

Justice Fazlur Rahman passes away

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Justice AKM Fazlur Rahman, a retired judge of the High Court and former chairman of Administrative Appellate Tribunal, died from Covid-19 on Thursday. He was 75.

He was undergoing treatment at Anwer Khan Modern Hospital in Dhaka. He left behind his wife, two daughters, a son and a host of well-wishers to mourn his death, Barrister Md Shakawat Hossain Khan, husband of elder daughter of Justice Rahman, told The Daily Star.

He said Justice Rahman was buried at his family graveyard in Pankundo village under Dohar upazila, Dhaka. Chief Justice Syed Mahmud Hossain, Law Minister Anisul Huq, Fisheries and Livestock Minister SM Rezaul Karim and Attorney General AM Amin Uddin expressed deep shock at the death.



Two more

FROM PAGE 12 diploma in ophthalmology from the National Institute of Ophthalmology in Dhaka, he added.

Farida left behind her husband, a son, a daughter and a host of relatives, colleagues and admirers to mourn her death. She was buried at her native village in Faridpur on Thursday night.

In another development, 80-year-old retired Capt Sirajul Islam, who once served at the army, died at the Covid unit of Barishal Sher-e-Bangla Medical College Hospital, said Mohammad Moniruzzaman, assistant director of the hospital.

He said Prof Sirajul was admitted to the Covid unit with the virus infection on July 26. He was shifted to ICU on the same day with breathing difficulties.

Sirajul Islam, a veteran physician, used to treat 50 to 60 patients every day during the pandemic, risking his life.

He left behind his two children, friends, colleagues, and a host of well-wishers to mourn his death.

The doctor, who treated hundreds of underprivileged patients for free, was buried at the Barishal Muslim graveyard after Jumma prayers yesterday.

Pabna journalist

FROM PAGE 12 organisations in separate messages have demanded withdrawal of the case after the filing of the lawsuit came to light.

"Filing of such a case is a threat to the freedom of a journalist. We demand withdrawal of the case immediately. If the demand is not met, the journalist community will announce a tough agitation," said ABM Fozlur Rahman, president of Pabna Press Club.

Contacted, Azizul yesterday said he was defamed in the news article and that's why he filed the case. He, however, denied the allegation that he sued the journalist to harass him.

Man lands

FROM PAGE 12 She mentioned this to the accused's family members but they did not bother taking any step.

On Thursday night, the accused raped the victim, the case statement read.

The accused also threatened the victim with dire consequences if she had shared her experience with anyone.

Ananda Kumar, sub-inspector of Sherpur Police Station, also the investigation officer of the case, said they arrested the accused after the victim filed a case against him.

The accused was sent to jail via court, he added.

Shahidul Islam, officer-in-charge of Sherpur Police Station, said the victim would be sent to a hospital for medical tests today.

"We tried to send her today but the hospital authorities asked us to send her tomorrow as today is Friday."



A policeman inspects an ID of a bus passenger passing through a checkpoint on the first day of a two-week lockdown to prevent the spread of the highly infectious coronavirus Delta variant, in Quezon City, Metro Manila, Philippines yesterday.

PHOTO: REUTERS

Delta fuels new curbs across Asia

FROM PAGE 12 widespread infection in some cities, while cases in some areas show initial signs they could ease.

China reported 124 new confirmed cases for Thursday, the National Health Commission (NHC) said, up from 85 a day earlier. Of the new confirmed infections, 80 were locally transmitted, up from 62 a day earlier, it added.

The latest infections were mainly in the provincial city of Yangzhou on the lower reaches of the Yangtze river, near the commercial hub of Shanghai.

To keep the virus within its borders, Yangzhou closed the passenger entrances of two railway stations yesterday. It has already suspended domestic flights, and the flow of taxis and ride-hailing vehicles with other cities.

Nanjing and Yangzhou now account for more than 70% of local confirmed cases in China since late

July, though not all the local cases are linked to the two cities.

The coronavirus pandemic has killed at least 4,268,017 people worldwide since the virus first emerged in late 2019, according to an AFP compilation of official data.

The US is the worst-affected country with 615,320 deaths, followed by Brazil with 560,706, India with 426,754, Mexico with 243,165 and Peru with 196,760.

MANILA LOCKS DOWN

The Philippines is battling one of Asia's biggest outbreaks and has seen a steady rise in infections over the last two weeks which health officials have attributed to the highly contagious Delta variant of the virus.

"The national government together with local governments should act aggressively, as if there is already community transmission," health ministry spokesperson Maria Rosario Vergeire told a news conference,

referring to the highly contagious variant.

"All of the areas in the national capital region have positive two week growth rates (in cases)," she added.

The surge has pushed the number of confirmed cases in the Philippines to nearly 1.64 million, while the 247 additional deaths recorded yesterday brought the fatality count in the country to 28,673.

Vietnam's capital Hanoi will extend restrictions until August 22, its health ministry said yesterday, after authorities warned of new clusters of infections detected in the city of more than 8 million people.

CASES SPREAD BEYOND TOKYO

Japan reached the milestone of one million coronavirus cases yesterday, domestic media reported, as infections soared in Olympic host Tokyo and other urban areas as the country struggled to contain the Delta variant.

UK's Johnson under fire over 'crass' coal closure quip

AFP, London

Opposition leaders yesterday condemned Prime Minister Boris Johnson as "crass and offensive" for joking that former leader Margaret Thatcher's coal mine closures had given Britain a head start in fighting climate change.

Thatcher, in power from 1979 to 1990, fought a bitter battle with the coal mining industry in the 1980s, delivering its death knell by closing over 100 mines, devastating communities in northern England and South Wales.

A year-long walkout against closure plans by miners in 1984-85 was one of the defining moments of her premiership, eroding union power and triggering her free market reforms.

Johnson made the comments on a visit to an offshore windfarm in Scotland

on Thursday, as he talked about the changes in Britain's energy mix.

"Thanks to Margaret Thatcher, who closed so many coal mines across the country, we had a big early start and we're now moving rapidly away from coal altogether," he said.

But the quip risks backfiring with voters in former mining heartlands of northern England, who switched from Labour to his Conservatives in the last general election in 2019, largely over Brexit.

Keir Starmer, Labour's leader in Westminster, said: "Boris Johnson's shameful praising of Margaret Thatcher's closure of the coal mines, brushing off the devastating impact on those communities with a laugh, shows just how out of touch he is with working people."

Wales' First Minister Mark Drakeford, of Labour, told BBC

radio the comments were "crass and offensive", saying the closures caused "incalculable" damage to local communities.

Johnson failed to meet First Minister Nicola Sturgeon on his two-day visit to Scotland, where feelings still run high against the Tories because of Thatcher's policies.

Under Thatcher, heavy industry and coal mining declined, while Scots widely opposed her introduction of a controversial flat-rate per capita "poll tax" in the late 1990s.

Sturgeon said communities across Scotland were "utterly devastated by Thatcher's destruction of the coal industry".

She has repeatedly criticised Johnson for his handling of the coronavirus pandemic response and his refusal to allow a second referendum on Scottish independence.

Resurgent Taliban take first

FROM PAGE 12

provinces. A Taliban commander, speaking on condition of anonymity, said it has strategic importance as it is on the border with Iran.

"This is the beginning and see how other provinces fall in our hands very soon," he told Reuters.

In Kabul, Taliban attackers killed Dawa Khan Menapal, head of the Government Media and Information Centre, in the latest in a series of assassinations aimed at weakening President Ashraf Ghani's democratically elected government.

In a tweet, US Charge d'Affaires Ross Wilson said he was saddened and disgusted by the death of Menapal, whom he called a friend who provided truthful information to all Afghans.

"These murders are an affront to Afghans' human rights & freedom of speech," he said.

Scores of social activists, journalists, bureaucrats, judges and public figures fighting to sustain a liberal Islamic administration have been assassinated by Taliban fighters in a bid to silence voices of dissent in the war-torn country.

An official in the federal interior ministry said "the savage terrorists killed" Menapal during Friday prayers. "He (Menapal) was a young man

who stood like a mountain in the face of enemy propaganda, and who was always a major supporter of the (Afghan) regime," said Mirwais Stanikzai, a spokesperson for the interior ministry.

The Taliban claimed responsibility for the death, with spokesman Zabihullah Mujahid sending a message to media saying "he was killed in a special attack carried out by mujahideen".

The murder comes after the militants warned Wednesday of more attacks targeting Afghan government leaders, a day after the defence minister Bismillah Mohammadi escaped an assassination attempt in a bomb-and-gun attack.

The Afghan and US militaries have stepped up air strikes in their fight against the insurgents in a string of cities, and the Taliban said Tuesday's Kabul raid was their response.

Fighting in Afghanistan's long-running conflict has intensified since May, when foreign forces began the final stage of a withdrawal due to be completed later this month.

The Taliban already control large portions of the countryside, and are now challenging government forces in several provincial capitals.

Data discrepancy leaves

FROM PAGE 3

But the health office data says 23,544 people got infected in Sylhet district, 5,062 in Sunamganj, 5,249 in Habiganj, 6,030 in Moulvibazar and 3,576 in Sylhet MAG Osmani Medical College Hospital.

Besides the total count, mismatches were also found in the daily Covid-19 data.

On Thursday, Divisional Health Office data showed 13 people died in the division in the previous 24 hours, while DGHS data said 23 died during the period.

The previous day, health office data showed 20 deaths, while DGHS showed only 5.

In addition to that, DGHS is missing the data of Sylhet MAG Osmani Medical College Hospital.

Sylhet Divisional Health Office shows that 289 people (112 Covid-positive patients in general beds, eight in ICU and 169 Covid-19-suspected) are admitted at the hospital's Covid-19 isolation unit.

According to hospital authorities, there are 325 general beds and 18 ICU beds in the hospital.

But DGHS data does not show the hospital's bed count.

Dr Himangshu Lal Roy, director of the Sylhet Divisional Health Office, said, "After joining the office as director recently, I've found that there is a huge mismatch between the data we are providing and what DGHS is publishing. It's also causing confusion among people."

"I'm not sure what's causing the mismatch, but I've already communicated with DGHS to resolve the matter as soon as possible," he said. Contacted, Prof Dr Mijanur Rahman, director (MIS) of DGHS, said, "We publish the compiled report the divisional offices send us. Of my knowledge, there is no mismatch, and this is not supposed to occur."

After mentioning the inconsistencies found by this correspondent, he said, "If so, I will look into the matter and resolve the data gap."

M'singh hospital overrun

FROM PAGE 3

According to hospital sources, Covid-19 positive patients and people with symptoms are thronging the hospital from Mymensingh, Jamalpur, Tangail, Sherpur, Netrakona, Kishoreganj, Sunamganj and Gazipur.

The deputy director said the number of patients at the 500-bed Covid ward has started to exceed its capacity since August 1. With the onrush of patients, there is also a crisis of oxygen supply at the hospital, he said.

"The hospital has a 10,000-litre central oxygen facility and we have already appealed to the director general (health) and health ministry to increase it to 20,000," he said.

"We cannot increase the number of beds now as it will require more medical, cleaning and security staff," he said.

Amid the situation, the hospital authorities have urged people to take their patients to nearby hospitals in case of emergency.

Contacted, Mymensingh divisional

director (health) Md Shah Alam said there are 20 Covid beds in each of the 30 upazila health complexes in the division.

Besides, a 50-bed corona unit was opened at Community Based Medical College and Hospital Bangladesh where 12 Covid patients are currently admitted, he said.

Prof Motiur Rahman Bhuiyan, president of Bangladesh Medical Association (Mymensingh), said work for two field hospitals with over 200 beds is also ongoing in Muktagachha and Tarakanda to reduce the pressure on MMCH.

The number of total deaths at MMCH stands at 616. Of them, 245 died of Covid-19 infections while 371 with symptoms since July 1 till yesterday.

According to the health department in Mymensingh, 437 people have died of Covid-19 in the division so far. A total of 591 people tested Covid positive yesterday, raising the total number of infected people to 29,445 since the pandemic.

Two French nationals charged over bid to kill Madagascar president

AFP, Antananarivo

Two French nationals are among those who have been charged in connection with a plot to assassinate Madagascar's President Andry Rajoelina, their lawyers said on Thursday.

After being held for two weeks the men, named as Philippe F. and Paul R., went before a judge on Wednesday.

The judge decided to formally charge them and detain them in a high-security prison.

"We don't know the reason for this decision," Philippe F's lawyer, Etienne de Villepin, told AFP.

Altogether 21 suspects, including a Madagascar central bank employee, appeared in court in Antananarivo on Wednesday.

Eleven of them were also incarcerated, according to the Taratra government news agency, which published the names only in abbreviated form.

Indira Gandhi writes

FROM PAGE 12

BUNCH OF WHITE LIES

A foreign office spokesman of the Bangladesh government today described Pakistan's white paper on Bangladesh as a "bunch of white lies".

The spokesman said, "The army junta in its heinous move to hoodwink world opinion, so strong against it, has completely distorted contemporary events and facts. The facts were too clear to be reiterated and largely known to the world by the courtesy of the world fraternity of journalists."

88 OF AWAMI LEAGUE KEEP PAKISTAN SEATS

The Pakistan government announced today that 88 members of the National Assembly belonging to the banned Awami League would retain their seats.

The 79 other assemblymen who were members of the Awami League would be given an opportunity to clear themselves of charges against them, the government said.

According to reports in the Pakistani press, league members who retained their seats were likely to offer their cooperation to the government, either forming a new political party or joining one of the existing ones.

US' PAKISTAN FOOD PACT

The United States and Pakistan signed a \$15.3 million food-for-peace agreement in Islamabad that was to provide East Pakistan with 100,000 tonnes of wheat and 50,000 tonnes of rice. The aid was designed to ease the effects of last year's cyclone disaster in East Pakistan.

Shamsuddoza Sajen is a journalist and researcher. He can be contacted at sajen1986@gmail.com

Example of applied

FROM PAGE 12

and includes maths that was used by surveyors to define land boundaries.

Lead author Dr Daniel Mansfield described it as a "significant object" due to the fact it includes an example of what is now known as "Pythagorean triples", used to make accurate right angles, but 1,000 years before Pythagoras was alive.

"It's the only known example of a cadastral document from the Old Babylonian period, which is a plan used by surveyors to define land boundaries," said Dr Mansfield.

"In this case, it tells us legal and geometric details about a field that's split after some of it was sold off."

He said the discovery and analysis of the tablet have important implications for the history of mathematics, putting geometry centuries earlier than first thought.

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