rest were over 60 years.