

BANGLADESH
UPDATE



1,094
New cases in 24hrs



3,97,507
Total cases



5,780
Deaths



3,13,563
Recoveries

GLOBAL
UPDATE



1,151,811
Deaths



42,686,055
Total cases

European buildings turn blue for UN's 75th anniversary

AFP, Geneva

More than 150 monuments and buildings across Europe were set to be lit up blue yesterday to mark the 75th anniversary of the United Nations.

The UN's Palais des Nations headquarters in Geneva, the Grand Place in Brussels and Dublin Castle were among the locations set to turn the shade of blue used on the UN flag.

The United Nations officially came into existence on October 24, 1945, when the UN Charter, agreed four months earlier, came into force.

Starting out with 51 original members, there are now 193, with South Sudan the latest to join in 2011.

"The United Nations has spanned the decades helping millions of people to escape the yoke of poverty, gain access to education and health, have their fundamental rights respected, and enjoy better livelihoods," it said in a statement.

"It also helped the world avoid a third world conflict -- the main reason it was created -- and remain relatively peaceful."

Locations turning blue included

the city halls in Barcelona, Belfast and Copenhagen; cathedrals in Stockholm and Reykjavik; the Jet d'Eau fountain in Geneva; the bridges of Turin; the Peace Palace in The Hague, and the Presidential Palace in Bratislava.

The Foreign Office in London, the UNESCO headquarters in Paris, Rua Augusta Arch in Lisbon, the Olympic Museum in Lausanne, Mostar Bridge in Bosnia and Herzegovina, the Zizkov Television Tower in Prague and Ljubljana's Triple Bridge were also to be lit.

In a speech in New York marking the anniversary, UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres said international solidarity was urgently needed in unprecedented times as the coronavirus pandemic sweeps the globe.

"On United Nations Day, I reinforce my appeal for a global ceasefire so we can devote all our energies to fighting Covid-19," Guterres said.

"Let us act together now to defeat the pandemic, prevent climate catastrophe, uphold the equality of women and men and pave the way for a safer, healthier, more just and sustainable world."

Dhaka scrambles

FROM PAGE 1

vaccine procurement. The ERD sent a letter to the Embassy of Japan in Dhaka in this regard.

Officials said each person is likely to need two shots which might cost \$10-12 per person.

The government also has plans to seek \$300 million-\$400 million from the Asian Development Bank and \$200 million from the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB).

A top finance ministry official said the finance minister had talked with AIIB President Jin Liqun over the phone about the loan in the last week of September.

The official said the government is asking for low-interest soft loans from the development partners.

"We have to ensure stimulus packages and have other priorities to keep the economy afloat," the official

said.

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, said that her government announced \$13.25 billion stimulus packages to help people cope with the losses caused by the shutdown of the economy. The packages are equivalent to 4.03 percent of the total GDP.

At his meeting with the WB South Asia vice president, the finance minister requested for the immediate release of \$250 million from the \$500 million Covid-19 Recovery and Response project.

Akbarnama

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report of 25-year-old Shahjalal University of Science and Technology student Md Taifur Rahman Pratik, whose hanging body was recovered from his house in the Kajalshah area on January 14 last year.

Following Rayhan's death earlier this month, Pratik's sister Shanta Tawhida posted on Facebook on October 16, claiming that Pratik was murdered outside and SI Akbar then staged it as suicide.

She stated in her post that the SI in the investigation report did not mention that CCTV footage from the building was missing for two days -- the day of the incident and the day before -- and altered several things in the report to declare it a suicide.

CYCLE OF CORRUPTION
Following Akbar's suspension after Rayhan's custodial death, a new sub-inspector Sahin Miah was assigned as the in-charge of the outpost on October 14.

After a previously viral video of the new SI gambling in a secret gamblers' den surfaced after his posting, Sylhet Metropolitan Police withdrew him.

The next in-charge of the outpost was SI Hasan Uddin, previously second-in-command at Bandarabazar outpost.

However, he too was suspended on Wednesday, according to an SMP

press release, after his involvement in helping Akbar abscond was found.

In connection with Rayhan's death, SMP has now suspended five -- including SI Akbar -- and withdrawn from service another three, said BM Ashraf Ullah Taher, additional deputy commissioner (media) of Sylhet Metropolitan Police.

Akbar has been on the run since October 12 and the Police Bureau of Investigation, now in charge of the investigation, has alerted all immigration posts not to let him out of the country.

While the case filed by Rayhan's wife on October 12 accused several unnamed people -- on Tuesday, one of the suspended constables, Titu Chandra Das, was arrested and taken into remand by PBI in this connection.

The same day, Police Headquarters formed a separate three-member probe body to find those who helped Akbar abscond, said Soheli Rana, assistant inspector general of police headquarters.

Abdul Karim Kim, coordinator of Sankhubbdo Nagorik Andolon in Sylhet, said, "No police outposts in the SMP area serve the people, but rather collect money illegally."

"The policemen paid good money as bribes to get posted there and they try hard to recover it. The system that promotes such corruption must be stopped."

Brac, WB join hands

FROM PAGE 1

"The losses due to road accidents are comparable to that of life threatening diseases. While the high casualty numbers are unacceptable, they are preventable," said Chen.

Road Transport and Bridges Minister Obaidul Quader, who attended the event, reflected on the challenges faced by the government on improving road safety.

"No matter how many roads we build, how much infrastructure we construct, we don't feel satisfaction if there is no discipline in the roads, if people are not safe on the streets. All our achievements will go in vain," he said.

"We are losing lives on the roads every day. I start every morning with news of road accidents, and when I see them, I feel guilty, and I burn in an invisible fire," said the minister.

He said the government was yet to fully implement the Road Safety Act because of certain realities.

Giving a nod to Brac's initiative to introduce more female drivers in the transport sector, Quader said, "We want more female drivers, because they are more inclined to follow rules and be more disciplined on the streets."

He added that the female drivers graduating from Brac would be

incorporated in the government vehicle pool.

Asif Saleh, executive director of Brac Bangladesh, said, "The road safety situation is not caused by one problem: it is not about the wage system, not just about the lack of awareness, and lack of drivers' capacity -- all of them combined are causing the road safety epidemic."

In Bangladesh, road crashes are the fourth leading cause of death of children aged between 5 and 14, and 67 percent of the victims are within the age group of 15-49, speakers said at the programme.

Ahmed Najmul Hussain, director of the administration and road safety programme at Brac, said their work would include a focus on rural road safety committees.

At the event, a road safety campaign was launched targeting the 48 kilometre Jashore-Jhenaidah corridor, where the WB is currently implementing an infrastructure upgrade from two-lanes to a safer four-lane highway.

"I believe that undertaking more such community-driven awareness initiatives for the other highways of the country will substantially help reduce the number of road crashes," Najmul said.



A namaz-e-janaza being held for Barrister Rafique-Ul Huq on the Supreme Court Bar Association (SCBA) premises yesterday. The noted jurist was laid to rest at the Banani graveyard.

PHOTO: STAR

Moving backwards in terms of good governance

FROM PAGE 1

around for quite some time about whether the JP is a part of the government or an opposition party.

GM Quader: It is true that there are some confusions among the people. We joined the AL-led grand alliance before the election in 2018. No other political party save JP could secure a significant number of seats in the parliament. For that, the necessity of an opposition party became urgent in parliament and that's why we have decided to act as the opposition party.

DS: Has that decision improved the JP's image?

GM Quader: It varies from person to person. Some realities cannot be overlooked. We could act as a party in government. In that case, it would be somewhat of a one-party parliament, where everybody would speak similarly with no one opposing the decisions of the treasury bench. I think our decision is helping the country.

DS: But many think the JP cannot or does not act like an opposition party.

GM Quader: What is the basis of the assessment that we have failed?

DS: People do not see JP's strong voice against many public interest issues like the price hike of daily essentials and a lack of good governance in the country.

GM Quader: We have raised our voice regarding all these issues. We have talked about the election, corruption, extra-judicial killings and other issues in parliament, and these are all documented and recorded.

DS: How do you evaluate the country's prevailing political, social, and law and order situation?

GM Quader: We are looking at those issues like the people are looking at it. We don't take these issues positively. We have raised our voice against all these nuisances -- both inside and outside parliament.

DS: What is the state of governance in Bangladesh?

GM Quader: We have talked about

different problems. We have had a parliamentary democracy since 1991 to make the government accountable to the parliament. But the reality is different. Good governance cannot be established without ensuring accountability, the absence of which also began in 1991. No government since then has let the parliament function properly. All the governments after that year have failed in establishing good governance. We are moving backwards as far as good governance is concerned.

DS: One thing that has been established in political circles is that corruption took an institutional shape during the regime of HM Ershad. Later, the situation worsened during the subsequent BNP and AL rules. What is your take in this regard?

GM Quader: We have been saying for a long time that the level of corruption during Ershad's regime was far less than it is at present.

DS: It is alleged that now the trend of votes being cast the night before the election day has taken over. How do you look at it?

GM Quader: Everybody likes a good deed and dislikes a misdeed. I think a fair electoral process is mandatory for a democratic country like ours. We have restored parliamentary democracy. But it is dysfunctional. How much democracy prevails in a country can be measured by observing how fair the elections are. When elections become the single standard for measuring democracy, the situation is called "Democracy for one day". We could not even maintain that system. All governments failed in this regard.

DS: Once the JP had a lot organisational strength at the national level. Later, it was noticed that the party had a strong hold in the country's northern region. Is the party turning into a regional political party from a national one?

GM Quader: The Jatiya Party has its own image and strength. It was never a regional party. The people of northern region consider the JP as their own

party. They think they are deprived of their rights and other facilities as they do not have the kind of leadership like that of HM Ershad. That is why they loved Ershad. But the JP works for the betterment of the entire country. We have organisational strength and lawmakers everywhere in our country.

DS: What type of electoral system you expect in the future?

GM Quader: I dream of an electoral system where people really get the chance to exercise their voting rights and freely choose their leadership.

DS: Do you think a one-party presidential rule is better than parliamentary democracy?

GM Quader: Parliamentary democracy did not bring any good for our country. There is no system of accountability in the parliament. Article 70 of the constitution has scrapped the process of accountability. That is why we made some proposals for reform. We asked for a system where all the elected parliament members will be general members except those in the cabinet. The cabinet members, including the prime minister, will be accountable to the general members, who will raise questions against any misdeeds.

According to Article 70, a person elected a member of parliament (MP) in a national election in which he or she was nominated as a candidate by a political party shall vacate his/her seat if s/he a) resigns from that party or b) votes in parliament against that party.

The provision has created the path for the Prime Minister's decision to make the ultimate decision. When the process of accountability goes missing, parliamentary democracy starts malfunctioning. So, our demand is to revoke that article to allow all the parliament members to speak freely.

DS: If article 70 is abolished, will it not create an opportunity for underhand dealings like buying out a lawmaker's vote?

GM Quader: That is why we proposed to amend the provision.

Trump no fan of 'Borat' creator Sacha Baron Cohen

AFP, Aboard Air Force One

Donald Trump said Friday he has not been a fan of Sacha Baron Cohen -- even before a clip from the British comedian's new Borat movie forced the US president's lawyer Rudy Giuliani into an awkward explanation.

Asked about the clip -- which shows Giuliani in a faked "interview" with an attractive and flirtatious young woman -- while speaking to journalists aboard Air Force One, Trump said: "I don't know what happened."

"But years ago, you know, he tried to scam me. And I was the only one who said no way. That's a phony guy. And I don't find him funny."

Trump said the incident happened about 15 years ago.

"To me, he was a creep," Trump said.

The president did not provide further details about that encounter, but in a 2003 interview, Baron Cohen -- playing the wannabe gangster Ali G -- pitched a business venture to Trump: special gloves for eating ice cream.

Before the new Borat film's release, word of Baron Cohen's latest outrageous ambushes on unsuspecting participants had spread like wildfire.

On Wednesday, Giuliani issued an angry denial over the fake interview.

In the film, the encounter appears to leave the 76-year-old former New York mayor in a compromising situation, caught with his hands down his pants in the bedroom.

Giuliani said the scene was "a complete fabrication."

"I was tucking in my shirt after taking off the recording equipment. At no time before, during, or after the interview was I ever inappropriate," he tweeted.

"If Sacha Baron Cohen implies otherwise, he is a stone-cold liar."

The comedian continued to poke fun at Giuliani.

In a video posted on social media, Borat himself leapt to his defense and accused the "fake news media" -- a term often used by Trump and his supporters -- of turning an "innocent" encounter into "something disgusting."

Intellectually-

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Police were trying to arrest the accused, and the victim was sent to hospital for medical tests, said Anwarul Islam, officer-in-charge of Chatkhill Police Station.

Meanwhile, a suspended Jubo League leader, who was arrested on October 21 for raping the wife of an expatriate and capturing it on video in Chatkhill upazila, was sued in another rape case.

The woman filed the case against Mujibur Rahman Sharif, 32, president of Noakhola union unit Jubo league, with Chatkhill Police Station on Friday night.

According to the case statement, Sharif broke into the woman's room at her father's house in Noakhola union on the night of December 15, 2018 and raped her at gunpoint when her husband was in Dhaka for work. Sharif also confined the victim's younger brother in another room.

He later threatened to kill the woman if she disclosed this incident to anyone, said the case statement.

The victim last night lodged a complaint with the police station against Sharif who was arrested in a rape case on October 21.

After investigation, police found the allegation to be true. Then, the complaint was recorded as case, said Anwarul Islam, OC of Chatkhill Police Station.

On October 21, police arrested Sharif for allegedly raping the wife of an expatriate at gunpoint and capturing it on video in the same union.

On October 22, Sharif was placed on four-day remand by a court in the case. Later, Jubo League suspended him from the party.

Rohingya teen

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Anti-personnel mines were banned under a global treaty in 1997.

Myanmar troops have been accused of waging an ethnic cleansing campaign against the country's Rohingya Muslim minority, with some 740,000 fleeing to Bangladesh since August 2017.

At the height of the mass exodus when tens of thousands of Rohingyas poured into Bangladesh every day, several were killed or seriously hurt in suspected landmine explosions along the border.