

**BANGLADESH
UPDATE**



1,600
New cases in 24hrs



3,84,559
Total cases



5,608
Deaths



2,99,229
Recoveries

**GLOBAL
UPDATE**



1,099,560
Deaths



38,942,937
Total cases

Take measures to prevent rape

PM asks admin officials to create public awareness

UNB, Dhaka

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina yesterday asked the administration to take extensive measures against rape and raise public awareness against such incidents in the society.

“We will have to take extensive measures to resist such rape incidents. And after all, we need to create public awareness,” she said.

The PM was virtually addressing the concluding ceremony of the 70th Foundation Training Course for fresh cadre service officers. She joined the programme from the Gono Bhaban through a video conference.

The participants were connected from Bangladesh Public Administration Training Centre (BPATC) at Savar and the offices of seven divisional commissioners.

Hasina said the government has amended the Women and Children Repression Prevention (Amendment) Act 2000 and an ordinance has already been promulgated to check rape incidents.

She said the rape incidents that take place these days are propagated widely. “The more it is propagated, the more its prevalence increases.”

Noting that people have the right to get justice, the PM said she knows what is the pain of not getting justice.

Hasina said she did not have access to justice after the assassination of her father, mother, brothers and others on August 15, 1975 as indemnity was given to the killers.

She said this culture (of injustice) should not remain in the country. “It has been possible to try the killers only because I could come to power.”

Hasina said the government wants people not to fall victims to any injustice.

Focusing on the government's vision and plans to develop the country, she asked the new cadre officers to take Bangladesh forward being imbued with the spirit of the Liberation War.

She said as the government wants to make Bangladesh a developed country by 2041, the young generation, including the trained officers who would be running the country till that time, should take the country forward in such a way that Bangladesh does

not fall back any more.

The PM asked the new officers to work for the welfare of the people.

Hasina said the government wants to develop every village equipped with all civic amenities so that rural people get urban facilities.

She put emphasis on modern training for government employees so that they can cope with the pace of the world.

Public Administration Secretary Shaikh Yusuf Harun delivered the welcome speech, while BPATC Rector Md Rakib Hossain, on behalf of the PM, distributed certificates among the trained officers.

Cadre officers Monia Sirat and Mehedi Hasan Kawsar, on behalf of 663 participants of the six-month foundation training course, spoke at the function.

Death penalty

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It marked the first conviction since the government this week introduced the death penalty for rape.

Gang-rape already carried the death sentence, but rape by a single offender had previously been punishable only by life imprisonment.

Bachelet cited the law change in Bangladesh, but also calls in a number of other countries to impose the death penalty for rape.

She highlighted calls in Pakistan for public hanging and castration of rapists, and a law introduced in the northwestern Nigerian state of Kaduna last month imposing surgical castration followed by execution in rape cases where the victim is under 14.

“The main argument being made for the death penalty is for it to deter rape – but in fact there is no evidence that the death penalty deters crime more than other forms of punishment,” Bachelet said.

“Evidence shows that the certainty of punishment, rather than its severity, deters crime.”

She stressed that in most countries, “the key problem is that victims of sexual violence do not have access to justice in the first place.”

This was due to a range of factors, including “stigma, fear of reprisals, entrenched gender stereotypes and power imbalances,” she said, stressing that handing the death penalty to perpetrators would not remove those barriers.

EC sues MP Nixon Chy

FROM PAGE 1

On October 10, a by-election was held for the post of chairman of Charbhadrasan upazila parishad in Faridpur.

According to the case statement, Mujibur Rahman Chowdhury, 42, called Atul Sarkar, deputy commissioner of Faridpur, over mobile phone around 8:00am the previous day and expressed his displeasure over the appointment of more magistrates.

On the day of the election, AC (Land) of Bhanga arrested an activist of Nixon's for violating the election code of conduct.

For this reason, Nixon then used abusive language directed in a phone conversation with Jasmin Sultana, Charbhadrasan Upazila Nirbahi Officer.

Nixon also violated the election code of conduct by participating in a victory rally after the announcement of Charbhadrasan upazila election results.

Nazneen Khanum, officer-in-charge of Charbhadrasan Police Station, who accepted the case, said they would investigate the matter.

The district Awami League unit expressed regret to the deputy commissioner (DC) of Faridpur for Nixon's unedifying behavior on Wednesday. Members of Bhanga upazila AL unit also formed a human chain demanding his punishment.

However, at a press conference, Nixon Chowdhury denied the allegation of using abusive language and sought legal action against the Faridpur DC,

claiming that he acted in favour of BNP candidate KM Obaidul Bari in the Charbhadrasan by-election.

UNO SUES SUSPENDED MAYOR IN BERA

In an unrelated development in Pabna, Bera Upazila Nirbahi Officer Asif Anam Siddiquee filed a case against the suspended mayor of Bera municipality for assaulting him in the upazila law and order committee meeting.

The UNO filed a case with Bera Police Station on Wednesday night, police said.

Talking to The Daily Star, the Bera UNO said suspended mayor Abdul Baten proposed to include the unlawful allotment of Kazirhaat and Nagbari ghat to Bera upazila parishad so that they could be leased out.

When the UNO denied to sign the proposal, the mayor allegedly misbehaved with him during the meeting on Monday. He was suspended the following day.

Later, the UNO filed a case with Bera police station on Wednesday night accusing Abdul Baten of assaulting him and obstructing the regular work of government.

Officer-in-charge of Bera Police Station said the case was recorded and they were investigating the incident. Police are trying to nab the accused, the OC added.

Abdul Baten, also the younger brother of lawmaker of Pabna-1 Samsul Haque Tuku, in a press conference earlier refuted the allegation of assaulting the UNO.

5 to die for gang-raping

FROM PAGE 1

said the victim and Sagar got to know each other through mobile conversation in 2012.

Sagar took the girl to Elenga by a CNG-run three-wheeler when she reached in Shaldair area on her way to the madrasa on January 15 the same year. He later took her to the house of Rajan, his friend and another of the accused, at Charaljani in Madhupur on the same day.

Sagar, by the four other accused, gave the girl pressure for marrying him. The girl, however, refused for marriage after came to acknowledge that Sagar is a Hindu man.

Then Sagar raped the girl at the house on the same night.

They later took the girl beside the Bonshi river at night on January 17 and Sagar and two others raped her on there again and others helped them. They later left her there in unconscious state.

In the morning (January 18), the girl, with the help of locals, went to Madhupur Bus Stand and informed the

matter to her brother over phone. Later, her family members went there and took her to the house.

The girl filed a case against the five people with Bhuapur Police Station on the same day.

Police arrested Sujon Chandra Moni Rishi, one of the accused, on the same day and Sujon gave confessional statement to the court under Section 164 on the next day (January 19) admitting his involvement with the incident.

Later the four other accused were also arrested.

After investigation, police submitted a charge sheet against the five. Later, the trial of the case was started with framing charges against the accused on October 29.

The PP expressed his satisfaction over the verdict saying that the victim got justice.

On the other hand, Golam Mostofa, one of the lawyers of the accused, said they were not satisfied over the verdict and they would appeal to the higher court against the verdict.



Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina and US Deputy Secretary of State Stephen E Biegun exchange gifts as the latter calls on the PM at the Gono Bhaban yesterday.

PHOTO: PID

Too pricey to be on menu of many

FROM PAGE 1

Already hit hard by plummeting income due to the novel coronavirus, Hosne Ara is now looking for alternative ways to make ends meet.

“I’ve curtailed my shopping list and I buy vegetables at night to get comparatively lower prices,” she added.

Egg, a good source of protein for the poor and limited income group, has also become dearer.

Farhad Hossain, who runs a grocery shop in Jatrabari, said he bought 100 eggs for Tk 890 a week ago. “Now it is sold at Tk 920 in the wholesale market. I will sell each dozen at Tk 144,” he said, adding that he earlier sold a dozen for Tk 100-110.

The price of broiler chicken, another good source of protein, has also increased to Tk 130 from Tk 120 a kg.

MYSTERY OVER POTATO
Fixing the price of per kg potato at Tk 30 at the retailer level, the Department of Agriculture Marketing (DAM) issued a letter to deputy commissioners on October 7.

In the letter, DAM claimed that about 1.09 crore tonnes of potato was produced last year against an annual domestic demand of 77.09 lakh tonnes. Though the country exports potato, there is less possibility of crisis, read the letter.

According to DAM, the price of per kg potato when kept in cold storages was Tk 14.

The cost of cold storage rent, interest, collection charge and weight loss stand at

Tk 9. Considering that factor, if the potato is sold at Tk 23 per kg, persons who kept potato at cold storage will get Tk 2 profit.

If the wholesaler adds Tk 2 in profit per kg, the price would be Tk 25 and it is not reasonable to charge over Tk 30 per kg at retail stage, read the letter.

A farmer spent Tk 8.32 to produce one kg potato, it said.

Four days after the DAM's letter, Bangladesh Cold Storage Association (BCSA) on October 11 called upon farmers and traders to bring out potato from storage in an attempt to stabilise the price.

The association said that this year the production of potato was 85 lakh tonnes and due to transport and labour crisis for Covid-19 only 40 lakh tonnes of potatoes were kept in cold storages.

However, DAM Director General Mohammad Yousuf disputed BCSA's potato production figure of 85 lakh tonnes. He said about 1.09 crore tonnes of potatoes was produced this year.

About 55 percent of 40 lakh tonnes potato has already been sold at the market. Of the remaining, 10 lakh tonnes are seed potato which will be used for the next cultivation season in November, read the BCSA letter.

A source said with the remaining potatoes, another one and half months will be covered. The newly harvested potato is supposed to hit the market by the end of December as potato cultivation was delayed due to the flood. “Farmers and traders who kept potato

Extend help in Rohingya

FROM PAGE 1

Ihsanul Karim briefed reporters after the meeting.

Quoting Biegun, Ihsanul said the United States also wants a permanent solution to the protracted Rohingya crisis.

“We will continue to extend our support to Bangladesh on this issue,” the press secretary quoted Biegun as saying.

Hasina mentioned that over 1.1 million forcibly displaced Rohingyas are living in Bangladesh at the moment, which is an extra burden on the country.

“The problem has been created by Myanmar and we are holding dialogues with them ... they should take their citizens back,” she said.

The PM said the Rohingya issue is a social problem, and a large number of the displaced Myanmar nationals are living at camps in Cox's Bazar.

“Some quarters could mislead them and get them involved in anti-social activities. So, we need their immediate repatriation to their homeland,” she said.

The premier and the US deputy secretary of state discussed the issue of bringing back Bangabandhu's convicted fugitive killer Rashed Chowdhury, now in the USA.

Biegun informed that the case was being reviewed by the US attorney general's office.

He said the visa services for Bangladeshis students would be reopened once the Covid-19 situation improves.

The US deputy secretary of state, who arrived in Bangladesh on Wednesday,

said he has already discussed the issue of economic cooperation with Bangladesh officials.

“The US government will closely work with Bangladesh for promoting economic and trade relations,” he said.

He discussed with the PM the coronavirus situation in the USA and said that over two lakh people have died there after being infected with the deadly virus.

“We are close to making vaccines available and hopefully those will be available in the market in the next two weeks,” he said.

According to Biegun, several US companies are manufacturing the vaccines as widespread vaccination will start from next year.

The US deputy secretary of state highly appreciated Bangladesh's tremendous economic stability and progress under the leadership of Hasina.

He said Bangladesh is attracting foreign investment in huge volumes. The United States wants to further strengthen cooperation with Bangladesh in the energy sector, he added.

Hasina said her government is setting up 100 special economic zones across the country to attract more investment from home and abroad as well as generate employment.

She also briefly highlighted her government's steps to contain the Covid-19 alongside keeping the wheels of the country's economy moving.

US Ambassador in Dhaka Earl R Miller and PM's Principal Secretary Ahmad Kaikaus were present during the meeting.

Covid patients have to spend

Tk 12,000 each

for medicine

Shows a study

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A study conducted by Bangladesh Health Watch (BHW) reported that coronavirus patients spent Tk 12,000 each on average as medicine cost.

The respondents of the survey said specific medicines were not available in the pharmacies and they had to procure it from alternative sources.

Patients who were interviewed during the survey took Paracetamol followed by Vitamins C, B and A, read the study which was based on the interviews of 101 Covid-19 patients.

They were interviewed over phone between June 4 and Aug 30.

The study found, almost 70 percent of the respondents took the antibiotics particularly Azithromycin, followed 10 percent by Doxycycline, and nine percent jointly Chloroquine and Hydroxychloroquine.

Very few of the patients mentioned of taking other antibiotics such as Amoxicillin, Levofloxacin and Amoxicillin plus Clavulonic acid etc.

In very few cases, the positive patients have used hydrocortisone and Ivermectin.

Besides, all of the respondents took precautionary measures and supplementary food besides taking medicine and regular foods.

Govt to start

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Tk 700-800 if procured in bulks, according to a health ministry document obtained by this newspaper.

Earlier last week, officials at the Institute of Epidemiology, Disease Control and Research (IEDCR) said they were validating antigen-based rapid testing kits of several companies, including those mentioned above.

Apart from the two companies, the government will also procure more kits through the World Bank and the Unicef, said DGHS officials.

On September 17, the government permitted antigen-based rapid testing at the public healthcare centres after months of bureaucratic tangles.

The decision is yet to come into force.

Initially, the government has planned to introduce antigen testing facilities at 10 specialised and 39 district hospitals, including those designated to treat Covid-19 cases, across the country. These healthcare installations do not have coronavirus testing facilities.

Private hospitals have not been allowed to use antigen-based rapid testing yet.

Meanwhile, the World Health Organization (WHO) has delayed the supply of 10 lakh antigen kits to Bangladesh.

On September 28, the WHO announced that 120 million antigen rapid diagnostic kits for Covid-19 would be made available to low- and middle-income countries under an agreement between manufacturers Abbott and SD Biosensor and the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation.

“They said they will give us kits within a week. Now they are saying they will need more time. They will give 10 lakh kits. If we get those, we will not need to go for procurement,” Prof Khurshid said.

The antigen-based rapid testing is a molecular test, an alternative to the sophisticated RT-PCR test, which detects the presence of the novel coronavirus.

The antigen test involves taking a saliva sample and it can usually determine whether a person is infected within 15-30 minutes.

An RT-PCR test now costs the government Tk 3,500 to Tk 4,000, said DGHS officials.