

BANGLADESH
UPDATE



1,289
New cases in 24hrs



4,18,764
Total cases



6,049
Deaths



3,36,568
Recoveries

GLOBAL
UPDATE



1,253,906
Deaths



50,048,519
Total cases

Rural cooperatives can remove poverty

Says PM

UNB, Dhaka

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina yesterday said there would be no poverty in Bangladesh if multidimensional rural cooperatives can be established.

"It is now proven that if we can build multidimensional rural cooperatives, there will be no poverty in Bangladesh. Poverty will totally be eradicated," she said.

The PM was addressing a function, marking the 49th National Cooperative Day and awarding of recipients of the National Cooperative Award at Bangabandhu International Conference Centre. She joined the programme virtually from the Gono Bhavan.

The theme of the day this year is: "Philosophy of Bangabandhu, Development in Cooperatives".

Hasina said those involved in the cooperative movement have a bigger role in freeing the country from poverty.

"You will have to continue your work in that direction. What we want is to free Bangladesh from hunger and poverty."

The premier said the people of the country would march forward whatever hurdles come in their way as they snatched their victory through the Liberation War.

She asked those involved in the cooperative movement to develop a marketing system to sell their products and produce.

"If we don't develop a marketing system, then we won't be able to sell our products and it will discourage all...so, marketing is very important."

Hasina urged all involved in cooperatives to take effective steps so that people do not lose their enthusiasm and interest.

Stating that the government believes in the policy of the Father of the Nation, the PM said the country can



be developed through cooperatives. She asked all concerned to discharge their duties with sincerity and responsibility. "Don't go for immediate profit. Let it [cooperatives] be a permanent, productive and profitable organisation so that all members can get the shares of their profits."

Hasina also stressed the need for involving more women in the cooperative movement saying that half of the country's population are women and they should be involved in this programme in a greater way.

"The more women will be involved in various activities the greater way the corruption will be eradicated from the country."

Describing various measures taken for the overall development of the country, she said the government is taking every step so that people living in rural areas can earn their livelihoods from there.

"We'll provide all urban facilities to rural areas so that people living in villages can enjoy a better and decent life."

The PM said cooperatives are the tool for fulfilling the dream of the Father of the Nation. "Bangabandhu wanted to expand cooperative-based production and distribution management in all sectors."

State Minister for LGRD and Cooperatives Swapan Bhattacharjee and Rural Development and Cooperatives Division Secretary Rezaul Ahsan also spoke at the event.

Earlier, LGRD and Cooperatives Minister Tazul Islam, on behalf of the PM, handed the National Cooperative Award to cooperative societies and individuals in different categories in recognition of their contributions to the sector.



People react after media announced that Democratic US presidential nominee Joe Biden won the 2020 presidential election on Black Lives Matter Plaza near the White House in Washington DC yesterday.

PHOTO: REUTERS

Kamala Harris breaks barriers

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a second term. She hasn't weighed in publicly on such speculation.

Edison Research and the major US television networks yesterday projected their victory, based on unofficial final results, even though the incumbent president, Republican Donald Trump, vowed to continue fighting in courts.

A US senator from California, Harris has a track record of shattering glass ceilings. She served as San Francisco's first female district attorney and was California's first woman of color to be elected attorney general.

Her background in criminal justice could help a Biden administration tackle the issues of racial equality and policing after the country was swept by protests this year. She is expected to be a top adviser on judicial nominations.

Harris, whose mother and father emigrated from India and Jamaica, respectively, had her sights set on becoming the first woman US president when she competed against Biden and others for their party's 2020 nomination. She dropped out of the race last December after a campaign hurt by her wavering views on healthcare and indecision about embracing her past as a prosecutor.

Biden looked beyond some of the

harsh words Harris had for him in that campaign to name her his running mate in August. She has proven to be a valuable and polished stand-in, appealing especially to women, progressives and voters of color, all critical to the party's election hopes.

Harris, who developed a deep fundraising network during her Senate and White House bids, has been instrumental to Biden's raking in record sums of money in the closing months of the campaign. Her selection sparked a burst of excitement in the Democratic base and among the party's donors.

"Harris always made the most sense as a running mate for Biden because she had the ability to help him unify the Democratic coalition across racial and generational lines and was able to spike base enthusiasm," said Joel Payne, a Democratic strategist who worked for Hillary Clinton's 2016 presidential campaign.

TEAM PLAYER

Accusations from progressives that Harris did not do enough to investigate police shootings and wrongful conviction cases when she was California's attorney general helped doom her own presidential run but surfaced little during her time as Biden's running mate.

Harris has often defended her record, saying as she did in a town hall event last year that she had worked her whole career "to reform the criminal justice system with the understanding that it is deeply flawed and in need of repair."

Trump and his re-election campaign had sought to paint Harris instead as a tool of the Democratic left who would wield power and influence behind the scenes in a Biden presidency.

Prior to her selection, several Biden aides said that Harris was able to put to rest concerns among some in the former vice president's camp that she would be too personally ambitious to make a trustworthy partner.

Harris has shown herself to be a team player, taking on a lower-profile role and holding virtual and in-person political events that sometimes drew little news coverage, while often speaking in terms of what Biden would do for the country if elected and making an impassioned case against Trump.

"Joe and I were raised in a very similar way," Harris said of Biden at her October debate against Vice President Mike Pence. "We were raised with values that are about hard work, about the value and the dignity of public service and about the importance of fighting for the dignity of all people."

Myanmar goes to polls today

Despite accusations of genocide, Suu Kyi's party set for another term

CNN ONLINE

Myanmar is set to vote today in its second democratic general election since the end of oppressive military rule -- a poll that's expected to be marked by ethnic divisions and health concerns over rising coronavirus infections.

Nobel laureate Aung San Suu Kyi and her National League for Democracy party (NLD) won a landslide in 2015 and established the first civilian government after 50 years of isolation and military authoritarianism.

In the biggest city Yangon, there was optimism and real hope that Suu Kyi would lead the country forward in its development and democratic transition. Five years later, Suu Kyi remains popular among the ethnic Bamar majority and the NLD is expected to take another win.

But 2020 is vastly different from 2015.

Internationally, Suu Kyi is no longer the democracy icon once adored in the West, primarily because of her handling of the military crackdown against the ethnic Rohingya Muslim population, which the United Nations said had "the

hallmarks of genocide."

More than 740,000 Rohingya fled from Myanmar into neighboring Bangladesh in 2016 and 2017 as the military waged a campaign of violence in Rakhine state. Survivors have recounted harrowing atrocities including gang rape, mass killings, torture and widespread destruction of property at the hands of the army.

Myanmar denies the charges and has long claimed to have been targeting terrorists.

Those Rohingya still inside Rakhine are segregated and forced to live in conditions akin to prison camps, with restrictions on movement, education, and access to healthcare.

"Rohingya are unable to vote and are blocked from accessing full citizenship rights under the discriminatory 1982 Citizenship Law," said John Quinley, Senior Human Rights Specialist at Fortify Rights. "Not only are Rohingya blocked from voting but Rohingya political parties were rejected for running in elections. These are courageous, smart, and qualified politicians that have been stripped for running for office based on their ethnicity."

Trump joins small one-term

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the Republican unabashedly seizing on the power of incumbency.

Trump held rallies across the country in front of Air Force One, insisted on putting his name on the 150 million pandemic stimulus checks to Americans and delivered his Republican convention speech at the White House.

His actions sparked accusations Trump violated the Hatch Act, which restricts the use of the federal government for political activity.

"There is a reason why it's unusual for incumbents to be defeated. Incumbents have the ability to use the bully pulpit to their advantage; they can change the storyline," said Matt Dallek, a political historian at George Washington University.

"They have all the trappings of the White House -- executive power, the Oval Office, Air Force One. These are powerful symbols that they have at their disposal."

The White House -- in the words of one of its fictional inhabitants, President Andrew Shepherd in Rob Reiner's "The American President" (1995) -- offers "the single greatest home court advantage in the modern world."

For Trump, the first president never to have previously held elected office or a military leadership position, the White House helped normalize a volatile man better known earlier to Americans as a television celebrity.

However unpresidential in tone his tweets, his every formal event took place behind lecterns bearing the instantly recognizable seal of the US commander in chief.

US presidents enjoy wide leeway on diplomacy and Trump, like his predecessors, eagerly brought foreign leaders before the cameras with him at the White House, including in September when the United Arab Emirates and Bahrain agreed to

recognize Israel.

Trump is the first president never to cross 50 percent approval in Gallup polls and was intensely divisive over his nearly four years, with wide opposition to his handling of the pandemic, his abrasive rhetoric and incessant personal scandals.

George HW Bush, by contrast, basked in nearly 90 percent approval as he led the first Gulf War in 1991.

The difference, Dallek said, is that both Bush and Carter failed to unify their parties.

Carter and George HW Bush faced primary challenges from the left and right of their parties respectively that weakened them heading into the general election.

Similarly, Lyndon Johnson -- who technically did not lose reelection but abruptly decided not to seek a second full term in 1968 -- was hit by a revolt on the left over the Vietnam War.

Gerald Ford, who took over after Richard Nixon's resignation and was never elected nationally on his own, also faced a spirited challenge in 1976 from Ronald Reagan.

Trump, on the other hand, virtually took over the Republican Party, whose 2020 platform said only that it backed his agenda.

"The challengers to Trump really had to go outside the Republican Party," Dallek said.

With Trump's election loss but dominant position in his party, chatter has already begun on whether he would seek an even more unusual feat -- winning a second but non-consecutive term in 2024.

Only one other president in US history has served two terms that were not back-to-back -- Democrat Grover Cleveland, who won his second mandate in 1892, four years after a narrow loss.

Biden wins

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Black American and the first American of Asian descent to serve as vice president, the country's No. 2 office.

Cheers and applause was heard in neighborhoods around Washington, DC, with people emerging onto balconies, yelling, honking their horns and banging pots. The wave of noise built as more people learned of the news. Some were in tears. Music began to play, "We are the Champions" blared.

In the Brooklyn neighborhood of Bedford-Stuyvesant, people clapped, and erupted in screams of joy as the news spread. Some residents danced on a building's fire escape, cheering while others screamed "yes!" as they passed by.

In a reminder of the divided state of the country, however, pro-Trump "Stop the Steal" demonstrators gathered at state capitol buildings in Lansing, Michigan, and Harrisburg, Pennsylvania.

The networks' declaration that Biden had won came amid internal concerns within Trump's team about the strategy going forward and pressure on him to pick a more professional legal team to outline where they believe voter fraud took place and show evidence pointing toward it.

One Trump loyalist said Trump simply was not ready to admit defeat even though there would not be enough ballots thrown out in a recount to change the outcome. "There's a mathematical certainty that he's going to lose," the loyalist said.

Biden was expected to address the nation after 7:00am BST (1:00am Sunday GMT) from his hometown of Wilmington, Delaware, according to a campaign aide.

DIFFICULT TASK AHEAD

For Biden's supporters, it was fitting that Pennsylvania ensured his victory. He was born in the industrial city of Scranton in the state's northeast and, touting his middle-class credentials, secured the Democratic nomination with a promise to win back working-class voters who had supported Trump in 2016.

He launched his campaign in Pittsburgh last year and wrapped it up with a rally there on Tuesday. It was a tight race in industrial states such as Pennsylvania, Michigan, Wisconsin and Minnesota, but Biden did enough to prevail.

He faced unprecedented challenges. These included Republican-led efforts to limit mail-in voting at a time when a record number of people were due to vote by mail because of the pandemic, which has killed more than 236,000 people in the United States.

When Biden enters the White House on Jan 20, the oldest person to

assume the office at age 78, he likely will face a difficult task governing in a deeply polarized Washington, underscored by a record nationwide voter turnout.

Both sides characterized the 2020 election as one of the most crucial in US history, as important as votes during the 1860s Civil War and the 1930s Great Depression.

For months, officials on both sides raised the spectre of the United States not being able to pull off a fair vote. In the end, however, voting at the polls proceeded with limited disruption.

Thousands of election officials worked for four days under intense pressure, sometimes with partisan supporters protesting outside.

Biden's victory was driven by strong support from groups including women, African Americans, white voters with college degrees and city-dwellers. He was more than four million votes ahead of Trump in the nationwide popular vote count.

Biden, who has spent half a century in public life as a US senator and then vice president under Trump's predecessor Barack Obama, will inherit a nation in turmoil over the coronavirus pandemic and the related economic slowdown as well as disruptive protests against racism and police brutality.

Biden has said his first priority will be developing a plan to contain and recover from the pandemic, promising to improve access to testing and, unlike Trump, to heed the advice of leading public health officials and scientists.

He also has pledged to restore a sense of normalcy to the White House after a presidency in which Trump praised authoritarian foreign leaders, disdained longstanding global alliances, refused to disavow white supremacists and cast doubt on the legitimacy of the US election system.

Despite his victory, Biden will have failed to deliver the sweeping repudiation to Trump that Democrats had hoped for, reflecting the deep support the president enjoys despite his tumultuous four years in office.

This could complicate Biden's campaign promises to reverse key parts of Trump's legacy. These include deep Trump tax cuts that especially benefited corporations and the wealthy, hardline immigration policies, efforts to dismantle the 2010 Obamacare healthcare law and Trump's abandonment of such international agreements as the Paris climate accord and Iran nuclear deal.

Should Republicans keep control of the US Senate, they would likely block large parts of his legislative agenda, including expanding healthcare and fighting climate change. That prospect could depend

13 more die, 1,289 test positive

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Thirteen people died from Covid-19 in 24 hours till 8:00am yesterday, according to a press release from the Directorate General of Health Services (DGHS).

With this, the death toll from the virus rose to 6,049 in the country. This is 1.44 percent of all confirmed cases.

A total of 1,289 new infections were recorded in those 24 hours, taking the total number of people infected or confirmed cases to 418,764, added the release.

Against a total of 11,419 tests in 113 laboratories in those 24 hours, the positivity rate was 11.29 percent while the overall positivity rate was at 17.23 percent.

Bangladesh is currently 22nd in the list of worst affected countries in the world in terms of the number of cases.

The position is one step behind Indonesia and one step ahead of the Czech Republic, according to worldometers.info.

Meanwhile, a total of 1,541 Covid-19 patients recovered in the same 24 hours, raising the total number of recoveries to 336,568.

With this, the recovery rate rose to 80.37 percent.

Among the 13 deceased, 11 were males and two females. All of them died in hospitals, according to the press release.

One of them was aged between 21 and 30 years, one between 41 and 50, two between 51 and 60 and nine were above 60 years.

One of the deceased was from Khulna division while two were from Sylhet, three from Rangpur and the rest seven were from Dhaka division, added the press release.

As of yesterday noon, a total of 2,511 Covid-19 patients were undergoing treatment in general beds of hospitals while 265 were in ICUs across the country.

Sangsad begins special session today

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A special session of the Jatiya Sangsad will begin at 6:00pm today on the occasion of Mujib Barsha, the birth centenary of Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman.

President Abdul Hamid called the session exercising the power bestowed upon him as per Clause (1) of Article 72 of the Constitution on October 21 last.

Though the special session was supposed to be held in March, it was postponed in the wake of the coronavirus outbreak.

According to sources, President Abdul Hamid would address the session and highlight Bangabandhu's life and activities.

The session will be prorogued with the passage of a resolution on the political life of Bangabandhu, said sources.

This is for the first time, the Jatiya Sangsad goes into any special session, sources at the parliament secretariat said.

Earlier, the parliament went into special sittings on two occasions -- January 31 and June 18 in 1974 -- which were addressed by former Yugoslav President Marshal Josip Broz Tito and then Indian president VV Giri.

Storm Eta leaves 150 dead or missing in Guatemala

AFP, Guatemala City

About 150 people have died or remain unaccounted for in Guatemala due to mudslides caused by powerful storm Eta, which devastated an indigenous village in the country's north, President Alejandro Giammattei said Friday.

The toll is in addition to the approximately two dozen people who died elsewhere in Central America since Eta made landfall in Nicaragua on Tuesday as a hurricane.

Giammattei said an army unit had arrived in the northern village of Queja to begin rescue efforts, amid fears that most of the residents had been killed.

A preliminary report indicated that "150 homes have been buried with 100 people dead," he said.

Giammattei added that another mudslide in the northeastern department of Huehuetenango, on the border with Mexico, had left 10 dead.

"We calculate that between the dead and the missing, unofficial figures show about 150 dead," said Giammattei, updating the country's death toll from the 50 fatalities he had reported on Thursday.

He called the situation in Queja "critical," with heavy rain continuing to fall and setting off new mudslides, while roads are still blocked.

Some 2,500 people in the impoverished Mayan indigenous area had lost their belongings in the deluge of mud.