

**BANGLADESH UPDATE**



**3,883**  
New cases in 24hrs



**8,44,970**  
Total cases



**13,399**  
Deaths



**7,78,421**  
Recoveries



**GLOBAL UPDATE**



**3,860,660**  
Deaths



**178,340,963**  
Total cases

## RMCH turns into a Covid

FROM PAGE 1

was admitted to the hospital three weeks ago with paralysis in the lower part of his body after falling from a mango tree in Chapainawabganj's Bholahat upazila.

The medicine wards witnessed the most transfers of patients to the Covid unit, said Prof Md Khalilur Rahman, head of the department.

"Most patients who come to our wards are asymptomatic. Sometimes, they come with diarrhoea or abdominal pain, and ultimately many of them are found to be infected with the virus."

He said the word "alarming" has ceased to have any meaning for them.

"We're already in an alarming situation," Associate Professor Md Rais Uddin, head of the cardiology department, said screening out infected patients at the point of entry into the hospital could have prevented such a situation.

The 1200-bed public hospital with 56 wards treat patients from eight districts of Rajshahi division and also from those of Khulna division.

Since the pandemic hit the country in March last year, the biggest healthcare facility of the northern region opened a Covid unit and gradually expanded it.

The RMCH Covid unit now has 309 beds in 11 wards to tackle the influx of coronavirus patients from the bordering districts. It has also dedicated its 20-bed ICU unit to treat critical Covid patients.

**A RISING DEATH TREND**  
Since March last year, at least 866 patients -- 236 of whom Covid positive -- died at the hospital's coronavirus unit. Of the deaths, 111 occurred in July -- the highest in a month until May this year when 124 patients died.

That record has been broken as 193 patients died at the unit in the first 18 days of this month. Seventy-nine of them tested positive for the virus.

While visiting the hospital on Wednesday afternoon, this correspondent found ambulances and three-wheelers carrying patients lined up in front of the gate of the emergency department.

Inside, general patients, Covid patients as well as the suspected ones and their attendants were crowding corridors.

There were intermittent announcements over the hospital's loudspeakers reminding them of the need to follow social distancing and health guidelines, but not many paid heed to that.

Seeking anonymity, a hospital official said, "No place in the hospital is safe anymore...infected people are roaming at every corner in the hospital."

During a two-and-a-half hour visit on Wednesday afternoon, this correspondent hardly saw any doctor or nurse attending patients in the Covid wards.

In front of the ICU unit, a nurse was seen going out on her shift change. And at ward 22, a male nurse was seen consulting with a doctor through a narrow gap of an almost shut door of the doctors' chamber.

The hospital authorities have dedicated the ground and top floors of a three-storey building for Covid patients. But with other wards for general patients in between and no separate entry or exit for Covid wards, chances of infection remain very high.

All the Covid wards were full and some were crammed with patients even occupying the veranda with oxygen concentrators or cylinders next to them.

Murshida Khatun, a nurse in the hospital, was taking care of her 35-year-old husband Md Ruhul Amin, who tested positive for Covid, in one of those verandas.

She was not even wearing a mask. Asked, she said, "I am infected too."

Most officials and staffers in the hospital said that with Covid patients overwhelming the facility, the virus has started spreading beyond the dedicated corona unit to other wards, turning the entire hospital into a

Covid hotspot.

Due to a lack of screening, infected patients and staffers with mild or no Covid symptoms are entering the hospital and infecting others, they said.

RMCH Director Brig Gen Shamim Yazdani said, "Both are happening. Knowingly or unknowingly, infected patients are getting admitted while admitted patients are being infected by staffers or other patients. It is unavoidable when you are managing all types of patients in the same hospital."

The emergency department has a system of triaging patients during their entry, but the system does not always work, he pointed out.

"When patients come [to the hospital], we ask those with fever, coughs and other symptoms of Covid to go to a separate room where separate doctors and nurses attend to them," Shamim told The Daily Star.

But many asymptomatic patients are not being segregated during triage.

Again, the other patients have to walk through the same corridor with Covid patients when they get admitted.

"We couldn't arrange separate corridors for Covid patients."

He said it would have been ideal if the hospital was declared a Covid-dedicated facility, considering the influx of patients from different districts.

"But it's not easy. What will happen to pregnant women needing a C-section or heart patients who need surgery, and patients needing dialysis? Where will we shift them? We can't abandon them."

Around 891 beds in 45 wards are used to treat patients of important departments such as gynaecology, surgery, burn, medicine cardiology, nephrology, and neurosurgery, he said.

"Already we are asking many critical patients to be cared for at home. In normal times, we would have asked them to get admitted to the hospital."

The RMCH director said during the first wave of the pandemic last year, the hospital saw mostly affluent people getting infected.

"But the Delta variant now has been infecting everyone -- rich and poor, old and young.

"We are seeing farmers, shopkeepers, labourers suffering and dying every day and it happened as they refused to care about maintaining the health rules," Yazdani said, adding that from primary assessment they found that 40 percent of patients were from low-income groups.

Admitting that testing all patients during entry to the hospital could have been the best practice, he said they are unable to do so because of limited testing facilities.

Two RT-PCR laboratories at the RMCH test nearly 600 samples a day -- a large number of those are from Rajshahi, Naogaon, Natore and Chapainawabganj, according to data from the labs.

The RMCH director, however, said rapid antigen test can be initiated at the entry points, adding that around 400 patients are getting admitted to the hospital every day -- 40 of them to the corona unit.

About the haphazard setting up of corona wards, the hospital director said it was not possible for them to arrange the corona wards at certain corners of the hospital as they had to connect the wards with the central oxygen supply lines.

"Not all wards of the hospital needed oxygen supply lines before. We set up a corona ward where we could ensure a proper oxygen supply to the beds."

Coronavirus transmission among doctors, nurses and staff are low as they were vaccinated, he said.

Out of 85 doctors and 200 nurses working in the Covid unit, five doctors and 23 nurses became infected during the ongoing second wave of the pandemic, he added.



PHOTO: COURTESY OF BANGLADESH EMBASSY IN LIBYA

Officials of Bangladesh embassy in Libya talk to Bangladeshi migrants who were rescued after a boat sank in the Mediterranean on May 18. The photo was taken at a hotel in Tunisia last month.

## 'We don't know whether he's alive'

Says wife of one of the 13 Bangladeshis missing for over a month after trawler carrying them sank off Tunisian coast

EZAZ MAHMUD

At least 13 Bangladeshi migrants have been missing since a boat capsized with them off the coast of Tunisia almost a month ago.

Tunisian Coast Guard, Red Crescent and migration authorities have yet to find them, according to officials at Bangladesh Embassy in Libya.

The chances that they are alive are slight, but their bodies have not been found yet, they added.

Meanwhile, desperate family members of the missing migrants have been contacting the embassy and other Bangladeshis who survived the accident in the hope of hearing about their loved ones.

In the early hours of May 18, a boat sank in the Mediterranean with 81 Bangladeshi migrants during a storm.

Sixty-eight of them were rescued alive, according to the embassy.

Two days after the accident, a delegation led by Gazi Md Asaduzzaman Kabir, the Charge d'Affaires of Bangladesh Embassy in Libya, visited Tunisia and learnt that 13 Bangladeshis were missing.

The embassy officials confirmed that those remaining missing include Sentu Mandal, Akhteruzzaman Ilias, Saiful Islam Hawlader, Rajan Chowkidar and Mohammad Nazim of Madaripur, and Mohammad Alam of Tangail.

The officials got two more names -- Mintu Hawlader of Madaripur and Al-Amin of

Barishal -- but their identities could not be confirmed.

They were hoping to enter Italy.

The Daily Star talked to several survivors, who were taken to a hotel in Tunisia. They informed that most of the migrants went to Libya via Dubai a few days before the Ramadan.

The went to Dubai through normal flights. Then, they went to Benghazi in Libya on a chartered flight.

The boat, crammed with passengers, left the Libyan port of Zuwara, located around 200 km off the capital Tripoli, on the night of May 16. The boat sank around 20 hours later.

Many of those onboard swam to a floating platform off the southern coast of Tunisia, and some were rescued by the Tunisian Navy and Coast Guard officials.

"The boat suddenly capsized after being hit by the storm... I couldn't see many of the passengers after we were rescued," said Wali Ullah Khan, who is from Muladi, Barishal.

"Nobody had a life jacket. I saw many people drowning," said Al-Amin of Madaripur.

Most of those who remain are aged between 18 and 44.

Some 14 people of Nayachar village of Madaripur Sadar were rescued.

Contacted, 44-year-old Sentu's wife Sathi Akhter said, "We don't even know whether he is alive."

Sentu's nephew Rony said, "We are sure that my uncle was on the boat... The embassy officials told us that they would inform us if my uncle is found."

Akhteruzzaman's wife Laila Akhter said, "My husband called me over the phone on the night of May 16. He told me that he was starting the boat journey. He has not been traced after the accident. One of his travel mates told me that my husband tried to survive by swimming."

Contacted, Gazi Md Asaduzzaman Kabir said, "We have kept communications with the departments concerned in Tunisia, Libya and other neighbouring countries to get the information."

Just a day before the accident, some 52 Bangladeshi aspiring migrants were rescued from the Mediterranean, while they were trying to go across the sea.

Besides, 179 more Bangladeshis were rescued on May 27 and 28.

Of them, 221 Bangladeshis were kept in detention in five cities in Tunisia under the supervision of International Organization for Migration (IOM) and Red Crescent.

Some 308 illegal attempts to enter Italy by using Tunisian coast were resisted this year.

A total of 4,376 people were rescued. Of them, 2,531 were Bangladeshis, according to the Office of Tunisian National Guard Directorate General.

The writer is a freelance journalist.

## Missing preacher reappears

FROM PAGE 1

of the deputy commissioner of Rangpur Metropolitan Police's Detective Branch.

After Adnan went missing, his second wife Sabekunnahar claimed that her husband last spoke to her over phone at 2:37am on June 11 and told her that he reached the capital's Gabtoli. Since then he could not be contacted.

Teacher of a Mirpur madrasa, Sabekunnahar held a press conference and even submitted a letter to the Prime Minister's Office demanding safe return of Adnan. She also visited the offices of different law enforcement agencies, suspecting that her husband was picked up.

However, after interrogation, Rangpur police said Adnan went into hiding voluntarily due to some family and personal problems.

After he went missing, Azeda Begum, the mother of Taw Haa, 31, whose real name is Md Afsanul Adnan, lodged a general diary with Rangpur Kotwali Police Station on June 11.

Adnan and his first wife Abida

have a three-year-old daughter and a one-and-a-half-year old son. His first wife lives in Rangpur and the second one in Dhaka.

Earlier in the day, police detained Adnan's associates Abul Muhiat from his home at Jaigirhat of Rangpur's Mithapukur, Firoz from Bogura's Shibganj and driver Amir Uddin from Rangpur city's Ashratpur (Chawkbazar) area.

Police were interrogating them.

**BRIEFING BY POLICE**

After interrogation, Abu Maruf Hossain, DC (crime) of Rangpur Metropolitan Police, told journalists that Adnan along with the associates and the driver left Dhaka's Gabtoli for Rangpur on the night of June 10. After reaching Trimohoni in Gaibandha, they went to the house of Adnan's friend Siam and stayed there, he said.

While there, everyone switched off their mobile phones and kept those with Adnan, the DC said.

The police official said they went into hiding willingly due to various family and personal problems.

He added that they first went to Dhaka from Rangpur on June

10 afternoon. Adnan told his travelling companions that he had some personal problems. He then consulted with them and decided to go into hiding, the DC added.

DC Maruf said police would also look into whether they went into hiding as part of a conspiracy to embarrass the state or the government.

He added that Adnan shared some of his problems with police, which are being scrutinised.

In another development, Adnan and his two associates -- Muhiat and Firoz -- were produced before a Rangpur court last night and the court freed them.

A top police official said he did not want to talk about Adnan's personal affairs. He also said the next step would be taken after investigation.

Despite repeated attempts to contact Sabekunnahar's two brothers and Adnan's mother for comments over the police version, none could be reached as their mobile phones were found switched off.

[Our Dinajpur correspondent contributed to this report.]

## Tk 3.77cr stolen from bank vault

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In his forwarding letter to the court, Sub-inspector Pradip Kumar Sarker wrote that the arrestees were entrusted with taking care of the vault and its keys were with them.

According to the complaint received by police, the audit team found Tk 3,77,66,000 missing from the vault and informed Abu Bakar Siddique, manager of the Bangshal branch, about it.

The duo confessed to misappropriating the amount, while Siddique interrogated them, the letter reads.

It mentions that the alleged crime was an offence under Section 409 of the Penal Code and that it is for the Anti-Corruption Commission (ACC) to investigate.

The ACC has been informed and

delivered the documents necessary to pursue legal actions in this regard, it added.

The officer also wrote that there was a chance that the accused could go into hiding and requested that they be kept in jail.

Earlier on Wednesday, the detective branch of police told a press briefing that a racket led by an IT officer of Dutch Bangla Bank Limited allegedly embezzled Tk 2.57 crore by manipulating the electronic journal of the bank's ATM machines.

This was also detected during an internal audit.

In January 2020, a bank official was held in Rajshahi on charges of stealing Tk 3.45 crore from Premier Bank's vault and using the money to gamble online.

## UK Conservatives lose safe seat in major upset

AFP, London

Britain's ruling Conservative party suffered a major upset in a by-election result announced yesterday, losing a safe seat it had held for nearly 50 years.

Prime Minister Boris Johnson's party lost in the contest to elect an MP for Chesham and Amersham -- prosperous commuter towns in Buckinghamshire, northwest of London.

The centrist Liberal Democrat candidate, Sarah Green, won more than 56 percent in a constituency that had been held by the Tories since it was set up in its current form in 1974.

The Times newspaper said the defeat raised questions over the

Conservative strategy of focusing efforts on seizing seats from the main opposition Labour party, rather than on defending traditional Tory seats, known as the "Blue Wall" due to the party's logo colour.

Johnson's party in May won a by-election in the traditional Labour-voting Hartlepool, adding another parliamentary seat in northeast England to those they secured in the last general election in December 2019, when Brexit was the main issue.

The pro-European Lib Dems campaigned actively in Chesham and Amersham, tapping into local opposition to controversial projects in the area, with leader Ed Davey visiting 16 times, The Times

said.

The BBC said voters this time round focused on local issues: the controversial construction of a high-speed rail link through the constituency and plans to build more houses in rural areas.

Davey tweeted that the result "sent a shockwave through British politics" and proved the "blue wall can be smashed by @libdems".

The contest was triggered by the death in April of former government minister Cheryl Gillan, who had held the seat for 29 years.

Peter Fleet, a former motor industry executive who was bidding to replace her, called the result "very disappointing".

## Good news

FROM PAGE 1

four in Dhaka city, according to government notice, issued to all civil surgeons and related health officials, signed by Dr Shamsul Haque, line director of the DGHS.

Only those registered with the centres, but have not got the first shots, will get priority, said the notice.

Frontline government health workers, police members, outgoing migrant workers (registered with the Bureau of Manpower, Employment and Training), cleaners of Dhaka's two city corporations, and ward or municipality workers involved in funerals will also get priority for the vaccination.

Besides, students of all government, private medical, dental, nursing, midwifery MATS and IHT colleges, residential students of all public universities, employees of the Bangladesh Investment Development Authority, and the Chinese nationals in Bangladesh will also be eligible for the vaccination, the notice said.

There will be one centre in each district. The centre will either be at a medical college hospital, a district hospital or any other healthcare facility. It will be decided by the district's Covid-19 Vaccination Committee, led by the civil surgeon.

In Dhaka city, the Sinopharm vaccine will be administered at centres of Dhaka Medical College Hospital, Sir Salimullah Medical College Hospital, Shaheed Shuhrawardy Medical College Hospital and Mugda Medical College Hospital.

There will be maximum of two vaccination booths in each centre, which will remain open from 8:00am to 3:00pm every day except Fridays and public holidays.

A vaccine recipient will get the second jab 28 days after the administration of the first dose.

Shamsul Haque yesterday told The Daily Star the government was yet to decide on when the 1,00,620 doses of Pfizer vaccine from Covax (Covid-19 Vaccines Global Access) would be given.

Earlier, the government decided to administer the Pfizer vaccine in Dhaka city.

According to DGHS data, so far 72,48,829 people have registered for vaccines on www.surokkha.gov.bd. Of them, 58,20,015 have received the first jab while 42,64,362 have received the second jab of AstraZeneca's Covishield vaccine.

Bangladesh has so far received 1.02 crore doses of AstraZeneca's Covishield vaccines -- 70 lakh purchased and 32 lakh as gift from the Indian government. Besides, it got the 11 lakh Sinopharm vaccine doses from China.

Health Minister Zahid Maleque on Wednesday said Bangladesh would receive 10 lakh doses of the Oxford-AstraZeneca vaccine by August under the global arrangement, Covax.

The nationwide mass inoculation against Covid started on February 7 at around 1,000 centres across the country with a target to vaccinate all citizens aged 18 and above in phases.

The inoculation campaign stumbled after Serum failed to provide the Oxford-AstraZeneca vaccine amid a surge in virus deaths and cases in India.

As per an agreement, Bangladesh was supposed to receive three crore shots of the vaccine from Serum in six months.

Serum delivered 50 lakh doses in the first consignment in January, but shipped only 20 lakh shots the following month. The country has not received any shipment from the company since then.

Meanwhile, the virus continued to sweep bordering districts, including Khulna and Rajshahi.

Besides, the highest deaths yesterday -- 15 -- was reported from Chattogram division. Twelve deaths each were reported from Dhaka and Rajshahi division, said DGHS.

In Khulna division, eight Covid patients died while four died in Barishal, two in Sylhet and one in Mymensingh division, according to the DGHS.

Of the yesterday's deceased, two died in homes and 52 in hospitals.

With this, the official death toll in the country rose to 13,399. The death rate stood at 1.59 percent.

In 24 hours till 8:00am yesterday, 3,883 new infections were reported.

## Former Japan justice minister jailed for vote-buying

AFP, Tokyo

A former Japanese justice minister received a three-year jail term yesterday for vote-buying in an attempt to get his wife elected to a national office, local media said.

Katsuyuki Kawai, 58, was found guilty of charges that he distributed 29 million yen (\$260,000 at today's rates) to about 100 people in 2019, to help secure an upper house seat for his wife Anri, national broadcaster NHK said.

He was fined 1.3 million yen (\$11,800) in addition to the jail term, local media added.

Officials at the Tokyo District Court could not immediately confirm the reports.

Katsuyuki, a close confidant of former prime minister Shinzo Abe, had reversed his earlier claims of innocence and broadly conceded the allegations against him.

**বার্ষিক সাধারণ সভা-২০২১**

সূত্র নং-বিসিবি / এজিএম-২০২১ / ০৩১ তারিখঃ ১৯শে জুন, ২০২১

বাংলাদেশ ক্রিকেট বোর্ডের বার্ষিক সাধারণ সভা-২০২১ নিম্নে উল্লেখিত তারিখ, সময় ও স্থানে অনুষ্ঠিত হইবে :

দিন ও তারিখ : বুধবার, ০৭ই জুলাই, ২০২১ইং।

সময় : দুপুর ১২ঃ৩০ ঘটিকা।

স্থান : গ্র্যান্ড বলরুম, রেডিসন ব্লু ঢাকা ওয়াটার গার্ডেন, এয়ারপোর্ট রোড, ঢাকা-১২০৬।

সাধারণ পরিষদের সকল সম্মানিত কাউন্সিলরবৃন্দকে বাংলাদেশ ক্রিকেট বোর্ডের বার্ষিক সাধারণ সভায় অংশগ্রহণের জন্য অনুরোধ করা যাচ্ছে।

পরিচালনা পরিষদের নির্দেশক্রমে -  
প্রধান নির্বাহী কর্মকর্তা  
বাংলাদেশ ক্রিকেট বোর্ড