

BANGLADESH UPDATE



4,698
New cases in 24hrs



14,82,628
Total cases



25,729
Deaths



13,99,885
Recoveries



GLOBAL UPDATE



4,481,648
Deaths



215,039,150
Total cases

CUSTODY OF 2 DAUGHTERS

Japanese-Bangladeshi parents trying to reach out-of-court settlement

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Considering the future and welfare of their two daughters, Japanese mother Nakano Eriko and Bangladeshi father Imran Sharif are trying to come to an agreement before the court hearing on August 31.

They made the remarks yesterday while talking to reporters in front of the Victim Support Centre of Dhaka Metropolitan Police in Tejgaon, where the children are staying.

Responding to a question, Eriko, 46, who moved to Bangladesh recently to fight a legal battle over the children's custody, said she wants to negotiate for the welfare of her daughters -- Nakano Jasmine Malika, 11, and Nakano Laila Lina, 10.

"I saw the children smiling. I bathed them with my own hands. The people who are looking after them here are very sincere...Although it's [Victim Support Centre] and not a five-star hotel, the environment is clean, safe and secure."

She said she is grateful to the people who are looking after her children.

Eriko's lawyer, Shishir Monir, said they are hopeful about reaching an agreement soon before the court hearing.

"Since it is a family matter, there are social and cultural issues in addition to the legal process. For this, we are trying to end the matter through negotiation outside the process. We hope to reach a decision soon."

Asked what kind of agreement could be made, he said, "The divorce between them has not been implemented yet. There are still chances for various types of negotiations."

"As the next hearing date is on the 31st of this month, we are trying to reach an agreement before that, while maintaining respect for each other. Both the parents and their lawyers have initially agreed on the matter."

About the problem between the couple centring a flat, he said, "There may have been an issue but that was not the only reason [for the husband to send a divorce notice]."



Imran Sharif



Nakano Eriko

A lawsuit has been filed with a Japanese court over the divorce, he added.

Her husband, however, moved to Bangladesh without following a Japanese court order.

Imran Sharif, 58, the children's father, said that he is ready to negotiate for the betterment and future of the children.

"The subsequent issues involve the outcome of the agreement. I will try my best to keep my children happy."

He said the girls were depressed at the Victim Support Centre, although the people who are looking after them are very sincere.

"The children cannot eat properly there. They are surrounded by unknown people. If we can move them to a hotel, both of us can stay in separate rooms and look after them, which will give them peace of mind."

He said the information provided about the flats in Japan was incorrect.

"I was kicked out of home with a two-day legal notice. I was forced to move to Bangladesh."

On July 18, Eriko, a doctor based in Tokyo, came to Bangladesh and filed a writ petition with the High Court seeking a directive on Imran to hand over the two children to her custody.

On August 19, the HC bench directed Imran to produce his daughters before it on August 31. But before that, the Criminal Investigation Department of Police took the children into their custody on August 22.

On August 23, the HC bench of Justice M Enayetur Rahim and Justice Md Mostafizur Rahman said the girls will remain at the centre till the August 31 hearing.



Chief of Army Staff Gen SM Shafiuddin Ahmed visits a stall at the International Defence Industry Fair-2021 in Turkey. He returned to Dhaka yesterday, ending his state visit to that country.

PHOTO: ISPR

Rolling out in the open on Sunday

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system, is being built from the capital's Uttara to Motijheel at a cost of Tk 21,985 crore.

Once complete, the metro rail -- with 16 stations -- will be able to carry 60,000 people an hour, reducing travel time from Uttara to Motijheel to around 40 minutes. The journey now takes about two hours on a regular day.

The overall progress of the fast-track project was 68.49 percent till July this year. The first phase saw 88.18 percent progress and the second phase -- from Agargaon to Motijheel -- 66.74 percent. The installation of tracks and other equipment and procurement of cars saw 60.66 percent progress, according to the project's monthly progress report.

The first set of the metro trains reached Dhaka on April 21 and the depot two days later, registering a major development in the project.

Each train has six cars that can carry a maximum 2,308 people at a time. It was manufactured by Kawasaki Heavy Industries Ltd in Japan, said officials.

Bangladesh's first ever electricity train was rolled out on the tracks on a test run inside the depot in the city's Diabari on May 11. With that, the country entered a new era of electricity-powered trains, said officials. Currently, all the conventional trains here run on diesel.

From that day, the authorities began the performance test and continued it inside the depot, which has some 20 kilometres of tracks. The authorities also operated the train on a test track for speed tests.

The authorities then asked officials concerned to prepare the first five stations in Uttara North, Uttara Center,

Uttara South, Pallabi and Mirpur-11 for the test run.

However, the performance test would be carried out involving the first four stations as there is turnout point at the Pallabi station, officials aware of developments told this newspaper.

The Mirpur-11 station will also be prepared as when the train will reach the Pallabi station, it will get power from the power sub-station at Mirpur-11, they said.

"The train would be operated between the four stations slowly," an official said, wishing not to be named. The project is being implemented under eight packages.

Of them, packages 3 and 4 are being used for building viaduct from Uttara to Agargaon while package 7 is for maintaining electrical and mechanical systems and package 8 for storing rolling stock (rail coach) and depot equipment.

People involved with these four packages are passing busy hours to make the performance test successful, the officials said.

So far, four sets of metro trains -- out of 24 -- have reached the country.

Meanwhile, the DMITCL authority, with MAN Siddique in the chair, held a meeting yesterday with the consultants of all eight packages and the team leaders to make Sunday's programme a success, they added.

FIRST PHASE OPERATION LIKELY IN DECEMBER 2022

Talking to The Daily Star on May 11, MAN Siddique said after the performance test on rail tracks on the viaduct, they would go for the integrity test.

During the integrity test, they will check whether synchronisation of everything was done properly and whether they were ready to go for a trial run, he said.

Citing experience of different countries, he said it takes six months to a year, even more in some cases, to complete all these tests.

After completion of all tests, the authorities will go for a trial run before launching the service. "It may take up to 10 weeks to complete both tests with and without passengers," he added.

The original implementation period of the project was 2012-2024. Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina later directed that metro services from Uttara to Agargaon be made operational by 2019, and from Agargaon to Motijheel by 2020.

Failing to meet the deadline, the authorities in May 2019 said the services would be launched on December 16 this year as the country celebrates the golden jubilee of its independence.

But Finance Minister AHM Mustafa Kamal in his budget speech on June 3 this year said activities were underway to start passenger transport in the Uttara-Agargaon section of metro by December 2022.

MAN Siddique, taking part at the magazine programme Iyadi on July 30, also said: "We hope that the Dhaka city dweller would be able to use the first phase -- Uttara Diabari to Agargaon -- of metro rail from December 2022."

When this correspondent asked him about the deadline yesterday, MAN Siddique said the road transport and bridges minister would reveal the information formally.

Army chief returns from state visit to Turkey

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Chief of Army Staff Gen SM Shafiuddin Ahmed returned home yesterday, wrapping up his state visit to Turkey.

During the visit, the army chief met Turkey's President of Defence Industries Ismail Demer and Deputy Minister of National Defence Muhsin Dere, said a press release from the Inter-Services Public Relations (ISPR).

The two top officials of the Turkey government assured Shafiuddin of extending to Bangladesh all sorts of cooperation, including on military equipment.

Later, the army chief visited different stalls at the International Defence Industry Fair-2021 in Turkey, said the press release.

After reaching Ankara from Istanbul, he visited the grave and museum of Mustafa Kemal Atatürk and paid homage at the memorial.

During his stay in Ankara, Shafiuddin met Gen Musa Aveser, chief of Turkish Land Forces, and Gen Yasar Guler, chief of Turkish general staff.

At the meetings, the army chief discussed issues of mutual interest between Turkey and Bangladesh.

The talks focused on possible areas of defence cooperation between the two countries, including training exchanges, the release said.

Apart from meeting several important officials of the Turkish army, Shafiuddin also inspected the operation control room of Turkish Unmanned Aerial System (UAS), the Army Aviation Headquarters and Turkish Air Spaces Industry, it added.

BNP knows

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city north and south units jointly organised the memorial meeting at AL's Bangabandhu Avenue central office on the occasion of the National Mourning Day.

Hasina asked whether Khaleda Zia or Tarique Zia could claim that they saw Zia's body in the box (which was brought from Chattogram) as a bullet-hit body can easily be recognised. "No one saw it as there was no body [of Zia] in the box," she said.

The AL president said she heard from HM Ershad that there was a body with a combat dress in the box. "Don't BNP men know that the president can't wear a combat dress? Even then they haven't given up the habit of engaging in clashes over there," she said.

Hasina, the eldest daughter of Bangabandhu, said the objectives of August 15 conspirators were to make Bangladesh a failed state, thwart the achievements of the (country's) independence and destroy the ideals of the Liberation War.

She said the name of Bangabandhu that the conspirators erased from the history for 21 years is now internationally recognised. "Now no one can erase the name anymore.... The history they had distorted is now very clear to the people," she added.

Reiterating that Ziaur Rahman and Khondaker Mostaq were the masterminds of the August 15 carnage, she said Bangabandhu made Ziaur Rahman the deputy army chief, bringing him from Cumilla Cantonment in order to keep his family unbroken.

She said Ziaur Rahman never believed in the existence of Bangladesh. "It's true. No such history can be heard that Ziaur Rahman fought in any field or anywhere."

The PM said the AL Chattogram leaders, including Mosharraf Hossain MP, named him "Mr Retreat" at that time as he used to stay three miles away from any fighting spot.

Hasina said Mostaq became president depending on Ziaur Rahman, but could not cling to power for a long time just like Mir Jafar. "All use the traitors, but no one trusts them. Ziaur Rahman did exactly the same thing, and Mostaq had to step down even before completing three months in power," she said.

In her emotion-choked voice, the PM said she got the love and affection from AL leaders and activists and the people of Bangladesh when she returned home in 1981 after losing her family members. "So, AL is my family and Bangladesh is my family... I don't have any fear of death or any desire," she said.

Hasina thanked the AL leaders and activists for helping people during the Covid-19 pandemic. "It's the Awami League leaders and activists who are standing by the people," she said.

AL Dhaka city north unit Sheikh Bazlur Rahman presided over the discussion moderated by its general secretary SM Mannan Kachi.

AL Dhaka city south unit President Abu Ahmed Mannafi, General Secretary Humayun Kabir, Vice-president Nurul Amin MP, Joint General Secretary Moshed Kamal and Organising Secretary Akter Hossain, and AL Dhaka city north unit Vice-president Kader Khan, Joint General Secretary Matiuur Rahman Matin and Organising Secretary Azizul Haque Rana spoke at the function.

Twin blasts kill over 60

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The airport is the only part of the country under foreign control following the Taliban's return to power on August 15, and huge crowds have massed in the hope of being evacuated.

He said the blasts have been assessed as coming from Islamic State suicide bombers, and that the US airlift would continue despite the attack.

"ISIS will not deter us from accomplishing the mission," he said. The United States expects more Islamic State attacks in Kabul and is prepared to retaliate, McKenzie told a news conference.

US President Joe Biden had earlier cited an "acute" terrorist threat from the regional chapter of the Islamic State jihadist group.

The Taliban condemned the blasts, and said they happened in an area under US military control.

"The Islamic Emirate strongly condemns the bombing targeting civilians at Kabul airport," said a statement released by Zabihullah Mujahid, the Taliban's main spokesman, on Twitter.

Graphic video shared on social media showed bodies lying semi-submerged in a canal adjacent to the airport, where thousands have gathered since the Taliban takeover of August 15 hoping for a flight out.

"When people heard the (first) explosion there was total panic," a man name Milad told AFP.

"The Taliban then started firing in the air to disperse the crowd. I saw a man rushing with an injured baby in his hands."

The US government and its allies had raised the alarm earlier in the day with a series of advisories warning their citizens to avoid the airport.

No specifics were given, but Belgium's Prime Minister Alexander De Croo referred to a threat from suicide bombers.

London also issued a warning to its citizens, saying "if you can leave Afghanistan safely by other means, you should do so immediately."

There were reports on social media late yesterday of a third blast north of the airport, but further details were not immediately available.

After the blasts, images posted on social media showed men ferrying injured people to safety in wheelbarrows.

More than 95,000 Afghans and

foreigners have fled Afghanistan via the US-led airlift since the hardline Taliban movement took control of the country.

Despite security warnings, huge crowds of people desperate to flee the Taliban continued to throng the airport, their bid for a way out becoming increasingly anxious ahead of next Tuesday's deadline set by Biden to end evacuations and withdraw troops.

Biden has not budged on the hard deadline -- even as some foreign nations warned they would be forced to leave at-risk Afghans behind.

Shortly after the blasts the White House said Biden was being briefed on the attack, delaying a planned meeting with Israel's visiting prime minister and cancelling another event.

Several Western allies have already wrapped up their airlift operations including Canada, whose government said it was "truly heartbreaking" to leave behind those who wanted to be rescued.

Germany's defence minister said Berlin has pulled out all its soldiers, while Chancellor Angela Merkel condemned the "heinous" attack.

In recent years, the Islamic State's Afghanistan-Pakistan chapter has been responsible for some of the deadliest attacks in those countries. It has massacred civilians at mosques, shrines, public squares and even hospitals.

The group has especially targeted Muslims from sects it considers heretical, including Shias.

But while IS and the Taliban are both hardline Sunni Islamist militants, they are rivals and oppose each other.

The Taliban have promised a softer brand of rule from their first stint in power, which ended in 2001 when the United States invaded because they gave sanctuary to al-Qaeda.

But many Afghans fear a repeat of the Taliban's brutal interpretation of sharia law, as well as violent retribution for working with foreign militaries, Western missions or the previous US-backed government.

There are particular concerns for women, who were largely banned from education and employment and could only leave the house with a male chaperone during the group's 1996-2001 rule.

Some of the Afghans massed outside the airport have foreign passports, visas or eligibility to travel, but most do not.

19 months' wait may end Oct 15

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centres of public universities to speed up the inoculation.

A number of UGC members said the universities would also reopen dormitories after students were vaccinated.

Several VCs spoke in favour of reopening the dorms from September as almost all their teachers and most residential students had already been fully vaccinated.

UGC Acting Secretary Ferdous Zaman said they sent a list of about 3.5 lakh university students to the health ministry. "Six to seven days ago, the health directorate informed us that 35 percent of 1.45 lakh registered students had been fully vaccinated."

He said almost all universities teachers had also gotten their two shots. On March 17, 2020, the government closed all educational institutions due to the Covid-19 outbreak in the country. The closure led to cancellation of exams and left academic calendars in disarray.

Following the closure, the government launched TV educational programmes on the state-run Sangsad channel for secondary and primary students. Later, it asked all schools, colleges, and universities to introduce online education.

Most students in urban areas were able to utilise remote learning but the digital divide proved to be a great disadvantage for underprivileged learners, mainly due to a lack of devices and poor access to internet.

REOPENING OF SCHOOLS
Several top officials of the education and primary and mass education ministry said there was a discussion but no decision made on reopening secondary and primary schools.

They said there would be a meeting next week with the National Technical

Meeting sources said the VCs of at least two universities suggested setting up vaccination booths at the medical

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ACC cannot freeze

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challenging the legality of the directive. In the full text of the verdict, the HC said number 18 of the ACC rules of 2007 clearly laid down a procedure for freezing or attachment of a property allegedly illegally acquired by a suspect.

"Before freezing or attachment of any property the commission, prima-facie has to be satisfied first that the alleged property has been acquired by illegal means and then, the commission should have authorized its officer to apply before the senior special judge or the trial Judge, as

the case may be, before freezing or attachment of such property. "And thereafter, the authorised officer, should have filed an application before the court concerned stating the reasons for attachment or freezing of the property, as the case may be, with sufficient materials. "Finally, the court concerned may pass an order of attachment or freezing the property after being prima-facie satisfied that said property has been acquired by the parson concerned by illegal means," the HC judges observed.

Belayet filed a writ the HC

investigation officer to freeze the bank account of Belayet Hossain, who owns a pharmacy in Cox's Bazar.

It added that a senior special judge's court or a special judge's court has some jurisdiction.

Assistant Director of ACC's Chattogram-2 Integrated Office Md Sharif Uddin on January 6 directed the manager of Cox's Bazar branch of Social Islami Bank Ltd to freeze the bank account of Belayet.

Belayet filed a writ the HC