

BANGLADESH UPDATE

635
New cases in 24hrs

5,49,184
Total cases

8,441
Deaths

5,01,144
Recoveries

GLOBAL UPDATE

2,584,486
Deaths

116,409,295
Total cases

AIRCRAFT PURCHASE FROM CANADA

Biman's new Dash-8 arrives in Dhaka

UNB, Dhaka

The third Dash-8 aircraft purchased from Canada arrived in Dhaka yesterday afternoon.

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina has named it "Shwet Bolaka".

State Minister for Civil Aviation and Tourism Mahub Ali received the aircraft at Hazrat Shahjalal International Airport at 5:36pm. It was bought under a government-to-government agreement.

Mahub said the prime minister is working to modernise the fleet of Biman Bangladesh Airlines. Buying this new aircraft is part of that initiative.

"She is expected to inaugurate 'Akash Tori' and 'Shwet Bolaka' on March 14," he said.

The new 74-seat Dash 8-400 aircraft

is built by De Havilland, a well-known Canadian aircraft manufacturer. It is equipped with eco-friendly and advanced facilities like HEPA filter technology, that completely purifies the air inside the aircraft in just four minutes.

Civil Aviation and Tourism Secretary Mokammel Hossain, Biman Bangladesh Airlines Chairman Sajjadul Hasan, Civil Aviation Authority of Bangladesh Chairman Air Vice Marshal Md Mofidur Rahman and Biman Managing Director and Chief Executive Officer Mokabbir Hossain were also present, among others.

Earlier, among the three newly-purchased Dash-8 planes, 'Akash Tori' arrived in Dhaka on February 24 this year and 'Dhruvo Tara' on December 27 last year.



Shwet Bolaka, the new Dash-8 aircraft purchased from Canada, at Hazrat Shahjalal International Airport after its arrival in Dhaka yesterday afternoon. The 74-seat aircraft is built by Canadian aircraft manufacturer De Havilland.

PHOTO: COLLECTED

AL men clash in presence of law minister

20 injured in B'baria

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Brahmanbaria

At least 20 people were injured in Brahmanbaria's Kasba yesterday as two groups of ruling Awami League activists clashed in a programme where Law Minister Anisul Huq was present.

The supporters of Kasba municipality mayor and those of a mayoral aspirant attacked each other over establishing dominance.

Twelve motorcycles and some establishments were also vandalised during the clash, which broke out around 11:00am.

Police and witnesses said the local administration organised an event for distributing smart NID cards at Kasba upazila parishad auditorium.

The programme was scheduled to start at 11:00 where Law Minister Anisul Huq, also the local lawmaker, was the chief guest.

Kasba municipality Mayor Emran Uddin Jewel, also a former president of the upazila unit Chhatra League, along with his supporters joined the event around 11:00am.

At the same time, upazila unit Jubo League President MA Aziz, who is a mayoral aspirant of the municipality, went there accompanied by his followers.

There had been a long-standing political rivalry between Jewel and Aziz. Now both of them are trying to get party's nomination to run for the mayoral post in the upcoming Kasba municipality election.

At one stage, the supporters of two groups were locked in an altercation and then attacked each other, said witnesses.

Around 30 minutes later, the law minister reached the venue. The clash stopped for a while due to interference of the minister.

Then the programme was going on as per schedule. A few moments later, both the groups got locked in clash again in presence of the minister.

The minister then left the venue in police protection and went to his village home Paniarup in the same upazila.

Both the groups threw chairs and brick chips at each other and vandalised 12 motorbikes and other establishments, said locals.

Four of the motorcycles were set on fire.

On information, police rushed to the spot, lobbed teargas shells and charged truncheons on the clashing groups to bring the situation under control, said Alamgir Bhuiyan, officer-in-charge of Kasba Police Station.

Additional law enforcers were deployed in the area to fend off further outward incident, he said.

No case was filed and no one was arrested till filing of the report around 7:00pm.

Alleging that his supporters were attacked by his rival group, Aziz said he would file a case in this connection.

This correspondent could not communicate with Kasba municipality mayor Jewel for his comments.

Wheat-laden train derails

Rail link with Kushtia snapped

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Kushtia

A railway wagon along with 22 carriages derailed and fell on the line in Milpara area of Kushtia yesterday.

The train derailed around 2:00pm as it hit an inspection trolley while railway officials were inspecting the rail line riding it, confirmed Shahidul Islam, divisional manager (west zone) of Bangladesh Railway.

The wagon was carrying wheat and going to Faridpur from Rajshahi, he added.

Soon after the incident, the rail communication between Kushtia and the rest of the country snapped.

As a result, the movement of trains on Khulna-Goalanda, and Rajshahi-Faridpur-Gopalganj routes remained suspended.

According to railway officials, a total of four trains, including one intercity and a wagon, regularly operates on the routes.

One mail train between Khulna and Goalanda, one intercity train between Rajshahi and Gopalganj, and the shuttle train between Kushtia and Goalanda were disrupted.

Station Master Jalal Uddin said a rescue train from Pakshy Railway headquarters started a rescue operation.

At least six to seven hours may be needed to reconnect the rail link fully, he added.

Meanwhile, a five-member probe committee, headed by Bangladesh Railway West Zone's Divisional Mechanical Engineer Ashish Kumar Mondal, was formed to investigate the incident.

Saiful Islam, a way engineer of the west zone, was also suspended.

Trump to be allowed back on YouTube when 'risk of violence' falls

AFP, San Francisco

Former US president Donald Trump will be allowed back on YouTube but only when the threat of his inciting violence abates, the head of the popular online video sharing platform said Thursday.

YouTube in late January suspended Trump's channel, joining other social media platforms in banning his accounts following the deadly January 6 Capitol riot.

"We will lift the suspension of the

Donald Trump channel when we determine that the risk of violence has decreased," YouTube chief Susan Wojcicki said during a streamed Atlantic Council interview.

"Given just the warnings by the Capitol Police yesterday about a potential attack today, I think it is pretty clear that that elevated violence risk still remains."

Wojcicki said that when the Trump channel is reinstated, it will remain subject to the same "three strike" system as everyone else at YouTube.

Charge sheet names 9 AL, BCL men

FROM PAGE 1

In the charge sheet, the nine were shown as fugitive accused.

On February 28, six of the accused appeared in court and secured bail, while three others are on the run now, court sources said.

Shushashoner Jonno Nagorik (Shujan) Secretary Badiul Alam Majumdar, who filed the case with Mohammadpur Police Station on August 10, 2018 following the attack, told The Daily Star yesterday, "The charge sheet of the case is totally politically motivated. Awami League man Ishtiaque Mahmud was the main culprit behind the attack, but he was not included in the charge sheet.

"A no-confidence petition will be filed with the court against the charge sheet after talking with the lawyers," the complainant said.

On August 4, 2018, the nine accused along with some 15 to 20 unidentified people gathered near the Iqbal Road residence of Shujan secretary Badiul Alam Majumdar around 11:00pm and chased the car of Marcia Bernicat, said the investigation officer in the probe report.

The accused then threw brick chips at her car, the probe report said.

Later, the accused vandalised the house of the complainant and made

death threats to his wife and son, according to the charge sheet.

Contacted, Investigation Officer Abdur Rouf said yesterday, "No evidence was found against Ishtiaque Mahmud during investigation, so his name was excluded in the charge sheet."

Some 30 unidentified miscreants attacked the car of Bernicat, who was about to leave the residence of Shujan secretary Badiul Alam Majumdar around 11:00pm after attending a courtesy dinner thrown in her honour.

In a diplomatic note to the foreign ministry on August 5 that year, the United States sought a thorough investigation into the attack on the official vehicle of its ambassador in Dhaka.

The US embassy, in a note to the Dhaka Metropolitan Police, also said a vehicle carrying Bernicat was attacked by a group of armed people, some of whom were on motorcycles.

Later, the ambassador's security team was able to gather the identity of two individuals of the group -- Ishtiaque Mahmud and Firoz Mahmud -- who shouted during the attack, claiming that Badrul was involved in anti-government activities, officials said referring to the US embassy's note to the metropolitan police.

HC: Juvenile offenders

FROM PAGE 1

fundamental notion of juvenile justice system," the bench said.

The HC bench made the observation and ruling in a 63-page full text verdict which has been released recently.

The bench led by Justice Md Shawkat Hossain delivered the verdict on August 28, 2019, following an appeal filed by an accused child from Netrakona.

Two other judges of the bench are Justice Md Ruhul Quddus and Justice ASM Abdul Mobin. Justice Md Shawkat Hossain is now retired.

In the full text judgment, the HC said, "Research on neuroscience and child psychology suggests that the juveniles/adolescents are not fully capable of comprehending the consequences of their acts and deeds. They cannot control their impulses. In fact, the part of brain that enables impulse control and improves the ability of making a reasoned decision does not fully develop in adolescent age.

"Similarly, the children/juveniles are unable to comprehend the legal consequences of confessional statements.

"In many cases, they take the blame of crime they did not commit just to end the interrogation. It should be borne in mind that the children can easily be influenced and they have tendency to admit guilt for different purposes. Sometimes, they falsely confess to have committed an offence if there is possibility of getting some benefits therefrom."

In the verdict, the HC bench said, "In imposing punishment for offences punishable with death or imprisonment of life, the maximum term of imprisonment against a juvenile offender or a person, who crossed childhood during trial or detention, cannot be more than 10 years.

"A juvenile court constituted under the Children Act-1974 as was in force before and under the Shishu Ain-2013 has so exclusive jurisdiction to try the cases, where children in conflict with law are charged with criminal offences."

No other court or tribunal constituted under any other special or general law irrespective of its age of legislation has jurisdiction to try such cases unless the jurisdiction of juvenile court is expressly excluded there.

The Druto Bichar (Speedy Trial) Tribunal constituted under the Druto Bichar Tribunal Ain-2002 cannot assume the jurisdiction of juvenile court in any manner whatsoever, the HC bench observed in the full text judgment.

In 2011, the child filed the appeal with the HC challenging a trial court verdict that had sentenced him to 10 years' imprisonment in a case filed for kidnapping and killing a seven-year-old child in Netrakona in February 2010.

The Speedy Trial Tribunal-4 of Dhaka delivered the verdict on October 13, 2011, based on the confessional statement made by the accused child who was 15 years and seven months' old during the occurrence of the offence.

The HC bench also scrapped the Speedy Trial Tribunal's judgment that convicted and sentenced the child to 10 years' imprisonment in the case.

The special HC bench had heard expert opinions from three amice curiae (friends of court) -- Khandker Mahub Hossain, Mi Farooqui and Shahdeen Malik -- before it delivered the verdict.

Then Deputy Attorney General Moniruzzaman Rubel told The Daily Star yesterday that 10 years' imprisonment as maximum punishment for juvenile offence is the axiom provision of the relevant law.

51pc of target achieved so far

FROM PAGE 1

spot with 2.17 percent of its population immunized. Israel tops the list (98.85 percent) followed by the United Arab Emirates (62.73 percent).

As per the National Vaccine Deployment Plan, 70 lakh people will be inoculated in the first month of the mass vaccination campaign that began on February 7.

Initially, 59.85 lakh vaccine shots were dispatched to 64 districts, shows data of the Directorate General of Health Services (DGHS).

According to the division-wise distribution list, Khulna has emerged as the top performer among the eight divisions by inoculating 77.45 percent of the target population of 588,000.

On the other hand, Mymensingh is at the bottom of the list, achieving only 30 percent of its target population of 504,000.

Dhaka holds the second position with inoculation of 70.71 percent of its target population of 15,72,600, followed by Chattogram with 61.24 percent of the target population of 12,56,000 inoculated.

However, the district-wise analysis put Dhaka at the top with inoculation of 614,805 people. As of yesterday, 94.88 percent of the allocated 6.48 lakh doses were administered in the district.

The majority of the doses -- 543,616 -- were administered at 47 vaccination centres in the capital.

Chattogram district, which got an allocation of 4.56 lakh vaccine doses, holds the second position with 274,567 people vaccinated as of yesterday,

followed by Khulna, Rajshahi and Gazipur.

Meherpur vaccinated 11,845 people -- the lowest among the 64 districts. It got an allocation of 12,000 doses against a population of around seven lakh.

Assessing the trend of vaccination across the country, experts say the people living in urban areas are more responsive than those in rural areas.

They advocated setting up more vaccination centres in remote areas and taking online registration support to people's doorstep to expedite the vaccination campaign.

Prof Ridwanur Rahman, an infectious disease specialist, said, "There are multiple reasons behind the slow pace of vaccination. People are seeing the registration process as a burden.

"Another key reason is inadequate number of vaccination centres. There is a need for providing door-to-door registration service in addition to setting up of vaccination centres in remote areas," he told this newspaper recently.

Echoing his view, Dr Mushtaq Hussain, member-secretary of the Publicity and Communication Sub-Committee for Covid-19 vaccination campaign, said, "There is a need for expansion of vaccination centres in the coming days."

Asked whether there is any weakness in the government's publicity campaign,

he said many people still don't know that they can get registration services at a digital centre set up by the Local Government Division in every union."

Contacted, Dr Shamsul Haque, member-secretary of the Committee

Eight yrs' probe yields nothing

FROM PAGE 1

His body was found floating on the Shitalakhya river on March 8.

Rabbi filed a murder case with Narayanganj Kotwali Police Station later that day. He also submitted a complaint to the superintendent of police on March 18, accusing seven men, including Shamim Osman, by name and 8-10 others unnamed persons.

"There would have been some kind of consolation for us if the killers are punished," said Rabbi, a renowned cultural activist of Narayanganj, on Wednesday.

"The long wait for justice has now turned into anger. Journalists came to my house, but my wife did not say a word," he said.

There has been no clear answer from the authorities on what is holding the investigators back from officially turning in the probe report. For the last few years, Rab had only one thing to say: "The investigation is going on."

The home ministry on June 20, 2013, ordered Rab to investigate the case upon a High Court order following an appeal by Rabbi.

On August 7, 2013, Rab officers raided Ajmeri's "Winner Fashion" office on Allama Iqbal Road in Narayanganj and seized a pair of blood-stained jeans, a pistol butt and equipment used for yaba consumption. Officials also found numerous bullet marks on the walls, an almirah and a sofa.

"Winner Fashion" was one of the six

"torture cells" detected by Taqi Mancha, a citizen platform formed in 2014 to fight crimes in Narayanganj. Taqi was allegedly tortured to death inside "Winner Fashion".

THE SUSPECTS
Ajmeri is the son of late Jatiya Party MP Nasim Osman and nephew of Shamim Osman.

Others named in the draft charge-sheet as involved are Rajib, Kalam Shikder, Mamun, Apu, Kajol, Shipon, Jamshed Hossain, Yusuf Hossain Liton, Sultan Shawkat alias Bhromor and Tayebuddin who goes by the alias Jacky.

Law enforcers arrested Yusuf Hossain Liton, Rifat, Sultan Shawkat, Tayebuddin and Simanta in connection with the murder. Yousuf and Sultan gave confessional statements before a magistrate.

In his statement on November 12, 2013, Sultan said Ajmeri Osman led the killing. Sixteen days after making the confession, he appealed to the magistrate, seeking withdrawal of his statement.

Sultan fled the country, walking out of jail on bail on March 20, 2014. A Narayanganj court issued a warrant against him later. The four others are now out of jail on bail.

On Thursday, Taqi's father Rafiqur Rabbi, who took part in countless demonstrations and public events to talk about his grievances, said the investigation was complete in the very first year after the murder.

for the National Covid-19 Vaccination Campaign at the DGHS, said they allocated vaccine doses, considering the population of each district.

"Some districts are moving fast to achieve the target while some are not. We are revising the vaccine allocations for the districts based on their success in achieving the inoculation target," he noted.

Initially, DGHS officials said the campaign would continue at more than a thousand vaccination centres across the country for 12 working days in the first month.

"We are not rigid with the timeline. We may need more time to reach the target for the first month. We are going to inoculate the teachers and students... Hopefully, the pace of vaccination will be faster," said Shamsul.

Bangladesh started the vaccination campaign with 70 lakh doses of Oxford-AstraZeneca vaccine in hand. In January, the government received the first consignment of 50 lakh of the three crore doses of Oxford vaccine it purchased from the Serum Institute of India (SII).

Besides, Bangladesh got 20 lakh doses of Oxford vaccine from the Indian government as gift the same month. It also received 20 lakh doses of Oxford vaccine from SII on February 23.

The country is also expected to get 1.09 crore Oxford vaccine doses from Covax for free in different phases till May.

The government set a goal of inoculating 70 lakh people in the first month of the campaign after revising the target twice.

Political influence stalled the progress of the case, he alleged.

"The law enforcement agencies identified the killers... they prepared the charge sheet within a year. Since the accused were family members of an influential political leader in Narayanganj and linked to the ruling party, the probe report has not been submitted in eight years."

Seeking the prime minister's intervention, he said, "It's now in the prime minister's hand."

Contacted, Rab-II Commanding Officer Lt Col Khandaker Saiful Alam said the investigation was taking time because the case was complex.

He added that officers can't say specifically when they would press charges.

He added that there was no pressure on Rab regarding the submission of the charge sheet.

Prosecutor Pradip Ghosh Babu on March 1 said he appealed to a court for issuance of a directive for quick submission of the charge sheet and arrest of those named in the confessional statements.

The court then ordered the investigation officer to press the charge sheet quickly, but rejected the appeal for any arrest. It, however, wrote in the order that if the officer wanted, he could arrest them.

Pradip said the prosecutors filed such appeals five to six times and courts gave similar orders every time, but Rab didn't comply.

Ensure justice, scrap DSA

FROM PAGE 1

the media that award-winning cartoonist Kishore complained about being tortured in custody of the law enforcement agencies after his arrest on the night of May 2, 2020.

"Even writer Mushtaq Ahmed was given an electric shock. According to the Torture and Custodial Death Prevention Act 2013, this is a serious crime and a violation of the directives of the High Court. It is the responsibility of the state to protect human rights of every prisoner, but citizens are dying in custody of state forces and are being subjected to brutal physical and mental torture," added the statement.

The signatories to the statement are: noted photojournalist Shahidul Alam, Shafiqul Islam Kajol, Chattogram University teacher Maidul Islam, Rashtrachinta activist Didarul Bhuiyan, architect Golam Mahfuz Joardar, leftist student leaders Maruf Hossain and Aziur Rahman Ashaf. They all were

earlier detained under the DSA or ICT Act.

"While murderers-money launderers are being granted bail through the legal process, the culture of not getting bail through the legal process has begun for those arrested under the Digital Security Act. When things happen like this, it is no longer considered a fair law. Rather, it becomes an anti-people law," said the statement.

Meanwhile, Law Minister Anisul Huq yesterday reiterated that the government was planning to take measures to ensure no one is arrested or sued under the DSA before an inquiry is carried out.

"We are thinking about incorporating a provision in the Digital Security Act so that no case is filed and none can be arrested under this law before an inquiry into the allegations [of spreading confusion and rumours about the government] is conducted," he told The Daily Star yesterday.

On Tuesday, the minister had told

this newspaper that the government would take necessary steps so that the provisions of DSA were not abused.

"I have a plan to form a monitoring team so that there is no scope for abusing the law," he said.

Anisul had also said that the DSA was a "very necessary" law as it was formulated in order to give protection to the people and the state from digital offences, and therefore, there was no question of repealing it.

Yesterday, journalists in Brahmanbaria's Akhaura asked the minister whether the government would amend the DSA.

The minister replied, "You will see in a few days [what happens in this regard]."

He made the remarks on Akhaura Railway Junction station premises before going to Kasba to distribute smart NID cards among the people.

This was the minister's first visit to his electoral constituency (Kasba-Akhaura) after almost a year.