

BANGLADESH UPDATE



436
New cases in 24hrs



531,326
Total cases



8,003
Deaths



475,899
Recoveries



GLOBAL UPDATE

2,122,886
Deaths



99,011,538
Total cases

TRUMP IMPEACHMENT TRIAL

Proceedings delayed until February 8

AGENCIES

Donald Trump's US Senate trial will begin in the second week of February, days after a fresh impeachment case against the former president is transmitted by the House, Senate Majority Leader Chuck Schumer said Friday.

The newly announced schedule reflects a deal struck by Senate leaders to delay the substantive portion of the trial for two weeks so that the chamber may conduct other critical business including confirmation of President Joe Biden's cabinet nominees.

The House of Representatives impeached Trump for a historic second time on January 13, just one week before he left office.

Schumer said the article of impeachment will be delivered and read out to the Senate on Monday at 7:00 pm (0000 GMT Tuesday). The chamber's 100 members will be sworn in as trial jurors the next day.

The House members assigned by Speaker Nancy Pelosi as impeachment managers, and members of Trump's yet-to-be-named defense team, will then be given time to draft their legal briefs.

"Once the briefs are drafted, presentation by the parties will commence the week of February 8," Schumer told colleagues on the Senate floor.

During the two-week interim, the Senate will act on Biden's cabinet nominations "and the Covid relief bill which would provide relief for millions of American who are suffering during this pandemic," Schumer added.

"Healing and unity will only come if there is truth and accountability, and that is what this trial will provide."

Members will deliberate whether to convict Trump on what the US Constitution describes as "high crimes and misdemeanors."

Trump was impeached on a single charge of "incitement of insurrection" for his role in whipping up his supporters during a speech in Washington on January 6, the day a pro-Trump mob stormed Congress and threatened the lives of lawmakers and then-vice president Mike Pence.

Five people died in the violence, including a police officer.

The delay is the result of a deal Schumer struck with Senate Minority Leader Mitch McConnell.

McConnell was a close congressional ally to Trump during his term, but he severely reprimanded the outgoing president for repeatedly seeking to overturn results of the election and for his incitement of protesters, and he

left the door open for voting to convict Trump.

But he had sought a delay in the trial until February, arguing Trump needs time to hire lawyers and mount a defense.

On Friday, McConnell appeared to express regret for the Democrats' speedy timetable.

"As I understand, it must be headed our way Monday. By Senate rules, if the article arrives, we have to start a trial right then," he said on the floor.

But the Senate can agree to its own parameters of the trial timeline.

McConnell spoke of the "unprecedentedly fast" process in the House, where Trump was impeached in a single day.

"The sequel cannot be an insufficient Senate process that denies former president Trump his due process or damages the Senate or the presidency itself," he said.

Trump survived a first impeachment almost a year ago when the then Republican-controlled Senate acquitted him of abusing his office to try to get dirt on Biden's family before the presidential election.

With the Senate now comprised of 50 Democrats and 50 Republicans, and a two-thirds majority needed to convict Trump, at least 17 Republicans would have to vote against the former president to secure a conviction.

If that occurs, a subsequent vote would be held on whether to ban Trump from holding public office in the future.

A handful of Republicans have spoken out harshly against the president but it remains unclear if there would be enough GOP senators to vote for conviction.

Meanwhile, a slim majority of Americans say Trump should be convicted by the Senate of inciting an insurrection and barred from holding public office, according to a Reuters/Ipsos poll, which showed a sharp partisan divide over the issue.

The national public opinion poll, conducted on Wednesday and Thursday, found that 51% of Americans think Trump should be found guilty for inciting the deadly storming of the US Capitol.

Another 37% said Trump should not be convicted and the remaining 12% said they were unsure.

When asked about the former Republican president's political future, 55% said Trump should not be allowed to hold elected office again, while 34% said he should be allowed to do so and 11% said they were unsure.



Health workers conduct testing in the Jordan area of Hong Kong yesterday, after thousands were ordered to stay in their homes for the city's first Covid-19 coronavirus lockdown as authorities battle an outbreak in one of its poorest and most densely packed districts.

PHOTO: AFP

Pandemic pushes 42pc into poverty

FROM PAGE 1

Most of the "new" poor belonged to the service sector, said Dr Raihan. 51.2 percent of the people who dropped below the poverty line last year were in this sector, SANEM found, providing glaring testament to the unemployment scenario during the pandemic.

In 2018, however, this was not the case; back then, agriculturalists made up the majority of the poor.

"Among those who were not poor at all in 2018, only half could retain their economic standing," Dr Raihan said, adding that the other half dropped down to various stages of poverty, with as many as 20 percent degrading to "extreme poor."

"Rangpur, Rajshahi and Mymensingh saw the biggest jump in the upper poverty rate from 2018 to 2020," he said, meaning that those districts experienced the highest increases in the number of poor people.

The highest in the country was in Rangpur, with 57.3 percent of its people being below the poverty line, according to the survey.

"This survey was done at the end of the year. Such findings were concerning because it shows that the impact of the pandemic has extended

throughout the year," said Dr Raihan.

In addition to Dr Raihan, the other authors of the study include Professors Sayeda Haque Bidisha and Mahtab Uddin of University of Dhaka, and research assistants Md Tuhi Ahmed, Mir Ashrafun Nahar and Jabun Nahar.

"Expenditure, especially non-food expenditure, fell sharply in 2020," said Dr Raihan. The extreme poor lowered their expenditure on non-food items by as much as 63 percent. They cut spending on food by 30 percent.

On the other hand, the non-poor, who did not cut back on food unlike others, had to spend more to retain their normal food consumption levels — they spent 17 percent more on food last year than they did in 2018. To compensate, they spent less on non-food items.

Expenditure on education was sacrificed across all income strata, found SANEM.

"Is the backward mobility of the socioeconomic classes temporary or permanent? We need to figure out what the shocks were and whether we can recover quickly," said Prof MM Akash of Department of Economics at University of Dhaka.

"Was there permanent loss of assets or distress selling? This needs to be

questioned," he said.

"If expenditure on education has decreased, we need to question whether this expenditure will bounce back. I think the expenditure on primary education will recover, because this is borne by the government," added Dr Akash.

Dr Fahmida Khatun, executive director of the Centre for Policy Dialogue, said, "We see that the support from the government was not sufficient and it could not compensate for the damages incurred by the population."

"Our development has not been inclusive. Survival mechanism is so little among the poor, that it was not enough to weather a crisis. We have not seen institutional steps to address this," she added.

Addressing the discussion, Dr Zahid Hussain, lead economist at The World Bank's Dhaka office, said, "The most important finding is that expenditure on education has decreased and alternative education methods like online education could not substitute in-person education. Learning poverty is not any less important than consumption poverty because we need to think about the future generations."

Everyone will have a home

FROM PAGE 1

Hasina asked all concerned, particularly the local administrations, to hand the ownerships of the houses to the beneficiaries.

She said 320,000 families were earlier given homes while work on building one lakh more houses for the landless and homeless would start soon.

The premier said she was very happy yesterday as she managed to give such a large number of houses to landless and homeless people.

Describing the ceremony marking the distribution of a large number of homes as the largest festival, Hasina said, "Today, it is the largest festival. There is no such big festival like giving homes to landless and homeless people on such a large scale."

She, however, thanked all concerned, including the local administrations and public representatives, for managing building such a huge number of houses maintaining due standard in a short period.

The PM said the souls of her father Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman and her mother and lakhs of martyrs who made supreme sacrifice for the country's Liberation War would rest in peace as such a huge number of people have got their own homes.

She urged all to pray for her as she could build the country as "Sonar Bangla" as dreamt by the Father of the Nation.

Referring to giving homes to the

backward people such as dalits, horijons, transgender, tea workers and others, the PM said her government was working tirelessly to ensure improved live for cross-section of people in the society.

Hasina said the government has also rehabilitated the climate refugees with giving them homes at Khuruskul of Cox's Bazar and 100 more buildings are being built for them.

She criticised the previous BNP-Jamaat government for stopping the housing projects taken by the then Awami League government in 1997 to rehabilitate the landless and homeless people.

The PM said the AL after forming the government in 2009 had again initiated the Ashrayan project to rehabilitate the landless and homeless people.

Hasina later exchanged views with the beneficiaries, local AL leaders and public representatives who got connected to the programme from Khulna, Nilphamari, Habiganj and Chapainawabganj.

A video documentary on the government's effort to rehabilitate the landless and homeless people was screened at the programme.

PMO Secretary Md Tofazzel Hossain Miah moderated the function from the Gono Bhaban end.

The government has built 66,189 houses at a cost of Tk 1,168 crore. Built on two decimals of land, each of the houses has two rooms, one corridor and one latrine alongside electricity and water connections.

A nurse to get the first jab Wednesday

FROM PAGE 1

There will be four vaccination kiosks at the DMCH.

"We are planning to start vaccination amid much merriment. There will be pre-and-post vaccination waiting spaces near the booths," said the DMCH director.

The team of vaccinators might be accompanied by doctors at the DMCH, he said.

As per the National Vaccination Plan, there will be two vaccinators — nurses or sub assistant medical officers — and four volunteers in each team. A total of 7,344 teams will be deployed across the country.

The government plans to roll out Covid-19 vaccines, bought from Serum Institute of India, early next month.

The general public will be able

to register for vaccination through a mobile app from January 26. The department of Information and Communication Technology (DOICT) will release the app after receiving permission from the Prime Minister's office, officials said.

However, those who do not have a national identity card or a passport will not be able to register using the app, said N M Zeaul Alam, senior secretary at the DOICT.

Bangladesh received 20 lakh doses of the Oxford-AstraZeneca vaccine as a gift from the Indian government on Thursday.

Bangladesh also purchased three crore doses of the vaccine from Serum Institute of India.

Beximco Pharmaceuticals Limited, the local agent of Serum, said they have yet to receive the shipping

documents for the first shipment of the vaccine doses.

"The tentative date of arrival is January 25 or 26. Once we get the details, we will be able to tell when and how many doses we will receive. Hopefully, we will get the details tomorrow [today]," Beximco Managing Director Nazmul Hassan Papon told The Daily Star.

Meanwhile, lists of frontline workers who will be prioritised for inoculation have not been finalised yet.

On January 13, Shamsul Haque Mridha of the Expanded Programme on Immunization, sent a letter to all deputy commissioners, asking for lists of frontline workers. But the health department has yet to receive the lists from every district.

Internal strife has AL worried

FROM PAGE 1

BNP leaders said they were working together to ensure victories for its mayoral candidate Shahadat Hossain and the party supported councillor hopefuls.

Central AL leaders, including Joint General Secretary Mahbubul Alam Hanif, had said they would take stern actions against the rebels. But the party is yet to take such actions fearing further division ahead of the city polls, insiders said.

According to the party's charter, the AL can expel the rebels from the party without issuing any show cause notice, but the party high command was still not taking any such action as it was unsure about the outcome of such a harsh move.

Talking to The Daily Star on condition of anonymity, a top central AL leader admitted that the division in the port city AL has become a headache for them as they fear the party's votes would split in Wednesday's polls which would be of advantage to BNP supported candidates.

He said they were waiting for directives from Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina, also the AL chief, on dealing with the rebel candidates.

Jahirul Alam Jashim, AL's rebel councillor candidate in ward-9, yesterday said he would not quit the electoral race as "voters were rallying behind him".

Enquired whether he faced any

pressure from the AL high-ups to quit the race, he told The Daily Star that none from his party asked him to do so.

A total of 172 candidates are contesting the CCC councillor polls in 41 wards. Among them are 22 AL rebels in as many wards.

Campaigning for the polls will end at midnight tomorrow.

AL sources said supporters of former mayor Nasir were frustrated that he was not nominated for the mayoral post. They believe that Mohibul is responsible for this.

Also, a number of followers of late Chattogram mayor Mohiuddin Chowdhury, father of Mohibul, won the AL's support to contest councillor polls. That's why leaders and activists loyal to Nasir are not interested in campaigning for party's mayoral nominee Rezaul Karim Chowdhury, the sources added.

Rezaul, senior joint general secretary of Chattogram city AL, is contesting an election for the first time.

AL presidium member Engr Mosharrif Hossain, also the party's chief coordinator for the CCC polls, said it was totally unacceptable that rebels would take part in the elections going against their commitment to the party.

"Those who are still in the electoral race defying the party's directive are no longer part of our party. The party

will not shoulder the responsibility of their activities," he added.

BNP TRYING TO CAPITALISE ON AL'S WEAKNESS

The BNP is desperately trying to use the AL's intra-party feud as an opportunity to win the city polls. Although several cases were lodged against over 150 activists of the BNP and its associated bodies recently, the party men are active in campaigning for the polls.

BNP sources said standing committee member Amir Khasru Mahmud Chowdhury was coordinating the party's polls campaign. However, senior local leaders, including Mir Nasir and Abdullah Al Noman, were yet to join the polls campaigning.

Speaking to this paper yesterday, Amir Khasru said all BNP leaders and activists were working together to ensure victories for the party's mayoral candidate and the councillor hopefuls.

"But like the common voters, we are also worried whether the city polls will be free and fair as the police have already taken over the electoral process and working in favour of the ruling party's mayoral candidate," he added.

He alleged that police were conducting raids on the BNP men's houses every night to create panic among the party leaders and activists.

B'BARIA'S ASHUGANJ UPAZILA Chairman's brother killed by 'rivals'

7 detained for grilling

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Brahmanbaria

A man was killed and eight others were injured in a clash between two rival groups in Brahmanbaria's Ashuganj upazila early yesterday.

The dead is Jamal Munshi, 48, younger brother of Ashuganj Upazila Parishad Chairman Hanif Munshi, said police.

Jabed Mahmud, officer-in-charge of Ashuganj Police Station, said they detained seven people for quizzing after the incident.

Additional police were deployed in the area to avoid further clashes, he added.

Citing locals, the police official said, Momin Munshi, another sibling of chairman Hanif, locked into an altercation with a local UP member Saddam Miah near Charchartala Eidgah ground around 11:30pm on Friday.

On information, Hanif rushed to the spot and settled the issue.

However, in the aftermath of the incident, Saddam's supporters stormed Hanif's house around 1:00am yesterday with local weapons like harpoon.

At one point, Jamal and a few other people of their group tried to obstruct their opponents but were seriously injured.

Jamal died on the way to hospital, the OC said.

The body was sent to Brahmanbaria General Hospital morgue for autopsy, he added.

Contacted, Hanif said, "They attacked my house and planned to kill me for no reason. They killed my brother Jamal as he was out first."

No case was lodged in this regard until this report was filed.

Saudi intercepts 'hostile target' over capital

AFP, Riyadh

Saudi Arabia intercepted a "hostile target" over Riyadh yesterday, said state media in the kingdom which has come under repeated attack from Yemen's Iran-backed Huthi rebels since 2015.

An explosion was heard in the Saudi capital at around 11:00 am (0800 GMT), AFP correspondents reported.

"I heard a loud sound and thought that something had fallen from the sky," said one resident, who lives in the Al-Sulaimaniyah district of Riyadh. "The whole house was shaking."

The Saudi-led coalition, which backs Yemen's internationally recognised government against the Huthis, said it had "intercepted and destroyed a hostile air target going towards Riyadh", without elaborating, according to state-run Al Ekhbariya television station.

Govt approves

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The Institute of Epidemiology, Disease Control and Research conducted the validation trial of this kit, according to the OMC Healthcare official.

In a press release, the company said that this RT-PCR Test Kit can successfully detect the mutated form of the virus.

"This kit can be one of Bangladesh's principal weapons in effective diagnosis and clinical management of Covid-19. Some 30-40 percent of the expenses [in regards to diagnosing Covid-19] can be reduced if OMC Healthcare kits are used," read the press release.

Mazbahul Kabir, chief executive officer of OMC Healthcare, said, "We currently have the capacity to produce 40-50 thousand Covid-19 RT-PCR test kits every day, and if needed we can expand it as per requirement. To ensure the highest quality of our test kit, we have used the automatic production line."

Dhaka seeks

FROM PAGE 1

intervention at the ongoing 13th GFMD Summit — Future of Human Mobility: Innovative Partnerships for Sustainable Development — being held virtually from January 18-26.

He thanked the current chair the UAE for its excellent leadership in organising the first-ever virtual GFMD Summit amid the Covid-19 pandemic successfully.

Momen said migration is now a defining issue of their time, a natural global demographic phenomenon and no country can deal with it alone.

"Shared responsibility, cooperation and inclusiveness are critical in addressing challenges to effective migration governance."

The minister said they should take all measures keeping the ultimate interest of the migrants at the centre of all of their activities.

"Of late, we see that migration and displacements are increasingly taking place for reasons beyond the capacity of the migrants like climate change, sudden natural disasters and forced displacement," he observed.

Momen said the responsibility to decide the future of GFMD lies with them, the participating member states.

Finally, a roof over their heads

FROM PAGE 1

over of houses to some 66,189 beneficiary families all over the country via a video conferencing from the Gono Bhaban.

Mujib Borsho marks the birth centenary of Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman.

Jalil said after migrating to Chunarughat in the early 1970s, he started to live in a small house built on a forestland.

In 1982, he was evicted and then, until 1989, he lived in other people's houses before finding another house on forestland.

Jalil said he and his wife had to raise his six children amid uncertainty over finding a permanent shelter for themselves.

He said his grandfather was a poor farmer with a few bighas of land in



his possession in Begumganj and his father was even poorer and used to have as little as about one bigha of arable land.

Now at the twilight years of his life, Jalil has finally found the shelter he needed for his family to thrive.