

BANGLADESH UPDATE



435
New cases in 24hrs



537,465
Total cases



8182
Deaths



482,424
Recoveries



2,298,943
Deaths



105,581,552
Total cases

Govt sacks jail super

FROM PAGE 1
Md Main Uddin Bhuiyan, assistant IG of the prisons, told The Daily Star yesterday that he did not receive any order from the ministry by the time the work hour ended on Thursday.

He added that he would be able to give the specifics on Sunday.

On January 6, inmate Tushar, brother-in-law of Hallmark Managing Director Tanvir Mahmud, was allowed a visitor in violation of the coronavirus restrictions.

In the leaked footage, Tushar was seen walking around wearing black clothes in the area where jail officials' cabins are located. Soon afterwards, a woman in a purple dress was seen entering from outside and going to the said area around 12:55pm.

The footage also showed Tushar and the woman going to the room of an officer named Saqlain where they spent about 45 minutes.

Two committees were formed to investigate the incident.

According to officials, a 49-page investigation report submitted to the home ministry on Wednesday recommended 18 prison officers and guards be sacked or face departmental

action.

The report mentioned 25 types of punitive measures that include transfer to district-level prisons and to less important positions, they said.

Sayed Belal Hossain, additional secretary (jail) of the home ministry, told The Daily Star that the ministry order asked the prisons department to take steps in line with the two-investigation committees' recommendations.

Meanwhile, the department of prisons formed another three-member committee on Thursday to investigate how footage from prison security cameras got leaked.

Sagir Mia, deputy IG of prisons in Khulna division, is the chief of the probe body. The other members are Gias Uddin, acting superintendent of Kashimpur High Security Jail, and Al Masum, superintendent of Faridpur District Jail.

Contacted, Sagir said, "We will visit Kashimpur jail on Sunday. We hope that we will be able to submit the investigation report soon."

[Our Gazipur Correspondent contributed to this report]



Medical waste is dumped in a field near the emergency department of Sher-e-Bangla Medical College Hospital in Barishal city, posing serious threat to public health. The photo was taken yesterday.

PHOTO: TITU DAS

One accused confesses

FROM PAGE 1
fellow students, including one unnamed.

Police later came to know that another accused Arafat also died at a city hospital on January 30. They suspected that he died from excessive alcohol consumption.

Meanwhile, another Dhaka court yesterday placed accused Farzana Jaman Neha on five-day remand, said court sources.

The 25-year-old woman was arrested in the capital's Azimpur on Thursday night, said Abdul Latif, officer-in-charge of Mohammadpur Police Station.

He said police seized some medical documents and a mobile phone from Farzana.

Earlier on January 31, a Dhaka court had placed Mortuza and another accused Nuhah Alam Tafzir, 21, on five-day remand each in the case.

Police said they identified the unnamed accused and were trying to arrest that person.

According to police, Farzana, along with her friends, went to a restaurant in Uttara on the night of January 28 and consumed alcohol. She fell sick and left the restaurant with another friend.

Investigators said two of the friends later visited another hotel in Gulshan where they took alcohol again.

Police suspect that consumption of excessive liquor might have caused the death of the 21-year-old female university student.

However, the victim's father alleged that Mortuza and Arafat took his daughter to a restaurant in Uttara on January 28. She fell sick as they forced her to consume excessive alcohol. Later, she was taken to a flat in Mohammadpur where Mortuza raped her, the father added.

Protests grow amid arrests

FROM PAGE 1
A similar protest took place across town in Yangon University.

In the capital Naypyidaw, dozens of employees from several government ministries posed for group photographs wearing red ribbons and flashing the democracy symbol.

Hours before yesterday's university protest, Win Htein was arrested at his daughter's house, said Kyi Toe.

The 79-year-old NLD stalwart, considered Suu Kyi's right-hand man, has spent long stretches in detention for campaigning against military rule.

Ahead of his arrest, Win Htein told local media the military putsch had called on people in the country to "oppose (the coup) as much as they can".

According to the Assistance Association for Political Prisoners (AAPP), a Yangon-based group that monitors political arrests in Myanmar, more than 130 officials and lawmakers have been detained.

Telecom providers in the country were ordered to cut access to Facebook, the main means of communication and accessing the internet for millions of people in Myanmar.

With Facebook stifled, more Myanmar people have moved to Twitter in recent days or started using VPN services to bypass the blockade.

A so-called Civil Disobedience Movement has gathered steam online, calling on the public to voice opposition every night by banging pots and clanging cymbals to show their anger.

Police in Mandalay, Myanmar's second largest city, detained more than 20 people for banging pots and pans. They were yesterday sentenced to seven days in prison for violating a public disorder law. Another four university students from Mandalay, arrested at a small rally were charged yesterday for protesting without permission and breaking coronavirus rules.

The putsch has drawn condemnation globally.

On Thursday, President Biden reiterated his call for the generals to reverse course.

"The Burmese military should relinquish power they have seized, release the advocates and activists and officials they have detained, lift the restrictions in telecommunications, and refrain from violence," Biden said.

He spoke hours after his National Security Advisor Jake Sullivan said the White House was "looking at specific targeted sanctions" on military-linked entities.

Meanwhile, the leaders of Malaysia and Indonesia said Asean foreign ministers would be asked to hold a special meeting to discuss the situation after Sullivan spoke by phone with ambassadors from the Association of South East Asian Nations, a 10-member bloc to which Myanmar belongs.

The UN Security Council issued a statement Thursday that expressed "deep concern" and demanded the detainees be freed -- but, in a change from an earlier draft, did not condemn the putsch.

Tigers on top despite late stutter

FROM PAGE 1
spinners with the pitch playing slow and low with some turn as well.

The visitors staged a strong fightback with the ball in the last session of the day's play. Off-spinner Rahkeem Cornwall dismissed Tamim Iqbal and Nazmul Hossain Shanto for ducks in the span of three deliveries.

In the second over of the innings Tamim was trapped in front by a Cornwall delivery angling into the stumps and a review confirmed it was going to hit them.

Just a ball later Nazmul handed an edge to slip as the left-hander just hung his bat outside the line of the stumps.

Bangladesh at one stage were two down with just one run on the board but Mominul joined Shadman and showed resilience against some disciplined bowling.

Left-hander Shadman, who batted well for his fifty in the first innings, had to face some hostile short bowling from pacer Shannon Gabriel.

Shadman opened his account after 29 deliveries but eventually fell for the trap off another Gabriel short delivery targeting the rib-cage as the ball touched his gloves and was caught by the wicketkeeper down the leg side.

Star allrounder Shakib Al Hasan,

who left the ground after what seemed to be a groin injury, did not take the field yesterday. It is as yet uncertain whether he can come out to bat today after scans showed he had sustained a fresh thigh injury while fielding.

Earlier, Taijul removed overnight batsman Bonner off the first ball of the day.

But Brathwaite along with Kyle Mayers held the ship together and added 55 runs for the fourth wicket. The Windies skipper reached his 20th Test fifty before he was bowled by off-spinner Nayeem Hasan on 76.

Mayers followed him soon after, trapped leg before to Mehedi, but skipper Mominul and the bowlers were unable to build pressure on Windies, who were at one stage 154 for five.

Jermaine Blackwood and Joshua Da Silva kept frustrating the Tigers and added 99 runs for the sixth wicket. But Bangladesh came back strongly and went on to pick the last five West Indies wickets in the span of 23 deliveries conceding just six runs to wrap up the innings for 259.

Blackwood top-scored with 68 and Silva added 42 as Mehedi took four wickets and Nayeem and Taijul got two each to get rid of the Windies lower order.

Crippled law cares little

FROM PAGE 1
what she wants to do, but we are observing that she has lost her interest in studies."

She said her husband is a day labourer, who catches fish to provide the daily meal for the family. She added that it was not possible for them to bear the additional expenses their traumatised daughter desperately needs.

"Who will take the responsibility of my daughter?" the mother asked.

COMPENSATION REALITY
Barrister Md Abdul Halim, who has long been outspoken about reparations for rape victims, said the matter of compensation is as important as the prosecution of rape cases.

"The trial of rape is one of the criminal justice system mechanisms which can take years to prove. And in Bangladesh, only three percent of cases relating to violence against women and children result in a conviction," he said.

"But as soon as a girl or woman has been raped brutally and/or hospitalised and her health is in critical condition, the state has a positive obligation to rehabilitate and compensate the victim so that the victim doesn't feel alienated from the state mechanism."

Under the Women and Children Repression Prevention Act 2000, the five perpetrators are charged ranges from Tk 10,000 to Tk 1 lakh. The amount usually goes to the state and if the judges want, they can direct this amount to be given as compensation to rape victims and their families.

Since compensation has not yet been made mandatory, the courts rarely order the fined amount to be given as compensation to victims when a conviction is reached.

A 2020 study by Bangladesh Legal Aid and Services Trust (BLAST) looked at 44 reported rape cases filed under the law between 2000 and 2019, and found that the court ordered the amount of the fine to be converted into compensation for the victims in only three cases.

The report, titled "No Justice without Reparation: Why Rape Survivors Must Have a Right to Compensation", however, found two of these three cases were later acquitted at the High Court.

BLAST did not independently verify whether the victim received the compensation in the remaining conviction, said author of the report, BLAST research specialist Taqbir Huda, on Thursday.

Even in cases where compensation is ordered, there is little indication that any victim or their family ultimately receive this money timely and without

hassle.

In 2019, BLAST filed right to information (RTI) requests to 20 Women and Children Repression Prevention Tribunals, five of which responded.

Out of around 1,000 rape cases tried under these five tribunals in the past two years, only one case -- tried at the Tangail tribunal -- saw a directive to provide compensation to the victim's family.

Based on analysis of news reports during that timeframe -- from 2018 to 2019 -- it can be inferred that this was the sensational Rupa Khatun gang-rape and murder case.

Rupa, 27, was gang-raped and killed on a moving bus on August 25, 2017, after which the perpetrators dumped her body at the Madhupur forest area in Tangail.

As this newspaper reported on February 13, 2018, the court verdict included directing the authorities to seize the bus and hand it over to her family.

However, since an appeal of the case has been pending at the High Court, the chances of Rupa's family of getting the bus in good condition look increasingly unlikely.

"Even if we get justice, the bus will not be able to help us at all, because after three to four years, no one will buy it at even Tk 1 lakh," Rupa's brother Hafizul Islam Pramanik told The Daily Star.

"I think this order was another curse for my family. I have spent more than Tk 1 lakh in visiting the BRTA office in Agargaon and Keraniganj to complete the formalities," Hafizul said.

EXISTING LEGAL MEASURES FALL SHORT

Recognising rape victims' need for compensation, the Bangladesh Law Commission in 2007 prepared a draft law named the "Crime Victim Compensation Act 2007".

The draft act said every district must have a committee to deal with compensation of victims of violent crimes, where they can apply for compensation from a state fund.

The draft was sent to the law and home ministries in 2007. However, 14 years down the line, it still hasn't seen the light of day.

Contacted on January 21, Law Minister Anisul Huq said, "The draft is yet to come to me, as it is being examined by the officials at the legislative division."

Asked why it is taking such a long time, he said he couldn't comment on this before he gets the draft. He added, however, that he will look into the matter.

BLAST's Taqbir Huda stressed enacting the draft Crime Victim

Compensation Act 2007, saying the law will not only help rape survivors and their families but also help victims of other violent crimes.

"Besides, since the procedure of the act will be different from the criminal justice system, the survivors could receive a remedy during the trial," added Taqbir, who leads the Rape Law Reform Now campaign.

Fowzul Azim, chief research officer of the Law Commission and senior district judge, said the amount of the fine under the Women and Children Repression Prevention Act 2000 is very small and cannot be considered as compensation for an offence like rape.

"Besides, it is not likely that the survivors will receive the amount very smoothly through the courts. They need to collect the amount from the deputy commissioner's office, and it is a very complex process which needs to be simplified."

He added that the assessment of compensation must be guided by a standard principle.

"If the amount varies from court to court, it will create further discrimination, which is why the judges cannot [presently] order compensation for rape victims," he said.

"We have to keep in mind that not all the perpetrators will have the ability to compensate the victims, and in such cases, the state must take the responsibility to compensate them."

Noting the necessity of an interim compensation scheme similar to that ordered by the Indian Supreme Court, Barrister Halim also says there must be an expert committee -- consisting of government officials, human rights activists, and legal experts dealing with rape cases -- to create a scheme in this regard.

India made amendments to the Code of Criminal Procedure in 2009 to specifically recognise the victim's right to compensation.

The provision now states that when a court imposes a sentence or a fine, it may award compensation to the victim from the whole, or part, of the fine recovered from the perpetrator.

It also stipulates every state government to set up a scheme to compensate the victim and their dependents who require rehabilitation due to the suffered loss or injury.

The scheme comes in handy in situations where the compensation awarded in the judgment is not sufficient, the case ends in acquittal, or when the accused cannot be traced, identified, or when no trial takes place, according to Indian media reports.

Idols vandalised at five temples in Dinajpur

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Dinajpur

A group of unidentified miscreants has vandalised idols at five temples in Dinajpur's Chirirbandar upazila.

Locals found idols of the five temples damaged yesterday morning.

In the last five days, idols of at least 12 temples were vandalised in the upazila. All these temples are situated in the upazila's Abdulpur, Auliapukur and Saitara unions.

Ratan Singh, general secretary of Dinajpur Hindu Buddhist Christian Oikya Parishad, confirmed it.

Local religious minorities protested the incident while police arrested five people in connection with the incident.

Earlier in the last couple of weeks, six temples in Chirirbandar upazila were vandalised by miscreants. Two cases were filed on February 3 over the incident, said police in the upazila.

So far, police arrested four persons in connection with the incidents took place in the last couple of weeks, said Ashok Kumar Chowhan, Officer in Charge of Nawabganj Police station.

According to Dinajpur Chapter of Hindu Buddhist Christian Oikya Parishad, the first idol vandalism incident took place on January 23 night at a Durga Temple in Nawabganj upazila.

The next day, a case was filed with Nawabganj Police Station mentioning nobody's names.

Protesting the incidents, Hindu community people staged a demonstration in Dinajpur on Wednesday.

A protest procession was brought out and a human chain was formed in front of local Press Club.

Dinajpur Chapter of Bangladesh Hindu Buddhist Christian Oikya Parishad, and Bangladesh Puja Uddhapan Parishad spoke at the human chain.

3 crushed to death in road accident

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Narayanganj

Three men were crushed to death in a road accident on Dhaka-Chattogram highway in Narayanganj's Kanchpur area yesterday.

The dead are Abu Bakkar Siddique, 20, of Narayanganj; Ohidul Mia, 32, of Rangpur; and Sajib Sarkar, 28, of Chandpur, said police.

Mohammad Moniruzzaman, officer-in-charge of Kanchpur Highway Police Station, said the trio was standing behind a Chattogram-bound Borak Parbaha's bus which was parked at Kanchpur intersection to board on passengers.

Around 10:00am, a speedy bus of Homna Super Services hit the parked bus from behind, leaving the three critically injured, he said.

Locals rescued the victims and rushed them to local hospital where they succumbed to their injuries around 12:00pm.

According to locals, both the buses were competing each other to rush fast with the aim to catch more passengers.

On information, police rushed to the spot and seized the two buses. However, drivers and helpers of the buses fled the scene, said the OC.

Oil-carrying train derailed in Sylhet

The district's rail link with rest of country remains suspended

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Sylhet

Sylhet's rail link with the rest of the country has been suspended since early yesterday when a freight train derailed in Fenchuganj.

The train was heading towards Sylhet from Chattogram when 10 of its oil-tankers derailed, damaging 200 metres of track, Divisional Railway Manager Sadequar Rahman said.

"Rescue teams are working, but we are not sure when the rail link can be restored," he added.

The technicians have been able to recover only two of the freight carriages as of 4:00pm, he said.

Some amount of oil spilled from the tankers and spread over nearby fields.

Passenger trains Paharika, Jayantika, Parabat and Kushiara did not depart the Sylhet Railway Station

SEE PAGE 4 COL 3

7 more die from Covid, 435 infected

UNB, Dhaka

Bangladesh reported seven new Covid-19 deaths until yesterday morning, including six in Dhaka, taking the national tally to 8,182 since the pandemic began.

The country's mortality rate stood at 1.52 percent, the Directorate General of Health Services (DGHS) said.

Also, Bangladesh confirmed a daily infection rate of 2.79 percent with 435 new cases in the last 24 hours till yesterday morning, pushing the official infection toll to 537,465.

The country saw a daily infection rate of 3.34 percent on January 24, 4.90 percent on January 14, 8.29 percent on January 10, 7.52 percent on January 4, and 8.18 percent on January 1.