

BANGLADESH UPDATE



6,566
New cases in 24hrs



14,47,210
Total cases



24,878
Deaths



13,37,181
Recoveries



GLOBAL UPDATE



4,411,603
Deaths



210,473,612
Total cases

10 ABSCONDING CONVICTS IN AUG 21 CASE CID moves to seek Interpol red notice

To write to Police HQ for necessary steps

SHARFUL ISLAM

The CID will write to the National Central Bureau of the Police Headquarters to get the Interpol to issue red notices for 10 absconding convicts of the August 21 grenade attack case.

The 10 fugitives are retired Lt Col Saiful Islam Joardar, former DGF director retired Maj Gen ATM Amin Ahmed, and militants Md Iqbal, Mohibul Mukhtak, Anisul Morsalin, Mohammed Khalil, Maulana Liton alias Delwar Hossain alias Zobayer, Jahangir Alam Badar, Mufti Shafigur Rahman and Mufti Abdul Hai.

Of the 49 convicted of the grenade attack in 2004, 16 are absconding.

Interpol had earlier issued red notices for six of them, but later cancelled the notice for BNP Senior Vice-Chairman Tarique Rahman, who is in the UK, and former BNP lawmaker Kazi Shah Mofazzal Hossain Kaikobad, who is either in the UK or the US. About the other four, the NCB has come to know Mawlana Mohammad Tajuddin Mia is probably in Pakistan, Abul Haris Chowdhury in India or Malaysia, Ratul Ahmed Babu in Italy or South Africa and Mohammad Hanif in Thailand or Malaysia.

The International Criminal Police Organisation (Interpol) issues red notices for fugitives wanted either for prosecution or to serve a sentence. A red notice is a request to law enforcement worldwide to locate and provisionally arrest a person pending extradition, surrender, or similar legal action.

Police Headquarters' National Central Bureau (NCB) in Dhaka is the focal point for Interpol in Bangladesh.

Officers familiar with the proceedings said the NCB recently asked the

Criminal Investigation Department for its opinion on whether to seek red notices for the 10 convicts.

An officer at the section concerned of the CID said the department was preparing the necessary documents. "We will write to the NCB to communicate with the Interpol about issuing the red notices for the 10 convicts."

Mohiul Islam, assistant inspector general, at the Police Headquarters said Interpol red notices were issued for six of the convicts at different times, but Tarique's red notice was cancelled on January 26, 2016, due to his protective status and Kaikobad's notice got cancelled on May 4, 2018, as it did not comply with the Interpol's constitution.

The grisly attacks on Bangabandhu Avenue in 2004 left 24 people dead and over 300 wounded. AL chief Sheikh Hasina, then opposition leader, narrowly escaped with injuries to her right ear.

Mohiul said at the request of the

commissioner of Dhaka Metropolitan Police, the NCB was trying to get the red notice reissued for Tarique in a money laundering case filed with Cantonment Police Station in the capital.

In the grenade attack case, the CID pressed charges against 52 in October 2018. Of them 49 got convicted. The court awarded death penalty to 19, life imprisonment to 19, three years imprisonment and a fine of Tk 50,000 to four and two years imprisonment with a fine of Tk 50,000 to seven.

Ali Ahsan Mohammad Mojaheed, Mufti Abdul Hannan and Shahidul Alam Bipul were found guilty and executed in other cases by the time the charges were pressed in the grenade attack case.



Relatives take Nasir Uddin, a critical Covid-19 patient, to the coronavirus unit of Dhaka Medical College Hospital yesterday morning after he was brought there in an ambulance from his home in Munshiganj. He was given oxygen support as he was experiencing difficulties in breathing.

PHOTO: RASHED SHUMON

AL feud behind Barishal violence

FROM PAGE 1

Semiabat is the general secretary of Barishal city AL while Farooque, lawmaker from Barishal-5, is vice-president of Barishal AL.

Witnesses said the violence ensued as some BCC staffers – believed to be followers of the mayor and members of the local AL units – appeared on the premises of the UNO's office in the city's C&B area around 9:30pm and tried to take down banners put up by Farooque's followers marking the National Mourning Day.

As on-duty Ansar members barred the BCC staffers from removing the banners, the mayor's followers started scolding them. On information, the UNO rushed to the spot from his government residence on the same compound. Mayor's followers misbehaved with him, according to the witnesses.

At one stage, Semiabat's followers left the spot only to return with another 60-70 people. They then attacked the UNO's residence, breaking open its gate. At this, the UNO ordered the on-duty Ansar members to open fire.

Additional policemen, who had already arrived there, also swung into action, charging batons on the crowd to disperse it, said witnesses.

At least 50 people were hurt – some of them bullet-hit, according to AL sources and witnesses.

Mayor Semiabat and Barishal city AL President AKM Jahangir went to the spot while the chaos went on. The situation was brought under control after around one and a half hours, added witnesses.

The UNO later told journalists that some local AL and BCL activists broke the gate of his residence. "Ansar members had to fire shots to ensure our safety."

Talking to the media, Semiabat said he went to the spot to calm the situation

and alleged that Ansar members fired shots targeting him.

As the incident heated up Barishal's political landscape, the authorities suspended road and river connection between the district and other parts of the country till yesterday noon.

Additional members of police and Rab were deployed at different parts of Barishal city to avoid any further untoward situation.

The C&B Road was blocked by garbage trucks of the city corporation.

Ten platoons of BGB members were also deployed across the city yesterday evening to maintain law and order.

Talking to journalists, Barisal Metropolitan Police (BMP) Additional Commissioner Md Enamul Haque said, "We did whatever was necessary to drive the mob away."

Barishal Divisional Commissioner Md Saiful Hassan Badal and Barisal Metropolitan Police (BMP) Commissioner Md Shahabuddin Khan visited the spot. Both of them said legal action would be taken against those responsible for the violence.

Two separate cases were filed with BMP's Kotwali Police Station in connection with the incident.

The UNO yesterday sued the mayor, 28 other named and 80 unnamed people over the violence.

A police sub-inspector filed the

other case accusing the mayor, 94 other named and 400 unnamed people.

Police arrested 12 people, including Barishal city unit AL Joint Secretary Hasan Mahmud in connection with the incident, said Nurul Islam, officer-in-charge of Kotwali Police Station.

Barishal district AL, city unit AL and BCL jointly organised a press conference yesterday and alleged that the UNO unleashed the violence as he was

involved in a conspiracy to tarnish the government's image.

In a statement yesterday, Bangladesh Administrative Services Association said it held an emergency meeting of its executive committee. The Association thinks the incident took place at the instruction of the BCC mayor, the statement said.

The association demanded the mayor's immediate arrest and other legal action against him, added the statement.

Talking to The Daily Star, several local politicians said the violence on Wednesday night was the result of a longstanding feud between the mayor and the state minister.

Almost all 30 ward councillors in Barishal City Corporation were loyal to the mayor. But recently, six to seven of them joined hands with the state minister. These councillors in collaboration with the state minister organised different programmes and put up banners on the occasion of the National Mourning Day.

This irked the mayor and that is why his men went to take down banners from the premises of the UNO's office, they said.

The politicians also said Semiabat wants to take absolute control of Barishal city politics while Farooque is trying to increase his political strength in the city.

The two AL leaders did not make any

comments regarding their rivalry or their involvement in the incident.

No official comment on the alleged conflict between the BCC and the local administration was also available.

Talking to journalists yesterday, Home Minister Asaduzzaman Khan said action would be taken against those responsible after investigation.

"The probe will reveal the real issue," he said.

COVID FIELD HOSPITAL BSMMU slows down expansion as virus infection drops

MOUDDUD AHMED SUJAN

Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujib Medical University authorities have slowed down the expansion of their Covid-19 field hospital as fewer new cases are being detected in recent days.

Officials yesterday reported 159 deaths of patients confirmed to have Covid-19, the lowest in the past one and a half months.

The BSMMU launched Bangamata Sheikh Fazilatunnesa Mujib Covid-19 Field Hospital with 356 beds on August 7. There are 20 beds at the Intensive Care Unit (ICU) and 20 beds at the High Dependency Unit (HDU) at the facility which has central oxygen supply system.

Health officials earlier said there would be a total of 1,000 beds at the hospital.

But Prof Debabrata Banik, coordinator of the field hospital, yesterday said the expansion work has been slowed down because the infection rate has dropped.

He told The Daily Star that the plan now is to increase the number of beds to 500 instead of 1,000.

According to the Directorate General of Health Services, the number of Covid-19 patients has declined in

different Covid-19 hospitals across the country.

Yesterday, the general bed occupancy declined to 39 percent from 69 percent on July 13. The ICU bed occupancy rate declined to 70 percent from 90 percent on July 30.

"The number of Covid-19 patients has been declining because there were some restrictions before August 11. With everything reopening, there is a risk of another rise," Dr Abu Jamil Faisal, member of the Epidemiology and Public Health Committee of the DGHS, told The Daily Star yesterday.

Since August 2, the positivity rate has been declining steadily, with 17.64 percent recorded yesterday, the lowest in the past two months.

As the Delta variant of coronavirus spread across the country the positivity rate jumped to 33 percent on July 24.

Yesterday, the DGHS reported 6,566 new cases, taking the total confirmed cases to 14,47,210.

With the latest count, the total number of deaths rose to 24,878.

Of those reported dead yesterday, 76 were male and 83 female. Fifty of them were in Dhaka, 38 in Chattogram, 23 in Sylhet, 13 in Rajshahi, 12 in Khulna, 10 in Barishal, eight in Rangpur and five in Mymensingh divisions.

Wounds unhealed

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"With all these complications, I am not sure if I will get to see the culprits punished before I die."

During the phone conversation, her voice cracked frequently. In between, she spoke of her tribulations: she feels numb in her left leg and left hand. Just days ago, she slipped and fell from the stairs as her left leg betrayed her and took a misstep.

Her husband, who was a big support for her in this condition, died a few years ago. "For me, living is now hell due to the pain all over the body."

She added: "Despite all these sufferings, it would bring us some solace if we could see implementation of the verdict in our lifetime."

When she was taken to the hospital after the grisly attack 17 years ago, everybody thought she was dead. They even kept her among the dead bodies, she recalled.

She first moved her limbs after three days in a coma, and regained full consciousness after 25 days.

Rashida Akhtar Ruma, another victim bearing over 1,000 splinters in the body, was 24 when she suffered the injuries. Now 41, her pain is unbearable some days, and it is getting worse with time.

"All that we want is to see the perpetrators and mastermind of the attack, Tarique Rahman, punished in my lifetime," she said.

A Dhaka court on October 10, 2018, sentenced 19 people, including former state minister for home Lutfozzaman Babar to death. Nineteen others, BNP acting chairman Tarique included, were given life imprisonment.

Execution of the capital punishment

remains pending as the High Court has not yet started hearing on the death references and appeals by the 19 death-row convicts.

The HC accepted the appeals more than two and a half years ago.

Nasima Ferdushe, now in her 60s, sustained injuries so bad that doctors cannot do an MRI on her because of the 1,500 splinters she still carries, including in her head, lungs, and chest.

A former MP, Nasima said the pain was a constant reminder of the attack. She was only able to walk after five years of treatment and had been bedridden for nine months.

"Many of the grenade attack victims have already died. Many others are waiting for the end like me with untold sufferings," she said, adding that to be able to see the final justice done would take away at least some of the pain.

The attack left 24 people dead and over 300 injured.

Prime Minister and AL chief Sheikh Hasina, then opposition leader, narrowly escaped death with injuries to her right ear. Ivy Rahman, wife of late president Zillur Rahman, was among those killed.

Nazimuddin, 60, carrying around 100 splinters, said pain in different parts of his body was increasing with each passing day.

A vice-president of Dhaka City North Awami League, he said the execution of the verdict, including the death sentence for 19, would bring them some mental peace although it would not ease their physical pain.

Several other survivors shared his sentiment and called for quick completion of the High Court proceedings.

Alarm as vaccines found at pvt clinic

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On Wednesday night, police, following a tip-off, arrested Bijoy Krishna Talukder, 37, for selling Moderna Covid-19 vaccines at Sheba Clinic in Chalabon area of Dakkhinkhan, Azizul Huq Mia, officer-in-charge (investigation) of Dakkhinkhan Police Station, told The Daily Star.

Bijoy was supposedly a volunteer in the special vaccination drive at a centre in Uttarkhan in the city.

The law enforcers recovered an ampul of the vaccine from Bijoy's room and 20 packets that could hold 10 ampules each. Police later raided his home in Hazipara area and found another ampule in his refrigerator, said the official.

"During primary interrogation, we learnt that Bijoy was vaccinating people for Tk 500 per dose. We traced a couple who have taken the jabs from him. We are trying to get details," said Azizul.

Saiful Islam, deputy commissioner of Uttara division police, told this paper that Bijoy told police that he took the ampules from the vaccination centre.

"We have requested the city corporation [DNCC] to check whether any ampul was missing. We have also asked for details of Bijoy as he claimed to have worked as a volunteer," said Saiful.

He said the DGHS was informed and it was investigating how the shots got out of the vaccine centre.

Dhaka North City Corporation Mayor Atiqul Islam said, "I am yet to receive any letter from the police. We will give full assistance to the police."

He, however, said they would not

investigate the matter themselves.

Health officials have squarely blamed the DNCC authorities for the vaccines ending up in the black market.

They also said the vaccination campaign was going smoothly until the special vaccination campaign was held during which around 55 lakh people got vaccinated.

"The vaccination campaign has been monitored by us. But during the special mass vaccination campaign, some new centres were opened under city corporations and all the anomalies happened in the city corporation areas," said a DGHS official, preferring not to be named.

The claim is neither entirely unfounded nor accurate in particular.

On August 12, a councillor of Cumilla City Corporation administered Covid shots to over 100 people at her office.

Photos of Nadia Nasrin, councillor for reserved seat-4, -5 and -6, vaccinating people made the rounds on social media, drawing widespread criticism.

Mir Mubarak Hossain, civil surgeon of Cumilla, said, "There was chaos and the ward councillor took the health workers and vaccines to a nearby place. But the councillor had no permission to administer vaccines to the people."

Many in Chattogram city got vaccinated in their homes during the special campaign. The matter came to light after Md Hasan, 31, posted a photo of him getting the jab on Facebook.

Even big shots got the jabs at home and that too not during the special campaign.

Resistance against Taliban spreads

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a rally, but it was unclear if the casualties resulted from Taliban firing or from a stampede.

"Hundreds of people came out on the streets," witness Mohammad Salim said. "At first I was scared and didn't want to go but when I saw one of my neighbours joined in, I took out the flag I have at home."

"Several people were killed and injured in the stampede and firing by the Taliban."

Protests flared in the city of Jalalabad and a district of Paktia province, also both in the east.

On Wednesday, Taliban fighters fired at protesters waving flags in Jalalabad, killing three, witnesses and media reported.

Meanwhile, Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov yesterday said that armed resistance to the Taliban is forming in Afghanistan's Panjshir Valley, led by

deposed vice-president Amrullah Saleh

and Ahmad Massoud, a veteran guerrilla leader killed by suspected al-Qaeda militants in 2001.

"The Taliban doesn't control the whole territory of Afghanistan," Lavrov told reporters at a press conference in Moscow following a meeting with his Libyan counterpart.

Famed for its natural defences, the valley never fell to the Taliban during the civil war of the 1990s, nor was it ever conquered by the Soviets a decade earlier.

"Salute those who carry the national flag and thus stand for dignity of the nation," Amrullah Saleh said on Twitter yesterday.

Saleh said on Tuesday he was the "legitimate caretaker president" in Afghanistan after president Ashraf Ghani fled.

In an op-ed for the Washington Post, Ahmad Massoud, leader of the National Resistance Front of Afghanistan, called

for Western support.

"I write from the Panjshir Valley today, ready to follow in my father's footsteps, with mujahideen fighters who are prepared to once again take on the Taliban," wrote Massoud.

Qatar could host fresh talks between the Taliban and the Afghan government as soon as next week to reach an agreement over power sharing and government transition, said two sources familiar with the process and two foreign diplomats.

Former Afghan leaders, including ex-president Hamid Karzai, have already held talks with the Taliban.

Meanwhile, G7 foreign ministers yesterday called for a united international response to prevent the crisis escalating further, in comments echoed by countries including Russia. China said the world should support, not pressure, Afghanistan.

JAPANESE WOMAN'S PETITION HC summons father over custody of two daughters

Asks him to bring them to court

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The High Court yesterday directed Bangladesh-born US citizen Imran Sharif to produce his daughters before it on August 31 after his Japanese wife Eriko Nakano, who moved to Bangladesh, filed a writ petition for custody of their children.

The court ordered the officers-in-charge of Adabor and Gulshan police stations to ensure that Imran and his sister Amina Jebin produce the children -- Nakano Jasmine Malika, 11, and Nakano Laila Lina, 10, -- before the court on that day.

It also ordered Imran not to leave the country with his daughters in the next 30 days.

The HC also issued a rule asking the authorities concerned of the government and Imran and Amina to explain as to why they should not be directed to produce the children before the court to satisfy it that they are not confined illegally.

The HC bench of Justice M Enayetur Rahim and Justice Md Mostafizur Rahman came up with the order after hearing the writ petition.

Lawyer Mohammad Shishir Munir appeared for the petitioner during the virtual hearing.

Nakano, 46, a doctor based in Tokyo, came to Bangladesh on July 18 this year and filed a writ petition with the HC seeking a directive on Imran, 58, to hand over the children to her custody.

She submitted the petition to the court through lawyer Shishir, saying that Imran, who now lives in Mohammadia Housing Society under Adabor Police Station in Dhaka or in a Gulshan house, may flee Bangladesh with her daughters.

In the petition, Nakano said she and Imran got married on July 11, 2008, in Japan following Japanese and Muslim culture.

Imran submitted a divorce notice to a Japanese court on January 18 this year. However, he did not appear before the court on the scheduled dates for the hearing.

On January 21 this year, Imran picked up the daughters from their school in Tokyo and came to Bangladesh on February 21.

In the petition, Nakano prayed to the HC to order Imran to produce her daughters before the court in three days to demonstrate that they are not confined illegally.

She added that Imran took her daughters and harassed her intentionally by preventing her from seeing or contacting them.

Age limit raised

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months until the end of the year.

On August 12, State Minister for Public Administration Farhad Hossain told reporters at the Secretariat that they had sent a proposal to the Prime Minister regarding this issue.

The government increased the age limit by five months in the first phase of the Covid-19 pandemic last year.

Holy Ashura today

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for establishing truth and justice in the fight with soldiers of Yazid on Karbala Maidan in Iraq.

The day is a public holiday.

President Abdul Hamid and Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina yesterday issued separate messages on the eve of the holy Ashura, paying deep respect to Hazrat Imam Hossain (RA) and other martyrs of Karbala.

In his message, the president said, "The holy Ashura is a significant and mourning day for the whole Muslim Ummah."

Their supreme sacrifice for upholding the ideals of Islam remains as a glorious event in the history, he said.

"Islam is a religion of peace and harmony. Here there is no room for confrontation, jealousy and envy," President Hamid added.

In her message, Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina said the sacrifice of Hazrat Imam Hossain (RA) and his companions to establish truth and justice in society is an example for the Muslim Ummah across the world.

She urged all to follow health guidelines and offer special prayers to the Almighty Allah seeking relief from the coronavirus pandemic.

Police have taken special security measures in the capital marking the occasion.

The religious affairs ministry has restricted Tazia marches, processions and rallies on the occasion of the holy Ashura.

However, all other necessary religious rituals on this occasion can be performed maintaining health protocols, said a release of the ministry on August 17.

Bangladesh Betar, Bangladesh Television and private TV channels will air special programmes, while newspapers and online news portals publish supplements highlighting the significance of the day.