

BANGLADESH
UPDATE



2,364
New cases in 24hrs



4,41,159
Total cases



6,306
Deaths



3,56,722
Recoveries

GLOBAL
UPDATE



1,361,707
Deaths



57,001,890
Total cases

Act fast to save the planet

Hasina urges world leaders about combatting climate change, calls for \$100b fund a year to support adaptation

UNB, Dhaka

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina yesterday asked global leaders to ensure concessional finance and debt relief and access to technology for all to overcome the impending crisis posed by climate change.

She also called for the promised \$100 billion per year to support adaptation and mitigation activities.

"The time to take action to save the planet is not tomorrow, it's today. Strict implementation of the Paris Agreement is the only way out and the issue of 'Loss and Damage' must be mainstreamed," the PM said.

Hasina was addressing the high level panel closing session of the UNFCCC Race to Zero Dialogues on "Transformational Leadership to Meet Net-Zero Ambition" through a pre-recorded video message.

The premier said though climate change is a stark reality for all, it is more evident for the climate vulnerable countries like Bangladesh.

"A further rise in the sea level, even for half a metre, could threaten the very survival of many climate vulnerable

countries," she said, adding that the global leadership must take bold decisions to reduce carbon emission to save life and precious resources.

Considering global high risks, the national parliament of Bangladesh declared a "Planetary Emergency" and called upon the world to work "on a war footing" to stop climate change, the PM said. "We expect the same approach from the rest of the global leadership."

Hasina mentioned that Bangladesh this year faced recurrent flooding along with two cyclones that damaged crops and habitats, and affected people's livelihood amid the Covid-19 pandemic. "All these were happening due to global warming which is altering nature."

The PM said the bottom 100 countries account for just 3.5 percent of the global emission whereas the G20 countries are responsible for three-quarters.

"So, we expect more responsible actions from the leadership of these countries. We also call for an international day to be named 'Climate Resilience Day' to secure our harmony with mother earth."

Govt cannot put

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In reply, the premier said that it was not a big loss for the students and that England had done the same.

The PM again urged people to follow the hygiene rules and not to go outdoors without a mask as she warned about a possible second wave of coronavirus.

On November 9, the prime minister and leader of the House placed the resolution under rule 147 of the Rules of Procedure to pay solemn tributes to Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman through a special session convened by President Abdul Hamid on the occasion of Mujib Borsho.

Seventy-nine MPs from treasury and opposition bench MPs took part in the 19-hour-long discussion on the resolution in five work days.

The House on November 15 unanimously adopted a resolution to pay tributes to Bangabandhu to mark the birth centenary of the father of the nation.

Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman "gave us a country. He wanted to build a... developed and prosperous country. But he got only three and a half years," she said.

"The name of the Father of the Nation was erased from history after his assassination. Many false rumors were spread about Bangabandhu and his family. But Bangabandhu... wanted to change the fate of the people of Bangladesh."

A total of nine bills, including the one on Women and Children Repression Amendment, had been passed in the special session in 10 work days.

On January 31 and June 18 in 1974, while the parliament was in session, special sittings were arranged, officials at parliament secretary told The Daily Star. Former Yugoslav President Marshal Josip Broz Tito and then Indian president VV Giri addressed parliament respectively on those occasions.

Rape linked to women clad

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Ministry of Women's Welfare Foundation and the Ministry of Women and Children Affairs. The government has been working for the rehabilitation of women and their rights all the time, especially under the leadership of our prime minister.

Bangladesh has a culture of its own. Parliament has approved death penalty for rape, and we all appreciate this as a timely measure. There is a social custom in Bangladesh.

It would not be right if anyone takes what I meant by "feminists" personally or organisationally. What I meant was not to go beyond the policy of the government or religious norms. For example, when I go out on the street, if I don't wear proper clothes, if I walk around wearing a T-shirt -- that was what I meant.

DS: What do you mean by proper clothes? Is there any law in the constitution that forbids women to wear T-shirts? Why would it be an offence if a woman comes out on the street wearing a T-shirt and what does it have to do with rape incidents?

Bablu: Of course, rape has something to do with wearing a T-shirt and going out on the streets. Whenever a grown-up woman walks down the street in indecent clothing, perverted men with evil intention will look at her.

DS: Then the problem lies with the man.

Bablu: We will have to get to the root of that evil.

DS: So, where is that root?

Bablu: We all have to understand that.

DS: We want to know your understanding. Nurat and Tanu used to be all covered up and they did not wear T-shirts, yet they were victims of rape. How do you explain that?

Bablu: We cannot take those incidents as examples. We will have to focus on the overall issue. The evil desires of those perverted men stem from watching people on the streets or online pornography. Their lust is created in one place and they abuse it in another.

DS: Do you think maintaining hijab will put an end to these heinous acts?

Bablu: Not really, but will curb it greatly.

DS: You wanted the implementation of the "tamarinds theory" of Hefajats late amir Ahmad Shafi.

Bablu: We are aware of the explanation given by Maulana Shafi Sahib. We have our own culture and social system. We cannot compare our culture with that of the "free-sex countries" of the West, which is not acceptable here.

DS: You are talking about free-sex of the West. Will you be more specific about which countries you are referring to?

Bablu: I have visited France and Spain.

DS: Do you mean France and Spain are free-sex countries?

Bablu: If you consider things lexically, then it won't help. In these countries, women enjoy complete freedom. After the age of 18, a girl can no longer be ruled by her parents. In our country, families follow different social norms and we need to abide by them.

DS: You are talking about our culture. What is the culture of Bangladesh -- shari, hijab or jeans and t-shirt?

Bablu: I don't mean shari or t-shirt as reference in our culture. It is about dressing decently.

DS: What do you mean by dressing decently?

Bablu: It's not all about clothes but also about how we move around. One dress code will not define how decent we are.

DS: Are we not acting like decent people?

Bablu: Many of us are following, but I also notice deviation.

DS: That is why you want the "tamarinds theory" to be implemented?

Bablu: It is not necessary that we will have to implement that theory. It is all about our mothers and sisters going anywhere and presenting themselves in a certain way so perverts will not get an opportunity and be provoked to rape.

This will definitely reduce rape incidents. At the same time, the way the government is enforcing the law will also curb it. But a law alone cannot solve this problem. We will also have to combat this heinous crime socially.

DS: Do you think decent clothing needs to be included in the anti-rape laws?

Bablu: A law alone will not help if we as citizens do not have the awareness of the law. Legal obligations must be associated with our awareness.

DS: A few days ago, you came to the discussion with a picture of weapons in your hand on a Facebook post. What is the state of law and order? Why do you need weapons?

Bablu: It was not like that. Many people, including MPs and contractors, can keep arms for their own safety with the permission of the government. I also took it for my safety. If you take a good look at the picture that has been published, you will see that I was just having a feel of the weapon in the showroom. One of the people who was with me posted the picture.

DS: The photo was posted from your own Facebook profile. Does it mean the law enforcers are not enough to protect an MP or contractors like you or others? And is this the reason that you are keeping your own weapons and forces?

Bablu: What you said is exaggerated. The fact is that the present government has upgraded the Bangladesh Police and made it stronger.

DS: Then why do you need personal weapons?

Bablu: As people's representatives, we have to travel a lot and go to places at night. Sometimes we don't have police with us. So, we need weapons for personal security.



Policemen put a sticker on the windshield of a CNG-run auto-rickshaw on Sadar Road in Barishal city as part of a rally organised to raise awareness on the importance of wearing masks in curbing the spread of novel coronavirus. The programme was organised yesterday by Barishal Kotwali Model Police Station under the Barishal Metropolitan Police.

PHOTO: STAR

Bribes keep them running

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safety. But there is no visible initiative to get them off the roads even though people are getting killed because of them almost every day.

Yesterday, nine people were killed and seven others injured when one of these vehicles flipped into a roadside ditch in Shibganj upazila of Chapainawabganj.

These vehicles and similarly illegal easy bikes were involved in more than 15 percent of total 5,516 roads crashes last year, according to Bangladesh Jatri Kalyan Samity, a passenger welfare body.

The exact number of such vehicles on the roads is almost impossible to ascertain but people involved in the sector claimed that there were more than 10 lakh plying the roads.

BANNED, YET NOT

As per section 46 (4) of Road Transport Act-2018, nobody is allowed to operate faulty, risky, banned or restricted vehicles on roads and highways or issue permission to operate such vehicles.

The section explains that "Nasimon, Karimon, Bhatbhati, easy bike, powered rickshaw and van are such vehicles".

Even before the enactment of the law, Road Transport and Bridges Ministry imposed a ban on three-wheelers on 22 major highways in August 2015.

The High Court in January 2017 ordered imposing a ban on such improvised three-wheelers on highways across the country to reduce the number of road crashes.

Almost all probe committees investigating major crashes over the last three years recommended stopping the movement of these locally made three wheelers and unfit vehicles on highways.

But the vehicles remained on the roads and highways.

Road Transport and Bridges Minister

Obaidul Quader, on several occasions, admitted that the government could not fully implement the ban due to opposition from many politicians, including public representatives.

"Many politicians of the country are behind it. We give order [banning these three-wheelers] ... on the other hand, many public representatives encourage the plying of such vehicles," he said at a views exchange meeting on September 4, 2018.

"Even though I want it [the ban], local representatives won't let it happen," a participant of a meeting of National Road Safety Council held in November 2017 quoted Quader as saying.

Osman Ali, general secretary Bangladesh Road Transport Workers Federation, said, "Some of these vehicles operate under 'minister's names', some under 'MP's names' and others under the local 'mayor's names'.

"The authorities should first investigate who actually manage the operations of these illegal vehicles," he told The Daily Star yesterday.

Another top transport leader said before putting one of these vehicles into service, the owner has to pay Tk 2,000 to Tk 3,000 to get it listed with so-called transport organisations, which are usually run by the local political leaders.

The owners also have to pay a particular amount daily and some people from police and administration get a cut, he said wishing anonymity.

Whenever the administration wants to take actions against these vehicles, the local leaders say it is cruel to the poor people who run these vehicles. "But the fact is they want to protect their interests -- money and vote," the leader said.

NO PROPER KNOWLEDGE OF SAFETY FEATURES

These vehicles are risky because makers of these vehicles do not have

the proper knowledge about safety features while drivers are not aware of road-safety rules and regulations, said Prof Md Hadiuzzaman, director of Accident Research Institute of Buet.

"With the rise in the number of such vehicles, the number of road crashes will increase," he said, adding that the government should take immediate and strong steps to control them.

"It may not be possible to stop operations of such vehicles overnight, but the government should phase those out gradually and replace those with standard public transport," he added.

About easy-bikes, which are battery powered, he said some "authorities" are giving them permissions but these are also sub-standard. Apart posing risks of accidents on roads, they are also the reason behind traffic jams in towns.

The batteries are also one of the causes of environment pollution as they are not recycled.

Prof Hadiuzzaman said the prime minister issued a directive to formulate a masterplan for rural road network and the authorities should synchronise standard public transports with it.

Nur Mohammad Mazumder, chairman of Bangladesh Road Transport Authority (BRTA), the government's transport regulatory body, said mobile courts of the BRTA and district administrations were regularly conducting drives against such illegal vehicles.

Replying to a question, he said road transport and bridges ministry has formed a committee, led by an additional secretary of the ministry, to find a way out of this problem. The committee is yet to submit its report, he said.

KL's plan to make foreign workers wear wristbands discriminatory

Say two rights groups

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Two rights groups of Malaysia yesterday condemned the country's government for planning to make migrant workers wear wristbands under the pretext of containing Covid-19.

Tenaganita, a migrant rights group, and Lawyers for Liberty, a human rights lawyers' organisation, have termed the Malaysian government's move "discriminatory", reported The Star.

The Southeast Asian country is home to a large number of Bangladeshi migrant workers, regular and undocumented.

Tenaganita said compulsory wristbands would be discriminatory, reported The Star.

The NGO's Executive Director Glorene Das said that if all foreign workers were forced to wear wristbands in the country, it would be a clear "criminalisation of migrant workers".

"They are not criminals or animals to be tagged," she said when contacted by The Star yesterday.

Glorene's statement came after Malaysia's Security Minister Ismail Sabri Yaakob's remark that the government is mulling whether to make it compulsory for all foreign workers to wear wristbands, The Star reported.

Nine killed

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Deputy Assistant Director of Chapainawabganj Fire Service Mohammad Saber Ali Pramanik said another victim, Abdul Latif, also died on his way to the health complex and the body was later handed over to family members.

Pramanik also said carrying a load greater than the vehicle's capacity and the narrow road were the main reasons behind the accident.

The victims were returning to Balladighi with paddy they got as part of their labour charge after harvesting paddy from Naogaon's Niamotpur upazila.

When informed of the accident, police and the fire service officials rushed to the spot and rescued five injured people, who were then taken to Shibganj Upazila Health Complex. On-duty doctors at the complex sent them to Rajshahi Medical College and Hospital as their condition deteriorated.

Bodiu Rahman of Barik Bazar village, who witnessed the incident, said, "I went out of my house and saw the vehicle overturned in a roadside ditch and I shouted for help. Many people came forward to rescue them."

Bodiu said the road is very narrow.

Shakib Al Rabbi, upazila nirbahi officer (UNO) of Shibganj upazila, said when handing the eight dead bodies to their family members, they also gave them TK 10,000 to each family.

They had also arranged ambulance to send injured persons to RMCH instantly, he said.

Explain steps taken to arrest PK Halder

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inaction and failure to arrest and bring Halder back home should not be declared illegal.

The HC bench of Justice Md Nazrul Islam Talukder and Justice Ahmed Soheli came up with the order and rule on a suo motu move following a report run by Bangla daily Bangladesh Pratidin on November 18 about Halder's fleeing and embezzling a huge amount of public money, Deputy Attorney General AKM Amin Uddin Manik told The Daily Star.

During the court proceedings, the HC bench observed that Halder fled the country after misappropriating thousands of crores of taka, but he was not arrested as if he was showing disregard for the state, which is not acceptable.

No one, including Halder, is above the law, the court said.

ACC lawyer Khurshid Alam Khan was present during the HC proceedings.

On October 21, another HC bench directed the law enforcement authorities to arrest Halder immediately after his return home.

Allowing Halder to return home, the HC asked the inspector general of police and the immigration police to arrest him immediately after his arrival at Hazrat Shajjalal International Airport.

The HC bench of Justice Muhammad Khurshid Alam Sarkar also asked the law enforcers to give Halder the scope to refund the money to the organisations from which he embezzled it.

Country sees rise in Covid deaths again

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rising trend was observed in daily deaths and the number of new cases.

With the latest figure, the Covid-19 death toll rose to 6,306.

In the same 24 hours, another 2,364 people tested positive for the virus, taking the total number of infections to 4,41,159.

Against a total of 17,531 tests in the same period, the positivity rate was 13.48 percent, which is more than the previous day's 12.82 percent.

With this, the overall positivity rate was 16.92 percent.

According to experts, the daily positivity rate is one of the important parameters to measure the transmission level of the virus.

If the rate remains below five percent and does not increase, it means the transmission is under control, epidemiologists said.

Throughout the last two months till last week, the positivity rate was below 12 percent almost every day and started increasing over the last week. Since last month, countries across Europe and

America have been witnessing a harsh spike in Covid-19 cases with the advent of winter even after successfully slowing the outbreak earlier in the year.

Observing a rising trend of cases and deaths, experts in Bangladesh stressed the need for immediate acceleration of scientific virus curbing measures.

Meanwhile, at least 1,934 Covid-19 patients have recovered in the same 24 hours.

The total number of recoveries rose to 3,56,722 and the recovery rate was 80.86 percent.

Among the 30 dead, 25 were male and five were female.


All of them died in hospital, according to the DGHS press release.

Two of them were aged between 41 and 50, seven between 51 and 60 and the rest were above 60 years, added the release.

A total of 2,720 patients were undergoing treatment in general beds while 289 were in ICU beds in Covid-19 dedicated hospitals across the country.




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Date: November 21, 2020 (Saturday)
Time: 09.30 a.m.



Chief Guest

Prof. Muhammad Yunus

Founder, Grameen Bank & Nobel Peace Laureate, Bangladesh
will deliver the Convocation Address

Watch live on www.kiit.ac.in & Kalinga TV from 9.30 a.m. onwards