



BANGLADESH UPDATE

3,050
 New cases in 24hrs


8,29,972
 Total cases


13,172
 Deaths


7,68,830
 Recoveries

GLOBAL UPDATE

3,822,518
 Deaths


176,902,239
 Total cases

INNOCENT IN JAIL FOR 5YRS PBI IDs 7 cops responsible

Submits probe report to HC

ASHUTOSH SARKAR

A probe by the Police Bureau of Investigation (PBI) has found seven former officials of Pallabi Police Station responsible for wrongly arresting Md Arman, a technician from Mirpur's Benarasi Palli, in 2016.

Because of them, the victim had to languish in jail for five long years, found the PBI investigation.

The seven police officials were extremely negligent in carrying out their duties while examining the name, address and other information regarding the case's accused. That is why innocent Arman was arrested and he had to suffer in jail for a long time, the PBI said in an inquiry report submitted to the High Court yesterday.

The seven are then officers-in-charge (OCs) of the police station Md Dadan Fakir and Md Nazrul Islam; the then sub inspectors (SIs) Md Sirajul Islam Khan and Khan Imdadul Haque (now retired), the then duty officer Moniara Akhter; the then SI Md Russel and the then assistant sub inspector (ASI) Hajrat Ali, according to the PBI report.

A three-member PBI probe body, headed by Superintendent of Police Mohammad Khorshid Alam, submitted the report through the attorney general's office to the HC

bench, led by Justice Md Mozibur Rahman Miah, complying with a previous directive.

Police arrested Arman in a drug case in January 2016 instead of the original accused, one Shahabuddin Bihari. Following a writ petition, the HC on December 31 last year declared the arrest and detention of Arman illegal and contradictory to his fundamental and human rights.

Arman was released from the Dhaka Central Jail.

The HC also directed the inspector general of police to give Tk 20 lakh in compensation to Arman in 30 days. Later, the Appellate Division stayed this part of the HC verdict.

The same day (December 31), the HC ordered the IGP and the DMP commissioner to withdraw police officers, who were discharging duties under Pallabi Police Station during the incident, from their present workplaces and also ordered the PBI to conduct an inquiry into the incident and submit a report to it.

The HC bench of Justice Md Mozibur Rahman Miah and Justice Mohi Uddin Shamim delivered the order following a petition filed by Law and Life Foundation.

The HC observed that the incident was very unexpected and a collective failure of the police department.

ROHINGYAS GETTING CITIZENSHIP ACC sues ex-CCC councillor, 5 others

FM MIZANUR RAHAMAN, Cg

The Anti-Corruption Commission yesterday filed a case against six people, including a former ward councillor of Chattogram City Corporation and three Rohingyas, for issuing citizenship and birth certificates to Rohingyas.

Deputy Assistant Director Sharif Uddin of ACC Integrated Office Chattogram-1, said the ACC sources.

The accused are: Ismail Bali, 49, former councillor of Patharghata ward of CCC, Subarna Dutta, assistant of birth certificate issue section of the ward office, Rohingya broker Sirajul Islam, and three Rohingyas -- Mohammed Ismail, 56, his wife Meher Jan, 42, and Wahida, 26.

Of them, Ismail and Meher Jan have Bangladeshi passports and NID cards and they are now living in Saudi Arabia.

DAD Sharif said, "The incident happened between 2017 and 2019. Introducing her as the daughter of Rohingya Ismail and showing his NID card, Wahida applied for birth and

citizenship certificates in September 2019."

According to the case statement, following the application, councillor Bali issued the certificates for Wahida on September 29, 2019. Later, with the help of broker Sirajul, Wahida went to the Panchlaish passport office on November 11, 2019, and applied for Bangladeshi passport giving her documents and showing Meher Jan and Ismail as her parents.

However, passport officials had detained her after her fingerprint matched the Rohingya database. During primary interrogation, Wahida admitted that Meher Jan and Ismail were not her parents.

The case statement added that Ismail and Meher Jan also collected their citizenship certificates signed by councillor Bali from his ward and managed to get the Bangladeshi NID cards under Kotowali Zone using the documents. Wahida also applied for NID card, the statement said.

DAD Sharif said the case was lodged after the ACC found the irregularities to be true.

Railway now seeks

FROM PAGE 1

After a programme on May 23, the respondent asked the Railways Minister Md. Nurul Islam Sujon about the reason for the wholesale revision of the projects and he along with the Railway Secretary Salim Reza and the BR Director-General Dharendra Nath Mazumder blamed it all on the global public health crisis.

In the last five fiscal years, the ministry could not achieve the average implementation rate for annual development programmes except in fiscal 2017-18, documents show.

In five consecutive fiscal years, including the current one, the government allocated Tk 56,964.2 crore for various development and technical assistance projects to the BR. Until October last year, the BR managed to spend only Tk 30,493.3 crore, according to its data.

The BR has already sent the proposals of the 19 projects, 15 of which have already been amended before for another round of revision, sources said.

One of the projects is the construction of the 64.75-kilometre-long Khulna-Mongla Port rail line.

The project was supposed to be completed within three years of its approval in December 2010.

But the project's physical work did not kick off six years after the approval. In the meantime, the cost of the project -- which is being implemented with India's first line of credit -- rose to Tk 3,801 crore, 120 percent higher than the original estimate.

The delays did not end there. The project authorities recently sought another Tk 633.4 crore and a one-and-a-half-year extension of the project's current deadline in June this year.

As of February, the project witnessed 82.5 percent progress.

Another project is the Akhaura and Laksam Double Line project.

The project, which was approved in December 2014 for June 2020 completion, entails the construction of a double rail line on this section and the conversion of the existing track into the dual gauge.

But the main construction work only commenced in November 2016, about two years after the approval. The project

got a year's extension to June this year.

Now, following the request of the project authorities, the BR authorities on May 8 sent a proposal to the planning commission seeking a two-year time extension to June 2023 without cost escalation, according to another BR official.

The project witnessed 74 percent progress until April this year.

The BR in 2015 had taken two projects -- one for the east zone and another for the west zone -- for rehabilitation, construction and upgradation of important level crossings.

The project for the east zone has gone through revision twice and the west zone once. And now, the BR has sought a year's extension for both projects.

As of April, 77 percent of the east zone project has been completed and 74.4 percent of the west zone one.

The Planning Commission has fixed June 23 to discuss the time extension proposals of 11 BR projects, the BR official said.

The other seven projects that would be discussed at the meeting on June 23 are: procurement of meter gauge and broad gauge passenger carriages; procurement of locomotives, relief cranes and locomotive simulator; technical assistance for Dhaka-Chittagong-Cox's Bazar rail project preparatory facility; feasibility study for important projects of the west zone; feasibility study and details design for the construction of a rail line from Darshana to Meherpur; and feasibility study for the construction of a railway link to proposed Bay Terminal at Potenga.

Besides, BR sought time extension for other eight other projects: construction of dual gauge line parallel to the existing MG line on Dhaka-Narayanganj section; procurement of 200 MG passenger carriages; construction of Akhaura-Agartala rail link; procurement of 20 MG locomotives and 150 MG passenger carriages; rolling stock operations improvement project (rolling stock procurement); construction of rail line from Ishwardi to Rooppur Atomic Centre; construction of rail line between Chilahati and Chilahati Border; feasibility study and detail design for construction of a railway link to Sunamganj; and technical assistance for rolling stock operations improvement.



Traders taking fish fry in a vehicle to sell them to fish farms. Fish fry is usually released into water at the farms during this time of the year. The traders are constantly thumping the water in the pots to make sure the fry get enough oxygen. The photo was taken on Friday on the Khulna-Gopalganj highway.

PHOTO: SK ENAMUL HAQ

Understaffed, under stress

FROM PAGE 1

The manpower crisis in RMCH is not as acute as in the Natore hospital, said officials there.

There are three hospitals in Bogura where Covid patients can turn to. Of them, the 100-bed Mohammad Ali District Hospital and the Shaheed Ziaur Rahman Medical College Hospital are better equipped in terms of manpower, but TMSS Medical College & Rafatullah Community Hospital lags behind.

Fifty-three out of the 56 Covid beds at the Kushtia Sadar Hospital were filled as of yesterday morning, meaning it was almost at full capacity. The district's positivity rate two days ago was 30 percent.

But this hospital only has 11 doctors and 22 nurses. Once again, duty roster divides this batch up to half, and they then are further spread out over three shifts.

"We are having some trouble because of the roster. We will get more doctors and nurses. We need five doctors on an emergency basis and 50 nurses. All 11 of the doctors here are medical officers," said Dr Taposh Sarkar, the resident medical officer of the hospital.

The hospital's administration said about a quarter of the personnel's posts in the hospital remain vacant.

A little over an hour away, Chuadanga district hospital's 150 Covid-19 beds are under the care of 18 doctors and 65 nurses.

"When the 150-bed hospital was inaugurated, we were not given the healthcare staffers needed to operate this. We are maintaining a roster system for our existing staffers, and encouraging patients to recuperate at home," said Dr Maruf Hasan, civil surgeon general and superintendent of the hospital.

The daily positivity rate in the district was 50 percent on Sunday. It was 56 percent the day before, shows DHGS data.

In neighbouring Meherpur, the 250-bed district hospital has an appalling 5 doctors for 52 Covid-19 beds. The district has an equally appalling positivity rate of 39 percent, making it a high-risk zone.

"I got two more doctors on a temporary basis, but I urgently need at least four more," said Dr Rafiqul Islam, the superintendent of the hospital. "We have to divide the doctors into two batches and send one group to quarantine for 15 days."

According to the Directorate General of Health Services' Covid-19 Dynamic Facility Dashboard, an equally

HOSPITAL	TOTAL COVID-19 BEDS	OCCUPANCY RATE	NUMBER OF DOCTORS	NUMBER OF NURSES
Meherpur 250-bed District Hospital	52	46%	5 and 2 temporary	10
Jhenaidah District Hospital	50	34%	12	12
Kushtia 250-bed Sadar Hospital	56	95%	11	22
Jashore 250-bed General Hospital	45	91%	12	10
Bagerhat District Hospital	53	40%	22	65

frightening situation can be perceived down south in Narail.

The Narail district hospital has set aside 120 beds for Covid patients, but has only nine doctors, said hospital sources.

When asked to confirm the number, Nasima, the civil surgeon, asked to contact the superintendent of the hospital Dr Abdus Shakur.

Shakur, however, said he could not verify the number until the next morning.

This district has a daily positivity rate as high as 44 percent.

Moving to the west, the Jashore 250-bed general hospital was at 91 percent capacity yesterday with 41 of its 45 Covid-19 beds occupied, but this hospital has only 12 doctors and 10 nurses to deal with the influx of patients, said Civil Surgeon Sheikh Abu Shaheen.

But this is a crucial district where the daily positivity rate yesterday stood at 56 percent.

As a result, all patients in the southern division flock to Khulna Medical College and Hospital.

The hospital with a 100 Covid-19 dedicated beds was overflowing. It was being taken care of by 34 doctors.

Rabiul Hasan, the hospital's director, reports that beds or no beds, patients are now being accommodated anyway. "We have 141 Covid-19 patients admitted in the hospital right now," he said.

He said they do not have any shortage of healthcare professionals.

Khulna's positivity rate stood at 25 percent yesterday. Neighbouring Bagerhat's positivity rate was 26 percent, and its Mongla upazila is on lockdown,

but its sole district hospital suffers acutely from a manpower shortage.

There are 53 Covid-19 dedicated beds in the Bagerhat district hospital, of which 40 percent were filled, but the hospital is staring down the barrel of a looming healthcare crisis with only 22 doctors.

Our correspondent reports that roster duty means there are just not enough doctors to tackle the crisis and that a newly built 150-bed hospital lies empty for that reason.

Infectious diseases specialist Ridwanur Rahman commented that there was a huge geographical disparity in the distribution of healthcare staffers.

"There is a geographical disparity regarding which districts have more manpower. There is no policy -- if a doctor gets sent to an outpost, he or she needs to lobby to get transferred, so doctors are unwilling to receive transfers to other districts," said Ridwanur.

"There was no planning when it came to the growth of manpower in the healthcare sector. They are more focused on medical supply purchase rather than investing in the manpower, and now service provision has become difficult," he added.

Contacted, DGHS Director (hospitals) Farid Hossain, said, "We have collected lists of posts, which are vacant in hospitals. We are taking steps to recruit an adequate number of manpower. It is up to the higher authorities to decide how quickly those vacant posts will be filled."

[Our Benapole correspondent Mohsin Milon contributed to this report]

Nasir, 4 others arrested

FROM PAGE 1

"We will interrogate them. If needed, we will seek remand for them," he told reporters, adding that a fresh case under the narcotics control act will be filed as drugs and alcohol were recovered during the raid.

DB official Harun claimed the accused used to stage parties at the Uttara house -- from where they were arrested -- and at different clubs, often exploiting young women.

Detectives came to know that those arrested, including Nasir, are involved in alcohol trading, the official claimed, adding that they will investigate the allegations.

Meanwhile, Dhaka Boat Club authorities yesterday expelled Nasir as a member [entertainment and cultural affairs] of the executive committee (EC) of the club. The decision was taken during a meeting presided over by club President and Inspector General of Police Benazir Ahmed.

The meeting also suspended the memberships of Omi and one Shah S Alam, said a Dhaka Boat Club press release.

The meeting decided to form a three-member inquiry committee and has been asked to submit the findings within 72 hours.

The EC members observed that Nasir was in violation of club rules in allowing guests inside the club premises after club hours, which is a major violation and goes against the norms of the social club.

Pori Moni, who joined the movie industry in 2015, has played the lead female role in over 20 movies. Forbes magazine last year named her as among the 100 Digital Stars of Asia.

The incident came to light after Pori Moni posted a status on her verified Facebook page on Sunday at 7:53pm, alleging attempted rape and murder.

The popular actress, whose real name is Shamsun Nahar Smriti, addressed the post to the prime minister, stating that she is seeking justice as a loyal citizen of

the country.

She mentioned that she tried to contact Banani Police Station and even IGP Benazir Ahmed for help, but her efforts were in vain.

Later on Sunday night, she held a press conference and alleged that Nasir and Omi wanted to rape and murder her on June 9 midnight when they went to the Dhaka Boat Club in Birulia, Savar.

At the press conference, a teary-eyed Pori Moni described exactly what happened to her, giving details of the incident.

Sitting beside noted director Chayanika Chowdhury, she said Nasir and others ganged up on her at the club and forced her to drink alcohol by putting the neck of a bottle into her mouth, physically assaulted her and tried to rape her.

During the assault, Nasir addressed himself as a "friend" of IGP Benazir Ahmed, the president of Dhaka Boat Club.

Talking to the media, Sohail Rana, assistant inspector general (media) of the police headquarters, said, "She [Pori Moni] did not contact the IGP. It's unclear why she named the IGP."

In the case statement, Pori Moni alleged that Omi took them to the club tactfully when she along with her younger sister Boni, costume designer Jimmy and some other companions was heading towards Uttara from her Banani residence around 11:30pm.

When they reached the club around 12:20am, it was found to be closed. However, Omi had a conversation with someone over phone and made arrangements to open the entrance to the club, according to the case statement.

They entered the club and Boni went to the toilet next to the club's bar. As soon as they left the toilet, Nasir appeared there, requested them to sit inside the bar for a while and offered liquor and coffee. When they refused, Nasir turned violent and forced Pori Moni to drink liquor. He

also groped her, the case statement.

At one stage, she tried repeatedly to call the national emergency service at 999, but Nasir snatched her phone.

WHAT NASIR SAID

Speaking to reporters in Uttara during his arrest, Nasir claimed he was being framed. He admitted that he was present at the club that day.

"I'm a victim... What's being said is completely false... They entered the club when I was leaving. A man was with them and all were drunk. They tried to forcibly take expensive alcohol from the bar," he said.

Nasir said he was targeted as he prevented them from taking the alcohol because they were not members of the club.

Talking to reporters at her Banani residence last night, Pori Moni said she has now found some relief and confidence after the arrests.

She said she was told not to open up to the media about the incident.

"His [Nasir's] men were conveying apologies and trying to convince me for the last four days not to speak up... I didn't go there to get alcohol. But they opened my mouth forcefully to put the neck of the liquor bottle," Pori Moni said about Nasir's claim.

Pori Moni said she will fight till she gets justice in this case.

Nasir U Mahmud's profile on his company's website shows that he has been in the construction business for the last 37 years. He is currently the chairman of Kunjo Developers.

He was the president of Uttara Club for three years, and is a former executive member of Bangladesh Association of Construction Industry (BACI), former district chairman of Lions Clubs International, a former footballer who played in the Dhaka first division and former elected general secretary of SM Hall of Dhaka University.

On December 26, 2020, he became a Jatiya Party presidium member.

Movement curbs

FROM PAGE 1

enforce lockdown to prevent spread of the virus whenever they deem it necessary.

"We've already issued letters to this end..."

Asked whether the nationwide restrictions would be extended, the cabinet secretary avoided giving any answer.

Meanwhile, Health Minister Zahid Maleque said the administering of the first dose of Covid vaccines will resume across the country on June 19.

RESTRICTIONS IN 2 DIST

Dinajpur District Corona Transmission Prevention Committee decided to enforce strict restrictions on vehicular and public movement in Sadar upazila for a week from 6:00am today to contain the virus transmission.

Urging the residents to stay home during the period, Deputy Commissioner Khaled Mohammad Zaki said, "Vehicles including buses, battery-run three-wheelers, motorbikes, cars and microbuses will not be allowed on roads during the lockdown. Shops, markets and malls will also remain closed.

"Vehicles used for providing emergency services, however, will be out of the restrictions."

Kitchen markets will stay open for a couple of hours every day, he said.

In 24 hours till 8:00am yesterday, five Covid patients died in Dinajpur where the virus positivity rate was 38.04 percent on Monday, reports our correspondent in the district.

In Jamalpur municipality, restrictions on public movement were slapped from 6:00am yesterday and will be in force till June 30.

The Covid positivity rate in the district was 17.94 percent yesterday while the rate in the country was 14.80 percent.

Unlike Dinajpur, the local authorities in Jamalpur allowed vehicles to operate at half-capacity maintaining the health safety guidelines.

Shops and markets can be kept open from 6:00am to 6:00pm given that the duty follow the health safety protocol.

Our Jamalpur correspondent, however, reported that the restrictions on public movement were hardly enforced as people were seen gathering as usual in different parts of the town.

SITUATION IN KHULNA, RAJSHAHI DIVISION

The Covid situation has worsened further in Khulna and Rajshahi divisions as the positivity rate was above 30 percent in most of the districts in both the divisions, report our correspondents.

Yesterday, the positivity rate was 31.41 percent in Khulna, 47.31 percent in Satkhira, 31.48 percent in Kushtia, 36.27 percent in Meherpur and 66.07 percent in Chuadanga.

According to the Directorate General of Health Services (DGHS), 13 Covid patients died in Rajshahi division and seven in Khulna division.

Among the eight divisions, Chattogram saw the highest deaths -- 14 -- followed by Dhaka -- 13.

According to the Covid Dynamic Facility Dashboard of the DGHS, bed occupancy was almost 100 percent in the government hospitals in Natore, Rajshahi, Kushtia, Jashore, Satkhira and Chapainawabganj.

VACCINATION

Talking to journalists after an event in the capital, Health Minister Zahid Maleque said, "We will resume administering the first dose of Covid vaccines on June 19 with Sinopharm and Pfizer shots."

Bangladesh has already received 11 lakh Sinopharm vaccine shots from China as gift and 106,000 doses of Pfizer vaccine under the COVAX facility, a global vaccine-sharing initiative.

Those who have already registered for vaccine will get the shots, said officials.

On April 26, the health directorate halted administering the first dose due to a shortage of vaccines.

More than a week later, the administering of the second dose was also suspended at all the centres across the country.

So far, 58,20,015 people out of 72,48,829 registered for Covid vaccination have received the first jab, according to the DGHS.

Black fungus

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results indicated that he had black fungus.

"The patient is under treatment... He had breathing problems before the operation. But he is doing better now. We hope he will recover gradually," said Farhad.

A black fungus infection can turn critical for someone with a compromised immune system. Those with uncontrolled diabetes are also at high risk.

Health experts, however, said there is no reason to panic as people of all ages are not at risk.

Earlier in May at Birdem Hospital, black fungus was detected in two patients who had recovered from Covid.