

43 killed, dozens hurt

FROM PAGE 12
train hit," Shahid, another passenger, told AFP.

The Millat Express was heading from Karachi to Lala Musa when it derailed, its carriages strewn over the tracks as the Sir Syed Express from Rawalpindi arrived minutes later in the opposite direction, smashing into it.

Most of the dead were pulled from the derailed train, officials said.

Umar Tufail, a senior Daharki police officer, said 43 people were killed and dozens injured.

A spokesman for Pakistan Railways put the toll at 33, but communications with the crash site were difficult because its remote location.

One rescue worker described having to stand on top of his vehicle to get a phone signal.

Local farmers and villagers were the first to join passengers in trying to pull survivors from the crumpled carriages, reaching into broken windows and roof hatches.

A clip aired on a local channel showed medics giving an intravenous drip to a conscious passenger whose lower torso was trapped between crushed carriage benches.

The dead were laid out in rows on train seat benches and covered in traditional scarves.

COMMUNICATION PROBLEMS
The accident happened on a raised section of track surrounded by lush farmlands.

Interior Minister Sheikh Rashid, a former railways minister, said the track where the accident occurred was built in the 1880s and described it as "a shambles".

Current minister Azam Swati described the section of railway

as "really dangerous", but said authorities had been waiting to upgrade the network with funding from the multi-billion dollar China-Pakistan Economic Corridor project.

"In case there is a delay (with funding), we will rebuild this track with our own money," he said.

The Pakistan army and paramilitary rangers from nearby bases were at the site to help.

Prime Minister Imran Khan said he was "shocked" by the accident and promised a full inquiry.

Gul Mohammad, who works with the Edhi Foundation ambulance service, said communication problems were hindering the coordination of the rescue efforts.

"I am talking to you as I stand on the rooftop of my ambulance for better signal," he told AFP.

Train accidents are common in Pakistan, where the network has seen decades of decline due to corruption, mismanagement and lack of investment.

The majority of train passengers in Pakistan are working-class people who cannot afford the quicker bus journeys.

More than 300 people were killed and 700 injured in 1990 when an overloaded 16-carriage inter-city train crashed into a stationary freight train near the city of Sukkur in Sindh.

More recently, at least 75 people died when a train caught fire while travelling from Karachi to Rawalpindi in October 2019.

The rest of the transport sector does not fare much better, with two major passenger plane crashes in the past five years and thousands of road accidents.



Paramilitary soldiers and rescue workers gather at the site following a collision between two trains in Ghotki, Pakistan yesterday. At least 40 people were killed and dozens injured when a packed inter-city train ploughed into another express that had derailed just minutes earlier, officials said.

PHOTO: REUTERS

Passed amid uproar over

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Did the number of poor really spiral that much? Has the finance ministry made any effort to find out the true number? Why did the health budget remain unspent in a year of a public health crisis?

All imperative questions that neither the finance minister nor the parliamentarians sweated over.

Even in his budget speech for fiscal 2021-22 on June 3 that spanned 140-odd pages, barely 1.5 pages were dedicated to the supplementary budget, which saw higher allocations for 19 ministries and divisions and reduced allocation for 43.

The revised budget for fiscal 2020-21 now stands at Tk 538,983 crore.

The local government division got the highest allocation of Tk 2,890.5 crore, while the rural development and cooperatives division the lowest of Tk 1.4 crore.

The Prime Minister's Office got Tk 482 crore while cabinet division Tk 9.7 crore, election commission secretariat Tk 79.1 crore, financial institutions division Tk 205.6 crore, planning division Tk 242.8 crore, IMED Tk 6.7 crore, statistics and information management division Tk 142.8 crore, primary and mass education ministry Tk 1,005.2 crore, health services division Tk 2,850.5 crore, housing and public works ministry Tk 489.4 crore, religious affairs ministry Tk 384.5 crore, industries ministry Tk 565.4 crore, textile and jute ministry Tk 1,905.7 crore, fisheries and livestock ministry Tk 332.8 crore, water resources ministry Tk 1,040 crore, transportation and highways division Tk 676.6 crore and shipping ministry Tk 676.7 crore.

BNP MP Harunur Rashid said the financial sector is in a bad way because of corruption, said BNP MP Harunur Rashid.

The finance minister's indication of the continuation of easy amnesty to black money into the new fiscal year goes against the Prime Minister's declaration of zero-tolerance against

corruption, he said.

Another BNP member Rumeen Farhana asked what actions were taken against the list of 300 loan defaulters placed at the parliament.

Jatiya Party MP Kazi Firoz Rashid said many Bangladeshis with illegal money and wealth resides abroad.

So, the Anti-Corruption Commission should have offices in Canada, Malaysia, Australia and others countries, he added.

Another JP MP Rowshan Ara Mannan said that banking and financial institutions have become like "tortured orphans without in absence of any caregiver. Looting and corruption are taking place but none were punished for that."

In reply to the criticisms, Kamal said they would enact 15 laws in the next year for the reformation of the financial sector.

He said like the others he also feel pain when the hard-earned money of the countrymen was laundered abroad and he also wants to stop it.

"Money laundering has reduced significantly. The situation is not the same as before. In the past, sand used to come in the name of cement. Under-invoicing, over-invoicing is not like before. I will not say it has completely stopped. I can't see that much in the newspapers like the past," he said.

The finance minister said he did not know who took the money abroad.

"I don't have a list of who took the money. Give us the names. It will be easier for us to do the job. Many are still in jail or are under trial."

In the last decade, the interest rate on loans and the default rate have come down.

In 2008, the total loan outstanding was Tk 1.52 lakh crore. This has now increased eightfold to Tk 11.08 crore.

Responding to the criticism of the capital market, he said: "How has the stock market tanked? The daily average transaction was Tk 26 crore when the government first took power which has now increased 30 times."

Probe body visits

FROM PAGE 12
The board then submitted a bill for reimbursement to the district accounts office attaching related purchase documents.

On June 28 last year, Dhaka-based daily Janabani and local daily Paschimanchal published reports highlighting the extreme irregularities in the purchasing process. The reports alleged that materials worth only Tk 2.75 crore were purchased. No medicine worth Tk 4.5 crore was purchased but a bill for that amount was submitted and disbursed, the reports stated.

Following the reports, Khulna's directorate of health on July 2 formed the three-member probe body to investigate the matter.

Meanwhile, after the news was published, Dr Shamim Kabir filed a case under the Digital Security Act against two journalists -- Ahsan Alam, a Chuadanga correspondent of daily Janabani, and Saif Jahan, correspondent of Paschimanchal -- with Chuadanga Sadar Police Station on July 1.

Both the journalists were granted bail by the High Court on July 8 in the case.

Dr Shamim was transferred to Jhenaidah as Jhenaidah Sadar upazila health and family planning officer, the Civil Surgeon's Office sources said.

According to the investigation committee, it checked the stock of medicines purchased at the civil surgeon's office and all related documents. It also interrogated the civil surgeon of Chuadanga, the former RMO of Chuadanga Sadar Hospital, four upazila health and family planning officers, accountants and other officials concerned.

Contacted, Civil Surgeon Dr Maruf and Dr Shamim said they would not comment as the matter was under investigation.

Cops arrest 2 suspected

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transnational trafficking racket in India.

After returning home, she filed the case accusing 12 people, including Rifadul Islam Ridoy, 26, also known as Ridoy Babo on mobile app TikTok.

Talking to this newspaper recently, the victim described the brutalities she endured for more than two months in India's Bengaluru and Chennai.

Earlier on June 2, Hatirjheel police arrested three accused in the case. One of the arrestees -- Mehedi Hasan Babu -- admitted to investigators to have trafficked nearly 1,000 women to India in the last eight years.

Indian police arrested Ridoy and five other Bangladeshis in Bengaluru on May 27 after a video clip showing a 22-year-old Bangladeshi woman being tortured and sexually assaulted went viral on social media.

Bangladeshi law enforcers later identified the transnational trafficking racket which has around 50 members.

Following the incident of the video clip going viral, father of the victim filed another case with Hatirjheel Police

Station under the human trafficking act and Pornography Control Act.

Investigators said three women, who returned home recently, and the 22-year-old victim were trafficked by the same racket.

On June 1, the Rapid Action Battalion picked up the "kingpin" of the racket, Ashraful Islam Rafi alias Boss Rafi, and his three associates from Jhenidah Sadar and Abhaynagar upazilas and Benapole of Jashore.

Rafi was shown arrested in the case filed by the father of the 22-year-old victim.

The Rab said "TikTok Ridoy" was one of the main agents of Rafi with whom he met two years ago. They used the social media platform to entice girls with modelling contracts or well-paid jobs and trafficked nearly 50.

Rafi with the help of Ridoy trafficked the girls to the South Indian city of Bengaluru. The main purpose of trafficking women to India was to engage them in sex work, Rab added.

Indian police have so far arrested 12 people, mostly Bangladeshis, involved in the trafficking racket.

Lockdown slack in key

FROM PAGE 12
In Noakhali, most people outside did not wear masks and most of the small shops remained open. Crowds were noticed in kitchen markets. The town's roads saw a lot of small vehicles.

Mobile courts on Saturday and Sunday fined 40 individuals and different organisations Tk 33,500 for violating lockdown rules.

Contacted, Deputy Commissioner Mohammad Khorshed Alam Khan said six mobile courts were working to make people follow the health safety rules and enforce the lockdown.

The district's current infection rate is 23.68 percent. Noakhali municipality and six unions of the sadar upazila went into a seven-day lockdown on Saturday.

The Dinajpur district administration has decided to go tough on health safety guidelines violators.

People will be forced to wear masks. In addition, gathering places like tea stalls will be closed until further notice, said Khaled Mohammad Zaki, deputy commissioner of the district.

The decision was made in an emergency meeting on Sunday, he told The Daily Star yesterday.

The daily infection rate is between 22 and 26 percent in the district.

In another development, the local administration imposed a 10-day restriction on movement and activities in Kushtia from early yesterday as the district's current infection rate is 25.33 percent.

[Our correspondents from respective districts contributed to this report.]

Many people were outside without maintaining social distancing. Large crowds were seen in the town's shrimp fry market and Boro Bazar area. Many were locked into altercations with police who were trying to enforce the lockdown.

Although large shops and malls remained closed, some small shops were open. The picture of rural area was more alarming. Most people there neither wore masks nor follow social distancing.

Contacted, Deputy Commissioner SM Mostafa Kamal said multiple mobile courts were deployed to enforce the lockdown. Legal actions would be taken, if anyone violates the rules.

The current infection rate is 53.19 percent in the district. A seven-day lockdown was imposed on Saturday.

Temporary Iran

FROM PAGE 12
Grossi told journalists in Vienna at the beginning of the quarterly meeting of the IAEA's board of governors.

In late May the ad hoc arrangement was extended until June 24, with Grossi describing the remaining time as "very short".

Referring to negotiations underway in central Vienna between world powers and Tehran on the possible

revival of the international 2015 deal on Iran's nuclear programme, Grossi said he hoped that by "wider general agreement that's being worked on downtown or by some other means, we are not going to see our... inspection capacities curtailed any more."

"We cannot limit and continue to curtail the ability of the inspectors to inspect and at the same time pretend that there is trust," he said.

UK refuses aid

FROM PAGE 12
reports, already 4,000 evacuees had fallen victim to the disease.

5 ALL LEADERS SENTENCED IN ABSENTIA

Five top Awami League leaders -- Tajuddin Ahmad, Syed Nazrul Islam, Abdul Mannan, Tofail Ahmed and Abidur Rahman -- were sentenced in absentia to 14 years of rigorous imprisonment and confiscation of half of their properties by a special military tribunal in East Pakistan today.

MUKTI FOJ INTENSIFIES GUERRILLA ATTACKS

Bangladeshi freedom fighters intensified their guerrilla attacks on the West Pakistani army detachments and patrols in Bangladesh. They blasted grenades in different part of Dhaka including Gulistan and Paltan. In Sector 2, freedom fighters ambushed Pakistan army contingents in several places. Pakistan army suffered heavy casualties in these engagements. In the Rangpur sector, Mukti Foj destroyed two bridges and inflicted heavy casualty on the occupation army.

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Office of the Executive Engineer
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Chuadanga
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02	EED-CHU-TMED-FUR-02	586008	Manufacturing and Supply of Furniture for Academic Building at Bastopur Dakhil Madrasa in Damurhuda Upazilla under Chuadanga District.	23/06/2021 15.00	24/06/2021 15.00

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জিডি-১১৫৫

India re-opens

FROM PAGE 12
day at the height of the crisis, while its tally of infections now stands at 28.9 million.

But experts believe that both figures have been severely undercounted and could be a few times higher than the official number.

Authorities in the western state of Maharashtra, home to Mumbai, allowed businesses to run until late afternoon, staffed with half their employees, and opened gyms, salons and spas though cinemas and malls are to stay shut.

The re-opening efforts come as authorities struggle to vaccinate the population of nearly 1.4 billion in a strategy officials say is the only way to limiting any third wave of infections.

But tight supplies have meant that fewer than 5% of 950 million adult Indians have received the mandatory two vaccine doses.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi said yesterday that the federal government would provide vaccines free of charge to all adults from June 21 in an effort to turn the tide of pandemic.

Under the earlier policy, the federal government gave free vaccines to the elderly and frontline workers, and left state governments and private hospitals to administer doses for a fee to people in the 18-45 age group.

Seven companies are producing various vaccines against the coronavirus and the trial of three more vaccines is at an advanced stage, he said, adding that research is ongoing on a nasal spray vaccine which, if successful, can significantly boost India's vaccination drive.

"This is the biggest pandemic in the last hundred years...The country fought on a war-footing," the PM said in his address to the nation.

Malaysia police

FROM PAGE 12
and have helped enforcement teams "immensely", said the police chief.

"Although we have 157 standard operating procedure (SOP) monitoring teams, they move from one location to another.

"This makes them unable to monitor every location at once, including detecting symptomatic individuals in public places," said Rohaimi.

The drones, based in Kuala Terengganu, were loaned to the state by a private company for police use throughout the enforcement of the full lockdown.

In April last year, Terengganu police also used drones to track the movements and temperatures of residents in Dungun during the movement control order (MCO).

At least 62

FROM PAGE 12
Immigration Department's screening centre in Putrajaya for further action," he added.

The raid on the settlement that has access to water supply and electricity through illegal connections was carried out in collaboration with several enforcement agencies including the police, the Malaysian Civil Defence Force and the National Registration Department, Datuk Khairul said.

"This illegal settlement has the potential of spreading Covid-19 infections as it fails to comply with the stipulated standard operating procedures under the Movement Control Order," he added.

However, Khairul Dzamee denied allegations that the Immigration Department only took action against illegal immigrants, but not their employers.

"The claims are untrue because, in 2019, a total of 1,052 employers were charged in court with various offences under the Immigration Act, involving a total fine of RM19.3 million," he said.

"Last year, 519 employers were brought to court, involving a total fine of more than RM10 million. As of last month, 130 employers were slapped with fines amounting to RM3.2 million."