

BANGLADESH UPDATE

1,327
New cases in 24hrs

15,28,542
Total cases

26,880
Deaths

14,75,235
Recoveries

GLOBAL UPDATE

4,635,260
Deaths

224,912,384
Total cases

20TH ANNIVERSARY OF 9/11

US honours victims

Biden calls for unity

AFP, New York

America yesterday marked the 20th anniversary of 9/11 with solemn ceremonies given added poignancy by the recent chaotic withdrawal of US troops from Afghanistan and return to power of the Taliban.

At the 9/11 memorial in New York, relatives wiped away tears, their voices breaking as they read out the names of the almost 3,000 people killed in the al-Qaeda attacks.

"We love you and we miss you," many of them said as somber violin music played at the official ceremony, attended by dignitaries including President Joe Biden and former presidents Barack Obama and Bill Clinton.

At the Ground Zero site where 2,753 people died -- some of whom jumped to their deaths from the collapsing towers -- the service started shortly after 8:30 am (1230 GMT) under tight security, with Lower Manhattan effectively locked down.

The first of six moments of silence were marked at 8:46 am, with a bell ringing to symbolize the time the first hijacked plane crashed into the North Tower of the World Trade Center.

At 9:03 am, attendees stood still again to mark the moment the South Tower was struck. At 9:37 am, it was the Pentagon, where the hijacked airliner killed 184 people in the plane and on the ground.

At 9:59, the moment the South Tower fell. At 10:03 am, they remembered the fourth plane to crash in a field in Shanksville, Pennsylvania, after passengers fought the hijackers. At 10:28 am, the North Tower falling.

Mourners clutched photos of their loved ones, their pain still raw despite a whole generation having grown up since the morning of September 11.

"As we carry these 20 years forward, I find continuing appreciation for all of those who rose to be more than ordinary people," said Mike Low, whose daughter was a flight attendant on the first plane.

Bruce Springsteen sang his song "I'll See You in My Dreams," and after nightfall twin light beams will be projected into the New York sky.

Smaller ceremonies took place across the country, including outside fire stations throughout New York in remembrance of the 343 firefighters who lost their lives to save others, while a brief moment of contemplation took place in Times Square.

Heart-wrenching commemorations also took place at the Pentagon and Shanksville.

In the last 20 years, al-Qaeda founder Osama bin Laden has been hunted down and killed and towering new skyscraper has risen over Manhattan, replacing the Twin Towers, dubbed the "Freedom Tower."

But 9/11 is never far away.



READY TO ROLL ... Children buying bags at a shop selling school supplies. After almost two years, children can now breathe a sigh of relief as they finally get out of their homes and start normal lives again with friends at school. Inset, school authorities prepare the premises for the return of students by hanging up banners listing health safety rules, setting up hand-washing stations and readying school vans.

PHOTO: STAR

Next election

FROM PAGE 1

national election, the government will have to free party Chairperson Khaleda Zia and all other political prisoners and withdraw the "false" cases filed against 35 lakh opposition leaders and activists. "Otherwise, no election will be allowed in the country."

Jatiyatobadi Mohila Dal arranged the programme at the Jatiya Press Club, marking its 43rd founding anniversary.

Fakhrul urged the government to take necessary steps and create an atmosphere conducive to constituting a neutral election commission.

"You [government] are talking about formation of a law for constituting the Election Commission... people won't accept it if you pass a law unilaterally for your own benefit in parliament and form the Election Commission under it."

The BNP leader alleged that the government has politicised all the state machinery. "You have politicised the judiciary, the administration and the law enforcement agencies. You are even

trying to politicise the army. We now can't speak up and write freely."

He said journalists also cannot write anything now without fear as they are being harassed and implicated in cases under the Digital Security Act.

Fakhrul said the people of Bangladesh who liberated the country through a long battle will never accept an authoritarian and one-party rule.

He urged the Mohila Dal leaders and activists to get united for waging a strong movement for restoring democracy and having Khaleda freed from jail.

Speaking at the programme, BNP standing committee member Gayeshwar Chandra Roy said there is no other alternative for the party to waging a one-point movement for ensuring the fall of Sheikh Hasina.

"We're trying to forge a strong national unity to free Sheikh Hasina to quit for holding a free and fair election... we won't get any benefit even if the next election is held under an 'angel' keeping Sheikh Hasina in power," he added.

Deaths on roads jump by 40pc

FROM PAGE 1

40 PERCENT RISE IN DEATHS

There were around 2,291 road accidents till July last year, while the number is 3,259 in the same period this year, showing a 42.25 percent rise.

As per the police report, the highest number of accidents in a single month was 543 in May this year, when the country witnessed a mad rush of homegoers centring Eid-ul-Fitr.

On the other hand, while 2,211 people were killed on roads in first seven months of last year, the number rose to 3,095 over the same months this year, meaning deaths by road crashes saw a 40 percent rise.

A total of 3,918 people were killed in 4,198 accidents in 2020, while 4,138 people were killed in 4,147 accidents in 2019, shows the police report.

However, the numbers in the report are much lower than those stated by different road safety organisations.

WHAT ARE THE REASONS?

Since operations of public transport, especially buses, trains and launches remained suspended for more than two months since April this year, when

motorcycles or in private cars for Eid holidays, he added.

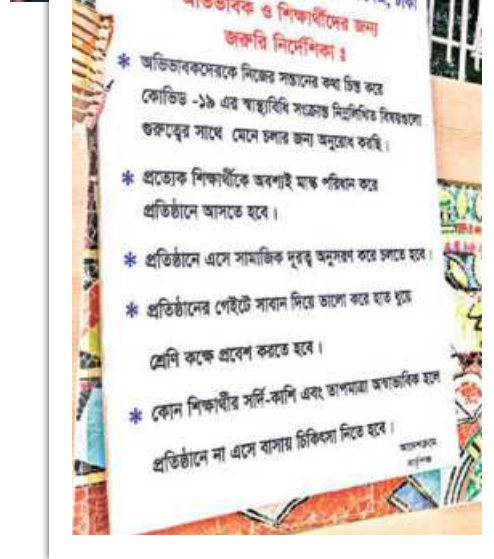
Besides, the accident prevention mechanism was not in place, he said, adding that non implementation of traffic laws, especially of the Road Transport Act-2018, are reasons behind the sharp rise.

Road safety crusader Ilias Kanchan, also the chairman of Nirapad Sarak Chai, said the number of road accidents saw a steep rise due to a phenomenal rise in the number of motorcycles since 2016, as the two-wheelers became the most accident-prone vehicle in recent times.

The number of registered bikes was 13.78 lakh till 2015, which rose to 32.58 lakh till May this year, according to the Bangladesh Road Transport Authority (BRTA) database.

Nirapad Sarak Chai, in its road accident report published in January this year, said the rate of bike accidents were 19 percent in 2019, which rose to 27 percent last year.

Kanchan said although three-wheelers like Nosimon and Korimon have been banned on the highways, a growing number of such vehicles are



Caged no more, back to fun

FROM PAGE 1

Candidates of Higher Secondary Certificate, Secondary School Certificate exams of 2021 and 2022 and this year's Primary Education Completion Examination (PECE) and its equivalent exams would attend classes every day.

For HSC candidate Anjum Chaity, this means preparations for her board exam can begin in full swing.

"I was not able to clear my doubts in online classes -- there are network issues, too. In in-person classes, I could do so immediately," said Chaity, a student of Dhaka Commerce College in Mirpur.

Parents though are not as excited as they are not sure whether the schools and colleges would be able to keep their children safe from the coronavirus.

One such concerned father is Shahinur Hossain. He would not send his children to classrooms now and would wait a week or two to see whether the school has put in place effective safety measures to prevent outbreaks.

If the coronavirus caseload increases, the government would close the educational institutions again, said Education Minister Dipu Moni yesterday.

This comes after Health Minister Zahid Maleque on Friday said his ministry would recommend closing schools and colleges if the Covid positivity rate goes up again.

Chances of infection rate rising

again are low if the health guidelines are followed properly, Dipu Moni said while talking with reporters at Jamalpur Circuit House after attending an Awami League event.

She went on to urge all parents not to send their children to schools if they display any kind of Covid-19 symptoms.

Almost all schools are ready to hold in-person classes from today with all the safety protocols, according to Syed Md Golam Faruk, director-general of the Directorate of Secondary and Higher Education (DSHE), and Ratan Chandra Pandit, additional secretary to the primary and mass education ministry.

"We have taken all steps to maintain health guidelines at school," said Shahan Ara Begum, headteacher of Ideal School and College in Motijheel, who is excited about the return of hustle and bustle in the school's corridor and playground.

Teachers would now have to give more time to students to make up for the learning losses they incurred during the closure, said Siddiqui Rahman, former director of Dhaka University's Institute of Education and Research.

He proposed that students are taught the lessons that they missed during the closure.

"Physical and mental wellbeing of children and helping them return to a meaningful learning process should be the priority," said Manzoor Ahmed, emeritus professor of Brac University.

The DSHE officials said that that secondary schools and colleges will hold two classes for each class while the schools resume, while the Directorate of Primary Education officials said primary students will attend three classes a day.

Both the offices instructed schools to ensure that all students wear a face mask, have adequate hand sanitising facilities and ensure that only two students sit on each large bench to maintain social distancing inside the classrooms.

Educational institutions were closed across the country on March 17 last year to curb the spread of Covid-19. The closure led to the cancellation of classes and examinations including last year's HSC, JSC and PECE.

The government on August 26 decided that all students of public and private universities would be vaccinated by the end of September and in-person classes at the universities would begin on October 15.

Health Minister on September 2 said in-person academic activities of first-, second-, and fifth-year students of medical colleges would start from September 13.

There are 2.02 crore students at 1.29 lakh primary schools, kindergarten and madrassas, 1.33 crore students at about 37,000 schools, technical and madrassas, according to Bangladesh Bureau of Educational Information and Statistics.

These students are expected to be in in-person classes this week.

Israel's Bennett says Iran 'lying' about nuclear programme

AFP, Jerusalem

Israeli Prime Minister Naftali Bennett on Friday accused Iran of "lying to the world" about its nuclear programme, days after the UN atomic watchdog criticised Tehran for lack of cooperation.

A strongly worded report from the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) said its monitoring at Iranian nuclear sites had been "seriously undermined" by Tehran's suspension of some inspections since February.

"Israel views with utmost gravity the picture of the situation reflected in the report," Bennett said in a statement.

The IAEA report, he said, "proves that Iran is continuing to lie to the world and advance a programme to develop nuclear weapons, while denying its international commitments".

Tuesday's report also said that Iran had boosted its stocks of uranium enriched above the levels allowed in the 2015 deal formally known as the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA).

10cr people

FROM PAGE 1

an event at the National Institute of Mental Health & Hospital in the capital.

He, however, did not clarify how the target would be achieved.

Asked whether the vaccination centres would be expanded to the union or ward level, he said, "We will increase collaboration."

According to health officials, the government has a stock of around 1.5 crore doses of Covid vaccines, including those 54 lakh doses from China.

Earlier, the government backedtrack on its decision to continue a special vaccination drive by setting up around 6,000 centers across the country.

The government conducted the special campaign from August 7-12, under which around 34 lakh people received their first jabs.

Yesterday, a flight of Biman Bangladesh Airlines landed at HSIAT at 12:44am with the Sinopharm vaccines, Dr Shamsul Haque, a line director at the Directorate General of Health Services (DGHS), told The Daily Star.

On behalf of the government, Dr Shamsul received the consignment at the airport.

48 DIE, 1,327 GET COVID Meanwhile, the DGHS reported 48 people died of Covid-19 in 24 hours till 8:00am yesterday.

Thirty-eight deaths were reported the previous day.

In those 24 hours, 1,327 people tested Covid-19 positive.

With this, the total number of deaths from novel coronavirus rose to 26,880 and the total number of infections to 15,28,542.

Yesterday, the positivity rate was 7.03 percent against 18,869 tests carried out across the country.

TIME	ACCIDENT	DEATHS
Jan-Jul 2021	3,259 (42.25% rise)	3,095 (39.98% rise)
Jan-Jul 2020	2,291	2,211

the government imposed different types of restrictions to curb the surge in Covid-19 infections and deaths amid the second wave of the pandemic.

As a result, different types of small vehicles like easy-bikes, motorcycles, private cars ruled the highways, especially during the rush ahead of the Eid-ul-Fitr.

On one hand, the number of small vehicles increased in the highways, on the other hand, goods-laden vehicles continued to operate on the busy, increasing the number of collisions, which ultimately increased the number of deaths, said Prof Md Hadiuzzaman, director of Buet's Accident Research Institute, while speaking to The Daily Star on September 5.

Bangladesh Jatri Kalyan Samity, a passenger welfare platform, on May 23 revealed data saying that although operations of long-route buses remained suspended during the Eid rush, at least 323 people were killed in 318 road crashes in 15 days.

This was the highest number of road crashes during Eid rush in the last four years, the report said.

Such a rush ahead of the Eid is very common in the country but the problem of road accidents intensified in the absence of public transport, because more people opted to travel on

being operated illegally with permission from political and influential quarters.

The High Court on July 3, 2014, banned the plying of battery-run rickshaws across the country for not running with valid licences as per the law.

A special taskforce, led by Home Minister Asaduzzaman Khan Kamal, in its third meeting in June this year, decided to stop battery-run rickshaws across the country, but the decision has not been implemented yet.

WHAT AUTHORITIES SAY? BRTA Chairman Nur Mohammad Mazumder blamed reckless driving of small vehicles amid Covid-induced suspension of buses and minibuses as the reason behind the rise in accidents.

Asked about the allegations of the lack of monitoring, he said, "We are doing our work and giving necessary directives to the stakeholders concerned to curb accidents."

However, it is difficult to stop road accidents if all stakeholders do not do their respective jobs, he told The Daily Star yesterday.

The Daily Star tried to contract Additional Inspector General of Police Mallick Faqul Islam, the chief of Highway Police, for comments but could not reach him despite repeated attempts.

Rogue cop at it again

FROM PAGE 1

deputy commissioner of DMP (Tejgaon Division), told The Daily Star yesterday.

A team from Hatirjheel Police Station arrested the three in Dhaka earlier in the day.

Earlier, another team from the police station picked up Kazi Ziko, 40, from Rajshahi, in a special drive on September 8 for his alleged involvement in the murder of his tenant, Kamrul Islam, on August 28, in the capital.

On Friday, Ziko gave confessional statement before a Dhaka court, said police sources.

According to the statement, Ziko, who owns a motorbike showroom in Rampura, found the gate of his home locked after he went there closing the showroom on August 28.

He then asked his tenant Kamrul's elder son Azizul Hakim to open the gate, addressing him Tui (you), which made Azizul angry as many find the address insulting.

Ziko said after he went to his room and got down, he heard the father and the son rebuking him.

At one point, Ziko claimed, Azizul and his brother Hasib started throwing bricks at him when he was going downstairs. Ziko also threw bricks at them and one of those hit Kamrul's head. Kamrul fell on the ground. He

died later, said court sources, quoting the arrestee's statement.

Police said Ziko went into hiding in Cox's Bazar immediately after the incident. He then moved to Sylhet to dodge the law enforcers.

Recently, he went to Chapainawabganj in Rajshahi and tried to take shelter there after identifying himself as a cattle trader, but got arrested, said ADC Faruk.

During interrogation, Ziko told Hatirjheel police that Mamun and Sohag were their relatives. Ziko, his wife Roksana Akter and uncle Sarwar Hossain contacted suspended ASI Mamun and Sohag to change the police report after a case was filed against Ziko.

Ziko and his family paid Tk 1.5 lakh to Mamun and Sohag for covering up the crime.

Mamun and Sohag took the money saying that they need to pay it to higher officials of Hatirjheel police and Dhaka Medical College morgue for changing the police and autopsy reports," a top police official said, requesting anonymity.

Ziko's uncle Sarwar went with Mamun and Sohag and paid the money in two installments.

While taking payment from the family, Mizan, the other arrestee, acted as Mamun's driver while another man named Md Kajol, news editor of the

daily Bhorer Somoy, falsely introduced himself as a staffer of the DMC's forensic department.

A separate case was filed against Mamun and the three others for trying to cover up the crime, said ADC Faruk, adding the three arrestees were later produced before a Dhaka court, which placed them on two-day remand each.

Md Shahidullah, deputy commissioner (Tejgaon division) of DMP, said: "We have already arrested the murderer and the people involved in taking bribe by misusing the name of Hatirjheel police. We are now conducting drives to arrest the absconding ones."

"We are also investigating whether any staffer of the Dhaka Medical College's forensic department has any links with the accused," he said.

On February 24 last year, ASI Mamun was spotted in a CCTV footage beating one Kabir Uddin Gazi after he got off a launch bound for Barishal.

Kabir later filed a complaint with several high police officials, including the inspector general of police, alleging that Mamun and four others assaulted him and took away Tk 75,000 from him.

Police then conducted an investigation into the incident and found the ASI guilty. On July 19 last year, he was suspended and attached to Rajarbagh Police Lines.