

**BANGLADESH
UPDATE**



1,492
New cases in 24hrs



403,079
Total cases



5,861
Deaths



319,733
Recoveries

**GLOBAL
UPDATE**



1,174,341
Deaths



44,412,918
Total cases

Always be ready to protect constitution, sovereignty

PM asks the army

UNB, Dhaka

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina yesterday asked the Bangladesh Army to be always ready to face any threat from home and abroad to protect the constitution and sovereignty of the motherland.

"For protecting the sacred constitution and sovereignty of the motherland, you have to be ever ready to face any threat from inside and outside keeping the unity intact," she said.

The PM was addressing a programme on the occasion of raising of flags of Bangladesh Army's eight units and organisations.

She joined the event, which took place at Sheikh Hasina Cantonment in Lebukhali of Patuakhali, virtually from the Gono Bhaban.

Hasina said Bangladesh Army is the symbol of confidence and trust and it has to step forward through gaining the trust of the people.

She said the first need for army personnel, as members of the Army, is professionalism and training.

"To attain this desired standard of professionalism, you all have to be skilled professionally, and also have to maintain honest and benignant life imbued with religious and social values."

The premier hoped that army members would sincerely discharge their responsibilities maintaining its key driving forces, including confidence in higher leadership, mutual trust, compassion, brotherhood, dutifulness, responsibility and above all, maintaining discipline.

Hasina said the government wanted that members of the armed forces would perform their duties towards the country and its people with responsibility, dutifulness and affection to the motherland.

About the country's foreign policy, introduced by Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, "Friendship to all,



malice to none", the PM said Bangladesh does not want war with anyone, rather it wants friendship with all.

"With these friendly relations, we want to develop Bangladesh socioeconomically."

However, she firmly said the government

wants to get the preparations ready for any attack on the country at any time.

"We want to be ready like that way, we want peace and friendship. We don't want enmity and war, because we have already witnessed the destructiveness of a war. We are the victims of a war, we don't want to engage in that type of conflict again," the premier said.

She said the country's economic development and prosperity are the main goals of the government and it has been working restlessly towards those goals.

The government has taken all necessary steps to develop Bangladesh Army as capable of facing geo-political and military challenges of the 21st century, the PM added.

In this regard, Hasina mentioned that the government has been implementing Forces Goal 2030 that was formulated following the defence policy of the Father of the Nation.

Praising army members for their integrity and responsibility in facing various natural disasters and humanitarian crises, she asked them to continue their efforts in future.

The PM also appreciated the army's role in facing the Covid-19 pandemic and said members of the army are lauded for creating mass awareness about the virus.

About the national standard, Hasina said it is a matter of dignity and pride for any battalion or unit of the forces to receive the national flag.

Earlier, the PM took a salute from members of the army through a video conference from Gono Bhaban.

Chief of Army Staff General Aziz Ahmed also spoke at the programme from Sheikh Hasina Cantonment.

Shady import worries cops

FROM PAGE 1

Later, DB filed a general diary over the matter and upon taking court permission, they sent the weapon to experts for opinion.

According to the DB police's report, the arms experts mentioned that it was totally illegal to buy the semi-automatic Uzi against the licence for the .22 calibre rifle.

"The Uzi pistol is a military-grade weapon and it is largely used by the arms forces in Belgium and the Israeli Defence Force. The arms is used to provide security to VIPs," reads the enquiry report. The Daily Star has a copy of it.

THE IMPORT

According to the report, there are 84 licensed arms dealer in the country.

Of them, only 14 import arms directly from abroad and 12 are located in Dhaka.

In response to letters from the DB, six dealers came up with lists saying that they have imported 91 Uzis since 2015 after declaring them as rifles.

Forty-nine of the weapons have been sold to different licenced arms holders.

Among the six dealers, Moin Arms Co in the capital's Paltan imported 20 Uzi rifles and 10 Uzi pistols. The pistols have already been sold, according to the report.

Contacted yesterday, Moin Iqbal, proprietor of Moin Arms Co, claimed that the Uzi pistols were one kind of rifle. According to him, the pistol is the small version of a rifle.

Asked then why "pistol" was engraved on the firearms, he said it's just a tag.

"If this business was wrong then why did customs releases the gun and international exports do this

business. We pay taxes and follow all the procedures to import the firearms," he said.

"Police is making a false allegation. It will not only destroy our business but will also send a negative message to international arms exporters," he added.

Contacted, Arun Kumar Biswas, additional commissioner of Customs Valuation and Internal Audit Commissionerate in Dhaka, however, categorically said if the import of the firearms was prohibited as per the arms rule, then they were not supposed to enter the country by any means.

He declined to make any further comments.

In the enquiry report, police requested immediate forfeit of all imported "Uzi pistols" and their handover to law enforcers, saying if the firearms reaches the hands of militants or any criminal group, it could be dangerous.

The irregularities in the arms import took place as there is no arms expert in customs and district commissioner offices. So the presence of arms experts is necessary during the release of any arms shipment by the customs house, the police report suggested.

DB (Tejgaon division) is presently investigating the matter.

Golam Mostofa Rashel, deputy commissioner of the division, said they have already submitted an inquiry report regarding the import of semi-automatic Uzi pistols.

"We would also send a letter to the customs authorities regarding the import. We are now investigating to know how these modern arms entered the country and who the users are."

KSA to scrap

FROM PAGE 1

Under the sponsorship system, a worker is obligated to work for his sponsor, and they cannot work for another employer unless the sponsorship is formally transferred.

According to the Gazette report, the Saudi Ministry of Human Resources was expected to announce yesterday the major features of this initiative to improve the relationship between the expatriate workers and their employers. But it was postponed.

Saudi Arabia was originally supposed to announce the abolition of the sponsorship system during the first quarter of 2020, but it got delayed due to the pandemic.

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Firefighters set a backfire to protect homes and try to contain the Blue Ridge Fire on Tuesday in Chino Hills, California. Strong Santa Ana Winds gusting to more than 90 miles per hour have driven the Blue Ridge Fire and Silverado Fire across thousands of acres, grounding firefighting aircraft, forcing tens of thousands of people to flee.

Sell it cheap or face torture

FROM PAGE 1

None of them agreed to have their names disclosed fearing retribution. They spoke of the Salim family's "criminal" activities against which locals dared not speak and law enforcers take action.

Including land, buildings, markets, and shops in Chawkbazar, Imamganj, Begumbazar, Birendro Bosh Street, Jola Potti in Kellar intersection and land the Salim family allegedly grabbed in Imamganj Razbari of Bhawal estate between Gabtali and Babubazar, they put the figure between 20 and 100 bighas.

Haji Salim's personal assistant Soheli Ahmed brushed aside the allegations of land grabbing. He claimed that the lawmaker was abroad when Jahaj Bari was torn down.

"We have no idea who demolished Jahaj Bari," Soheli told The Daily Star on Tuesday.

As The Daily Star wanted to talk to the lawmaker, Soheli said, "Sir cannot speak. He can walk and do other activities."

This paper tried to talk to other employees of the lawmaker, but none of them agreed to talk.

A Rab mobile court sentenced Erfan to one and a half years in jail on Monday. After Erfan's arrest, Rab found a torture cell on the top floor of Haji Salim-owned 16-storey Madina Ashik Tower, which is a few yards away from Erfan's home in Chawkbazar. **TRICK USED FOR GRABBING PROPERTIES** Whenever there was a dispute among family members over land in Old Dhaka, Haji Salim would rush there to arbitrate, said a local.

He would persuade some owners to

sell their shares for throw-away prices and then have the other owners picked up by his musclemen and armed cadres and have them tortured until they agreed to sell their shares.

"Salim used to purchase a shop for Tk 4-5 lakh when the market price was between Tk 50-60 lakh," said another local.

Giving an example, a local said Haji Salim had signed an agreement four to five years ago with one Jumman Bepari and his family over handing over a piece of land near the Jail Gate in Old Dhaka for the construction of a building.

As per the agreement, the land owners were supposed to get 40 percent of the shops and flats and Tk 2 crore as sign-up payment.

Haji Salim constructed a 12-storey market/residential tower. "But Salim gave them 35 percent of the flats," said the local who is close to the Bepari family.

The Bepari family never saw the Tk 2 crore and got just one of the 40 shops in the market on the first six floors of the building, the local alleged.

RIVER GRABBING

In the beginning of 2019, Bangladesh Inland Water Transport Authority (BIWTA) recovered around 2.5 acres of Buriganga Adi channel in Kamrangirchar and Jhawchar from Salim's possessions.

On May 19 this year, Assistant Sub-Inspector Anil Bihari Nath of Basila River Police Outpost seized a loader, owned by Salim-owned Al Madina Maritime, two trucks, and arrested three staffers of Al Madina Maritime when they were filling up the Buriganga at Arshinagar in Jhawchar.

The arrestees were: Masum Shaikat, Sudangshu Kumar Sarkar, and Jashim

Akan.

Anil filed a case with Keraniganj Model Police Station too.

Contacted Tuesday, Al Madina Maritime site supervisor Sudangshu said they were now out on bail. He claimed that they were not filling or grabbing the river, rather the police arrested them mistakenly.

Anil told The Daily Star over the phone yesterday that he had caught the three in the act of filling up the river with sand.

AGRANI BANK LAND RECOVERED

Salim and his family also grabbed 19.14 decimal of land belonging to Agrani Bank Ltd in Moulvibazar of Old Dhaka.

The bank finally recovered the land on Tuesday from Salim's clutches. The bank also erected a boundary wall earlier demolished by Haji Salim's men.

Baishnab Das Mondal, assistant general manager and head of the branch, said Agrani Bank, which was Habib Bank before the country's independence, has been the owner of the land for the last 73 years.

But since 2003, Haji Salim has been claiming ownership and had tried to grab the land using forged documents. The bank registered several general diaries since then and also filed a case in 2016.

The legal battle is still on, he added.

"During the pandemic, they demolished their two-storey building completely. The bank authorities filed a GD against Salim's wife Gulshan Ara Selim, who is the claimant of the land on paper," he said.

Asked, Salim's PA Soheli Ahmed claimed that the lawmaker was the actual owner and that they have all documents to prove it.

Systemic flaws to blame: HRW

FROM PAGE 1

The 65-page report titled "I Sleep in My Own Deathbed: Violence against Women and Girls in Bangladesh", draws on 50 interviews to document the obstacles for the government's goal of a society without violence against women and children.

"The uptick in violence against women and girls during the Covid-19 pandemic, as well as recent protests against sexual violence, are a bellwether to the Bangladesh government that urgent structural reform is needed," said Meenakshi Ganguly, South Asia director at Human Rights Watch.

"The government should take concrete action by creating accessible shelters across the country, ensuring access to legal aid, and removing obstacles to reporting violence and obtaining justice."

Referring to research done by Ain o Salish Kendra (ASK), HRW said at least 235 women were murdered by their husband or his family in just the first nine months of 2020.

The HRW report found that not only is the criminal justice system failing survivors of gender-based violence, but additional failures in response, protective measures, and services seriously hinder survivors' ability to access the justice system in the first place.

According to data provided by the Multi-Sectoral Programme on Violence Against Women, of more than 11,000 women who filed cases through one of the government's nine One-Stop Crisis Centers for women and girls, only 160 saw successful convictions, HRW mentioned in the report.

According to the Justice Audit, in 2016 courts disposed of just over 20 percent of the over 170,000 pending Nari-o-Shishu cases that year, convicting only 0.5 percent of those accused.

The HRW report found that women and girls often cannot seek meaningful legal remedies under these laws, and abusers are rarely held to account.

Compounding this problem is the fact that with a backlog of some 3.7 million cases. Trials are often delayed or drawn out for years.

"The Bangladesh justice system is failing women and girls with devastating consequences," Ganguly said.

For most women and girls in Bangladesh, access to safe shelter for protection and support is lacking with an estimated 21 government-run shelters and 15 NGO-run shelters for survivors.

"This is deeply inadequate considering that most women in Bangladesh face some form of violence in their lives."

The report recommended development of stronger prevention mechanisms, including comprehensive education in schools on consent, sexuality, and relationships, and awareness campaigns for women and girls about their rights.

It also suggested increasing access to support services across the country, including providing accessible and safe shelters for survivors of gender-based violence in every district, without court orders to stay or restrictions on children.

The report stressed providing sufficient training to public prosecutors and police on standards of criminal

investigations, particularly in relation to working with survivors of gender-based violence.

It recommended the creation of a centralised, online filing system for all cases of gender-based violence and to ensure that relevant case information and reports are freely available and accessible to all parties to the case as appropriate.

The report lauded the government's success in addressing acid violence as acid attacks dropped dramatically from 500 cases in 2002 to 21 recorded attacks in 2020.

According to the report, some lawyers and activists suggested a variety of factors behind shortcomings in prosecution, including public prosecutors who are essentially political appointees and therefore there is little accountability in ensuring they carry out duties as required.

Prosecutors are also not recruited based on experience and are often not properly trained in criminal law, which leads to a failure in coordinating effectively with investigating officers to collect evidence or to make sure that witnesses appear in court when required.

Survivors and activists said public prosecutors often seek bribes from both sides, and if the accused has a greater ability to pay, prosecutors may ask for a reduced sentence or even lose the case by not presenting all evidence.

Despite repeated promises, Bangladesh still has no victim or witness protection law and women's rights lawyers said this presents a serious obstacle to effectively pursue cases.

Lessons amid relief

FROM PAGE 1

T20 tournament arranged by the Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) set to start from mid-November.

Since his ban in October last year, Bangladesh, who were scheduled for a busy year with at least 36 international games, played only 14 international matches -- four Tests, three ODIs and seven T20Is.

Although it is as yet uncertain when the Tigers will next play an international match, Shakib's availability from today will certainly boost the side's morale.

Shakib's teammates are all set to welcome their best performer with open arms and the youngsters who idolise him are eagerly waiting for the superstar to rejoin the dressing room.

"We have all been waiting for Shakib bhai since his ban and it's a great feeling to have him back with us again. He is our biggest asset and as a teammate it's the best news we have today," national batsman Mohammad Mithun told The Daily Star yesterday.

Shakib's return is of course good news, but his absence may have been more important if it taught a lesson to young players like Afif Hossain, Mohammad Saifuddin, Mosaddek Hossain and many other upcoming cricketers who idolise Shakib.

In a Cricbuzz interview in June this year, Shakib said, "I took the approaches from the bookie too casually. Later, I presented the evidence to the Anti-Corruption officials and explained everything honestly and they know everything about what happened. To be honest, that's the only reason I was banned for a year, otherwise I could have been banned for five to 10 years."

"I think it was a silly mistake I made having played international cricket and all the anti-corruption sessions I attended; I shouldn't have made such mistakes. I regret that and I think no one should take messages or calls from strangers lightly. That's the lesson I learned and I learned a big lesson."

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Turkey condemns French caricature featuring Erdogan

REUTERS, Istanbul

Top Turkish officials condemned a caricature scorning President Tayyip Erdogan in the French satirical weekly Charlie Hebdo yesterday, calling it a "disgusting effort" to "spread its cultural racism and hatred".

Turkish anger at the caricature added fuel to a row between Turkey and France about cartoons of a topic considered offensive to Muslims, which flared after a teacher who had shown pupils the cartoons in a lesson on freedom of speech was beheaded in France this month.

Locals still afraid

FROM PAGE 1

officer. But when we, the general people, went to local police stations to file complaints against Haji Salim's men, they didn't record those," complained the trader who asked not to be named.

Locals said Haji Salim's men went into hiding following the arrest of Erfan. In the meantime, some of the victims regained possession of their properties which were grabbed by the lawmaker's men.

They expressed fear that the MP's men would reappear in the area once "their trouble" is over.

Meanwhile, a Dhaka court yesterday placed Erfan and his bodyguard Zahidul Mollah on three-day remand each in a case filed over the attempted murder of a navy officer.

Additional Chief Metropolitan Magistrate Muhammad Asaduzzaman Nur passed the order after Ashfaq Rajib Hasan, inspector (investigation) of Dhanmondi Police Station and also the investigation officer of the case, had produced them before the court with seven-day remand prayer for each.

Lt Wasif Ahmed Khan of Bangladesh Navy filed the case naming four people. The two other accused in the case are AB Siddique Dipu, 45, and Md Mizanur Rahman, 30.

All four are now behind bars. Yesterday, the Anti-Corruption Commission said it would look into allegations made in recent media reports about Haji Salim and his family members.

Responding to queries from reporters, ACC Commissioner Mozammel Haque Khan said, "We have seen media reports on Haji Salim and his son Erfan Salim. We are noticing that the issue is related to law and order."

If any issue falls under the jurisdiction of the ACC, "we will look into it. If government land or properties are occupied, appropriate actions will be taken given that it is covered under the ACC act", he added.

Despite repeated attempts, The Daily Star could not reach Erfan's family members for comments.

Soheli Hawlader, assistant personal secretary to Haji Salim, said the lawmaker was ill and he would not comment on the matter.

10 US senators

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armed miscreants during Rab's operational activities," he told The Daily Star yesterday.

The bipartisan senators said since 2015, the Rab has reportedly extrajudicially killed more than 400 people, and the Rab has been credibly implicated in many cases of enforced disappearances and torture.

"These violations appear to be part of a broader crackdown on dissent by the ruling Awami League, and the Rab has not been held to account," said the letter.

"Extrajudicial killings by the Rab have reportedly spiked since the Government of Bangladesh began its 'war on drugs' in the months ahead of the December 2018 elections."

UN experts, including the Special Rapporteur on extrajudicial, summary or arbitrary execution wrote that the 'war on drugs' appears to be a deliberate policy of extrajudicial killings' and urged the Bangladesh government to end it and respect the rule of law and human rights, it said.

In nearly all cases, the senators said, the Rab claims that such extrajudicial killings result from "gunfights" or "crossfire," but documentation from reputable human rights organisations demonstrates that victims were often in Rab custody when they were killed, and many of their bodies show signs of death by execution, rather than a gunfight.

However, the government has failed to end these abuses and the Rab continues to commit extrajudicial killings with impunity, they said.

In addition to extrajudicial killings, UN experts, journalists, and human rights groups have documented cases of Rab committing enforced disappearances and widespread torture, including the 2019 abduction and suspected torture by the Rab of three men whose employer had a dispute with a high-ranking government official.

"These cases illustrate a pattern of gross human rights violations for which the Rapid Action Battalion and its senior leadership have faced no consequences."

Joining Ranking Member Menendez and Senator Young in signing the letter were Ben Cardin, Cory Gardner, Jeanne Shaheen, Marco Rubio, Chris Murphy, Chris Coons, Jeff Merkley and Cory Booker.