

**BANGLADESH
UPDATE**



1,474
New cases in 24hrs



4,20,238
Total cases



6,067
Deaths



3,38,146
Recoveries

**GLOBAL
UPDATE**



1,258,555
Deaths



50,432,229
Total cases

Work for people

PM asks local representatives

UNB, Dhaka

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina yesterday urged the public representatives of local government bodies to stand beside people and work for their welfare with a service mentality.

"The chairmen and councillors of district councils and other public representatives of local bodies have the responsibilities towards people in their localities," she said.

The prime minister made the call while addressing an oath-taking ceremony of the chairmen of Madaripur, Faridpur and Moulvibazar district councils as they were elected in the recently-held by-elections.

Sheikh Hasina urged them to give special focus on the overall development of their areas with the service mentality.

Recalling the steps of Father of the Nation Bangabandhu for decentralisation of state power, the prime minister said the great leader had upgraded all the subdivisions to district ones.

"Bangabandhu had also undertaken various programmes and begun working with farsighted plans to develop the new districts by appointing district governors," she said.

In light of the initiatives of Bangabandhu, Hasina said, the government has been working to fulfill all the basic needs of the people, including healthcare, education, housing, food and clothes.

Besides, the prime minister said, the government has also been working to take power to every house of the country in this Mujib Borsho. "Each



house will be illuminated with electricity."

She mentioned that steps have been taken to ensure food security for all and the government is working to provide housing for every single homeless person.

Hasina directed the chairmen, councillors and representatives of other local government bodies to find out whether anyone left homeless in their localities and come forward to help them get houses.

Talking about coronavirus pandemic, she said the entire world has got stagnant when it comes to social and economic development due to the deadly virus.

Hasina mentioned with satisfaction that leaders and workers of Awami League and its associate bodies stood beside the affected common people alongside the government to face the adverse impacts of the coronavirus.

"They worked hard to provide necessary assistance towards the corona-affected people as well as the farmers to have their crops cut and reached homes safely before floods," she added.

Earlier, chairmen of Madaripur District Council Munir Chowdhury, Faridpur District Council Shamsur Haque and Moulvibazar District Council Misbahur Fahman who were elected in the recent by-polls were sworn in at a ceremony at Bangladesh Secretariat.

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina virtually administered the oath to the newly-elected chairmen of the three district councils from the Gono Bhaban.

Major reform on the cards

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will be given on continuous assessment at schools.

The PECE was introduced in 2009 and the JSC exams a year later. Many educationists frequently termed the exams unnecessary and slammed those for stressing out the students.

"There should be one public exam at the end of the school level. School-based annual exams are enough for younger students," said Professor Emeritus Manzoor Ahmed of BRAC University.

The SSC exams will be on Bangla, English, mathematics, social science and science only. The other assessments will be made at schools.

Though the HSC exams will take place in two phases, the final result will be prepared after combining results from both phases.

After studying a syllabus for two years in grades-IX and X, students take the SSC exams on 10 papers. They sit for the HSC exams on 12 papers after studying a two-year syllabus in grades-XI and XII.

For decades, secondary schools have been requiring students to choose among science, humanities and business studies when they are in grade-IX. Officials yesterday said this had been creating unnecessary pressure on students.

Students of grades-XI and XII will study the compulsory Bangla, English and the ICT. And they will be able to choose three other subjects from science, humanities and business disciplines. They will pick another subject from vocational courses.

Curriculums were revised the last time in 2012.

Talking to The Daily Star, NCTB Chairperson Prof Narayan Chandra Saha said most countries around the

world do not have science, humanities and business disciplines at the school level.

All school-level students should have similar knowledge, he said.

The new outline also proposed two-day weekend -- Friday and Saturday -- in schools, instead of just Friday.

Narayan said the two-day weekend will have little impact on teacher-student contact hours because the time spent on holding public exams will be saved.

NCTB SEEKS OPINION

The NCTB on Thursday uploaded the draft outline on its website and requested all stakeholders to give their opinions.

Anyone can give their opinions via email by November 18, Narayan mentioned.

"We will finalise the new curriculum after getting opinions from stakeholders and place it before the National Curriculum Coordination Committee (NCCC)," he added.

COMPETENCY-FOCUSED CURRICULUM

Moshiuzzaman said the new curriculum will emphasise competency rather than theoretical knowledge.

There is no alternative to modernisation of education, he noted.

The NCTB has set 10 main competencies that a student will achieve after grade-XII. Those include a student's ability to communicate, collaborate, express himself or herself, honour other people's opinions, think critically and solve problems.

The curriculum puts emphasis on learning languages, communication, mathematics and reasoning, science and technology, the ICT, environment and climate, and values and morality.

President, PM greet Joe Biden

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Biden and Harris, Sheikh Hasina said on behalf of the government and the people of Bangladesh she was conveying warmest congratulations on their victory as the 46th President and 49th Vice-President of the United States of America.

"I believe your resounding victory reflects the profound trust and confidence the people of your great country have in your extraordinary leadership proven over four decades of devotion and dedication towards their welfare, and that of the USA," the premier wrote to Joe Biden.

"Your astute stewardship will also energise the USA in leading the world into a new era of global peace, and international cooperation in securing prosperity, and unity in facing the challenges of climate change," she said.

Mentioning that Bangladesh, over the years since its independence in 1971, has forged an excellent and durable relationship with the USA, she hoped, "Now with you at the helm of affairs of your country, I foresee the relationship reaching newer heights in the coming days."

"Indeed, I look forward to working closely with you in attaining those ideals as well as in effectively confronting the evils of terrorism, violent extremism, hatred, forced displacements as of the Rohingyas, and for the realisation of a safer and a better world."

The premier also extended a very warm invitation to Biden and first

lady Jill Biden to visit and experience Bangladesh and its overall progress achieved by its own efforts, the strength of its people and the support of its good friends like the USA.

Besides, Sheikh Hasia wrote to Kamala Harris, "Surely your glorious victory testifies your heroic leadership, remarkable achievements in public service, and valuable contributions to your great country and people."

"I believe your tenure, in the esteemed office, shall witness the continuation of your relentless efforts and success in establishing equal rights and justice for all people, as well as gender parity inspiring women in the USA and across the world with hope, vigor and drive in fulfilling ambitions of their very own," she said.

Sheikh Hasina said Bangladesh and the USA, since the establishment of diplomatic relations, have evolved an enduring, productive partnership growing and deepening with time.

"Now with you as Vice-President, proudly representing diversity and endowed with experience and wisdom, I see our two countries' relationships reaching unprecedented heights," she added.

The premier also extended a warm invitation to Kamala Harris and Douglass Emhoff to visit Bangladesh the soonest to see firsthand the impressive socio-economic development and the extraordinary level of women empowerment.



A boat with a sail commemorating the birth centenary of Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman floats on the Jatiya Sangsad Lake. Two such colourfully decorated boats were floated on the lake on Thursday. This photo was taken on Friday

PHOTO: PRABIR DAS

Ailing all along

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council for physiotherapy two years ago. Such a body has been formed but is yet to be functional.

The demand for establishing a "Bangladesh College of Physiotherapy" has also remained stalled for the last 12 years.

"This situation is a consequence of long-run negligence, professional conflict, bureaucratic tangles and a by-product of the ailing health system of the country," said Dr Mohammad Abdus Sabur, who teaches health system at the Institute of Health Economics, Dhaka University.

"Physiotherapy is one of the 17 medical technology disciplines in the country. In fact, the entire sector is in a total mess and needs proper planning," he told The Daily Star.

"Hundreds of thousands of people suffering from pain are deprived of proper care in the absence of a well-organised physiotherapy service in the country."

An integral part of modern medical science, physiotherapy is a non-surgical treatment process aimed at reducing pain, improving movement and restoring functionality of a patient's health.

The World Health Organisation has projected that by 2050, the global geriatric population will reach nearly two billion, which was around 547 million in 2010.

According to the Bangladesh Physical Therapy Association (BPA), more than 20 million people in Bangladesh have been suffering from mild to severe chronic pain.

But there are only over 3,000 physiotherapy graduates in the country; less than 1,000 of them are serving in different hospitals -- mostly private, according to BPA.

"We are serving patients, but we have no legal recognition like the MBBS or BDS physicians. It has resulted in mushrooming of quacks posing as physiotherapists. There is neither accountability, nor safeguards for us," Md Dalilur Rahman, president of BPA, told The Daily Star.

Bangladesh Physiotherapy Students Union (BAPSU) launched a series of demonstrations since August to press home their seven-point demand including infrastructure for the Bangladesh College of Physiotherapy, their appointment in all public hospitals as first-class officers after graduation, and scope of higher education in public institutions for graduates.

"The physiotherapists face discrimination. After completing a graduate degree, we have little scope to join government hospitals," said Partha Kumar, co-convenor of BAPSU and a final year student at the National Institute of Traumatology and Orthopaedic Rehabilitation (NITOR).

Contacted, Prof Nasima Sultana, additional director general (administration) of the Directorate General of Health Services (DGHS), told The Daily Star, "We are working on it. The ministry is also working for the creation of posts for the physiotherapists."

'Time to heal'

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"The people of this nation have spoken. They have delivered us a clear victory, a convincing victory," Biden told honking and cheering supporters in a parking lot in his hometown of Wilmington, Delaware.

The Democrat pledged that as president he will seek to unify the country and "marshal the forces of decency" to battle the COVID-19 pandemic, rebuild economic prosperity, secure healthcare for American families and root out systemic racism.

Without addressing his Republican rival, Biden spoke directly to the 70 million Americans who cast ballots in support of Trump, some of whom took to the streets on Saturday to demonstrate against the results.

"For all those of you who voted for President Trump, I understand the disappointment tonight. I've lost a couple times myself. But now, let's give each other a chance. It's time to put away the harsh rhetoric, lower the temperature, see each other again, listen to each other again," he said.

"This is the time to heal in America."

He also thanked Black voters, saying that even at his campaign's lowest moments, the African American community had stood up for him. "They always have my back, and I'll have yours," he said.

Casting his eye further, Biden said he would "make America respected around the world again" -- a reference to Trump's tearing up of traditional diplomatic ties.

Biden was introduced by his running mate, US Senator Kamala Harris, who will be the first woman, the first Black American and the first American of Asian descent to serve as vice president, the country's No 2 office.

"What a testament it is to Joe's character that he had the audacity to break one of the most substantial barriers that exists in our country, and select a woman as his vice president," Harris said.

Congratulations poured in from abroad, including from conservative British Prime Minister Boris Johnson, Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau, German Chancellor Angela Merkel and Israeli Prime Minister

However, BMDC refused to take physiotherapy and rehabilitation professionals under its umbrella.

In 2013, BMDC informed the court that they were unable to regulate the physiotherapy professionals due to scarcity of manpower and suggested forming another independent council.

Experts said this was a result of professional conflict between the physiotherapists and the MBBS graduates who study physical medicine as part of their curriculum.

This is not the only example of the conflict.

In 2012, the DGHS launched a file proposing to create 438 posts for physiotherapists in government medical colleges and hospitals, but was halted after the BMA opposed it, source said.

Against this backdrop, the DGHS arranged a meeting with the BPA, BMA, BMDC and several other stakeholders in 2014.

That meeting ended without any decision.

"The professional conflict has always been there. Like all other medical technologists, physiotherapists are also allies of physicians globally. Unfortunately, neither the job of physiotherapists nor any other medical technologists are defined under any legal framework," said Dr MA Sabur.

Against this backdrop, parliament passed the National Rehabilitation Council Act in 2018 to form a separate council for physiotherapists and several other allied disciplines under the social welfare ministry.

Two years have passed by but the council is yet to start functioning.

"The council has been formed, but appointment of manpower against 25 posts is yet to be approved by the finance ministry," said Abul Hossain, registrar of the council and a joint secretary of the social welfare ministry.

Experts, however, said such councils other than that under the health and family welfare ministry may create another complication as physiotherapists are part of the health system.

Prof Nazrul Islam, former vice chancellor of BSMMU, told The Daily Star, "Forming a separate council is good. However, ensuring coordination should be a priority. Otherwise, it may create another complexity."

Dr MA Sabur said, "All technologists -- whether it be diploma or graduate degree -- should be brought under a legal framework. And this must be under the health ministry as they have to serve under the health system in the long run. Otherwise, it would create another chaos."

BMDC also advocated for forming a separate council for physiotherapy and other allied disciplines under the health ministry.

"We have always said that there is no scope to integrate physiotherapy or any other allied disciplines within the purview of BMDC Act. But we recommended forming a separate council [for physiotherapy] only under the health ministry," said BMDC acting registrar Dr Arman Hossain.

Bill placed

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asked to submit its report before the House within seven work days.

In the proposed law, the punishment for rape is death penalty or life imprisonment.

According to Article 9 (1) of the existing Women and Children Repression Prevention Act-2000, the punishment for rape is life imprisonment.

The proposed law was promulgated through the president's ordinance on October 13 as the parliament was not in session and there were growing demands from people across the country to institute death penalty for rapists.

Law Minister Anisul Huq placed the ordinance in Parliament yesterday, the first sitting of the special session of parliament to mark Mujib Year -- birth centenary of Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman.

The ordinance was issued following waves of anti-rape demonstrations across Bangladesh after footage of five men stripping a woman naked and gang-raping her, and filming the video of the incident in Noakhali's Begumganj upazila, went viral on social media in early October.

The incident occurred at Joykrishnapur village under Eklashpur union of the upazila on September 2.

At least 975 women were reportedly raped across the country in the last nine months and 161 of the incidents took place last month, according to rights organisation Ain o Salish Kendra's (ASK's) October report.

Of them, 208 women were gang-raped, 43 murdered after rape and 12 rape victims died by suicide, the report added. Three women and nine men were killed while protesting assault incidents.

Bangladesh Mahila Parishad, meanwhile, said they recorded 129 rape incidents in September and 83 of the victims were minors.

Several organisations including Feminists Across Generations -- an inter-generational feminist alliance -- however said the death penalty was not a solution and demanded an end to "rape culture".

According to Article 9 (3) of the existing law, if a woman falls victim to gang-rape, and is injured or dies, the punishment is the death penalty or life imprisonment for each rapist.

As per the bill, changes were also proposed to two other sub-articles -- 11 (Ga) and 20 (7) -- of the existing law.

Any simple injury for dowry will be a compoundable offence (the complainant can compromise to drop the charge against the accused), in accordance with sub-article 11 (Ga) of the proposed law.

As per sub-article 11 (Ga) of the existing law, one shall be sentenced for a maximum of three years and a minimum of one year's rigorous imprisonment and handed a monetary penalty for making the 'simple hurt' for dowry.

In Article 20 (7) of the bill, 'the Children Act, 2013' was incorporated in place of 'Children Act, 1974' yesterday in order to follow the latest law as much as possible during the trial of any crime committed under the Women and Children Repression Prevention Act-2000, in case any child commits or witnesses such a crime.

The trial of rape cases shall be completed by 180 days at Women and Children Repression Prevention Tribunals, according to the existing law.

Meanwhile, the House went into its first ever special session yesterday evening to mark the Mujib Borsho. This will also be the 10th session of the 11th Parliament. The House session started at 6:00pm with Speaker Shirin Sharmin Chaudhury in the chair.

At the beginning of the proceedings, the House unanimously adopted a condolence motion expressing profound shock for those who died between the last session of parliament prorogued on September 10 and the beginning of the present session.

Speaker Shirin Sharmin Chaudhury moved the condolence motion, which was adopted unanimously in the House.

This was the first time the Jatiya Sangsad went into any special session, sources at the parliament secretariat said.

The special session was scheduled to be held on March 22, but was postponed following the coronavirus outbreak.

Earlier, the parliament went into a special sitting on two occasions -- January 31 and June 18 in 1974 -- but it was in session on both occasions, addressed by former Yugoslav President Marshal Josip Broz Tito and then Indian president VV Giri respectively.

Due to the pandemic, the media will not be allowed to cover the session directly, except on November 9, when the president will deliver his speech in the House.

Benjamin Netanyahu, making it hard for Trump to push his repeated claims, without evidence, that the election was rigged against him.

Trump, who was golfing when the major television networks projected his rival had won, immediately accused Biden of "rushing to falsely pose as the winner."

"This election is far from over," he said in a statement.

Trump has filed a raft of lawsuits to challenge the results, but elections officials in states across the country say there has been no evidence of significant fraud, and legal experts say Trump's efforts are unlikely to succeed.

As the news of his win broke, cheers and applause were heard around Washington, with people emerging onto balconies, honking car horns and banging pots. Throngs of people streamed to the White House to rejoice outside a security fence as the sound of fireworks boomed in the distance. Joyous rallies were reported all across the country.

Trump supporters reacted with a

mix of disappointment, suspicion and resignation, highlighting the difficult task that Biden faces winning over many Americans, especially in more rural areas, who believe Trump was the first president to govern with their interests at heart.

"It's sickening and sad," said Kayla Doyle, a 35-year-old Trump supporter and manager of the Gridiron Pub on Main Street in the small town of Mifflintown, Pennsylvania. "I think it's rigged."

Angry pro-Trump "Stop the Steal" demonstrators gathered at state capitol buildings in Michigan, Pennsylvania and Arizona. Protesters in Phoenix chanted "We want audits!" One speaker told the crowd: "We will win in court!"

There were isolated instances of Trump and Biden supporters confronting each other, as occurred between two groups of about 100 each in Harrisburg, Pennsylvania, but there were no immediate reports of the violence many had feared. The pro-Trump protests mostly faded as the results sank in.