

1,568 New cases in 24hrs



4,09,252 Total cases



5,941 Deaths



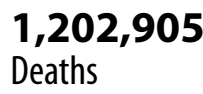
3,25,940 Recoveries



1,202,905 Deaths



46,594,901 Total cases



US elections could see record turnout

THE US presidential election is expected to see a record turnout...

These votes represent about 43 percent of registered voters nationwide...

David J Becker, executive director and founder of the Center for Election Innovation & Research...

In some of the elections with lowest turnout, the presidents were reelected. One of the examples could be reelection of Bill Clinton in 1996...

Analysts say mail-in voting saw a significant surge this year. Such voting in 2016 was only 25 percent or roughly 32 million...

They say the pandemic, democrat supporters' more enthusiasm against

Christian Ulvert, a Democratic strategist, said, "Probably, we are going to see about 80 percent of voter turnout this election..."

Analysts say US elections depend on electoral votes, not the national popular votes. In this election, Joe Biden remains ahead in the opinion polls in some of the swing states...

Democrat candidate Hillary Clinton too was ahead in most polls before the 2016 election and got 2.9 million more national popular votes. Yet, she was defeated by Trump as he received 304 electoral votes when he needed 270.

No matter who the president is, we are going to see high turnouts of voters. I hope this stays for decades. Hopefully, the Democrats as well as the Republicans will appreciate this," said Christian Ulvert.

Bids to silence journos

FROM PAGE 1 for a Facebook post he had made about the lawmaker. "It is clear from the way that police and the government have created a situation of impunity for crimes against journalists..."

Kajol was denied bail a total of 13 times, according to Article 19. The first occasion was on May 18, when Kajol's lawyer sought bail from Jashore District Chief Judicial Magistrate Court.

Statistics obtained from the police states that 53 journalists, five teachers and eight students were prosecuted under the DSA between January and June 2020.

This newspaper, tallying up numbers from media reports, found that 38 journalists were arrested between January and October this year. It is unknown just how many journalists are languishing in prison like Kajol after being denied bail.

The majority of arrests happened during the lockdown, creating alarm among the journalist community and leading the Sampadak Parishad to issue a statement of concern on June 30.

"The Bangladeshi media is playing a vital role in keeping the people informed, publishing news of successes and hope, pointing out inadequacies of our pandemic response, and facilitating public dialogue to map out our course for rebuilding. An attack on the media at this time is to endanger our possibility of stable recovery," said the statement.

The statement added that DSA has become a plaything in the hands of a vested quarter who uses this anti-press and anti-freedom of expression law whimsically to harass and intimidate journalists and to prevent them from exposing corruption and misuse of funds that the government was allocating for the people, especially the poor.

For the last few months, updates about his father's bail has formed the crux of the text messages between this correspondent and Monorom Polok, Kajol's son.

Polok would message "Bail not granted" or "Bail denied. Again" and the reply would be a dispirited "I'm sorry", or a sad emoji. Once or twice, his messages were met with silence. What does one say to a son whose father has been incarcerated for the better part of the year for a Facebook post?

non-bailable. These include Section 21, 25, 28, 29, which punish activities ranging from defamation, "hampering religious sentiments", publishing "offensive" information, publishing "propaganda" against the Father of the Nation, the Liberation War, the national anthem or the national flag. "We always say that defamation cannot be criminalised. The person can be brought to court, questioned by the Press Council, reprimanded or fined. These have to be civil lawsuits, not criminal cases. What is the job of the Press Council if journalists are being taken to prison and denied bail?" said Faisel.

The government would ultimately have to construct overpasses at the intersections to avoid traffic congestion in future but it would then cost more money and in many cases, it may not be at all possible, said the transport expert. Referring to the Dhaka-Mawa-Bhanga expressway, he said the government should not expand national highways anymore without keeping facilities of expressway.

THE PROJECT The Dhaka-Sylhet four-lane highway expansion is one of the 26 projects for which China had committed a \$21.5 billion soft loan. A memorandum of understanding (MoU) between Dhaka and Beijing was signed during the Chinese president's Dhaka visit in 2016.

But the government later decided to do the work using own resources, following failed negotiations with a Chinese company. Besides, there was an allegation against the Chinese company of offering bribe to a top government official to green-light the work at an inflated cost. At that time, the estimated cost of the project was Tk 11,412 crore.

Meanwhile, the consultant firm, which has prepared the design for the Dhaka-Sylhet highway expansion, suggested keeping 23 overpasses at all major intersections to ensure free flow of traffic, a RHD official said. Md Waliur Rahman, an additional chief engineer of RHD, who is looking after the project, said construction of 23 overpasses will increase the project cost and as ADB found it economically



Former US President Barack Obama introduces Democratic Presidential candidate and former US Vice President Joe Biden during a mobilization event at Belle Isle Casino in Detroit, Michigan, on Saturday.

Trump launches campaign blitz

FROM PAGE 1 determines the overall victor. The race remains a toss-up in Florida, North Carolina and Arizona, according to Reuters/Ipsos polls...

There already has been a record-setting number - 92 million - of early votes cast around the country, either in-person or by mail, a phenomenon expected to boost Biden's chances. The Trump campaign indicated it is banking on in-person voting on the election day to push the president over the top.

Trump's supporters are going to show up on Tuesday. Nothing is going to stop them," Miller told ABC's "This

Week" program. "I think Democrats are going to look in the rear-view mirror and say, 'This is probably what cost us the election.'" Dunn dismissed Miller's argument and said the record early voting numbers reflect enthusiasm not fear. Biden, who has made hammering the president's response to the pandemic a main theme of his speeches, was scheduled to campaign again in Pennsylvania, one of the most critical of the battleground states that Trump won in 2016.

states that for decades had gone in the Democratic column. He offered a note of optimism early on Sunday, writing on Twitter, "Our numbers are looking VERY good all over..." Weighing down Trump is a rising number of coronavirus infections in many parts of the country. The United States has recorded more than 9 million cases, with nearly 230,000 people dying from Covid-19.

Govt spent Tk 15k-47k for each

FROM PAGE 1 services during the pandemic. Our efforts will continue... the [Covid-19] dedicated hospitals will be kept functional as usual," he said. He then claimed that there was no crisis of personal protective equipment in the country. Mentioning that the government has recently announced the "No Mask, No Service," policy, he said soon there would be a massive campaign on raising health awareness to fight the outbreak.

18 DEAD, 1,569 NEW INFECTIONS Eighteen people died from Covid-19 in 24 hours till 8:00am yesterday, according to a press release of the Directorate General of Health Services (DGHS). With this, the death toll rose to 5,941, which is almost 1.45 percent of all confirmed cases in the country -- 4,09,252.

the list of worst affected countries in the world in terms of number of total cases. It is one step behind Indonesia and one step ahead of Ukraine, according to worldometers.info. Meanwhile, 1,795 Covid-19 patients recovered in the same 24 hours, taking the total number of recovery cases to 3,25,940, which is nearly 80 percent of all confirmed cases. Among the 18 deceased, 15 were males and three females. One was aged between 31 and 40, two were between 21 and 30, six between 51 and 60, and nine others were above 60 years, added the release.

Not enough overpasses

FROM PAGE 1 non-viable, they have dropped 17 overpasses for now. However, there would be six more railway overpasses. "As ADB declined to fund an economically non-viable project, we have to drop some overpasses for now. These [overpasses] can be constructed later," he told this correspondent on October 24, replying to a question.

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SASEC-2 project rose to Tk 16,662 crore from Tk 11,899.01 crore after first revision. In both cases, the rise in number of new structures are the main reason behind the escalation of cost and duration. "We had made mistakes in cases of both the SASEC projects, which we had to rectify. We should not do the same mistake again. Because we ultimately have to construct those overpasses after three or five years," an RHD engineer said, wishing not be named.

He said Dhaka-Sylhet highway project is going to be implemented following three major road projects -- SASEC-1, 2 and Dhaka-Mawa-Bhanga expressway. So this one should be the finest one. Prof Shamsul said Bangladesh lacks land, so it's policy should be -- construction of one quality road, instead of three/four. "The construction of Dhaka-Mawa-Bhanga expressway has set a standard. We have no scope to backtrack from it. There is no alternative to turn all national highways into expressways to meet our demands," he said.

Another RHD engineer said the width of the proposed Dhaka-Sylhet highway -- with four main lanes plus 5.5-metre-wide lanes for slow-moving vehicles -- will be same as that of an expressway and it is possible to turn the it into an expressway by investing additional money. In case of fund constraint, Prof Shamsul said, the government should focus on the intersections first by constructing overpasses and interchanges, then it can go for widening the road. "Because, capacity and productivity of any road is dictated by the intersections," he added. "Expansion of a road without ensuring free flow of vehicles would be suicidal," he told this correspondent last week.

No mask

FROM PAGE 1 February 29."

He promised to put up placards in front of markets and ask guards not to allow anyone inside malls without masks. However, in many places, many customers were seen purchasing items in different markets without wearing masks. Asked, one such customer of Dhaka New Market named Amina Khatun said she was not aware of the announcement. Iman Ali, a sales staff of Madina Trading at the New Market, said they could not force customers to wear masks. "It might create unpleasant situation," he added.

Several customers welcomed the Dokan Malik Samity's initiative saying this would create conscious among people to wear masks. Some people, however, questioned who would implement the decision and who would monitor this? On October 25, the government asked all organisations not to provide services to people without a face covering as it aims to curb a possible second wave of Covid-19.

A "no mask, no service" policy will be implemented and all organisations will be monitored because the government made masks mandatory in all institutions, markets, schools, social and religious gatherings. The directives came during a virtual cabinet meeting chaired by Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina.

PM for testing

FROM PAGE 1 was arranged at Osmani Memorial Auditorium while she attended it from her official residence the Gono Bhavan. The prime minister said that anyone coming from abroad has to go through this check for ensuring the safety of the people. She also asked the authorities concerned to take steps. In this connection, she mentioned that at the initial stage of the outbreak, the government had issued 21 directives to keep the people of the country safe from Covid-19 infection. She said that COVID-19 has been spreading around the world again on a massive scale and many countries in Europe, including the UK, have announced fresh lockdowns.

"We have to remain safe [and] must use masks whenever we go out in public," she said. "Use masks, keep yourself and others safe." The first November's youth day has been named Bangabandhu National Youth Day on the occasion of the birth centenary of Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman. State Minister for Youth and Sports Zahid Ahsan Russell presided over the programme where Youth and Sports Secretary Mohammad Akhter Hossain also spoke. Earlier, Russell handed over Bangabandhu National Youth Award (cash, certificate and crest) to 21 successful self-employed youths and five successful youth organisers in recognition of their exemplary contribution in setting up self-employment projects.

3 to walk

FROM PAGE 1 higher courts. According to the prosecution, Payel, a BBA fifth-semester student of North South University, went missing while returning to Dhaka from Chattogram on a bus of Hanif Paribahan on July 21, 2018. On July 23, his body was recovered from the canal under Bhatarchar bridge in Gazaria upazila in Munshiganj. Golam Swardy Biplol, uncle of the victim, filed a murder case with Gazaria Police Station the next day. Police arrested three employees of that bus from the capital.

One of them later told a Munshiganj court that there was traffic jam near Bhatarchar at Gazaria on Dhaka-Chittagong highway, where the bus that carried Payel got stuck. Payel got off the bus to relieve himself, and before he could board the bus, the vehicle set off as traffic started moving again. He ran behind the bus. The bus stopped but he injured himself badly when the bus's automatic door opened on him. He fell unconscious. The supervisor informed the matter to the driver. Driver Jamal Hossain, helper Faisal and supervisor Johny together decided to not take Payel back on the bus. Instead, they carried the bloodied youth and threw him into a canal from over the Bhatarchar bridge. It was about 4:00am and the passengers were sleeping.

Inspector Mamun Al Rashid of Gazaria Police Station pressed charges against the three on October 24, 2018. Following an appeal by Payel's family, the case was moved to the Speedy Trial Tribunal of Chattogram on December 24 that year. The tribunal framed charges against them on April 2 last year. Later, the case was moved to the Speedy Trial Tribunal-1 of Dhaka for judgement. Fourteen prosecution witnesses gave their depositions before the tribunal in the case. Earlier, the tribunal fixed yesterday for delivering the judgement on completion of the arguments from both prosecution and defence.