

## Dengue claims one more life

Bangladesh reports another Covid death  
STAFF CORRESPONDENT

One more dengue patient died while 16 others were hospitalised in the last 24 hours till yesterday morning.

The total number of deaths rose to 17 this year, according to the Directorate General of Health Services.

The total number of cases now stands at 1,316.

Last year, the country witnessed 1,705 dengue-related deaths and a total of 321,179 reported cases.

Meanwhile, country saw another Covid-19 death in the last 24 hours till 8:00am yesterday.

So far, DGHS has reported 10 Covid-related deaths in this year.

DGHS data shows that Covid infection rate rose to 10.18 percent from Wednesday's 8.93 percent.

The number of fatalities now stands at 29,486, taking the overall fatality rate to 1.44 percent.



Flying from one branch to another, a Chestnut-tailed Starling finally sits on a branch, swaying with the spring winds. Holding onto it with its tiny legs, the bird aims for the nectar, hidden in the centre of the blossoming orange palash flowers in Chattogram city's Eidgah area yesterday morning.

PHOTO: RAJIB RAIHAN

## Take stern actions to curb graft

JP lawmaker Chunnu urges PM  
STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Jatiyo Party secretary general Mujibul Haque Chunnu yesterday told parliament that if the government does not handle financial irregularities, money laundering and corruption strictly, then the country's financial resources will be exhausted.

Chunnu, also opposition lawmaker and chief whip, said this while participating in an unscheduled discussion in the parliament.

He urged Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina to be tough and take stern actions to curb such irregularities.

Citing reports published in different newspapers, he said the financial irregularities of public universities amount to Tk 1,300 crore, adding that most of the irregularities took place in the National University.

Criticising the Bangladesh Bank, Chunnu said while the banks are already becoming empty due to financial irregularities such as over-invoicing and under-invoicing, and money laundering, the central bank has kept silent.

"Money is being

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## Of fake visas and shattered European dreams

Syndicate comprising Biman, foreign airline, travel agency staffers involved in trafficking youths

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

An organised syndicate is trafficking youths to Schengen and Middle Eastern nations by collaborating with a group of lower-ranked officials from several agencies at the airport, as well as airline and travel agency staffers.

The syndicate also involves some manpower export companies and professional computer operators who arrange visas for them, which are mostly fake.

For processing the documents and other arrangements, the syndicate charges Tk 16 lakh to Tk 18 lakh.

The Detective Branch of police yesterday disclosed the findings following the arrest of five people on Tuesday in a joint operation with Airport Armed Police Battalion.

The arrestees are Asaduzzaman, a security staffer of Bangladesh Biman, and Kabir Hossain, a booking assistant at Kuwait Airways.

The other three — Jane Alam, Sabbir Miah, and Samrat Saodagor — were trying to go to Europe using fake Schengen visas.

Mashiur Rahman, deputy commissioner of Lalbagh Division of DB Police, told The Daily Star yesterday, "The syndicate can easily collect boarding passes and air tickets from the airport as it has a joint nexus with senior officers of airlines, station managers, and supervisors."

"The syndicate has been active

for the last five years, and we got to know that they have illegally sent at least 250 to 300 youths from Bangladesh so far," he said.

Police also recovered three passports, three fake visas, four NIDs, a special card to enter Hazrat Shahjalal International Airport, four visa cards, five cell phones, three e-tickets, and a fake work permit, among other things.

In many cases, these victims have to spend a miserable life in jails after they get arrested in the destination country for using fake visas or for using a tourist visa to work, he said.

Depending on the syndicate's capacity, only a few people may succeed in settling in the destination country, but the majority lose everything, added the DB chief.

"We have investigated many things, starting with the recruitment loophole in Biman. We have completed the investigation and informed the higher authorities. Action has been taken accordingly against those involved. I hope everyone involved will be brought under law," said Harun.

Detectives said they started an investigation and arrested the five based on a tip-off that a huge number of people are suffering in different country jails for using fake visas.

"We have got the names of some of the masterminds and airport staffers of the syndicate, and now we are conducting a drive to arrest them," said DC Mashiur.

The involvement of some top airlines' staffers with the syndicate was also found," the official added,

**The syndicate has been active for the last five years, and we got to know that they have illegally sent at least 250 to 300 youths from Bangladesh so far.**

MASHIUR RAHMAN  
Deputy commissioner of  
Lalbagh Division of DB Police

## SC upholds HC bail of GK Shamim

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Supreme Court yesterday upheld a High Court order that

on December 13 last year granted bail to expelled Jubo League leader SM Golam Kibria Shamim, known as GK Shamim, who was sentenced to life imprisonment in an arms case.

A five-member bench of the Appellate Division of the SC headed by Chief Justice Obaidul Hassan passed the order after dismissing a petition filed by the state challenging the HC's bail order.

Four other judges of the bench are Justice M Enayetur Rahim, Justice Md Ashfaqul Islam, Justice Md Abu Zafor Siddique and Justice Jahangir Hossain Selim.

The apex court also asked the HC bench led by Justice Md Nazrul Islam Talukder to hear and dispose of the appeal — in two months — filed by GK Shamim against the trial court judgment.

Nazmus Sakib, a lawyer for Shamim, told The Daily Star that his client cannot get released from jail following the SC order as he is arrested in three other cases.



## Bangladesh moving forward with spirit of Ekushey: PM

AGENCIES

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina yesterday said Bangladesh is moving forward with the ideals of the 1952 Language Movement.

"Today the fate of people has changed since Bangladesh has been marching forward with the ideology that we learnt from the sacrifices the people of this country had made on February 21 (the Language Movement) and during the Liberation War," she said.

Hasina said this while addressing as the chair at a discussion organised by Awami League on the occasion of International Mother Language Day at the AL office in the city's Tejgaon area, reports BSS.

The PM said the Language Movement had taught the nation to move forward and not to bow down. "Ekush also taught us to walk with our heads high, and go forward with its ideals," she said.

Pointing at the BNP, Hasina said they wanted to remove the AL from power through movement and resist the election, but they failed.

She said the country's most fair, free and impartial election was held on January 7 since 1975, reports UNB.

"Despite thousands of attempts, spreading false accusations and carrying out various lobbying at home and abroad, they could not resist the people from spontaneously casting votes," she said.

At the outset, one-minute silence was also observed to pay tribute to the martyrs of the Language Movement.



## Ten members of mugger gang arrested

Their 'big brothers' won't be spared, says DB chief

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Detective Branch of Dhaka Metropolitan Police yesterday claimed to have arrested 10 members of a gang over mugging and other offences during a drive in Tajmahal Road, Geneva Camp, and Basila areas of the capital on Wednesday.

The arrestees are Raja, 35; Md Jalal, 25; Md Mridul, 26; Md Jahangir, 35; Md Shamim Mia, 24; Md Shahid, 25; Md Shimul, 25; Monirul Islam, 27; Sohel Khan, 23; and Nur Mohammad, 20.

Each of them faces multiple charges, with Raja alone having 11 cases lodged against him while Mridul has four.

These youths, as well as some teens, are part of a gang that roams around following their "big brothers" in the day, said Harun Or Rashid, additional commissioner of DB, during a briefing yesterday.

However, after dusk, they operate in small groups as muggers, armed with machetes and other local weapons, snatching away cellphones and other belongings from individuals riding human hauliers.

Drivers and helpers of these vehicles are also often part of this nexus operating in Dhaka's Uttara and Mohammadpur areas, said the DB chief.

Following complaints made by residents of the areas, DB's Tejgaon Division initiated investigations, leading to arrest of the 10 gang members, he also said.

"We have got names of some of their 'big brothers'... they will not be spared," said Harun. "Forty specialised DB teams will continue this crackdown across all areas of the capital," he added.

**These youths, as well as some teens, are part of a gang that roams around following their "big brothers" in the day.**

HARUN OR RASHID  
DB chief

## Pay retirement benefits to non-govt teachers

HC directs govt  
STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The High Court yesterday directed the government to pay retirement benefits to the teachers and staff members of non-government educational institutions under the Monthly Payment Order in six months into their leaving from services.

Delivering verdict on a petition, the HC said the teachers and staff members of non-government educational institutions are harassed and victimised over the years to get retirement benefits.

"It should be thought how much salary a teacher gets. They should not have to move from door to door for years to receive the retirement facilities," the HC bench of Justice Naima Haider and Justice Kazi Zinat Hoque observed.

The bench delivered the verdict after holding hearing on a petition filed by 131 teachers and staff members in 2019 seeking necessary directives.

Petitioners' lawyer Mohammad Siddique Ullah Miah said more than 5 lakh teachers and staff members will receive benefits following the HC verdict.

Siddique said the government had earlier deducted total six percent from the salaries of the teachers and other employees of the non-government educational institutions under MPO till 2017, for giving retirement benefits to them.

The same year the government issued two gazettes for deducting total 10 percent from their salaries, he said, adding, the government did not increase the benefits in proportion with the 10 percent of the deducted amount.



Urging all educational institutions to establish sexual harassment prevention committees in accordance with the 2009 High Court directive, Bangladesh Mahila Parishad formed a human chain in front of the National Museum at Dhaka's Shahbag yesterday.

PHOTO: STAR

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## Set up sexual harassment prevention committees

Speakers urge educational institutions

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Speakers yesterday called upon all educational institutions to establish sexual harassment prevention committees in accordance with the 2009 High Court directive.

They also demanded proper monitoring to ensure that these committees are effectively fulfilling their responsibilities, as well as formulation of a law based on the judgment and prompt state action to this end.

Bangladesh Mahila Parishad formed a human chain in front of the National Museum at Dhaka's Shahbag protesting the recent incidents of sexual violence in educational institutions.