

BANGLADESH UPDATE



275
New cases in 24hrs



15,67,692
Total cases



27,823
Deaths



15,31,327
Recoveries



GLOBAL UPDATE



4,962,138
Deaths



244,309,434
Total cases

Facebook boss 'not willing to protect public from harm'

Says whistleblower Frances Haugen

AGENCIES

The Facebook whistleblower whose revelations have tipped the social media giant into crisis has launched a stinging new criticism of Mark Zuckerberg, saying he has not shown any readiness to protect the public from the harm his company is causing.

Frances Haugen told the Observer that Facebook's founder and chief executive had not displayed a desire to run the company in a way that shields the public from the consequences of harmful content.

Her intervention came as pressure mounted on the near-\$1tn (£730bn) business following a fresh wave of revelations based on documents leaked by Haugen, a former Facebook employee. The New York Times reported that workers had repeatedly warned that Facebook was being flooded with false claims about the 2020 presidential election result being fraudulent and believed the company should have done more to tackle it.

Haugen, who appears before MPs and peers in Westminster today, said Zuckerberg, who controls the business via a majority of its voting shares, has not shown any willingness to protect the public.

"Right now, Mark is unaccountable. He has all the control. He has no oversight, and he has not demonstrated that he is willing to govern the company at the level that is necessary for public safety."

She added that giving all shareholders an equal say in the

running of the company would result in changes at the top. "I believe in shareholder rights and the shareholders, or shareholders minus Mark, have been asking for years for one share one vote. And the reason for that is, I am pretty sure the shareholders would choose other leadership if they had an option."

Haugen, who quit as a Facebook product manager in May, said she had leaked tens of thousands of documents to the Wall Street Journal and to Congress because she had realised that the company would not change otherwise.

She said: "There are great companies that have done major cultural changes. Apple did a major cultural change; Microsoft did a major cultural change. Facebook can change too. They just have to get the will."

This weekend, a consortium of US news organisations released a fresh wave of stories based on the Haugen documents, reports The Guardian.

The New York Times reported that internal research showed how, at one point after the US presidential election last year, 10% of all US views of political material on Facebook – a very high proportion for Facebook – were of posts falsely alleging that Joe Biden's victory was fraudulent.

One internal review criticised attempts to tackle Stop the Steal groups spreading claims on the platform that the election was rigged. "Enforcement was piecemeal," said the research.

Dropped catches cost Tigers

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the ninth over.

Questions could be raised about Mahmudullah's strategy to not bring Shakib back into the bowling attack considering that two left-handers were at the crease. He instead opted to bowl himself, conceding 21 runs off his two overs. Shakib did not even complete his quota, bowling three overs and conceding 17 runs while scalping two wickets.

Bangladesh did manage to dismiss Rajapaksa after a 31-ball 53, which included three fours and three sixes off Nasum's bowling. But it was too late for the Tigers.

Asalanka, playing just his fifth T20I, struck the winning boundary, remaining unbeaten for a 49-ball 80 which featured five sixes and five

fours. Interestingly, neither Asalanka nor Rajapaksa would have made it into the World Cup squad had Niroshan Dickwella, Kusal Mendis and Danushka Gunathilaka not been suspended by Sri Lanka Cricket (SLC) after a video emerged of them flouting Covid-19 rules in England in June this year.

Before the exchange, Bangladesh posted a fighting total of 171 for four after being sent in to bat, riding on Naim Sheikh's second fifty at the flagship event. He made 62 off 52 balls with six fours.

Mushfiqur Rahim returned to form with an unbeaten 37-ball 57, which featured five fours and two sixes, as Bangladesh added 53 runs in the last five overs of the innings.

Ctg temple vandalised

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"They vandalised the water pots which are part of the rituals and worship. They [attackers] tried to enter another temple by breaking the lock, but failed to do so," the clergyman said.

Contacted, Shahadat Hossen, upazila nirbahi officer in Sitakunda, told The Daily Star that some drug addicts may have tried to break open the donation box.

"We visited the spot and talked to the priest and locals, urging them to unite against ill-attempts to incite people. Unidentified people smashed the water pots kept under a tree venerated by devotees," he said, adding that police were looking for the perpetrators.

In Teknaf, a group of young people teased some Chakma girls at the Katakhal Chakma Para Buddhist temple around 10:30am, said Painsyara Mahathero, the chief monk.

"When locals protested, the criminals called others over the phone and started to vandalise the meditation house of our temple and later torched the kitchen," he said.

Md Rafiqul Islam, additional superintendent of police in Cox's Bazar, said, "It was not a communal attack. It happened following the eve-teasing of Chakma girls. Criminals torched the kitchen of the temple."

Additional police were deployed in the area, he added. The criminals injured at least five Chakma people and among them, three are critically injured and have been sent to Cox's Bazar Sadar hospital, said Jyotin Chakma, president of the temple committee.

"At least 100 fanatics gathered and started to vandalise our meditation house. Later they torched the kitchen, which is totally burnt to ashes," he said.

"There are around 28 Chakma families in the area who are feeling insecure following the attack," said the monk.

Tun Aung, president of Bangladesh Adivasi Forum's Cox's Bazar unit, said "We strongly protest the attack on the temple. We demand immediate arrest of the criminals."

The recent atrocities on the Hindu community followed reports that

the "Holy Quran was demeaned" at a puja mandap in Cumilla's Nanua Dighir Par. Since then, attacks on Hindu temples, houses and business institutions at different districts have continued despite widespread protests.

Meanwhile in Rangpur, a local Chhatra League leader, Saikat Mandal, who allegedly masterminded the recent communal attack in Pirganj upazila, was sued yesterday in a case under the Digital Security Act.

A Rab official filed the case with Pirganj Police Station.

Saikat, former vice-president of Chhatra League's philosophy department unit of Rangpur's Carmichael College, was arrested from Gazipur's Tongi on Friday.

Four cases, including three under the DSA, were filed over the incident and 64 people arrested so far.

In Cumilla, Iqbal Hossain, who allegedly placed the Holy Quran inside the Nanua Dighir Par puja mandap in the early hours of October 13, has admitted his deed to the police.

"Iqbal admitted his involvement. Proof of involvement of others have been found," M Tanvir, additional superintendent of police in Cumilla, said yesterday.

A team lead by Zakir Hossen Khan, additional DIG (crime and operations) of Chattogram Range, is interrogating Iqbal, who was arrested from Cox's Bazar on Thursday night.

In Chandpur, police arrested four more people early yesterday on charge of vandalising puja mandaps and clashing with police in Chandpur's Hajiganj on the night of October 13.

A total of 37 people has so far been arrested in 10 cases filed over the mayhem, said Ibrahim Khalil, inspector of Hajiganj Police Station.

In Noakhali, a former upazila parishad chairman was among four arrested yesterday in a case filed over attacks on Hindu temples on October 15 in Begumganj upazila.

The arrestees are Harun-or-Rashid, former UP chairman of Senbag upazila, Md Anwarul Islam, Md Abu Taleb and Md Farhad, said Md Shahidul Islam, superintendent of police in Noakhali.

[Our correspondents from respective districts contributed to the report]



People taking photographs on the bridge constructed over the Payra river in Lebukhali on Patuakhali-Barishal highway after Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina inaugurated the four-lane bridge virtually from the Gono Bhaban yesterday.

PHOTO: TITU DAS

It's all sinister after sundown

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exposed security vulnerabilities and the tension simmering between active criminal groups across the 34 refugee camps in Ukhaia and Teknaf.

The killing took place right after a raid.

A case was filed around 11:30 on Saturday in this regard and 10 people have so far been arrested in several drives by the Armed Police Battalion (APBn) and Ukhaia police.

Nurul Islam, father of murdered Azizul Haque, filed the case against 25 named and around 250 unnamed people with Ukhaia Police Station.

The arrestees are Dildar Mabud alias Parvez, 32, Mohammad Aiyub, 37, Ferdous Amin, 40, Abdul Mojib, 24, Mohammad Amin, 35, Mohammad Younus alias Foyez, 25, Zafar Alam, 45, Mohammad Jahid, 40, Mohammad Amin, 48, and Mujibur Rahman, 20, Ahmed Sanjur Morshed, officer-in-charge of Ukhaia Police Station, told The Daily Star.

"We have increased our patrolling at night. However, killings still seem to be taking place," Md Tarikul Islam

Tarik, commander of APBn-16, told The Daily Star.

The situation is comparatively better in Teknaf area than in Ukhaia, he added.

On Friday, Foreign Minister AK Abdul Momen said law enforcers will open fire if necessary to stop arms and drugs trade in the camps.

According to officials of different law enforcement agencies, at least 10 Rohingya groups are involved in at least 12 types of crimes, including killing, abduction, rape, drug trafficking and robbery.

Since August 2017, at least 226 Rohingyas were killed and some 1,298 cases were filed accusing 2,850 individuals, mostly in connection with possession of drugs and firearms. Three battalions of the APBn have been trying to maintain law and order in the refugee camps, where over a million Rohingyas have been living since the mass influx of 2017.

Contacted, Home Minister Asaduzzaman Khan Kamal said, "I have been repeatedly saying that if Rohingyas stay here for a longer

period, the problems, including those related to law and order, will become multidimensional."

"The militant group from Myanmar is basically creating trouble here."

The minister said the government is going to step up security on the border to stop the movement of the Rohingyas.

"The construction of watchtowers is also almost complete, and once those are functional, the situation will improve."

The home boss also said BGB personnel will be kept on standby in the camp areas to avert any untoward incident, while patrols within the camps will be increased.

"The criminals use the mobile SIM of Myanmar. We have already instructed the BTRC to block the network immediately."

About 750,000 Rohingyas fled a military crackdown in Myanmar in the weeks following August 25, 2017, and joined another around 300,000 Rohingyas who fled earlier waves of violence and took shelter in Cox's Bazar.

They will stop at nothing

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Top AL leaders hope the number of rebels will come down by tomorrow. October 17 was the last day for submission of nomination papers and tomorrow is the last day for withdrawal of candidacy. The EC will assign the electoral symbol on October 27.

In September, AL General Secretary Obaidul Quader warned that the party would handle the issue of rebels with an iron hand, saying that the rebels would neither get any post in the party nor get nominated.

The warning clearly did not work. AL presidium member Abdur Razzak told The Daily Star that there were so many rebel candidates because the BNP is not taking part in the election.

"If the BNP were an opponent, the Awami League leaders would be more united," he said.

There are rivalries among the grassroots leaders because the party has been in power for a long time, he added.

In the coming polls, the AL has not nominated any individual who previously participated in any election as a rebel, he said.

AL Joint General Secretary Bahauddin Nasim is also of the view that the absence of opposition parties in the elections was the main reason behind the tendency.

He, however, hoped that the central leaders working on the issue would soon sort things out.

The AL leadership is also worried because many rebel independents

defeated the AL nominees in earlier UP polls.

On September 20, elections were held in 160 union parishads. It was part of the first phase of UP elections that were postponed due to the pandemic. The election was marred by violence with two dying in Cox's Bazar.

Most of the AL nominees faced challenges from the dissidents in that election. The situation was similar in the first phase of the polls in 204 UPs on June 21.

According to our correspondents, the coming elections will be held in 11 UPs in Jhikargacha Upazila of Jashore. Multiple local AL leaders have filed nomination papers as independents in eight of those unions.

Among them, local AL leader AKM Gias Uddin, brother of Jashore-2 MP Nasir Uddin, is running for chairman in Magura UP as an independent. He is one of the 19 such rebels in the 11 UPs in Chauagacha.

Elections are going to be held in 17 UPs in Mirpur and Bheramara upazilas of Kushtia. There are 13 rebel candidates in the two upazilas.

Sharmin Akhter was nominated by the AL to run for chairman in Poradaha UP of Mirpur upazila. But Anowaruzzaman Biswas Moju, a local AL leader, filed nomination papers as an independent.

Contacted, he said the individual nominated had no acceptance at the grassroots level and the activists have "forced" him to run for chairman. Moju, however, said he might withdraw his nomination paper.

Forty-six candidates have filed nominations for the post of chairman in 11 UPs of Singair in Manikganj. Thirteen AL leaders are contesting in eight of the UPs as independent, sources said.

Shahadat Hossain is AL nominee in Joymontop UP. Two other local AL leaders have submitted their nomination papers there.

One of them, Borhan Uddin Fakir, said nomination was given there in exchange for money.

"I submitted my nomination paper because the grassroots leaders and activists forced me to," he said.

The AL leader also alleged that he was being intimidated by a section of local leaders and asked to withdraw his nomination paper.

In Sherpur Sadar, seven AL rebels are running in six UPs.

Islamil Hossain, elder brother of Whip of the Jatiya Sangsad Atiur Rahman Atiq, filed nomination papers from Kamaria Union as an independent.

According to sources, at least 24 AL rebels are contesting in 16 UPs in Tanore and Godagari upazilas of Rajshahi.

Khadekunnabi Babu Chowdhury, cousin of AL MP Omar Faruk Chowdhury of Rajshahi-1, is contesting in Kolma UP in Tanore as an independent.

There are 33 rebel candidates in 10 UPs of Pabna's Sujanager upazila. Ahmed Kabir, younger brother of AL MP Ahmed Firoz Kabir of Pabna-2, is among the rebel candidates in Satbaria UP.

COVID UPDATE

1,467 patients now under treatment

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The health directorate yesterday said a total of 1,467 coronavirus patients were receiving treatment at hospitals across the country till 12:00 noon yesterday.

Of them, 1,123 were in general beds, 230 in ICU (Intensive Care Unit) beds, and 114 in HDU (High Dependency Unit) beds, read a press release of the Directorate General of Health Services (DGHS).

Around half of the patients -- 725 -- were in Dhaka alone, the DGHS release added.

There are 13,922 general beds, 1,237 ICU beds and 702 HDU beds in the Covid-19 dedicated hospitals or hospital units across the country, it further added.

As the Delta variant swept across the country from May this year, the hospitals almost stretched to the limit with a rapidly growing number of patients.

By July, the bed occupancy rate crossed the 90 percent-mark, according to the DGHS data.

From early August, the number of patients in hospitals started to decline "due to the restriction on movement for months".

In the past 24 hours till 8:00am yesterday, the DGHS reported deaths of nine Covid-19 patients and 275 new cases.

With this, the total number of deaths due to Covid-19 rose to 27,823, which is around 1.77 percent of all confirmed cases.

Besides, the total number of confirmed cases reached at 1,567,692.

Against a total of 18,485 samples tested, the positivity rate was 1.49 percent yesterday -- a decline from 1.88 percent the previous day.

Meanwhile, the total number of recovered patients reached 1,531,327 with 386 in the past 24 hours.

Of the dead, three were male and six were female.

Form panels

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all religions.

He said local representatives will have to take the responsibility of ensuring religious harmony.

"A vested quarter is orchestrating malicious activities to destroy communal harmony and make one play against another," he said, adding that elected representatives of the union parishad, upazila parishad, municipality, and city corporations must remain cautious in this regard.

Keeping the coexistence of people of all religions intact is an important role for elected local government representatives to play, he also said.

Tazul suggested local representatives remain alert about what is happening inside mosques, temples and other religious establishments, so that no one can commit any offence in those places.

A provocative social media campaign centring the alleged defamation of the Holy Quran at a Puja venue in Cumilla on October 13 triggered communal violence across the country, leaving scores of people injured.

Security up in Dhaka temples

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the DMP boss has also instructed its cyber-crime unit to increase surveillance through social media.

He said, "Not only the followers of traditional religions but also the people of all communities participating in the protest against the destruction of communal harmony."

"The zonal deputy commissioners will also join the protests and declare their solidarity by saying, 'We are by your side too'," he expected.

He said that the presence and surveillance of police members have already been increased in large puja mandaps and places of worship in

Dhaka.

"We are ready to provide all possible assistance to them in any need," he said.

Confirming the development, Abul Kalam, officer-in-charge of Tejaon Industrial Police Station, told The Daily Star that the commissioner instructed to beef up security measures in all religious institutions including temples.

Asked about the security measures, Muradul Islam, Sabujbag Police Station OC, said they always had vigilance centring the temples and places of worship but now they made deployment of police teams round the

clock.

Sources said, in the close-door crime conference, the DMP commissioner further said that strict actions would be taken if policemen are found to be demanding money for filling general diaries or police assistance.

If any DMP member is involved in corruption, the DMP will follow the zero-tolerance policy, he said.

Earlier, the DMP boss has awarded police personnel for their good work and important role in combating crimes in September.

DMP high officials and zonal DC's were also present at the conference.