

BANGLADESH
UPDATE



1,845
New cases in 24hrs



4,27,198
Total cases



6,140
Deaths



3,44,868
Recoveries

GLOBAL
UPDATE



1,295,722
Deaths



52,916,869
Total cases

34 robbers give up arms, surrender

MOHAMMAD JAMIL KHAN, from Banshkhali

At least 34 members of 11 robbery gangs yesterday surrendered their weapons to Rab-7 at Chattagram's Banshkhali Adarsha High School.

Rab-7 Commander Lt Col Moshir Rahman Jewel presided over the surrender ceremony, in which local members of parliament and high officials of police and Rab were also present.

Home Minister Asaduzzaman Khan attended as the chief guest, while Shamsul Hoque Tuku, chairman of the parliamentary standing committee on the home ministry, Home Senior Secretary Mostofa Kamal Uddin, Inspector General of Police Benazir Ahmed and Rab Additional Director General Col Tofail Mostafa Sarwar were special guests.

Addressing the ceremony, Asaduzzaman warned robbers who are yet to surrender would face legal action.

Regarding those who have surrendered, he said the government would provide all necessary legal assistance for the disposal of the cases against them, unless there are charges of murder or rape.

IGP Benazir Ahmed suggested that Rab provide support and rehabilitate the surrendered robbers based on their individual expertise.

He said the Sundarbans was declared a robber-free area in 2018 and now around 25 lakh locals are being able to live there without fear.

He urged everyone to stand against those who are trying to sabotage and foil the country's development.

The 34 robbers surrendered 90 firearms and 2,056 bullets and cartridges.

Earlier on October 20, 2018, 43 robbers of Maheshkhali surrendered their arms at a similar programme, said Lt Col Jewel.

Meanwhile, Rab-6 in Khulna and Rab-8 in Barishal celebrated the second anniversary of the day the Sundarbans was declared robber-free.

Addressing the occasion, the elite force gave financial aid and clothes

to robbers who previously laid down their arms.

SECOND CHANCE AT LIFE

Five years ago, Mizanur Rahman got married and took up a tuition job to support his new two-member family.

However, as the income was too low, he got himself involved in different criminal activities and joined a robbery gang in Maheshkhali to make easy money.

Six months into his marriage, he got arrested twice and served jail for over three and a half years.

Speaking to this correspondent, Mizan's wife Zinnat Ara said her five-year-old daughter has not yet gotten the chance to spend any time with her father.

"I am hopeful that my husband will now be able to get back to his normal life get the chance to get his normal life back and my family can finally be happy," she said.

Sardar Abdul Hakim, chief of the Baisya Dakat gang, said, "I was the son of a good man -- a fisherman -- and we used to lead a happy life out at sea. But five years ago, I was lured onto a dark path by some bad people.

"People started hating me and my children because I chose this path. But now I have the chance to go back to a normal life."

He urged all others, who are still on the path of crimes, to surrender.

"You will not get this opportunity again once it's gone."

Another robber from Maheshkhali, Mamun, also said he was happy to be able to get another chance at a peaceful life.

Nazim Bhandari, 60, was excited that his son got the opportunity to surrender. "My son Enamul Hoque was a CNG-run auto-rickshaw driver. He got involved in crimes to make easy money, but now he will get another chance at a good life."

Speaking to The Daily Star, Nesar Majhi, a boatman who was injured in an attack by robbers, said, "Thousands of people have been tortured in the area due to such attacks [by robbers]. I am very happy to see the surrender of 34 of them."

74 dead as boat sinks near Libya

FROM PAGE 1

those hoping to travel to Europe, mainly embarking from Libya and neighbouring Tunisia.

The UN's International Organization for Migration reported "a devastating shipwreck which claimed the lives of at least 74 migrants today off the coast of Khoms," in a statement, adding that the coastguard and fishermen were searching for survivors.

Khoms is a port city 120 kilometres west of the Libyan capital Tripoli.

The IOM called it the latest disaster in a "series of tragedies" involving at least eight other shipwrecks in the Mediterranean sea since the start of October.

"The boat was reported to be carrying over 120 people, among them women and children," the IOM said, adding that 47 survivors had been brought back to shore and 31 bodies retrieved.

The IOM said in the past two days, at least 19 other people, including two children, drowned after two boats capsized in the central Mediterranean.

More than 20,000 migrants have died in the last seven years, according to the UN refugee agency.

Human traffickers have taken advantage of persistent violence in Libya since the 2011 fall of dictator Muammar Gaddafi, turning the country into a key corridor for migrants fleeing war and poverty in desperate bids to reach Europe.

While many have drowned at sea, thousands have been intercepted by the Libyan coast guard, which has been backed by Italy and the EU, and returned to Libya.

They mostly end up in detention, often in horrific conditions.

Educational institutions

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the schools due to the pandemic and extended the closure in several phases. Academic activities of around four crore students are being hampered due to the pandemic.

The long closure has led to cancellation of exams and left academic calendars in disarray.

This year's Secondary Certificate and equivalent exams, Primary Education Completion and its equivalent exams, and Junior School Certificate and its equivalent exams were cancelled.

In place of HSC exams, candidates will be evaluated based on their results in JSC and SSC tests.

More than one crore students of Class-VI to IX will be promoted to the next classes this year without any annual examinations, the government announced. Instead, school authorities will give assignments to students.

Because of the pandemic, the government will not hold the Textbook Festival on January 1 when textbooks are handed over to primary and secondary students for free.

It also delayed introduction of new curriculums by a year. The pandemic also made the admission tests at schools uncertain.

The government launched

educational programmes on Sangsad TV for secondary students on March 29, for primary students on April 7, and for technical and madrasa students on April 19 to help them make up for the losses due to the closure of educational institutions.

Many guardians said it was only partially fulfilling the objective, as almost half of the people -- many of them underprivileged -- do not have access to TV sets.

Worst day

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17,112 tests yesterday, the positivity rate was 10.78 percent, while the overall positivity rate stood at 17.08 percent.

At least 1,737 Covid-19 patients recovered in the 24 hours.

With this, the total number of recoveries rose to 3,44,868, while the recovery rate stood at 80.73 percent.

Among the 13 deceased yesterday, four were females. All of them died in hospitals, according to the press release.

Four of them were aged between 51 and 60 years and nine were above 60 years old, added the release.

As of yesterday, a total of 2,533 patients were undergoing treatment in general beds while 268 were in ICU beds at the Covid-19 designated hospitals across the country, added the release.



Home Minister Asaduzzaman Khan, Chairman of the Parliamentary Standing Committee on the Home Ministry Shamsul Hoque Tuku, Inspector General of Police Benazir Ahmed along with other Rab and police officials pose for a photo with arms surrendered by 34 robbers. Rab-7 organised the surrender programme at Banshkhali Adarsha High School field in Chattogram yesterday.

PHOTO: STAR

AL candidates win by-polls in Sirajganj, Dhaka

FROM PAGE 1

In Sirajganj-1, Tanvir got 1,88,325 votes while BNP's Selim Reza got 468. Voter turnout was 51.75 percent.

Polling in both constituencies started at 8:00am and continued until 4:00pm without a break.

In Dhaka, police, Ansar and Election Commission officials were seen playing the role of spectators while the rules were broken.

A large crowd of AL supporters and activists was seen on the premises of Baunia Abdul Jalil High School, less than a kilometre from the international airport.

There were five centres in the school.

Inside a booth on the ground floor of a building, where no one except the voter is allowed, two women wearing boat badges were guiding the voters.

When asked, Presiding Officer Mohammad Shahadat Hossain said he was not aware of it.

He went with this correspondent to the booth and found one of the women inside a booth.

"No one can enter the booth. Please don't go there," he told the woman.

On the 2nd floor of a nearby government primary school, a polling agent wearing a white panjabi was seen holding the hand of a voter and taking him towards an EVM machine.

Asked, Presiding Officer Mir Anisur Rahman said it was not possible for officials to patrol all the time.

"I instructed them not to allow anyone except the voters in the booth," he said.

Pointing to a crowd of ruling party men on the school premises, he said, "You understand the situation here."

At a booth for women at Bangamata Sheikh Fazilatunnesa Mujib Govt Secondary School near Hajj Camp, a man wearing an AL badge cast a vote before this correspondent, apparently manipulating the devices. The photo and other details of a female private service holder appeared on the display when the man wearing a red shirt put his finger on the sensor.

Despite this, the polling officer asked the young man to cast his vote. The man then went to the booth meant for women and cast a vote.

Asked what had been happening, the polling officer left the room without an answer. Within a few moments, the man along with two others approached the correspondent and asked furiously, "Any problem?"

Hundreds of AL supporters were outside the school while the correspondent left the premises.

In Sirajganj, the BNP brought allegations of a lack of peaceful environment.

BNP candidate Selim Reza told the Daily Star that no polling agent of BNP could stay in polling centres because ruling party men drove them away.

AL nominee Tanvir said these were politically motivated allegations.

9 buses torched in sudden attacks

FROM PAGE 1

2:30pm; one in front of Pubali Petrol Pump in Motijheel area at about 3:00pm; and another on Progati Sarani around 4:30pm.

Abu Bakar Siddique, officer-in-charge of Paltan Police Station, said a government minibus was set on fire around 12:30pm on the north side of the BNP central office.

He said they picked up nine people from Nayapaltan area on suspicion of involvement in subversive activities.

Many commuters said they had to suffer in long tailbacks following the arson incidents that slowed down vehicular movement in different parts of the city.

Talking to this newspaper, a street

vendor who sells fruits near the secretariat said, "Suddenly, I saw fire in the rear of a Shahabgh-bound bus at the northern gate of the secretariat around 2:00pm. The passengers got down from the vehicle hurriedly."

He further said that initially, everyone thought the engine caught fire due to technical problems.

Sajib Kazi, another street vendor on Bangabandhu Avenue, said he saw smoke coming out from the rear of a bus that got stuck in traffic jam.

"Within a few seconds, fire engulfed the whole bus. All the passengers managed to get down," he added.

Russel Shikder, duty officer of the Fire Service and Civil Defence, said that

on information, their units rushed to the spots to douse fire. No causality was reported in the incidents.

Khondaker Enayet Ullah, secretary general of Bangladesh Road Transport Owners Association, believe that those were arson attacks as the buses were torched within a few hours.

He suspected that criminals in the guise of passengers boarded the buses and later set those on fire.

Enayet Ullah demanded compensation for the owners of the torched buses and punishment to all those responsible for the incidents.

Law enforcers were seen patrolling various key points in the capital since yesterday afternoon.

Court frames charges against Prothom Alo editor

FROM PAGE 1

Matiur and eight others, now on bail, pleaded not guilty and demanded justice after Judge KM Emrul Kayesh of the Metropolitan Sessions Judge's Court of Dhaka read out the charges to them.

Before that, the court dismissed five other petitions submitted by their lawyers for discharging them from the case.

The court then fixed December 14 for starting trial of the case.

On November 1 last year, Abrar, a ninth-grader, was electrocuted during the anniversary programme of Prothom Alo's youth magazine Kishor Alo.

The victim's father Mojibur Rahman filed the case with the

Fourth Additional Chief Metropolitan Magistrate's Court in Dhaka on November 6 last year.

In the complaint, Mojibur said his son was electrocuted and became unconscious around 4:30pm on November 1 last year while attending the programme of Kishor Alo.

Dhaka's Additional Chief Metropolitan Magistrate Aminul Haque took the case into cognisance and ordered the OC of Mohammadpur Police Station to submit an investigation report.

On January 16 this year, Abdul Alim, inspector of Mohammadpur Police Station, submitted the probe report to the court, saying that the charges brought against all the 10 accused were found to be true.

Dhaka's Additional Chief Metropolitan Magistrate Kaisarul Islam issued arrest warrants against Matiur Rahman and nine others in the case that day.

Following the arrest warrants, Matiur Rahman got bail from the High Court while nine others got bails from different lower courts.

On September 20, Dhaka Metropolitan Magistrate Mohammad Jasim ordered to transfer the case to the Dhaka Metropolitan Sessions Judge's Court for trial.

Earlier on October 1, the Dhaka Metropolitan Sessions Judge's Court took cognisance of the charges against Matiur Rahman and nine others in the case.

China to build power plant for DNCC area

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They have chosen the Chinese company among 17 candidates as they found it to be technically and financially viable, Nasrul said.

He said they are also initiating another project in Narayanganj, where a company has already been selected through tender.

Narayanganj City Corporation is providing land for the project. At the plant, 5 megawatts of electricity will be generated from waste, the state minister said.

As the volume of waste generated in Narayanganj is less compared to that of the capital, the amount of electricity generation will also be less, he added.

"We have also undertaken a similar plan in Dhaka South City Corporation areas. A negotiation in this regard is ongoing," he had said.

The state minister said they also have a plan to start the process in Gazipur. Responding to a question on air pollution, Nasrul said along with the selected company they will ensure that less carbon dioxide is emitted during power generation.

On plastic pollution, the state minister said in Germany, a consumer has to give green tax to the city mayor to use plastic items, which acts as a disincentive in plastic use in restaurants and other places. Residents also re-use bags, he said.

People also sort their waste at home in Germany. That does not happen in Bangladesh, he added.

"I have already spoken to DNCC officials in this regard," he said.

DNCC Chief Waste Management Officer Commodore Saidur Rahman told The Daily Star yesterday that as their existing landfill at Amin Bazar

has almost been filled up, they are going to set up another one next to it.

A development project proposal (DPP) for 80 acres of land has already been approved, he added.

"We will provide 30 acres of land to the company to use it for 25 years to set up a plant to generate power from waste," he said.

Saidur said they will provide 2,500 to 3,000 tonnes of waste generated in DNCC areas every day, which the company will segregate at the landfill to generate electricity.

"This will also help us reduce open disposal of waste and keep the city and environment clean," he said.

As waste volume will decrease to one-third due to the initiative, dumping areas will also be reduced gradually, the chief waste management officer said.

Protect society from militancy, terrorism and corruption: PM

UNB, Dhaka

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina yesterday urged all to protect the society from militancy, terrorism, corruption and drugs and to utilise the talent and strength of the young generation for the development of the country.

"It's essential to maintain peace in the country. We will have to protect our society from militancy, terrorism, corruption, and drugs. Then we can use the talent of the young generation for development," she said.

The PM was addressing a programme marking the opening of two newly-constructed buildings and an officers' mess for the members of the Directorate General of Forces Intelligence (DGFI).

PM's Press Secretary Ihsanul Karim briefed reporters after the programme.

Hasina opened two 14-storey building and a modern seven-storey officers' mess in Dhaka Cantonment area through a video conference from the Gono Bhaban.

The premier asked the DGFI members to discharge their duties sincerely for the wellbeing of the people.

She asked them to know the history of Bangladesh, love the country and work for it and its people, saying that she learnt it from her parents. "I always want this [working for people]."

Hasina said armed forces are very essential to protect the country's independence and sovereignty. Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman had built the war-ravaged country with one hand and developed the armed forces properly with the other, she added.

The PM said the goal of her government is to make Bangladesh a hunger- and poverty-free, developed and prosperous country as dreamt by the Father of the Nation.

DGFI Director General Maj Gen Mohammad Saiful Alam delivered the welcome speech. PM's Security Adviser Maj Gen (retd) Tarique Ahmed Siddique, Defence Secretary Abu Hena Mostofa Kamal and PMO Secretary Tofazzel Hossain Miah were present.

BGB sues BLAST employee for 'defamation'

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Cox's Bazar

The Border Guard Bangladesh (BGB) on Tuesday filed a defamation case of Tk 100 crore against a female employee of Bangladesh Legal Aid and Services Trust (BLAST).

In the case, the woman was accused of "premeditated propagation of false allegations such as that of gang-rape" against some BGB personnel.

Nayeb Subedar Mohammad Ali Molla, in-charge of Damdamia check post of BGB Battalion-2 on Cox's Bazar-Teknaf highway, filed the case with the court of Senior Judicial Magistrate Tamanna Farah in Cox's Bazar.

The BLAST employee is the lone accused in the case. Mohammad Ali, in the case statement, said that the woman's "false allegation" has severely tarnished the image of a force like the BGB.

On October 13, BLAST in a press statement demanded justice for its female employee alleging she was a victim of sexual violence at a checkpoint on the Teknaf-Cox's Bazar road. It also demanded that the government ensure her safety.

According to the plaintiff's lawyers Sazzadul Karim and Zia Uddin Ahmed, the accused on October 8 was heading for Teknaf from Hnila on a CNG-run auto-rickshaw.

"On-duty BGB men in Damdamia stopped the auto-rickshaw for regular checking, but the accused would not comply. Female BGB personnel later made her disembark the vehicle and she was searched.

"She later raised the allegation of 'gang-rape' against male BGB members of the check post and went to Teknaf Police Station to file a rape case. A medical board of Cox's Bazar Sadar Hospital examined her but did not find any evidence of rape."

In another press statement, BLAST, however, pointed out that their employee had not alleged rape. "We have earlier been informed of the allegations of sexual abuse, not rape, at the check post and have raised our concerns about the need to inquire into such allegations.

"We have not received any allegations from any staffer regarding 'rape' or 'gang rape' against BGB members and nor, to our knowledge, have such allegations been made to the police or any hospital. We are concerned that press reports included inaccurate statements about the allegations."

BLAST expressed alarm at the defamation case filed against its employee.

"A woman who raises concerns about safety and abuse should not have to face her character being questioned, nor should she be intimidated by allegations of criminal defamation against her. Reporting rates in cases of violence against women are already low in our country and using the law this way will only serve to intimidate and inhibit victims from raising any concern," said the organisation.