

BANGLADESH  
UPDATE



15,776  
New cases in 24hrs



12,96,093  
Total cases



21,397  
Deaths



11,25,045  
Recoveries

GLOBAL  
UPDATE



4,253,849  
Deaths



199,863,013  
Total cases

ROHINGYA REPATRIATION

# WB clarifies its position

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The World Bank addressed its position on the Rohingya issue on its website yesterday.

In a question-and-answer format, the World Bank spoke of Rohingya repatriation, its Refugee Policy Review and other issues.

Recently, Foreign Minister AK Abdul Momen said that the World Bank sent a letter attaching a document that spoke of Rohingyas' freedom of movement, birth certificates, privileges of education and job, and infrastructure.

Although the document was not Bangladesh-specific, the government informed the World Bank that it would not agree to those suggestions, the foreign minister had said.

The questions and answers posted on the World Bank's website yesterday are as follow:

What is the World Bank's position on the repatriation of the displaced Rohingya population?

The World Bank is helping Bangladesh address the needs of the displaced Rohingya population until their safe and voluntary return to Myanmar. The World Bank is also supporting Bangladesh to minimise the impact of the influx on the host communities.

How much has the World Bank committed to support Bangladesh to address the challenges created by the influx of the displaced Rohingya population?

The World Bank has committed

\$590 million for Bangladesh to address the health, informal education, safety net, water and sanitation, and basic infrastructure, including climate resilient roads, solar street lights, and disaster preparedness needs of both the displaced Rohingya and host communities in Cox's Bazar.

The World Bank's research and analysis are also providing insights for understanding the challenges and development priorities in Cox's Bazar.

Is this support a loan or a grant?

The entire \$590 million financing is on grant terms. This is not a credit.

What is the purpose of the Refugee Policy Review?

The Refugee Policy Review aims to evaluate the effectiveness and impact of the World Bank financing for the refugee and host communities.

This review has been done in each of the 14 World Bank member countries that are currently hosting displaced population.

How was the Refugee Policy Review done?

The review was done by the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) following the Refugee Policy Review Framework. UNHCR collected baseline information on the existing policies, practices, and programmes.

Does the Refugee Policy Review make specific recommendations to Bangladesh regarding the Rohingya population?

No, the review does not make any country-specific recommendations.



The Matuail landfill, the largest waste disposal site in the capital, is completely full. The stench from the landfill has become unbearable for the residents in nearby areas. There is a severe shortage of equipment and manpower for waste management. The photo was taken recently.

PHOTO: SK ENAMUL HAQ

## A tale of a landfill and its ravages

FROM PAGE 1

can cause severe pollution.

Abdullah Al Mueyed, chief operating officer of Citywide Inclusive Sanitation-FSM Support Cell at the Department of Public Health Engineering (DPHE), said, "A major portion of our solid waste contains more than 70 percent moisture content.

"When such a huge volume of solid waste has been transferred to a landfill site, it is very difficult to maintain aerobic conditions [presence of oxygen] inside the waste matrix.

"This excess pressure of a huge amount of untreated solid waste changes the aerobic conditions to anaerobic [absence of oxygen] over time, resulting in the emission of greenhouse gases like methane."

Following international headlines of large emissions of methane over Dhaka in April this year, Shafiullah Siddique Bhuiyan, project director of the Matuail landfill, said they are collecting satellite images of previous months and years, with the help of Bangladesh Space Research and Remote Sensing Organisation (SPARSO) and the Department of Environment (DoE), to calculate the emission rate of greenhouse gases.

DSCC, which manages the site, does not acknowledge the four tonnes of methane per hour figure that an emissions-tracking company came up with, but it does not itself have any estimation of greenhouse gases from the landfill.

"We do not think such a huge amount of this gas emits from this site as it is a sanitary landfill. We have a functional leachate treatment plant, automated weighbridge and our waste collection and management system is quite efficient. You can see it for yourself," he told The Daily Star.

During a recent visit to the landfill, this correspondent observed massive mounds of solid waste -- including plastic and kitchen waste -- uncovered and untreated at the waste site, emanating a horrific stench.

In some places, these waste mounds tower at almost 70 feet -- equivalent to a five-storey building -- above ground.

Leachate, a toxic by-product generated from compacted high-moisture content waste, has leaked all over the site, as the leachate collection drains are either full to the brim or completely choked by solid waste.

Leachate management is crucial as it can percolate down to groundwater and consequently into surface water sources.

Project Director Shafiullah said, "We need to install leachate collection drains for every 20-25 feet layer of solid waste.

"Currently, the solid waste layer is around 70 feet high. So, we should have at least three layers of leachate drains; instead, we have only one layer of leachate drain at present."

Also, most parts of the site are left without any soil cover -- in a sanitary landfill, dumped waste is supposed to be compacted and covered by soil on a daily basis to prevent interaction between the waste and air, reduce odour, and make a firm surface for better handling by heavy equipment.

**LACK OF LAND, EQUIPMENT, MANPOWER**

Officials concerned say they have only around 40 percent of the heavy equipment they need to process the daily 2,500 tonnes of waste. Also, existing equipment is damaged frequently as they have to operate on uncovered waste, in contact with overflowing leachate.

Both of the two back loaders that are used to move waste, one of the two tyre dozers, two bulldozers, three of the five pay loaders, and two of the five excavators are damaged.

The landfill also has a manpower shortage, with only 10 cleaners and four engineers managing this enormous dumpsite.

As a stopgap measure, the landfill authorities have also engaged 10 DSCC mosquito controllers and 10-12 technicians to work with the cleaners during their free time.

Due to such a severe shortage of equipment and manpower, large amounts of daily collected waste are left untreated and uncovered.

Shafiullah said, "As a result, we cannot put daily soil cover but when we finish using a section of the landfill we cover it with soil. We have already stopped using some parts of the landfill and covered it with soil and planted trees on it."

The landfill is also short of space for waste disposal.

Originally established in 1989 with 50 acres of land, the landfill's waste collection capacity was exhausted in 2006 and another 50 acres of adjacent land was added to the landfill. These 50 acres' capacity was also exceeded last year.

More than 25 acres of the landfill area have been unusable since February this year when a high-voltage pylon of Power Grid Company of Bangladesh collapsed onto part of the site.

Due to this, the landfill authorities are dumping waste in a nearby lake -- relentlessly polluting its water and soil.

An engineer stationed at the landfill said, "We dump waste transported here by rickshaw vans in the lake because the collapsed high-voltage electricity line

has made all the low-lying platforms unusable."

The remaining platforms are too high for these vans to access, he said, "So, we have no other alternative to using this lake. Once the line is removed, we shall remove the waste from the lake," he added.

Due to a lack of land, the DSCC is vertically extending the already exhausted dumping site by accumulating higher and higher waste mounds every day, instead of covering them with soil and planting trees.

A large amount of plastic waste is also a major concern for the authorities as there is no waste segregation and recycling facilities at the landfill. They do not allow waste pickers who collect recyclable waste from dumpsites inside.

As a result, heaps of plastic waste are only getting larger by the day. Waste like polythene bags often get blown away and pollute nearby waterbodies, sewerage lines, and residential areas.

During the dry season, this plastic waste is set ablaze -- creating severe air pollution in area nearby where Abdus Salam and Arshadul Alam live.

**PROPOSED REHAUL OF WASTE MANAGEMENT**

Despite local communities suffering, the DSCC has already taken steps to expand the landfill, acquiring a further 81 acres of land.

Air Commodore Badrul Amin, chief waste management officer of the DSCC, said, "We got clearance from the DoE for this expansion and our land acquisition is complete."

However, experts believe expanding the landfill is not a sustainable solution with reducing waste, segregating waste, and more efficient waste treatment needed.

Badrul said they were waiting for the local government and rural development (LGRD) ministry's approval of the "Clean Dhaka Master Plan 2018-2032".

On February 23 last year, Japan International Cooperation Agency (Jica) submitted a draft of the plan to the LGRD ministry for review. The draft was approved by both the city corporations of Dhaka.

One of the major objectives of the master plan is to implement systematic waste collection, segregation, recycling, reuse, and incineration facilities to reduce waste burden in landfills.

Badrul said, "Once approved and we get the funds, we shall be able to reduce more than 75 percent of the waste through reusing, recycling, and incinerating."

"We are hopeful all of the current problems will be solved gradually in the next 10 years."

## Countries need to work together to fight pandemic

Says Momen

BSS, DHAKA

Foreign Minister AK Abdul Momen emphasised strong cooperation among the nations to improve the ongoing Covid-19 situation across the world, including in Bangladesh.

"We must extend cooperation to the best of our abilities. Through cooperation, we can certainly minimise the sufferings," he said.

The foreign minister remarked while receiving 50 10L Oxygen Concentrators and 1.5m surgical masks as a donation from Singapore Red Cross Society at the state guest house, Padma, yesterday afternoon.

Momen said Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina was keen to maintain a proper balance between life and livelihood while managing Covid-19.

In this regard, Bangladesh's Covid response has been more successful than many other countries, Momen added.

"Bangladesh is still trying to take more healthcare measures in anticipation and is determined to improve the situation through cooperation with friendly countries," he said.

He thanked the Singapore government and Singapore Red Cross Society for the medical supplies as the need for oxygen concentrators is very critical now.

"Today's event marks a new milestone of bilateral cooperation between Bangladesh and Singapore," he said.

## Covaxin gets

FROM PAGE 1

not only scientific issues, but also religious, rights and other issues before giving the permission.

The Indian drug maker approached Bangladesh through icddr, in mid-January to hold clinical trials of its Covid-19 vaccine in the country. India approved the emergency use authorisation of the vaccine in January.

On June 24, the BMRC approved the Phase III clinical trials of a Chinese vaccine developed by the Institute of Medical Biology and the Chinese Academy of Medical Sciences. And it later approved Bangavax developed by Globe Biotech.

The Bangladesh government has approved Oxford-AstraZeneca's vaccine, Sputnik V, Sinopharm and Sinovac vaccines, Pfizer-BioNTech, Johnson & Johnson and Moderna vaccines for emergency use in Bangladesh.

## Everyone to have

FROM PAGE 1

The event was held at the capital's Bangabandhu International Conference Centre. The PM joined the programme virtually from the Gono Bhavan.

Hasina said, "This is the Bangladesh of Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman. Everyone in Bangladesh will get a better life...that's our aim."

The PM said she thinks that materialising the dream of the Father of the Nation is synonymous with the development of Bangladesh.

Hasina said no one could think about the welfare of the country and its people like Bangabandhu did.

About those living in slum-like areas, the premier said the government would arrange proper accommodation for them.

She said had Bangabandhu been alive, the people of Bangladesh would have had a developed life within 10 years of the country's independence with urban-rural balanced development.

"This is unfortunate [for Bangladesh] that he didn't get the time as August 15 [killing] took him away. He didn't get the chance to materialise his dream to reshape every village in a planned way," the PM said.

Regarding the multi-storey integrated office building in Madaripur, where all government services will be available under one roof, Hasina said saving the land of the country should always be in mind while carrying out development activities.

"We did it in Madaripur first. Gradually, we will do the same in every district and upazila for the convenience of people to avail themselves of all types of government services from one place."

The premier said the government has a plan to construct flats at the upazila level to address the accommodation problem of public servants.

State Minister for Housing and Public Works Sharif Ahmed and Secretary Md Shahid Ullah Khandaker also spoke at the programme.

## Govt mulls hotels

FROM PAGE 1

The overall positivity rate was lower despite a higher number of tests: 28.5 percent as opposed to 29.9 percent in the 24 hours earlier.

With the latest count, the total number of confirmed cases rose to 12,96,093 and the total casualties to 21,397.

Of the deceased yesterday, 140 were males and 95 were females.

The highest number of deaths were recorded in the Dhaka division (73), followed by Chattogram (65). Among the other divisions, 32 were in Khulna, 21 in Rajshahi, 12 each in Sylhet, Rangpur and Mymensingh, and eight in Barisal.

Of the total cases, 11,25,045 have recovered from their illnesses, including yesterday's 16,297.

## China to release updated climate plans 'in near future': envoy

AFP, Hong Kong

China's climate envoy yesterday said the world's most populous nation would release its updated plans to reduce carbon emissions "in the near future" as nations prepare to meet later this year for a pivotal global conference.

Climate negotiators from 196 countries and the European Union as well as businesses, experts and world leaders will gather in Glasgow in November for the COP26 summit.

The meeting is the crucial next step in getting the world's nations to agree to the kind of reduction in carbon emissions needed to stave off catastrophic climate change.

Under the Paris Agreement, countries are meant to have submitted updated 2030 climate targets ahead of COP26.

But nearly half have yet to do so, including key global emitters like China and India.

Yesterday, China's top climate negotiator said Beijing's updated plans would soon be released, potentially before the Glasgow meet.

"In the near future relevant policy papers will be out there, there will be detailed implementation plans," Xie Zhenhua told an online webinar organised by the Hong Kong University of Science and Technology.

"Then we're going to talk about that support to the UN Climate Change Conference in Glasgow," he added, according to a simultaneous English translation of his speech.

## Nasum leads Tigers

FROM PAGE 1

Hasan's 36 off 33 clearly depict the struggles of the Bangladesh batters to find boundaries and score quick runs. Afif Hossain's 23 off 17 at the death did, however, help the Tigers hobble past the 130-run mark.

While Bangladesh batsmen suffered from a clear lack of firepower within their ranks, Australia pacers were quick to read the nature of a slow Mirpur pitch as they adjusted accordingly. Knuckleballs, slower bouncers and sly change of pace from the likes of Mitchell Starc, Josh Hazlewood and Andrew Tye made things tougher for Bangladeshi batsmen.

Bangladesh lost Soumya Sarkar early when the left-hander chopped one on to his stumps trying to make room off a short delivery from Hazlewood in the fourth over. Mohammad Naim, who started off promisingly by hitting two sixes off Starc, could not convert his start into something meaningful. The left-hander threw his wicket away when he misread the length of the ball while trying to reverse sweep leggie Adam Zampa in the seventh over.

Shakib and Mahmudullah kept ticking the scoreboard in the middle but could never accelerate. Both the experienced campaigners were deceived by Hazlewood's slower deliveries with Mahmudullah falling in the 13th over and Shakib in the 17th.

Bangladesh will face Australia in the second T20I of the series today at the same venue.

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## The unvaccinated can't be outside

FROM PAGE 1

not wear masks... that is, they can impose fines. For that, an ordinance is necessary. There was a discussion about it. Maybe we can go for it," he said.

"From August 7, we will begin vaccine campaign at the union and ward level for seven days. We will administer one crore doses in seven days. We now have 1.25 crore vaccine doses in hand. We will get one crore more shots by the end of this month."

He also said elderly people will be given priority as their mortality rate from Covid-19 is higher.

The Election Commission's 2021 data shows there are about 11.17 crore people in the country who are voters -- in other words, they are 18 or over.

On the other hand, the Labour Force Survey 2016-17 of Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics says the total number of employed people in the country is about 6.08 crore, who are aged between 15 and 65. The total employed population aged 15-19 is only 39 lakh.

Till yesterday, some 97 lakh people took the first dose of Covid vaccine and some 44 lakh took both doses, according to the Directorate General of Health Services (DGHS).

That means even if the government administrators another one crore doses by August 13, there will still be a huge number of unvaccinated people who will be unable to go outside after August 10 under the government's new limit.

Meanwhile, 235 people died from Covid and at least 15,776 new infections were reported in the 24 hours preceding 8:00am yesterday, said a DGHS press release.

Yesterday, 12 ministers and state

ministers, the prime minister's principal secretary and cabinet secretary, 16 secretaries of different ministries, chiefs of law enforcement and intelligence agencies attended the meeting both virtually and physically.

Liberation War Affairs Minister Mozammel said no one will have to struggle to get the vaccine as there will be at least two vaccination centres in each union, municipality and city corporation ward.

"Vaccines will be administered at nearly 14,000 centres throughout the week [from August 7 to 13]. The elderly will be prioritised. Working people, store workers and bus helpers will be given vaccines as well. No one will be allowed to go to their workplace without taking the vaccine," he said.

Addressing shopkeepers, he said, "We're giving you three days -- [August] 7, 8 and 9 -- to take the vaccine... The meeting made the decision so that stores can reopen on Aug 11."

There will be a database of the vaccinated to monitor who are jabbed, he added.

"We don't know how long the pandemic will continue. We need to produce vaccines ourselves or partner with another country for manufacturing vaccines as soon as possible. Once it is done, we'll be able to inoculate everyone," he said.

Mozammel said the meeting decided to be strict on people who do not wear masks or follow health guidelines even after being requested to do so.

"It also said if people do not comply, the government may issue an ordinance with the provision of punishment to make people follow health guidelines," he added.