

**BANGLADESH
UPDATE**



1,436
New cases in 24hrs



4,00,251
Total cases



5,818
Deaths



3,016,600
Recoveries

**GLOBAL
UPDATE**



1,161,109
Deaths



43,503,823
Total cases

Cable repairs can cause slow

FROM PAGE 1
outages of between 100 gigabytes per second (gbps) and 150gbps due to the equipment changes being done by Bharti Airtel Limited at their Seabone cable at the Singapore end.

Junayed, who is also the vice-president of Internet Service Providers Association of Bangladesh (ISPAB), said currently Bangladesh has 1,700gbps bandwidth.

"Therefore, outages of 100 to 150gbps bandwidth would not have much effect on internet usage," Junayed, also managing director, Level 3 Carrier Ltd (IIG), added.

The latency and congestion level in internet usage may be at a minimum level, he said.

The slowdown in internet speed was likely to have started from yesterday, but Airtel has informed its Bangladesh counterpart that they are likely to start the upgradation work from the wee hours of today.

An IT expert, Junayed said major IIG operators have already taken some alternative arrangements to tackle the situation.

"We hope internet users will not face much problem from October 28 to November 1," he also said.

Md Emdadul Hoque, secretary-general of ISPAB, told The Daily Star

that reduced speeds may be experienced and that too during peak hours.

He also said there would not be much of an effect.

"Because of the maintenance, there will be some interruption and high latency. But the internet will be there," he told The Daily Star.

There are 39 IIGs in Bangladesh. Of them, 25 to 30 are operational. Only the top three would be affected by the maintenance work, Emdadul said.

IIGs import bandwidth from abroad and sell them among ISPs. There are 2,100 licensed ISPs across the country.

The South East Asia-Middle East-Western Europe 4 (SEA-ME-WE 4) is an approximately 18,800 km submarine cable connecting Singapore, Malaysia, Thailand, Bangladesh, India, Sri Lanka, Pakistan, the United Arab Emirates, Saudi Arabia, Egypt, Italy, Tunisia, Algeria and France.

"The SEA-ME-WE 4 is up. There is no maintenance over it. Only those IIGs that are using the SEA-ME-WE 4 from Cox's Bazar to Chennai and then are connected to the I2I to reach Singapore would be affected," said an industry insider.

The total number of internet subscribers rose 8.3 percent to an all-time high of 10.82 crore at the end of August, compared to February's 9.99 crore.

Rangpur cop suspended

FROM PAGE 1
of Detective Branch (DB) of police.

Aleya Begum, 35, a resident of Moynakuthi Kachutari area in the city, was also arrested for helping the alleged rapists.

The victim's family members said the police official identified himself as Raju, and was in a relationship with the victim.

Around noon on Sunday, Raihanul took the girl to Aleya's house and raped her. Then, two others also raped the girl, police said, quoting the victim's family members.

The victim dialled 999 in the evening seeking help and around 8:30pm, police rushed to the spot and rescued the girl, said the victim's mother.

The victim's father filed a case with Haragachh Police Station under Rangpur Metropolitan Police later that night.

Police are interrogating Raihanul, and legal action will be taken if he is found to be involved in the incident, said Abu Maruf, deputy commissioner of Rangpur Metropolitan Police.

In Noakhali, police yesterday arrested a man on charges of raping a 19-year-old woman in Hatiya upazila.

The arrestee is Helal Uddin, 40, of Kazirtek village.

Police said the woman came out of her room to go to the toilet around 1:00am on Sunday. Helal and another

accused Jamshed, 32, then forcibly took her to the bank of Meghna river, where Helal raped her with the help of Jamshed.

On Sunday night, the woman lodged a case against the two with Hatiya Police Station.

Police held Helal, who was later sent to jail. Police are looking for Jamshed, said Abdul Khayer, OC of the station.

In Habiganj, eight men, including a union parishad chairman, were sued for gang rape on October 18 by the woman's husband.

On Sunday, a court directed Nabiganj Police Station to investigate the incident and submit a report within three days, said Azizur Rahman, OC of the station.

The accused are Muhibur Rahman Harun, chairman of Aushkandi Union Parishad of Nabiganj; member of the same UP Dulal Ahmed, 40; Sebul Miah, 28; Jibu Miah, 27, and Shahidul Miah, 25. Three other unnamed perpetrators were also accused in the case.

Police said the victim was abducted by the accused from Parkul village of the same union while she was returning home from Sherpur Bazar on October 8. She was confined to a place and gang-raped for three days.

[Our correspondents in Dinajpur, Noakhali and Moulvibazar contributed to this report]

Durga Puja ends

FROM PAGE 1
remained closed after the evening rituals (Sandhyarati) as per the decision of Bangladesh Puja Uddhapan Parishad and Mahanagar Sarbajanin Puja Committee.

Visitors were not allowed to enter temples or puja mandaps from the beginning of Sandhyarati.

During the puja, special prayers were offered seeking relief from the coronavirus pandemic.

HC's monitoring order ignored

FROM PAGE 1
Contacted, SC Spokesman Mohammad Saifur Rahman said he will have to inquire of the registrar general on the issue of monitoring cell formation.

He could not give any details about the issue.

The rise in reported incidents of sexual violence against women and children points to the failure of the existing law and justice system in prosecuting offenders and ensuring justice for the victims. And the monitoring cell could have played a role here, said legal experts.

THE DIRECTIVE

The HC directive came in the full text of a verdict delivered by the HC bench of Justice M Enayetur Rahim and Justice JBM Hassan. The full text was released on May 12, 2017.

On December 5, 2016, the bench delivered a short verdict after hearing a suo motu (voluntary) rule.

The rule was issued early during the hearing of a bail petition filed by Millad Hossain, an accused in a murder case filed under the Women and Children Repression Prevention Act.

According to section 20 of the act, the Women and Children Repression Prevention Tribunal must finish the trials of cases filed under this law within 180 days of charge framing.

Section 31 (ka) of the law states if the trial of a case is not finished on time, the tribunal judge, public prosecutor and police officer concerned have to submit separate reports to the SC and the government, mentioning causes for the delay, and then the authorities concerned should take necessary steps.

The HC judges said in the full verdict, "...the Registrar General of the Supreme Court of Bangladesh is directed to constitute a Monitoring Cell headed by him or the Registrar of the High Court Division along with the Secretary or his representative not below the rank of Additional Secretary of the Ministry

of Home Affairs and Law and Justice Division, Ministry of Law, Justice and Parliamentary Affairs.

"The Monitoring Cell shall monitor this aspect and shall submit report from time to time to the concerned authorities of the responsible persons for taking appropriate action in accordance with section 31Ka (3) of the Act, 2000 with a copy thereof to the Monitoring Committee for the Subordinate Judiciary of the Supreme Court."

WHAT HAPPENED TO MILLAD HOSSAIN'S CASE?

The HC refused to grant bail to Millad Hossain as there was a specific allegation against him and asked the trial court to finish his trial in one year in line with the full text of the verdict.

The law secretary and SC registrar general on December 5, 2016 submitted two reports to the HC, saying none of the lower court judges, public prosecutors and police officials concerned complied with the provision of the act on disposing of cases.

The law secretary and SC registrar general submitted the reports after the HC asked them to explain in 30 days whether there was any exercise of the section and whether the SC and law ministry had taken any steps in this regard.

Millad Hossain's lawyer Kumar Debul Dey told The Daily Star that the case against his client was filed with Rangunia Police Station in Chittagong on February 19, 2015 on charge of killing his wife.

The case was sent to the Women and Children Repression Prevention Tribunal-2 of Chittagong for trial. The tribunal framed charges in the case on March 21, 2015, but could not finish the trial on time.

Advocate Kumar said he will bring before the HC the issue of non-implementation of its order on forming the monitoring cell.



Heaps of iron rod occupy a pavement near the capital's Chankarpool intersection. The rods, being used for the construction of a high-rise, have been kept there for more than a month, putting pedestrians at risk of injuries. The photo was taken yesterday.

PHOTO: ANISUR RAHMAN

Vaccine for all, free of cost

FROM PAGE 1

A special allocation of Tk 12,000 crore was made in this year's budget for procuring medical supplies for emergency response to Covid-19, the official mentioned.

Once procured, the vaccines will be administered to people as it's done under the existing vaccination programmes to prevent diseases like measles, polio and diphtheria, the official added.

Finance ministry officials said a rough estimate shows that Bangladesh will require \$1.65 billion to \$2 billion to bring its population of 165 million under the Covid-19 vaccination coverage. Each person is likely to need two shots which may cost \$10-12.

They further said the government is asking for low-interest soft loans from the development partners.

Contacted, Md Abdul Mannan, secretary at the Health Services Division of the health ministry, said, "The vaccines should be given to all free of cost."

He, however, said those would be given as per the government's policy guidelines which are yet to be finalised.

At a virtual meeting with the

WB vice president for the South Asia region on Thursday, Finance Minister AHM Mustafa Kamal urged the global lender to take necessary steps to expedite the disbursement of assistance on the basis of population.

"Bangladesh ranks third among the International Development Association (IDA) countries in terms of population," the minister noted.

The coronavirus pandemic is taking a heavy toll on human lives and businesses across the globe. Rapid access to vaccine doses can bring outbreaks under control and also help avert economic shocks that may send more people back into poverty.

The World Health Organization has said that a vaccine against the novel coronavirus will be ready for registration by the end of this year or early next year at the earliest.

Vaccines typically require years of research and testing before reaching clinics, but scientists are racing to produce a safe and effective coronavirus vaccine by next year.

The first vaccine safety trial for humans began in March and six vaccine candidates have so far been approved for limited use. At least 12

more have reached the final stages of testing as of October 24, according to the New York Times Coronavirus Vaccine Tracker.

Though the government has not made a deal with any country to get a Covid-19 vaccine at the early stage, health ministry officials insist that they are in talks with the makers of five front-running vaccine candidates.

On September 26, Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina 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.

Bangladesh also could get 20 percent of the vaccines it needs from the WHO and the Global Alliance for Vaccines and Immunisation under the COVAX Facility, a mechanism designed to guarantee rapid, fair and equitable access to Covid-19 vaccines worldwide.

COVAX currently covers nine vaccine candidates, and its aim is to secure supply and delivery of two billion shots by the end of 2021 to over 170 countries that have signed up for vaccines.

SUV with MP sticker has no papers!

FROM PAGE 1

vehicle during the incident.

"An MP sticker was pasted on the vehicle and Haji Salim's protocol officer had been using it," Ashfaq Rajib Hasan, officer-in-charge (investigation) of Dhanmondi Police Station, said.

However, officials at Bangladesh Road Transport Authority (BRTA) said a footwear company owns the vehicle and its fitness has not been checked by the authorities in 10 years.

Until this year, it was mandatory to have the fitness of a private vehicle checked by the BRTA every year and receive a fitness clearance. Using a vehicle without fitness clearance is an offence under section 25 of the Road Transport Act.

Every vehicle owner has to pay road tax and advance income tax while renewing the fitness clearance. But BRTA sources said there was no updated tax token for the vehicle, which is an offence under section 26 of the act.

A BRTA official said the owner was supposed to pay Tk 7,500 and an additional 15 percent VAT in road tax each year and Tk 75,000 as advance

income tax every year.

"So, the owner dodged more than Tk 5 lakh as he or she had not renewed the papers since 2010," the official said, wishing not to be named.

Besides, the BRTA in 2012 introduced retro-reflective registration number plates, popularly known as digital number plates, with radio frequency identification (RFID) tags that are mandatory for all vehicles.

But the vehicle in question does not have any of those.

"Although the absence of retro-reflective number plates and a RFID tag is not a distinct offence under the law, we often find that vehicles without such number plates have several other faults. Because, without the number plates, a vehicle can't be fully compliant," a BRTA executive magistrate told this correspondent.

According to BRTA, the Land Rover was registered in 2004 and the name of a footwear company was mentioned as its owner.

Contacted, an official of the footwear company said they sold the vehicle in

2006.

"We have all necessary documents in this regard. But, I don't know why BRTA documents still show our company as the owner of the vehicle. This is not our vehicle anymore," he told The Daily Star last night.

According to the Motor Vehicle Ordinance-1983, which had been in force until November last year, the seller of a vehicle must inform the BRTA in written form about the matter within 15 days of selling the vehicle. The new owner must do the same within a month.

"It's likely that they [buyer and seller] had not informed the BRTA about the development. The name of the owner would have been changed if they did," he added.

This correspondent tried to contact Haji Salim on his two mobile phone numbers mentioned on the Jaitiya Sangsard secretariat website. One of the phones appeared to be switched off while the other was not answered. There was no reply to the text messages sent to this number.

Haji Salim's son Erfan arrested

FROM PAGE 1

Erfan and the others were later shown arrested in the case.

Lt Wasif Ahmed Khan, 26, filed the case with Dhanmondi Police Station against Erfan and four others, Officer-in-Charge Ikram Ali Miah of the police station told The Daily Star.

Wasif also brought attempt-to-murder charges against the accused, including AB Siddique Dipu, 45, protocol officer of Madina Group; Zahidul, Erfan's bodyguard; and Md Mizanur Rahman, 30, driver of Erfan's vehicle.

Dipu was absconding till last night. Mizanur was placed on a one-day remand yesterday.

Rab officials said they recovered two unlicensed firearms -- a pistol and a pellet gun -- raiding the fourth and fifth floors of Erfan's nine-storey building -- Chan Sarder Dada Bari -- on Debidasbhat Lane in Chawkbazar yesterday.

They said the walkie-talkies they seized are usually used by members of different government agencies. Besides, the VPS, repeater and router, seized during the raid, can be used to communicate in a radius of 10km.

Talking to reporters, Rab officials said they suspected that using the firearms and security equipment, Erfan's men used to pick up the councillor's opponents after introducing themselves as law enforcers.

Rab also seized 12 cans of beer and seven bottles of foreign liquor from Erfan's room. Besides, they found

400 pieces of yaba from Zahidul's possession, said Rab officials.

Visiting the luxurious house, The Daily Star correspondents found what appeared to be a control room fitted with some equipment.

Rab officials said some of the devices were used for hiding location information.

In another raid yesterday, Rab found a torture cell at a room on the top floor of 16-storey Madina Ashik Tower, which is a few yards away from Erfan's home, said Rab's Lt Col Ashique Billah.

Rab's Executive Magistrate Sarwoer Alam said they found bones, handcuffs, hockey sticks, knives, rope, yaba-taking materials and different types of security equipment there.

The raid was underway when this report was filed late last night.

According to the statement of the case filed by the navy official, a vehicle, with number plate Dhaka Metro-Gha 11-5736, rear-ended his motorcycle in Dhanmondi area when he and his wife were returning to their Dhaka Cantonment home from Nilkhet around 7:45pm on Sunday.

A man came out of the SUV and verbally abused them and left the spot. When the car stopped at a nearby signal, Lt Wasif knocked on the car's window and introduced himself. After that, all passengers got off the vehicle and started hurling abuse and assaulting Lt Wasif.

"We will see your navy-army, we will see your lieutenant-captain ... We will kill you now," Lt Wasif quoted

the assaulters as saying, adding that they punched and kicked him indiscriminately.

When his wife came to save him, they also assaulted her, the case statement said. They then left the scene abandoning the car.

The complainant said he could identify DSCC councillor Erfan and Dipu as a protocol officer of Madina Group owned by Haji Salim from his ID card.

On-duty police personnel and locals rescued Lt Wasif and detained the driver and seized the car.

Many pedestrians got the incident on video which later went viral. In the video, the injured navy officer is seen describing the incident to locals -- how he was beaten up. "I was beaten up in front of everyone indiscriminately even after I introduced myself repeatedly saying I am Lt Wasif. Thank God, I know some basics for my safety, I could survive ... Otherwise they would have killed me today. They assaulted my wife too," the officer said, adding that one of his teeth was broken.

Following the incident, Lt Wasif first lodged a GD with Dhanmondi Police Station on Sunday night.

Yesterday, a case was filed against five people, including Erfan and Dipu.

After primary treatment at a private hospital, Lt Wasif was sent to Dhaka Combined Military Hospital.

Police said it was lawmaker Haji Salim's vehicle with an MP sticker. Mainly the protocol officer uses the

RIFAT MURDER CASE

Children's court to deliver verdict today

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Patuakhali

A Barguna court is set to deliver the verdict today on 14 juvenile accused in the much-talked-about Rifat Sharif murder case.

Judge Hafizur Rahman of Barguna Children's Court on October 14 fixed the date to pronounce the verdict after hearing arguments from both the prosecution and defence lawyers.

Among the 14 accused eight are now on bail and the rest in the children's ward of Barguna jail.

Mostafizur Rahman Babul, public prosecutor of Barguna Women and Children's Court, said, "We have produced necessary evidence before the court against the juvenile accused. We hope we will get proper justice."

According to court sources, a total of 74 witnesses testified against the 14 accused, aged between 14 and 17.

Rifat was hacked in broad daylight in front of Barguna Government College on June 26 last year. He died of his wounds at Barishal Sher-e-Bangla Medical College Hospital on the same day.

On September 1 last year, police pressed charges against 24 people, both adults and juveniles, in the murder case. Police had submitted the charge sheet to the court in two parts -- one against 10 adults and the other against the 14 juveniles.

The Barguna District and Sessions Judge's Court on January 8 this year had framed charges against the 14 juvenile accused. The trial of the accused began at Barguna Children's Court on January 13.

On September 30, the District and Sessions Judge's Court delivered the verdict on the 10 adult accused. The court handed down death sentences to six, including Rifat's wife Ayesha Siddika Minni, and acquitted the four others.

All the six death row convicts are now behind bars.

The main accused in the case, Nayan Bond, was killed in a "gunfight" with police on July 2 last year.

Trump, Biden

FROM PAGE 1

Biden accused the president of surrendering to the pandemic that has killed about 225,000 people in the United States.

With 6 days to go before Election Day, more than 59.1 million Americans have already voted in person or by mail, a pace of early voting that could lead to the highest turnout rate in more than a century, according to data from the US Elections Project at the University of Florida. Some 137 million votes were cast in total in 2016.

On Monday, Trump were scheduled to head to Pennsylvania, a critical swing state being heavily courted with frequent visits by both candidates, and were to speak at rallies in Allentown, Lititz and Martinsburg. He is set for multiple trips to Michigan, Pennsylvania and Wisconsin this week, as well as visits to Nebraska, Arizona and Nevada.

Biden was expected to remain in his home state of Delaware. He is scheduled to travel to Georgia today, with stops in Atlanta and Warm Springs, a town of about 400 people where Democratic President Franklin D. Roosevelt, who took office during the Great Depression and rolled out his New Deal recovery program, died in 1945.

That push in the Southern state, which went for Trump in 2016 by about 5 percentage points and has not backed a Democratic presidential candidate since 1992, shows Biden's effort to expand his party's reach as polls show a competitive race in the state.

vehicle. Haji Salim was not in the car during the incident. His son and bodyguards were in there.

Sajjadur Rahman, deputy commissioner (Ramna division) of Dhaka Metropolitan Police, said they were scrutinising CCTV footage taken from the area to know what actually happened and would take action accordingly.

Meanwhile, Home Minister Asaduzzaman Khan yesterday said none of those involved in the incident would be spared.

"If anyone commits a crime, they will be punished. No matter who they are or whether they are public representatives, everyone has to face the law," the minister told journalists at his Dhanmondi home.

The Daily Star could not contact anyone from Erfan's family for comments.

Sohel Hawlader, assistant personal secretary to Haji Salim, who usually lives in Dhanmondi, said the lawmaker was ill and that his elder son Solaiman Salim would not talk to the media.

An employee at Madina Developers at Madina Ashik Tower said Erfan studied in England and Canada and came back to Bangladesh around three years ago. He became the ward councillor in February this year.

He also said Erfan had a private room on the roof of the building and that he used to play badminton on the roof. He did not agree to say anything further.