

**BANGLADESH UPDATE**



**1,182**  
New cases in 24hrs



**3,67,565**  
Total cases



**5,325**  
Deaths



**2,80,069**  
Recoveries



**1,034,844**  
Deaths



**34,947,207**  
Total cases

## Sudan, rebels ink landmark peace deal

AFP, Juba

Sudan's government and rebel groups yesterday inked a landmark peace deal aimed at ending decades of war in which hundreds of thousands died. Ululations and cheers rang out as one by one, representatives from the transitional government and rebel

groups signed the deal, a year after the peace talks began, at a ceremony in the South Sudanese capital Juba. "Today we have reached a peace agreement. We are happy. We have finished the mission," Tut Gatluak, head of the South Sudanese mediating team said shortly before the signing took place.

## AL chief riled

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Names of senior leaders were dropped while people close to local lawmakers and influential local leaders were included in many committees, she told partymen. Hasina said she doesn't want any committees formed through nepotism, insiders told The Daily Star.

Hasina said these at a meeting of the AL Central Working Committee (ALCWC), the highest decision-making body of the party, at the Gono Bhaban.

According to party insiders, drafts for at least 20 district committees were submitted at the party president's Dhanmondi office.

The people named in the draft included several leaders accused of corruption and repression against women, and personal staff and close relatives of the district committee president and general secretaries, the insiders added.

At yesterday's meeting, Hasina read out draft committees of some districts and mentioned the names of some "controversial and tainted persons", said sources.

She also mentioned that some former presidents, general secretaries and vice-presidents of immediate past committees who have no allegations against them and have been dedicated to the party were dropped. She sent back the draft committees and asked that the committees be adjusted according to her guidelines.

She also said committees of some upazilas were announced through press releases without having councils, said meeting insiders.

Only 33 leaders out of 81 were present at yesterday's ALCWC meeting, which was held after almost seven months.

ALCWC leaders who are infected with coronavirus or have any family members infected with Covid-19 were

asked to not attend the meeting. The last ALCWC meeting was held on March 9.

Hasina also asked her party leaders to make the organisations stronger and communicate closely with the general people.

She also asked her party men to be prepared to serve the people as she feared that the Covid-19 situation may worsen during the coming winter, meeting sources said.

The ruling party yesterday formed eight high-powered committees for eight divisions to strengthen the organisational activities of the party and solve organisational problems.

The AL chief also informed the meeting that 522 leaders and activists of her party died from Covid-19.

In her introductory speech, PM Hasina said her government has been able to put the coronavirus pandemic under control because of different ministries and government organisations, including the health ministry and Directorate General of Health Services (DGHS), worked in a synchronised manner with sincerity.

"Some people are saying many things regarding the Directorate General of Health Services or health ministry... Whatever I've directed them [to do] on an emergency basis, they have done. They worked properly... That's why we've been able to put coronavirus under control," she said, reports UNB.

She said when directing them to do anything on coronavirus-related issues, she asked that the work be done bypassing mandatory government rules as it was very much urgent to provide medical services to the people of the country.

The prime minister thanked all government organisations, Awami League and its associated bodies for their coordinated and sincere efforts to help people.

## Election concerns

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statement late Friday.

Earlier, she said that medical experts recommended Trump work from the presidential offices at Walter Reed "for the next few days."

The hospitalization indicated an intense effort to make sure the president's reportedly "mild" symptoms do not deteriorate.

The development also highlighted the uncharted waters for the US election on November 3, with Trump -- who is well behind his Democratic opponent Joe Biden in the polls -- having to freeze much of his campaign.

At first, aides gave rosy assessments, with Trump's chief of staff saying the president, 74, had only mild symptoms, was in "good spirits" and feeling "very energetic."

But later Friday White House physician Sean Conley said Trump received a single dose of Regeneron's antibody cocktail, a treatment not yet approved by regulators.

In his 70s and technically obese, the president is in a higher-risk category.

Daniel Griffin, an infectious disease specialist, told AFP Trump had an estimated 20 percent chance of developing severe disease requiring oxygenation.

The president's son Donald Trump Jr told Fox News his father was "obviously taking it very seriously, but he's a fighter."

Trump spoke to Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell and Senate Judiciary Committee Chairman Lindsey Graham, McEnany said, and discussed emergency declarations and the coronavirus stimulus package with Chief of Staff Mark Meadows.

"His first question to me this morning was, 'How is the economy doing, how are the stimulus talks going on Capitol Hill?'" Meadows told reporters outside the White House, adding he had spoken several times to Trump already.

Privately, some Trump advisers worried Trump's illness could cost him the presidential election in just 31 days.

"Clearly it changes the dynamic from us being able to travel and show enormous energy and support from the rallies, which has been part of our calculation just like in 2016," said one Trump adviser.

The Trump campaign said all planned events involving the president were either being postponed or going virtual -- starting with the cancellation of a Florida rally Friday, one Saturday in Wisconsin and others in western states like Arizona next week.

Even the second Trump-Biden debate, scheduled for October 15, is

now in some doubt.

Rallies are such a key part of the Trump brand that his sudden inability to travel leaves the campaign scrambling to reinvent its strategy. In addition, Trump has made his argument that coronavirus dangers are overblown a central plank of his reelection platform.

Underlining his sudden advantage in the bitter race, Biden, 77, traveled to Grand Rapids, Michigan, going ahead with a previously scheduled campaign stop. He was tested negative for coronavirus, his campaign revealed on Friday.

Biden said he was praying for Trump and his family, and his campaign announced it would take down all negative ads.

However, Biden also reminded voters that he has pushed consistently for taking seriously the coronavirus, which has killed more than 208,000 Americans, unlike his opponent who has mocked the Democrat for his rigorous use of masks.

"Be patriotic," Biden told supporters in Michigan through a blue surgical mask. "It's not about being a tough guy. It's about doing your part."

News of Trump's infection came after one of his closest advisors, Hope Hicks, tested positive -- sparking fears of a cluster of cases emanating from the heart of the White House.

Trump met with dozens of people through the week and reportedly went to a fundraiser in New Jersey after it was known that Hicks had contracted the virus.

The White House said it was carrying out contact tracing, while Melania Trump's spokeswoman said the couple's 14-year-old son Barron had tested negative.

Vice President Mike Pence and other senior figures tested negative. The White House said Supreme Court nominee Amy Coney Barrett was negative too.

Former White House top aid Kellyanne Conway, however, announced late Friday she had tested positive with "mild" symptoms.

Trump's campaign manager, 42-year-old Bill Stepien, said he had tested positive, US media reported, and was in quarantine with mild symptoms.

As the news rattled global stock markets, leaders including Germany's Angela Merkel, Britain's Boris Johnson, and Russia's Vladimir Putin wished the president and first lady a speedy recovery.

Trump's predecessor Barack Obama noted the US is "in the midst of a big political fight" but set aside the bitter election battle to extend "best wishes" to the first family.



Villagers painting an almost 42-foot long boat, which will be used in a local rowing championship in Bogura's Sariakandi upazila. The competition, to be held on the Bangali river, is a decades-old custom. PHOTO: MOSTAFA SHABUJ

## Pay or die

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7:00pm on October 28," said Yasmin.

The amount was not enough and Hasan died in a "gunfight" that very night.

This newspaper reported Pradeep as saying on October 28, 2018: "Police went to Nayapara area after being informed that two groups of drug traffickers were engaged in a gunfight around 4:00am. As the police team reached the scene, the armed gang members began to shoot at them. Officers retaliated and after the exchange of fire ended, police found the bullet-ridden bodies."

Pradeep, now under an Anti-Corruption Commission probe for illegal wealth, had also told this newspaper that Hasan was a "suspected drug dealer".

Hasan left behind two daughters and a son, all under the age of 12.

His wife said, "I saw the news on Facebook the next morning and immediately fell unconscious. He was shot thrice, on the left shoulder, left hip and stomach."

She went with her sister and father-in-law to retrieve the body.

Thirty-two-year-old Nurul Amin was killed because they fell Tk 10 lakh short, alleged his family members. Also resident in Jaliyapara, Nurul was a Dubai returnee who worked at a local cell phone store. He had no criminal cases against him.

"My son worked for five years in Dubai as a store manager in Al-Khulliah supermarket. He came back in 2015 to get married, and had a child, so I did not let him go back," said his father Shukkur Ahmed, a frail old man in a crisp white panjabi, with generations of doing business in the shutki industry.

The Daily Star spoke to him at his beautiful two-storey family home in Jaliyapara.

"Nurul was picked up on March 15, 2019 from his store around the same time as Maghrib," said his father.

Two police sources acted as a mediator between the family and the police station, he added, claiming, "They asked for Tk 15 lakh and in return, Nurul would be charged with Section 54 and sent to court. That was too much for us to give, so we gave Tk 5 lakh to the dalals on March 18."

Nurul was killed on March 22, 2019. In the report of his death, published by this newspaper the next day, Pradeep admitted that Nurul was detained before his death.

"They [Nurul and another detainee] were interrogated at the police station. Based on their information, police along with them were going to Rajarchhara area to recover firearms and yaba pills around 3:00am yesterday. Sensing law enforcers' presence, some drug peddlers opened fire to snatch the arrestees, forcing them to fire back in self-defence."

The only two casualties of this so-called gunfight were Nurul, and the other detainee, a man named Nur Mohammed.

"Nurul's right eye was bruised black," said his nephew Fariq who saw the body, "and he had two gunshot wounds, one to the chest and one in his stomach."

Fariq took out a photo of the corpse to show to this correspondent; Nurul's father Shukkur who was standing at a distance, ambled over to see what was being shown, unintentionally spotted the photo and the impressively tall man doubled over, crying frantically -- a stark reminder that these extrajudicial killings were not just faceless numbers, they were heavy personal costs for families.

This unwritten rule of Teknaf town is also why, when Belal was arrested two days before last Eid-ul-Fitr, his father, 60-year-old Nurul Alam, immediately put his trawler up as collateral and paid Tk 2 lakh to the police.

"I met the cops in front of Mathiner Kup [a local landmark] the very next day and gave the money to a sub-inspector and an assistant sub-inspector," claimed Alam.

"I have already lost a son to crossfire, I could not afford to lose another."

They paid and Belal lives, though he is still in jail.

Another son, 23-year-old Kamal, had been picked up by law enforcers on October 22, 2018, and "given the crossfire" on October 29, family members claimed.

"They were bulldozing the homes of yaba dealers at midnight and Kamal was watching... he was picked up from the gate of our home," said Kamal's widow, 20-year-old Rukia Akhter, about the incident two years ago.

Police, however, denied in their official report that Kamal was detained a week earlier before the "crossfire".

On October 29, 2018, OC Pradeep told The Daily Star, "Police went to Nayapara area after being informed that two groups of drug traffickers were engaged in a gunfight around 4:00am. As a police team reached the scene, the

armed gang members began to shoot at them. Officers retaliated and after the exchange of fire ended, police found the bullet-ridden bodies."

The family, as well as locals, claimed that neither Kamal nor Belal were listed yaba dealers -- but two of their brothers are.

"My brothers-in-law surrendered after Kamal was killed," said Rukia.

Drug dealers or not, the socio-economic status of the family stands in stark contrast with that of their alleged peers. The family lives right in the middle of Najirpara, a neighbourhood locally famed as "Yaba Para" because of the sheer number of yaba dealers who live there in magnificent mansions.

Talking to these correspondents, Alam, a bone-thin man dressed in a tattered vest and lungi, said, "None of my sons are here to feed me. I catch fish worth Tk 500 every day and that is all we survive on. You can check my pot, we only had daal and rice for lunch."

He hoisted a bundle of fish nets and set off to catch fish to feed his family.

The Daily Star could not independently verify the claims in these cases. However, several other families have recently filed cases against Pradeep and other policemen with similar accounts.

Five cases, copies of which have been obtained by The Daily Star, have been filed against the cops of Teknaf police station since the death of Sinha -- all alleging that their family members were killed because not enough money was handed over.

The first was by Gulcheher, who filed a case with Teknaf Upazila Senior Judicial Magistrate's Court on August 18, accusing 27 police officers of killing her son.

"On July 4, my sons Saddam Hossain and Javed Hossain were detained by a team of police led by Whaikhyang police camp's in-charge Moshir Rahman. They were picked up from the street in a neighbourhood called Maulavibazar," narrated Gulcheher in the first information report (FIR) of her case.

"I went to the police camp to bring them home and was asked for Tk 10 lakh. I bargained for Tk 5 lakh. I handed over Tk 3 lakh on that very day while I sent over the other Tk 2 lakh the next day using their own chosen messenger. Javed was prosecuted and sent to court, but on July 7 at 10:00pm, Saddam was taken to a place close to his home and shot."

The Daily Star interviewed all but one of those who filed these cases.

On August 27, Senowara Begum, 24, filed a case against Pradeep and SI Moshir Rahman among others, for the death of her husband Abdul Jalil.

Jalil was in the custody of Teknaf police for eight months before being found dead following a "gunfight", she alleged in the FIR.

He was arrested at 9:30am on December 3, 2019 from Fuad Al Khatib hospital, she said.

"We looked for him for months. At 7:30pm on March 3, 2020, SI Moshir, OC Pradeep, ASI Arifur Rahman and an informant came to our house, and demanded Tk 10 lakh in exchange for Jalil. I gathered Tk 5 lakh by borrowing money and selling my gold and the above-mentioned cops came to my house again on March 16 to take the money," described Senowara in the FIR.

Months passed again, and her husband did not show up. On June 10, witnesses (named in the case) saw him inside room number 4 of the police station and Senowara rushed to meet Pradeep.

"He agreed to let my husband go, and I kept going there every day hoping he will be freed, up until July 7 when he was killed," she said.

Between 2:00am and 2:45am that night, Jalil was taken to an area called Combo Borchhara and shot at, states her FIR, adding that he was brought alive but wounded to Teknaf Upazila Health Complex.

The health centre referred him to Cox's Bazar, and he died on the way. Senowara's brother-in-law confirmed the same version of events to this newspaper.

The day after Jalil's death, Pradeep told this newspaper that they had gone to the spot to recover drugs, accompanied by an arrested "drug dealer".

The accomplices of the "dealer" was waiting in ambush resulting in a "gunfight". Two bodies were recovered -- that of the "dealer" and of Jalil.

Essentially, Pradeep claimed that Jalil was in the group lying in ambush to save their comrade.

On August 30, 22-year-old Sultana Rabiya Munni filed a case accusing Pradeep and 34 others of Teknaf police of killing her husband Syed Alam, brother-in-law Nurul Alam, and nephew Abdul Monaf on May 6 this year.

"They were picked up from our house in Rangikhal, Gazipara at 2:00am by

a team led by Pradeep and SI Moshir Rahman. At the time of detention, the two cops asked for Tk 50 lakh which we did not give. They were shot at 4:40am in a paddy field adjacent to our house," she stated, adding that she is now coming forward to file a case because she was threatened with "crossfire" too.

According to media reports, then OC Pradeep said these men were robbers who were killed in a "gunfight" with the cops.

Shahena Akhter also filed a case on September 2 against Pradeep and SI Moshir Rahman alleging that her husband Md Musa Akbar was killed in a "gunfight" because the family only paid Tk 3 lakh instead of the sum of Tk 20 lakh that was demanded of them.

Musa was arrested on March 28 this year at 2:00pm from Uluboniya. When Shahena went to see Pradeep, he denied that Musa was at the police station.

But two informants approached her saying they were representing SI Moshir and that her husband would be released if they could pay Tk 20 lakh.

Musa was killed the same day at 11:55pm, Shahena narrated in the FIR, when they were unable to pay in full.

On September 2, Hafez Ahmed filed a case alleging that his sharecropper brother Shahab Uddin was picked up from their residence on April 17, 2019, at noon, by Pradeep and SI Dipak Biswas, and killed in a "gunfight".

"At the time of arrest, SI Dipak and his informant Aminul Haque told me to bring Tk 5 lakh to the police station, or be ready to conduct my brother's funeral. I pawned all the gold jewelry in the house for Tk 50,000 and went to the police station to meet SI Dipak, but he asked me to hand over the money to Aminul. Aminul accepted the money but informed me the next day that the entire Tk 5 lakh would be needed," described Hafez in the FIR.

When he could not arrange the money over the next two days, Shahab was killed in a "gunfight" between two groups of drug dealers" on April 20, 2019 -- as said by the police in official report.

The Daily Star was unable to locate or reach the policemen named by victims' families for comment. Other than suspended OC Pradeep, who is in jail, the policemen in question have been transferred from their posts, and their phone numbers too have changed.

On September 25, The Daily Star reported that 1,487 policemen -- ranging from constables to inspectors -- had been transferred from Cox's Bazar by police administration, the largest such reshuffle in district police in recent history.

Police sources told The Daily Star that the reshuffle was actually part of a "correction campaign" by police in the aftermath of the killing of Sinha Md Rashed Khan. The subsequent outcry led to increased scrutiny of "gunfights", and "shootouts" by police in the district.

Asked about the allegations regarding "gunfights" in Teknaf, Deputy Inspector General, Chattogram Range, Md Anwar Hossain, said, "The court has initiated an investigation into the cases filed and is seeking information from the relevant police station. When the Teknaf police station submits a report providing information, further action can be taken."

Asked why the police officers named in these cases are not being arrested, "We cannot take any action until these steps are completed and the court gives further direction."

**NO MONEY, NO OPTION**  
While some well-off families were able to pay for their family members to live, albeit in jail, what happens when you are too poor to pay?

Anowara was never even given the choice to pay for her husband Abdur Rahman's life.

She lives in a shanty on the side of the road, poverty etched all over her walls. In the middle of a storm, she sat outside it, breaking a mountain of bricks into chips -- she would get Tk 600 if she could finish the pile before the day was out.

A construction worker by profession, Abdur Rahman and his brother-in-law Abdul Kader were picked up from their respective homes on June 25, 2019 at midnight by Pradeep and his team in civil dress, informed Anowara.

"They killed them that night at 2:00am on Marine Drive, near Moheshkhaliapara," she claimed.

Anowara found the body at the morgue the next day, shot on the left shoulder, chest, and stomach.

Then OC Pradeep told the media that they were killed in a "gunfight" which happened when police raided that spot to catch "traffickers".

There was no dillydallying, no negotiations -- it was all over within two hours of their alleged arrest.

Even in the lawless land of extrajudicial killings, it is the poorest who are the most deprived.

## Nepal PM's advisers test positive for Covid-19

REUTERS, Kathmandu

Three advisers to Nepal's Prime Minister KP Sharma Oli yesterday said they had tested positive for Covid-19, which has claimed the lives of 528 people in the country.

Oli's press, political and foreign affairs advisers told Reuters they had been infected and were isolating themselves.

An assistant working for Oli also tested positive, they added.

Oli has previously tested negative, but had yet to take a test after his associates tested positive, press adviser Surya Thapa said.

"The prime minister has been exercising extreme caution while meeting with people," Thapa told Reuters.

## Govt working

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The government strongly believes that the World Bank will provide them with the loan, he added.

International news agency Reuters, in its report on Wednesday, mentioned that World Bank President David Malpass said on Tuesday that he sought board approval for a \$12 billion coronavirus vaccine financing plan to help poor and developing countries secure a sufficient share of vaccine doses when they become available in the coming months.

He said the board was expected to consider the plan in early October.

Global competition for early coronavirus vaccine doses is already fierce, months ahead of any approvals, as wealthy countries move to secure supplies.

Malpass said the World Bank plan aimed to put poor and middle-income countries, where the virus is spreading most rapidly, on the same footing as richer countries by ensuring financing to secure supplies and a system for distribution, which will encourage drug makers to meet their demand.

Without early doses that can bring outbreaks under control, many of these countries risk economic disaster that would push hundreds of millions of people back into poverty.

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina on September 26 asked the world community to treat the Covid-19 vaccine as a "global public good" and urged the United Nations to ensure its timely availability to all countries at the same time.

The PM, while addressing the general debate at the 75th United Nations General Assembly, virtually said that her government announced 21 stimulus packages, worth \$13.25 billion which is equivalent to 4.03 percent of the total GDP, aiming to minimise the impacts of the Covid-19 pandemic.

Hasina on September 10, told the parliament that the government is ready to procure Covid-19 vaccine from the country where it will be developed first.

On August 27, Bangladesh approved the final or phase-3 human trial of a prospective Covid-19 vaccine by China's private Sinovac Biotech Ltd, which appeared to be a forerunner in a global race for developing inoculates against coronavirus.

Indian Foreign Secretary Harsh Vardhan Shringla, while visiting Dhaka in August, said New Delhi would make its potential Covid-19 vaccine available for Bangladesh on priority basis once it was produced in partnership with its developer Oxford University.

## Three more accused

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Magistrate Ziadur Rahman. Metropolitan magistrates Saifur Rahman and Sharmin Khanom Nila recorded statements of Ainuddin and Roni.

On September 29, the three accused were placed on a five-day remand in the case.

Jyotirmoy Sarker, additional deputy commissioner (media) of Sylhet Metropolitan Police, said, "With these three, confessional statements of six accused have been recorded in the court and the remaining two accused will be produced before the court tomorrow [Sunday]."

A day before, three of the other named accused in the case made statements under section 164 before a Sylhet court. They are Saifur Rahman, Rabiul Islam, and Arjun Lasker.

Meanwhile, DNA samples of two other accused in the case -- Tarekul Islam Tarek and Mahfuzur Rahman Masum -- were collected at Sylhet MAG Osmani Medical College Hospital yesterday morning.

On September 25, a group of youth raped a woman at a hostel of MC College after forcefully taking the victim and her husband there.

The husband of the victim filed the case