

**BANGLADESH
UPDATE**



1,637
New cases in 24hrs



3,90,206
Total cases



5,681
Deaths



3,05,599
Recoveries

**GLOBAL
UPDATE**



1,120,217
Deaths



40,435,880
Total cases

Wear masks

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Anwarul Islam said, “We have once again seen a rise in Covid-19 cases in the USA and Europe. That’s why the prime minister has asked all to be more careful and use face masks.”

Mentioning that using masks at public places is mandatory, he said, “If we use mask, the chance of getting infected reduces. We have seen people’s relaxed attitude towards using masks and that’s why we need to create awareness.”

Replying to a question, Anwarul said the divisional commissioners and Islamic Foundation have already been instructed to take steps to make people aware of using masks.

The divisional commissioners have been advised to operate mobile courts, if needed, to ensure the use of face masks, he added.

The cabinet meeting yesterday discussed three issues according to its agenda. The issues were: third quarterly report on implementation of the cabinet’s decisions, approval of a draft contract between Bangladesh and Austria on flight services and the foreign minister’s recent tour to Turkey.

The cabinet secretary said due to the novel coronavirus pandemic, the rate of implementation of the cabinet’s decisions has reduced by 12 percentile points to 46 in the third quarter of this year compared to the rate of the previous year.

Comparing to the rate of July-September period of 2019, the cabinet has taken more decisions during the same period this year, he told reporters.

“Although the rate of implementation was low, the cabinet has expressed satisfaction over the report,” said Anwarul.

He said the cabinet last year had taken 258 decisions and 238 of those were implemented. This year, the cabinet has taken 169 decisions till September and 116 of those have been implemented.

Talking about the second issue discussed at the cabinet meeting, the cabinet secretary said Bangladesh and Austria would be able to operate seven passenger and cargo flights a week between the two countries once the contract is finalised.

He said the initiative will ease Dhaka’s communications with Vienna where several UN offices are located.

A team, led by Foreign Minister AK Abdul Momen, recently visited Turkey after the inauguration of Bangladesh Chancery Complex in Ankara by PM Sheikh Hasina.

The foreign minister briefed the cabinet meeting about his visit.

Quoting Momen, the cabinet secretary said Turkey was keen to see a solution to the Rohingya crisis and it assured Bangladesh of help in this regard.

The Turkish government also showed interest in investing more in Bangladesh, he added.

Rail project PD

FROM PAGE 1

their known sources of income.

“We will change him [from the post],” BR Director General Md Shamsuzzaman told The Daily Star yesterday.

Asked whether any other measures would be taken against him, the DG said, “It depends on the Anti-Corruption Commission’s [case verdict].”

Ramzan was project director of the Khulna-Mongla Rail Link Project before he was given charge of the “Construction of Dual Gauge Double Line and Conversion of Existing Rail Line into Dual Gauge Between Akhaura-Laksham”, a few months ago.

Earlier, he served as chief engineer (west) of BR.

In the corruption case filed by ACC’s Deputy Director Abu Bakar Siddiqui on August 16, Ramzan was mentioned as project director of the Khulna-Mongla Rail Link Project.

According to the case document, he amassed Tk 2.43 crore through bribes and corrupt practices. This correspondent could not learn when and from whom he allegedly took bribes.

On the other hand, his wife has amassed Tk 2.48 crore between September 24, 2007 and June 30, 2019. Of this amount, around Tk 1.85 crore was amassed beyond the known sources of income, said the case document.

Railway sources said the PMO asked the railways ministry to take steps in this regard in the last week of September.

The railways ministry recently sent a letter to the Director General of BR asking him to give a proposal for appointing a new project director for the Akhaura-Laksham project.

BR is implementing the Akhaura-Laksham Project at a cost of Tk 6,504.54 crore under an Asian Development Bank loan while the Tk 3,801.61 crore Khulna-Mongla Rail Link Project is being implemented under Indian Lines of Credit.

This correspondent attempted to contact Ramzan Ali for comment, but he did not respond to calls and texts.

Railways Ministry Secretary Salim Reza could not be reached over phone.



Police chase away jute mill workers in a field inside Eastern Jute Mill in Khulna city’s Atra Gilatala area yesterday after around a thousand workers blocked the Dhaka-Khulna highway outside the factory demanding reopening of state-run jute mills. Top right, a policeman kicks a protesters near the factory. Bottom right, an injured worker detained and being taken to a police van parked nearby.



PHOTO: DIPANKAR ROY

Family points the finger at rival faction

FROM PAGE 1

night. Two others were injured in the attack. Shuvra was also the chairman of Bangladesh Rural Development Board’s Gouripur unit, said police.

Last night, the victim’s brother, Abidur Rahman, filed a murder case with Gouripur Police Station against 14 people, including Awami League leader and Gouripur Municipality Mayor Syed Rafiqul Islam; and BNP leader Riyaduzzaman Riyad.

Md Borhan Uddin, officer-in-charge of the police station, confirmed this. He said they arrested four accused, including Riyad, joint convener of BNP Gouripur upazila unit and also chairman of Moilakanda union parishad. The other accused are on the run.

Quoting locals, Md Kamal Hossain, OC (investigation) of the station, had earlier told this correspondent that Riyad, along with his eight accomplices, attacked Shuvra and his two companions with sharp weapons at a tea stall in Pan Mahal area around 10:30pm on Saturday.

The attackers arrived at the scene by two CNG-run auto-rickshaws and

escaped after the incident.

Shuvra’s two companions -- Siddiqur Rahman, 45, president of the AL ward-6 unit in Gouripur municipality; and Al Amin, 25, member of Swachasebak League Gouripur upazila unit -- were injured.

The three were rushed to Mymensingh Medical College Hospital (MMCH) where Shuvra died around 11:15pm on Saturday, said the OC.

Shuvra’s uncle Sadequr Rahman Selim alleged that Mayor Rafiqul, also president of the AL Gouripur municipality unit, is the mastermind behind the killing.

Minutes before the attack, a group of men led by Riyad was seen coming out of the mayor’s office after a meeting with him, alleged Selim.

He said Shuvra had expressed his wish to contest the upcoming mayoral election in Gouripur municipality and was making preparations for that. This could be the main reason behind the murder.



Shuvra

Selim also alleged that a group of men, loyal to Rafiqul, attacked Shuvra in 2016 in a similar fashion. He was critically injured and admitted to the MMCH.

Shuvra’s another uncle Mohammad Morsheduzzaman said that as a young leader, Shuvra was popular which made the mayor anxious about winning the next election. And a plot was hatched to kill him.

Despite repeated attempts, Rafiqul could not be reached for comments. His mobile phone was switched off.

Talking to this correspondent, Md Sohail Rana, president of

Swachasebak League Gouripur upazila unit, said there was a fight between Shuvra and Riyad at a programme last year.

He claimed that the main reason behind the killing could be feud between the two, but a BNP leader would not dare to commit such a murder in Gouripur without backing of ruling party men.

Hundreds in distress in Bosnian woods

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Most of them reached Bosnia from different Middle East countries. They had to pay hefty amounts to middlemen and made perilous journeys, said the report.

“I had to spend Tk 18 to Tk 20 lakh to reach here. I had to pay the money to middlemen in different countries...,” one of the Bangladeshis told DW.

INHUMAN CONDITIONS

Several hundred Bangladeshis are spending night in overcrowded shacks made of polythene sheets. They don’t have sufficient food, drinking water and emergency medical supplies.

International agencies were not seen playing an active role in providing support to them , the DW report mentioned.

Many of the Bangladeshis there said officials from some international agencies distributed food among

them and provided medical support occasionally but those were not sufficient.

In a separate report published on Sunday, DW Bangla said that failing to get shelter at a nearby refugee camp run by the International Organisation for Migration, more than a hundred Bangladeshis took shelter at an abandoned factory in Velika Kladusa.

Those who took refuge there said

they had to endure untold sufferings in cold and rain as the walls and roof of the factory building were damaged.

Despite all this, they still dream of making it to rich European countries, according to the report.

Asked whether they would return home if the Bangladesh government makes arrangements for them, they said their dream is to reach Italy or Spain and that they would not abandon it.

Rape verdict in 7 working days

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The tribunal took cognisance of the charges on the day the case was referred to it and framed the charges the next day. On October 13 and 14, 16 prosecution witnesses, a doctor, a judicial magistrate, the investigating officer and other members of the police testified in the tribunal.

The accused testified on October 15. The court delivered the verdict yesterday, a day after completing the hearing of arguments of both sides.

“We are happy. This has set an example,” Assistant Public Prosecutor

Ranjit Kumar Mandal told reporters after the verdict was announced.

The complainant also expressed satisfaction.

Convict Mannan’s lawyer Liakat Hossain said his client will appeal against this verdict.

Rizia Parveen, regional coordinator of the Women Development Forum, said it was proof that trial procedures can be completed in a short time.

Law Minister Anisul said, “We have not stopped after raising the punishment to death penalty for rape. We have directed prosecutors to

take necessary steps for hearing and disposing of the cases quickly.

“I have said time and again that the government is pledge-bound to ensure justice quickly and to establish rule of law,” he told The Daily Star while expressing his reaction to the Bagerhat court verdict.

Supreme Court lawyer and Chairperson of Ain O Salish Kendra ZI Khan Panna said no trial of a criminal case took place in such a short period of time in the history of judiciary.

“If the trial proceedings of the Bagerhat case were held flawlessly, we will appreciate it. But it’s unacceptable

if it had not been done accurately,” he said.

It has been proved that trial proceedings can be done really fast, Panna added.

Criminal law expert and Editor of Dhaka Law Reports (DLR) Khurshid Alam Khan said the trial of the Bagerhat case was the rarest event in the history of Bangladesh.

“The prosecution must ensure that the trial has been held in a fair and faultless manner,” he said.

Assuming that everything was done properly, the disposal of the case is laudable, Khurshid added.

Ensnaring children in the dark web

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cybercrime unit of the Counter Terrorism and Transnational Crime (CITC) arrested three Bangladeshi men.

The arrestees are Borhan Uddin, 26, his cousin Abdullah Al Mahmud, 25, and Ovi Hossain, 25.

Speaking to The Daily Star, Ishtiaq Ahmed, assistant commissioner of the CITC forensic team unit, said they arrested the three from the capital’s Sabujbagh, Rampura and Pallabi areas during a special drive.

The arrestees then gave their confessional statements under section 164 before a Dhaka court on Sunday, he said.

Police also recovered around 3,316 photos and videos of 45 juvenile girls, sex toys and a “manual” about how to convince a girl to provide nude content, he said.

Of the victims, 3 are Bangladeshis and 42 others are from the US, the United Kingdom and Australia.

According to officials, a 15-year-old US girl first filed a complaint against Ovi on November 20 last year through the Facebook page of the CITC’s cybercrime unit.

Two months later, on February 2 of this year, another 14-year-old US girl filed a complaint on Facebook against Borhan.

In the complaint, the girl mentioned that Borhan had been using her as a victim of child pornography for the past five years.

The unit also received five other complaints from local and international law enforcement agencies, said officials.

In the confessional statement, Borhan told the court that he started using social media site Instagram using a fake female ID in 2015, through which he was connected to a secret group for watching pornographic photos and videos.

After noticing Borhan’s activities in

the group, the admin included him into another secret group called, which provided the manual with a 13-point task list about how to trick girls into providing nude content, court sources quoted Borhan as saying.

Borhan was then advised to open an account in the dark web using a separate browser at the cost of around 0.002 bitcoin -- a crypto currency. The present value of 1 bitcoin is around Tk 9.72 lakh.

Borhan’s task was to send private messages to different minor girls and if anyone responded, then to apply the 13-point task list to convince them to send small nude video clips and photos, Borhan told the court.

Once the victims sent videos and photos, he would upload them on secret Instagram groups and on the dark web for trade.

Borhan later included his cousin Mahmud one and half years ago.

If any victim sent content once or

twice and then refused to send more, the accused used to threaten them of releasing the photos or videos on different websites, court sources said.

Similarly, Ovi also used to instigate children and teenagers after connecting with them through different dating sites and social media profiles.

AC Ishtiaq Ahmed said that the ultimate goal of these syndicate members were to collect bitcoins through the dark web by selling pornography.

“We are now trying to get details of the arrestees’ associates by analysing their data and cellphones. We may be able to give a clear statement after we get the forensic reports of the arrestees’ cell phones,” he said.

Ishtiaq further suggested that guardian check what their children are doing on social media sites and remain alert regarding whether they are becoming victims of child pornography.

Jute workers

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He told The Daily Star, shortly before being arrested himself, that police attacked the jute workers without any provocation.

They beat the workers mercilessly and used tear gas to disperse them, he said.

“Police picked up five workers from their homes,” he added.

There were at least 12 women among those injured. Among them, Nazma, Shumi Roy, Shafali Bala, Suchitra Biswas were seriously hurt, he also said, adding that the injured were given primary treatment.

Several hundred workers and members of Sammilito Nagorik Parishad blocked the Khulna-Jashore highway in the Atra area, just opposite Eastern Jute Mills in Khulna around 11:00am. Around 11:20 policemen tried to chase them away, which resulted in the clash.

Workers threw bricks and branches at police from inside the gates of Eastern Jute Mills, where they had gone after the clash with police.

Police then entered the premises and arrested the workers.

While police said they arrested nine people, Munir Chowdhury Sohail, convener of Gano Sanghaty Andolon said they arrested 14 leaders and activists. They include Oliar Rahman, Jute Mills Protection Movement; Al Amin Sheikh, convener of Chhatra Federation, Khulna district unit; SA Abdur Rashid, Communist Party of Bangladesh, leader of Khulna unit, Janardan Dutta Nantu, Bangladesh Samajtantrik Dal; and Kudrat-e-Khuda.

Police arrested inside the residential quarter of Eastern Jute Mills, he said.

Deputy Commissioner (north) Mollah Zahangir Hossain of Khulna Metropolitan Police said the three injured policemen were given primary treatment.

The government yesterday started paying golden handshake benefits to workers of state-owned jute mills in Khulna region.

At 12:00pm, State Minister for Labour and Employment Begum Mannujan Sufian inaugurated the programme at the Officer’s Auditorium of Platinum Jubilee Jute Mills -- more than 10 km away from Eastern Jute Mills -- in Khalishpur area of Khulna city. Sufian is a lawmaker from Khulna-3 constituency, which has five government jute mills.

Yesterday, she handed over cheques and savings certificates to 45 retired and terminated workers of Platinum Jubilee Jute Mills Ltd. In total, 3,836 retired and terminated employees of Platinum will be given over Tk 216.28 crore and 3,674 workers will be given Tk 2.15 crore worth of three months’ savings.

Talukder Abdul Khaleque, Mayor of Khulna City Corporation was the special guest at the programme. Khulna Additional Divisional Commissioner (revenue) Subash Chandra Saha, Khulna Range DIG of police Dr Kh Mohid Uddin, Khulna Metropolitan Police Commissioner Md Masudur Rahman Bhuiyan, Rab-6 Director Lt Col Raushanul Firoz, Superintendent of Police in Khulna SM Shafullah were present among others at the programme.

Khulna Deputy Commissioner Mohammad Helal Hossain presided over the function.

Why should Kajol

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Security Act.

The court also ordered the investigation officer of the case to appear along with the case docket before it on November 12.

The bench of Justice M Enayetur Rahim and Justice Md Mostafizur Rahman came up with the rule and order following a petition filed by Kajol seeking bail in the case.

Lawyers Jyotirmoy Barua, Fuad Hasan and Ripon Kumar Barua appeared for the photojournalist while Deputy Attorney General Sarwar Hossain Bappi represented the state during the hearing of the bail petition.

Speaking to The Daily Star, Ripon said Kajol was accused in three cases and he was yet to get bail in any of those.

Kajol in the bail petition said he should be granted bail because of his illness and the DSA section, under which he was implicated, did not apply to him as he did not defame anybody, the lawyer added.

According to the case statement, Kajol was engaged in extortion by obtaining information illegally and publishing false, intimidating and defamatory information via Facebook and Messenger.

On August 24, judge Emrul Kayes of a Dhaka court refused to grant bail to the photojournalist in the case filed under the Digital Security Act (DSA).

Earlier, Dhaka Metropolitan Magistrate Dhiman Chandra Mondol on June 24 had rejected his bail petition in the case.

Two other cases were filed against Kajol under the DSA on March 10 and 11 with Hazaribagh and Kamrangirchar police stations respectively.

Kajol, now in Dhaka jail, went missing on the evening of March 10, after leaving his office in Dhaka’s Hatirpool. Border Guard Bangladesh found him in Benapole of Jashore on May 3.

He was then arrested, initially on charges of trespassing, but was granted bail by a Jashore court after being produced before it.

Later, Kajol was shown held under section 54 of the Code of Criminal Procedure (CrPC) after police informed the court that he was accused in three more cases filed with different police stations in the capital.

The court then sent the photojournalist to Jashore jail.

Aff, Seoul

Torture, humiliation and coerced confessions are rampant in North Korea’s pretrial detention system which treats people as worth “less than an animal”, a rights group said yesterday in a report on the country’s opaque legal processes.

US-based Human Rights Watch

drew on interviews with dozens of former North Korean detainees and officials to highlight what it called inhuman conditions at detention facilities that often amount to torture.

Nuclear-armed North Korea, accused of widespread rights abuses by the United Nations and other critics, is a “closed” country and little is known

about its criminal justice system.

Mistreatment of detainees -- beating with a stick or kicking -- was “especially harsh” in the early stages of pretrial detention, interviewees said.

“The regulations say there shouldn’t be any beatings, but we need confessions during the investigation and early stages of the preliminary

examination,” a former police officer said.

“So you have to hit them in order to get the confession.”

Former detainees said they were forced to sit still on the floor, kneeling or with their legs crossed, for as long as 16 hours a day, with even a flicker of movement leading to punishment.