

481 New cases in 24hrs

15,62,357 Total cases

27,688 Deaths

15,23,833 Recoveries

GLOBAL UPDATE

48,64,544 Deaths

238,426,520 Total cases

SINHA MURDER
Army camp CO testifies before court

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Cox's Bazar
After killing Major (ret'd) Sinha Rashed Khan, police took away his body quickly from the spot and kept Sinha's associate Shahedul Islam Sifat confined in a nearby police camp, said a witness of the incident.

other equipment for recording video and photoshoots were lying in a scattered manner on the floor," he added.
"A few moments later, I saw Sifat was kept confined in a room. I wanted to talk with him but the former officer-in-charge of Teknaf Police Station Pradeep Kumar Das barred," said Arefin.

Durga arrives to fight evil

FROM PAGE 1
touches to the idols, and organisers are completing last-minute decorations on the mandaps.
According to Hindu mythology, the demon Mahishasura had received a boon of invincibility from Lord Brahma, which meant that no man or god could kill him.

people from the repression and misrule of Lanka Raj Ravana. With her blessings, Rama destroyed the Ravana's kingdom.
This year, Goddess Durga will arrive riding on a horse and depart by palanquin.
Durga Puja will be celebrated at 32,118 puja mandaps across the country, and in the capital it will be arranged at 238 mandaps, according to a statement of Bangladesh Puja Uddhapan Parishad.

Children aged 12-17 to get

FROM PAGE 1
supply for this, the minister said.
Till Thursday, around 1.79 crore people received both doses of the vaccines, according to the Directorate General of Health Services (DGHS).
The minister, however, did not mention when the child vaccination will start.

"We hope we will vaccinate eight crore people with double-dose by December-January," the health minister said.
Bangladesh will get over 16 crore vaccine jabs by January from different sources, including Covax, Sinopharm and the Serum Institute of India, the minister mentioned.
So far, the government has received 7.22 crore jabs of Covid vaccines, while 5.20 crore people have registered so far, said the minister.

Taiwan won't bow to China

FROM PAGE 1
Kong, but all major Taiwanese parties have rejected that, especially after China's security crackdown in the former British colony.
Tsai repeated an offer to talk to China on the basis of parity, but Beijing, responding some nine hours after she spoke, offered condemnation, saying the country must be "reunified" and that seeking independence closes the door to talks.

acknowledge Taiwan is part of "one China", and does not recognise Taiwan's government.
She says Taiwan is an independent country called the Republic of China, its formal name, and that she will not compromise on defending its sovereignty or freedom.
Still Taiwan's goodwill will not change, and it will do all it can to prevent the status quo with China from being unilaterally altered, she said.



Last-minute preparations for the Durga Puja in the capital's Tanti Bazar yesterday. The five-day-long religious festival, the biggest of the Hindu community, begins today through the Mahashashthi puja amid festivity and religious fervour. PHOTO: RASHED SHUMON

A Scourge returns on tiptoe

FROM PAGE 1
They think the government now needs to take aggressive measures to ensure children who were married off during the pandemic could come back to schools.
SHOCKING NUMBERS
The Daily Star collated information from 41 upazilas of 13 districts and found around 10,741 girls and at least two boys were illegally married off during school closures. The exact number, however, could be much higher if a proper survey is done.

3,000 children were illegally wedded.
Sharmeen Nilormi, a researcher on climate-vulnerable women and girls, said many of the victims were from southern climate-vulnerable districts as there are many destitute people in those areas and there is a deep-rooted link between poverty and child marriage.

"But the case is not the same in all regions. So, we need more research to understand the factors behind this sudden surge in child marriage... Over the last few years, the government has invested so much in girls' education. So, it is necessary to find the root causes to take up a proper policy to curb child marriage."
Besides the southern districts, Tangail saw a spike in child marriages. As per data from the district's secondary education office, 1,242 students, including two boys, of 12 upazilas became victims of child marriage during the pandemic.

years, and a minimum of six months, or with a fine of maximum Tk 50,000 or with both.
And in default of payment of fine, they will be punished with imprisonment which may extend to three months, it mentions.
More often than not, these marriages take place in kazi offices. Legally speaking, kazis are the "nikah registrar", appointed by the government.
Kazi Selim Reza from Moghbazar kazi office told The Daily Star that the government has formulated a law, but many kazis tend to ignore the law as there is a lack of enforcement.

Physicist Prof Harun no more

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Dr AM Harun-ar-Rashid, eminent physicist and "Bose Professor" of physics at Dhaka University, died at a hospital in Dhaka on Saturday. He was 88, said a press release.
Dr Rashid had been suffering from various old-age complications.
Dr Rashid served as the director of Computer Center (now the Institute of Information Technology) at DU. He was a visiting professor at the Institute für Theoretische Kernphysik, International Center for Theoretical Physics, Imperial College London, University of Texas, Austin, and University of California, Los Angeles.



Cinematographer Samir Kushari passes away

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Eminent cinematographer Samir Kushari, who was involved in hundreds of memorable television projects since BTV's golden era, passed away yesterday at a hospital in the capital due to post-Covid complications.
He was 71 years old.
His wife, Jaya Kushari, confirmed the news to The Daily Star. She said that the cinematographer was diagnosed with Covid-19 at the beginning of September.
Born in 1951 in Dhaka's Armanitola, Samir Kushari's father, Ronen Kushari, was an Ekushey Padak awardee and an esteemed radio personality.
Samir was the brilliant hand responsible for the cinematography of legendary productions like "Bahubrihi", "Sangsaptak", "Ayomoy", "Eishob Din Ratri", "Sat Samuddar" and "Pathor Shomoy", among many others.



He started his career in 1969 with the film "Jolchobi", as Sadhon Roy's assistant cinematographer. He also played the same role in Ritwik Ghatak's "Titash Ekti Nodir Nam".
He joined Bangladesh Betar during the 1971 liberation war.
However, he is most remembered for his stint in BTV after he joined in the late 70's, having spent more than three decades there.
He was involved in BTV's first ever 45-minute-long drama, which he finished in just one shot. He had also captured the fearsome Ramna Batamul bombings in 2001 with his camera.
In 2009, he retired as director of photography for BTV.
"He was always smiling and radiant", said eminent actress Ferdousi Majumdar, who had worked with him in the "Sangsaptak".
"I had never seen him lose his cool, he loved taking photographs. I will always remember him as a great human being."
Samir Kushari's last rites took place last night at Rajarbag's Kali Mandir, after an official guard of honour. He is survived by his wife, a son and a daughter.

Country to get

FROM PAGE 1
If electricity reaches every household and industry, then the country's overall socio-economic development will be possible, she said.
The latest and modern technologies have been used in the Rooppur plant to ensure safety and stop environmental pollution there, she added.

It's akin to law

FROM PAGE 1
to the Election Commission be made according to provisions of a specific law, no government has taken such an initiative in the last 50 years, the statement said.
"Urge the government to take urgent steps in this regard to enable the Election Commission to take the necessary lawful steps for conducting elections independently and without any external influence," the statement added.
Anisul said there is no scope to create controversy about forming a caretaker government during elections as there has been a Supreme Court verdict declaring it illegal.
Asked about BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia's permanent release, he said the matter is not under the jurisdiction of the government; the case against her is under trial.
The law minister also said the government has decided to form a probe commission to identify the masterminds behind the murder of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman and most of his family members on August 15, 1975.

Biggest hike in LPG price to date

FROM PAGE 1
"This is a curse on us," said Md Islam, a fixed income earner from the capital's Mohammadpur area.
On one hand, peoples' income has fallen for the pandemic, and on the other, the prices of all essentials have soared, he said.
In August, inflation stood at 5.54 percent, up 18 basis points from the previous month, according to the Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics.
This is the fourth hike in the price of LPG cylinders since April, when the BERC for the first time had fixed the retail price of the fuel.
Then, the BERC stipulated that a 12 kg cylinder would sell for Tk 975, with the prices to be adjusted based on the contract prices (CP) with Saudi Arabia for propane and butane, the main ingredients for LPG.
Saudi Aramco has set its October propane CP rate at \$800 per MT, up \$135 per metric tonne (MT) from the September CP. The butane CP has been set at \$795 per MT, up \$130 per MT from September.

said BERC Chairman Md Abdul Jalil at the press conference yesterday to announce the new LPG tariff.
But experts say the price hike, which is the biggest since April 12, was the energy regulator giving in to the demands of the industry stakeholders, which include the LPG cylinder manufacturers, bottling plant owners, importers and traders.
The industry stakeholders were unhappy with the BERC move to fix the price of LPG back in April.
They went on to call for a public hearing to press home their demand for an extra Tk 224 for a 12 kg LPG cylinder as the BERC's pricing formula did not incorporate all aspects of the cost components.
Until now, the BERC fixed the LPG price for the running month with the CPs of the previous month, according to Shamsul Alam, energy adviser of the Consumers Association of Bangladesh (CAB).
But this time, it fixed it in line with the current month, facilitating the private operators to sell their stock at a higher price, he said.
The price of 12.5 kg cylinder from the state-owned Bangladesh Petroleum Corporation would remain unchanged at Tk 591.
The BERC has abandoned its responsibilities, which are creating a competitive market, controlling the

unscrupulous entities and protecting the consumers' rights. Now they have paved the way for businesses to build an oligopoly in the market."
The private operators' bid to reform the pricing did not have legitimacy as the LPG operators did not apply within the month of the BERC's fixing the price as specified, according to Alam.
Despite the BERC setting the price since April, consumers have been paying higher because of non-compliance by the sellers, he added.
"We have never been able to buy any cylinder at a price that was set by the authority," said Sharif Mia, manager of Radhuni Restora in Gazipur's Rajendrapur.
In September, he bought a 30 kg cylinder at Tk 3,300. The BERC had set Tk 2,841 for a cylinder of that size.
Another consumer, Md Akram of the capital's Malibag area, said he bought a 12 kg cylinder for Tk 1,150 last month.
"When I asked them why they are charging more than Tk 1,033, the seller said the dealer charged extra for the cylinder," he added.
However, the BERC chief refused to take any responsibility for the failure in the implementation of the BERC's pricing at the retail level.
"Is the government agencies' responsibility. The people should raise their voices against extra prices as they are the source of all power," he said.