

BANGLADESH UPDATE **6,430** New cases in 24hrs **6,24,594** Total cases **9,155** Deaths **5,47,411** Recoveries **GLOBAL UPDATE** **2,843,644** Deaths **130,418,399** Total cases

EXTREME CLIMATE EVENTS Bangladesh loses 2pc of GDP a year

PM says in write-up for Diplomat magazine

UNB, Dhaka
Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina has said Bangladesh loses two percent of its GDP to extreme climate events every year.



By the turn of the century, the figure will go up to 9 percent. By 2050, more than 17 percent of the country's coastlines will go under water displacing 30 million people, she wrote in the renowned magazine Diplomat in its April 2021 issue.

"Six million Bangladeshis have already become climate displaced. And yet we continue to bear the 1.1 million Rohingyas from Myanmar at the cost of environmental havoc in Cox's Bazar. Who will pay for this loss and damage?" the PM asked.

In the write up under the headline "Forging Dhaka-Glasgow CVP-COP26 Solidarity", Hasina said humans are consciously destroying the very support systems that are keeping us alive.

"What planet shall we leave for the Greta Thunbergs or those at the Bangladesh Coastal Youth Action Hubs? At COP26 we must not fail them," she said.

Hasina, president of the Climate Vulnerable Forum (CVF), said Bangladesh wants to see climate

financing unleashed, not only towards low-carbon economy, but also for the promised \$100 billion, and 50 percent dedicated to climate resilience-building.

"We want to see international carbon markets unlocked for transnational climate cooperation and solutions found to our profound loss, damage and climate injustice."

The PM said for Bangladesh, often referred to as the "ground zero" of natural disasters, climate change is a survival battle braved by millions of its resilient people whose homes, land and crops are lost to the recurring wrath of nature.

She said like Bangladesh, every CVP nation has an irreversible climate loss and damage story to tell. "But they contributed little to global emissions. It is time to address this climate injustice."

Hasina said Bangladesh has learnt to self-finance its climate projects. The government has thus created a \$450 million Bangladesh Climate Change Trust Fund that supports nearly 800 adaptation and resilience projects in its vulnerable coasts.

"We are spending on an average 2.5 per cent of our GDP -- \$5 billion each year -- on climate adaptation and resilience-building," she added.



Workers build a boat along the Jamuna river in Tangail's Bhuiyanpur upazila. Boat becomes the only means of communication in some remote char areas of Tangail, Sirajganj and Jamalpur districts during the rainy season. The photo was taken recently.

PHOTO: MIRZA SHAKIL

Covid to cause \$1 trillion losses

FROM PAGE 1
The report said India's central budget for education dropped by 11 percent in the period while Bangladesh's budget rose by 12 percent.

The World Bank introduced a concept several years ago known as learning-adjusted years of schooling (LAYS). It seeks to combine access and learning outcomes into a single measure. It combines quantity (years of schooling) and quality (how much a student knows at a given grade) into a single summary measure of human capital in a society.

The latest report said estimates of the loss of LAYS in the third quarter of 2020 were based on scenarios between three to seven months of closures.

"As things stand, it seems an even more pessimistic scenario is unfolding -- one where schools have been shuttered for nine months. Learning-adjusted years of schooling in the South Asia region falls from a pre-Covid baseline of 6.5 years to 5.5 years -- suggesting that children could lose a full year of learning adjusted

schooling," said the report.

The World Bank report said many of these students will find it harder to return the longer they are away from school. The effects on their expected future lifetime earnings will be exceptionally large compared to a scenario where Covid-19 never occurred.

The typical student can expect to lose as much as \$445 annually as a result of lost schooling and learning. In the long run, this could cost the South Asia region over \$1 trillion in lost earnings.

"This amount is almost a quarter of what the region will spend to educate this generation of students."

The closures kept 391 million students out of school in South Asia. Many probably left school to help families with lost income. School closures in South Asia, on average, have been maintained for longer compared to the global average, despite findings that children, in general, have low caseloads and insignificant death rates from the virus.

Schools in Maldives and Pakistan were kept mostly open, while Pakistan's approach to school closures varied across provinces and changed during the year. Schools in India received national guidelines for states to decide, but a national directive for the reopening of schools and colleges for non-virtual learning only came in January 2021. "The consequent loss of skills will reduce the productive capacity of the economies in the region for years to come."

Between March 11, 2020 and February 2, 2021, Bangladesh kept schools closed more days than any other South Asian country.

Professor Syed Md Golam Faruk of Directorate of Secondary and Higher Education said TV, online and assignment-based lessons were going on to make up for the learning loss.

"We are assessing the education loss due to the closure. We will make special plans like arranging extra classes for students, who might lag behind due to the digital divide," he told The Daily Star.

Health safety rules flouted

FROM PAGE 1
"This could fuel a jump in coronavirus infections at a time when the number of infections keep rising," he said.

Over 1.16 lakh candidates took the one-hour test for the 2020-21 academic year against 4,350 seats in 47 government medical colleges and another 8,340 in 70 private medical colleges. At the 15 centres in Dhaka city, some 47,000 attended the test.

On March 24, Health Minister Zahid Maleque insisted that the MBBS admission test would be taken in compliance with health guidelines.

The Daily Star correspondents and photojournalists, while visiting at least five exam centres in Dhaka, found that on many occasions admission seekers were facing obstacles while entering and exiting the centres due to the gathering in front of the halls.

"We faced overcrowding while entering the exam halls. We needed to make our way in the crowd -- it was dangerous," Nusrat Tahmina told the Daily Star after taking the exam at Teachers Training College.

She, however, said there was not much problem inside the centre -- each bench was occupied by just one student.

Zeenat Ara Chetona, who took the exam at Udayan High School, said, "When we entered the centre, we couldn't maintain social distance. In fact, it was almost impossible due to the presence of a huge number of admission seekers and guardians."

But the authorities provided hand sanitisers inside the centre and they sat one student per bench, she said.

There was a huge traffic jam in front of the Dhaka College centre since 8:00am due to the presence of examinees and guardians. A huge gathering was seen

in front of the Teachers Training College and Government Laboratory High School centres, which are located close to each other.

Candidates and parents started coming to the examination centres of Dhaka University from 8:00am.

A father waiting outside the gate of Arts Faculty of Dhaka University said he left home early in the morning because he did not want to take any risk due to the transport crisis.

But there was no clear instruction about the guardians, and so they were least bothered about the safety rules.

"We all know how poor our sense of responsibility is. The government was keen on holding the test, but did not make any arrangement."

Nurul Azam, a guardian waiting in front of Udayan High School, said, "There are only five to six security guards here. It is not possible for them to handle such a huge crowd. There is also a lack of awareness among parents. They were blocking the path in front of the gate."

Another guardian, Mukhtesur Rahman, who came from Savar told this paper, "All other exams were postponed due to the new outbreak of coronavirus, but the health ministry themselves took the admission test. It will give a wrong message to the people."

"There was a transportation crisis for a few days; we came early so found no problem but how will we go now?" he asked.

Professor Dr AKM Ahsan Habib, director (Health Education) of Directorate General of Health Services, said in a press release after the exam that they maintained the health safety guidelines properly during the examination.

Hefajat blames it on ruling party

FROM PAGE 1
He was addressing a rally after Juma prayers in front of Hathazari madrasa in Chattogram. Hathazari is a stronghold of Hefajat men, mostly Qwami madrasa students.

"We've prayed for Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman. We also pray for Bangladesh. We are not anti-liberation or anti-government or anti-Bangladesh. We oppose the atheists and we will continue to do so," he said.

"The government is trying to close the madrasa in the name of containing the spread of Covid-19. We will resist the decision with an iron fist."

Due to the rally, traffic on the Hathazari-Khagrachhari road remained suspended for hours and police were on alert.

Yesterday, similar protests were staged in Narayanganj and Munshiganj, where hundreds of demonstrators joined defying the health restrictions imposed to curb the spread of the coronavirus.

At least 43 cases have been filed so far in connection with the destruction carried out by Hefajat activists in Dhaka, Chattogram, Brahmanbaria, Kishoreganj and Narayanganj.

Over 20,000 people were made accused in the cases.

Although there are plenty of video clips and photos showing that the recent countrywide mayhem was unleashed by Hefajat, only a handful of people from the Islamist organisation have been accused in the cases.

HEFAJAT-COPS CLASH IN GAZIPUR
At least 20 people, including seven policemen, were injured as police and Hefajat supporters clashed on Dhaka-Mymensingh highway in Gazipur after Juma prayers yesterday.

The clash broke out as Hefajat men tried to block the highway near Chowrasta Jame Masjid area. As police went to clear the blockade, the protesters threw brick chunks at them, leading to the clash, our correspondent reported, quoting witnesses.

Police fired tear gas and dispersed the crowd.
At least seven people were detained from the spot, the correspondent added.

Reign of fear in Faridpur

FROM PAGE 1
and Toufique, also a former vice-president of the district unit Chhatra League, had to pay the price.

He said he was beaten up mercilessly by members of the syndicate on May 24, 2018 and also falsely implicated in a murder case.

"My only fault was I participated in the bidding ignoring the unwritten law that only they or those who pay them commission can participate in the bidding in the district," he told The Daily Star recently.

A CID probe revealed that the Barkat-Rubel syndicate controlled all the tenders of roads and highways, public works, LGED ministry, health department, BRTA, the municipality, zila parishad, Water Development Board, and the medical college.

They illegally took commissions from various haats (markets) and district land registrar's offices and extorted money in the transport sector.

The syndicate earned thousands of crores of taka under the shelter of Babar and Fuad, the CID mentioned in the charge sheet of a money laundering case filed against Barkat and Rubel last year.

"It was not possible for anyone to do any work without giving them commission," said Alim Haidar Tuhin, a former vice-president of Faridpur district BCL unit.

However, the situation changed significantly after the arrest of the brothers, with their patrons and cohorts coming under immense pressure.

Faruq Hossain, executive engineer of LGED, they were now noticing that the number of tender submissions and contractors has increased since the arrest of Barkat and Rubel.

However, the situation changed significantly after the arrest of the brothers, with their patrons and cohorts coming under immense pressure.

Asked about the allegations, Khandaker Mosharruf Hossain, also lawmaker from Faridpur-3, told this paper on March 3, "I have no idea at all about how they made money. They got work orders through tender. I did not give them the work as it is not the job of a lawmaker or a minister. It is the job of government officials."

Asked about the allegations, Khandaker Mosharruf Hossain, also lawmaker from Faridpur-3, told this paper on March 3, "I have no idea at all about how they made money. They got work orders through tender. I did not give them the work as it is not the job of a lawmaker or a minister. It is the job of government officials."

Asked about the allegations, Khandaker Mosharruf Hossain, also lawmaker from Faridpur-3, told this paper on March 3, "I have no idea at all about how they made money. They got work orders through tender. I did not give them the work as it is not the job of a lawmaker or a minister. It is the job of government officials."

Asked about the allegations, Khandaker Mosharruf Hossain, also lawmaker from Faridpur-3, told this paper on March 3, "I have no idea at all about how they made money. They got work orders through tender. I did not give them the work as it is not the job of a lawmaker or a minister. It is the job of government officials."

Asked about the allegations, Khandaker Mosharruf Hossain, also lawmaker from Faridpur-3, told this paper on March 3, "I have no idea at all about how they made money. They got work orders through tender. I did not give them the work as it is not the job of a lawmaker or a minister. It is the job of government officials."

Asked about the allegations, Khandaker Mosharruf Hossain, also lawmaker from Faridpur-3, told this paper on March 3, "I have no idea at all about how they made money. They got work orders through tender. I did not give them the work as it is not the job of a lawmaker or a minister. It is the job of government officials."

Asked about the allegations, Khandaker Mosharruf Hossain, also lawmaker from Faridpur-3, told this paper on March 3, "I have no idea at all about how they made money. They got work orders through tender. I did not give them the work as it is not the job of a lawmaker or a minister. It is the job of government officials."

Democratic society suffers if media doesn't work properly

Says information minister

BSS, Chattogram

Terming media the mirror of the society, Information and Broadcasting Minister Hasan Mahmud has said multidimensional and democratic society suffers when the media does not play its role properly.

"We live in a democratic multidimensional society. The media is the fourth pillar of the state. So, when the media does not work properly, multidimensional and democratic society suffers," he said.

The minister said journalism is not just a profession, but a vow for many journalists.

"There are many journalists who could have retired as secretaries if they had entered government service. Many have left university jobs to pursue a career in journalism. The best students of the university study journalism. They come to this profession falling in love with journalism. It is necessary to keep an eye on fake journalists so that they cannot tarnish the image of the entire journalistic society," he added.

Mahmud was addressing the concluding ceremony of a function titled "Foundation Training Workshop on Journalism", organised by Press Institute of Bangladesh (PIB) at Kaptai Upazila Auditorium yesterday.

"We want to develop the country, but not just materialistically. In the last 100 years, the European countries have developed a lot with material development. But humanity is lost there. In many cases, there is also loss of values. Family bonds are lost there. In European society, 30 to 50 percent marriages end in divorce," the minister said.

SEE PAGE 4 COL 4

Mother of three gang-raped in Patuakhali

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Patuakhali

A mother of three has been gang-raped allegedly by a group of three men in Patuakhali's Baufal upazila around 9:00pm on Thursday.

Al Mamun, officer-in-charge (inquiry) of Baufal Police Station, said the victim filed a case with the police station.

Police are taking legal action against the accused and the woman was sent to Patuakhali General Hospital for medical examinations, he said.

According to police, a group of three men blocked her way around 9:00pm when she was returning home from the house of UP member Nilufa Begum.

They then took her to an isolated place and raped her.

Contacted, UP member Dulal Sikder said after receiving the news, locals rescued the victim and sent her to the police station.

Cop's son found dead at Ctg home

His body bore bullet wounds

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

Police recovered a bullet-hit body from a house in Akbarshah area in Chattogram city yesterday.

The victim was identified as Musfiqul Haque Mahin, 18, son of Mohim Uddin, a sub-inspector of Khulshi Police Station under Chattogram Metropolitan Police (CMP).

The law enforcers primarily suspected that Mahin shot himself with his father's service pistol.

Abdul Warish, deputy commissioner (west) of CMP, told The Daily Star, "The incident took place around 1:40pm at SI Mohim's house in Shapla residential area of Akbarshah.

"SI Mohim scolded his son Mahin over his studies and went to the mosque to say his Friday prayers. Following the event, Mahin shut the door of his bedroom and shot himself with his father's pistol at his chest."

Quoting the family members, Arif Hossain, assistant commissioner of Paharali zone of CMP, said Mahin was supposed to take part in yesterday's medical tests, but he did not do so triggering his father's anger.

"Mahin first took bath, wore Panjabi, shut the door from inside of his bedroom, and fired one round," he said. Mahin was rushed to Chattogram Medical College Hospital (CMCH) where on-duty doctors declared him dead, the police official said.

Police took SI Mohim's service pistol into custody.

An Unnatural Death (UD) case will be lodged in this regard, said Jahir Hossain, officer-in-charge (OC) of Akbarshah Police Station.

Rejoinder

FROM PAGE 1
the spot on February 27, he saw notorious illegal logger, Md Jamal, chitchating with a forest guard in front of the Chiringa range office in Sharaf Bhatta union.

We stand by the report.