

BANGLADESH UPDATE

294
New cases in 24hrs

15,68,857
Total cases

27,847
Deaths

15,32,695
Recoveries

GLOBAL UPDATE

4,992,586
Deaths

246,076,901
Total cases

No coal-based projects after 2021

Govt must announce, says TIB

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The government must announce that no new coal-based power project will be approved and financed after 2021 to achieve the renewable energy target, recommended Transparency International Bangladesh yesterday.

Besides, developed countries responsible for a lion's share of carbon emissions have to release money to the climate funds, including the Global Climate Fund (GCF), as compensation, not as loan or insurance money.

The organisation made these recommendations at a press conference centring the upcoming UN Climate Conference COP-26 slated for October 31 in Glasgow, UK.

"We need to formulate a clear roadmap nationally for renewable energy so that specific implementation of the commitments we have made nationally and internationally to move towards renewable power generation can be fulfilled," said Dr Iftekharuzzaman, executive director of TIB.

Chairing the event, he also said, "The GCF is trying to provide funds as loan and encouraging privately owned companies, instead of putting importance on adaptation."

In the press conference, Md Mahfuzul Haque, programme manager (Climate Finance Policy

Integrity Project) of the TIB, presented the position paper on behalf of the organisation with a 14-point recommendation.

The recommendations include: Bangladesh's raising demands to stop the unethical interference of fossil-fuel companies in setting policy on climate issues; ensuring transparency and accountability of developed countries in all mitigation activities to achieve the "net zero emissions" target by 2050; Climate Vulnerable Forum making concerted demands to provide adequate climate funding, technology transfer and technical assistance to developed countries to generate 100 percent of their energy from renewable sources by 2050.

Besides, TIB recommended a separate "Loss and Damage" fund in order to deal with the damage caused by climate change.

On the other hand, the organisation has also placed several recommendations for the Government of Bangladesh, including adoption of short-, mid- and long-term policies to increase the production of renewable fuels in the country.

TIB also recommended that Bangladesh plays a strong role under the leadership of the Climate Vulnerable Forum in collecting grants.



Dhaka South City Corporation authorities dug this hole on the capital's Mirpur Road close to Dhanmondi Govt Boys' High School for the renovation of a drain. This has been in this state for nearly two weeks, shrinking the road space and causing inconvenience to pedestrians, including the students of the school. The photo was taken yesterday.

PHOTO: RASHED SHUMON

Coming but at crawling pace

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Currently, negotiations are underway for signing the loan agreement for two other projects: one to set up a surface water treatment plant for the Rajshahi WASA and another on digital connectivity.

Both the projects were approved by the government in 2018 but are on hold for the uncertainty over Chinese funding.

Asked about the delay in signing the loan agreements with China, Finance Minister AHM Mustafa Kamal seemed at a loss.

"I have no idea. But this delay was not caused due to any of our internal problems," he told The Daily Star in the middle of the month.

Md Shahriar Kader Siddiky, additional secretary to the ERD, told The Daily last week that the delay in loan signing for the three projects cannot be blamed on the global coronavirus pandemic that began in January last year.

"Because, the agreements were due to be signed for a while now," he said, adding that the process for the other

projects has gotten slower for the pandemic.

Since the in-person meetings are not taking place for the pandemic, all communication is now taking place through letters.

"It takes time to get things done through this form of correspondence. Earlier, it used to take less time to complete the procedures," Siddiky added.

China has been slow in completing the loan agreement procedures due to its engagement in vaccination and various other activities to combat the pandemic, which is said to have originated in its Hubei province, said a finance ministry official on condition of anonymity as he is not authorised to speak with media.

"Because of the pandemic, China's loan recovery process in different countries got hampered. So, China's foreign lending is no longer in high gear - they are being more cautious than usual," he added.

However, another finance ministry official said the funds pledged by Xi is coming through at the usual pace for

China.

"It is actually not that slow if the historical trend and the other multilateral donors' commitment implementation are taken into consideration," he said.

Before fiscal 2009-10, China seldom provided loans to Bangladesh.

Until fiscal 2016-17, \$1.5 billion worth of loan agreements were signed with China and about \$1.3 billion disbursed, according to data from the Economic Relations Division.

Then in 2016, China came up with the big pledge of \$20 billion.

Until June, \$8.04 billion worth of loan agreements were signed with China, \$6.66 billion of which were part of the \$20 billion-package.

Of the loans agreements signed until June, \$3.5 billion were disbursed -- and \$2.26 billion were against the loan agreements signed for the \$20 billion-package.

Chinese loans now amount to 7 percent of Bangladesh's total outstanding foreign loans. China is the third-highest bilateral lender for Bangladesh after Japan and Russia.

STUDENTS AGED 12-17 40,000 to get jabs a day

Health minister says Covid vaccination campaign for them to begin Nov 1

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The government will begin vaccinating school students of Dhaka aged between 12 and 17 years against Covid-19 from November 1, Health Minister Zahid Maleque said yesterday.

The vaccination campaign will be conducted at 12 centres aiming to jab 40,000 students per day, he said.

The students will be administered the Pfizer Covid vaccine.

After a closure of nearly one and a half years amid the pandemic, students returned to their classrooms on September 12.

Yesterday, the health minister informed the cabinet about his ministry's plan in this regard during a meeting presided over by Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina.

Speaking to reporters after the meeting, Zahid said the education ministry sent the final list of school students to the health ministry.

The health ministry forwarded it to the ICT ministry to record the names in a database, he said. "The school authorities concerned will take measures for the registration of their students for vaccination."

Replying to a question, the health minister said the government plans to

expand the vaccination campaign to other districts.

Meanwhile, a countrywide special campaign for jabbing about 80 lakh people with the second dose of Covid-19 vaccines began yesterday.

People who received their first dose on September 28 during a special campaign marking the 75th birthday of the PM will get the second dose.

Zahid said the vaccination campaign for students will go on alongside the regular jabbing programme.

MAINTAIN HEALTH PROTOCOL: PM Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina yesterday called upon all to maintain health protocol, including wearing masks, as the novel coronavirus might hit the country again with the arrival of winter, reports BSS.

"All countries of the world have been seeing coronavirus again with the advent of winter," she said.

The premier said this while receiving 26,45,000 blankets for destitute people from the Bangladesh Association of Banks.

Referring to the increase in Covid cases in the USA, England and Europe during the winter, Hasina urged all to be careful about the cold and cough as the winter is approaching.

Can Tigers get going?

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Mahmudullah Riyad and his troops.

Bangladesh's batting department needs a massive overhaul in the face of below-par shows throughout the tournament and Liton Das will once again find himself under the scanner for a string of poor performances in the flagship event.

In fact, the Tigers will have to step up their game in all three departments. More importantly, Bangladesh's body language needs to improve drastically.

Although there was a scheduled training session yesterday, it was canceled at the last moment and the players spent their time in the team

hotel and had a long team talk.

The Tigers looked helpless as they meekly surrendered during a thrashing eight-wicket defeat to number one ranked England in their last game after posting a paltry 124-run target.

The West Indies also find themselves in a similar situation after being bundled out for just 55 runs in their opening game against England before receiving an eight-wicket thrashing against South Africa.

However, Bangladesh must still be wary of the power-hitting from the Calypso Kings on a rather small Sharjah ground where the Tigers' skills will be tested heavily.

Local admins failed to save

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their properties and places of worship in the districts during their biggest religious festival should not be declared illegal.

The bench of Justice Mozibur Rahman Miah and Justice Md Kamrul Hossain Mollah came up with the order and rule after hearing the petition filed by Supreme Court lawyers Anup Kumar Saha and Mintu Chandra Das seeking necessary directives on the issue.

They submitted the petition as a public interest litigation to the HC on October 21, saying that eight people were killed, many others injured and puja mandaps, temples and their properties vandalised and looted during the violent attacks between October 13 and 18, which is a criminal offence.

But the local administrations failed to protect them from the communal attacks, they said in the petition.

During yesterday's hearing, petitioners' lawyer Jyotirmoy Barua told the HC that incidents of violent attacks on the people of minority community took place at different times in the country since 2001, but justice has not

been ensured in any of the incidents.

The innocent people were harassed and arrested, but the real perpetrators were not punished, he said.

Lawyer Jyotirmoy said 18 criminal cases have been filed over mindless attacks on the Buddhist community people in Cox's Bazar's Ramu in 2012, but trial proceedings of any of the cases have yet been completed.

Judicial inquiries need to be conducted to find out the perpetrators responsible for the violent attacks on the Hindu people in different districts during Durga Puja festival and they should be brought to book, he added.

Attorney General AM Amin Uddin and Additional Attorney General Sk Md Morshed opposed the petition, saying that the government has taken appropriate steps after the attacks.

Many of the perpetrators have been arrested and several cases have been lodged over the attacks and the negligent police personnel have already been transferred as punishment, the attorney general said, adding that the government would continue its action.

A price too steep for a minor girl

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These are all non-bailable sections -- a condition that seemingly also applies for a 17-year-old.

The appeal made to the Appellate Division further goes on to state that "the case is under investigation, at this stage the interim order of bail will totally frustrate the purpose of the prosecution's case, creating obstacles in the way of free/fair investigation."

And so Dipti languishes in a correctional centre in Rajshahi.

Her father Dilip Das said, "It takes around two hours for me to travel and see her. I last saw her two months ago."

The "heinous crime" that Dipti is being jailed for was commenting on a photo of the Holy Quran upon a woman's thighs, according to the FIR, which also said that the photo attacked the "hearts of pious Muslims".

Dipti's father stated that his daughter kept insisting to him that her profile was hacked.

"When the photo was shared from my daughter's profile, the locals noticed

and came to our house to complain. I reprimanded my daughter and apologised to them on her behalf," said Dilip, a trader who runs a hardware store.

"They had even gone to attack my store but the other traders stopped them saying that I am a good person and I had never done anything to hurt or disrespect the Muslim community."

He further continued to supplicate that he was born in Parbatipur and has spent his entire life in the area harmoniously with the Muslim community as a model minority.

"I felt like my daughter might be harmed in some way, so I put her on the evening train to send her to her aunt's house but some youths noticed she was on the train. Even after it started moving, they stopped it on its tracks, dragged her out and handed her over to police."

And so began her ordeal.

Dipti had just finished tenth grade at the local government high school, and had even taken admission in eleventh grade, but since being put in juvie her

education has come to a halt.

"There is no schooling inside the detention centre. Her health has deteriorated because the food is very substandard. We sometimes send money so that she can buy snacks," said Dilip.

Dipti's lawyer Shahinuzzaman said that while giving her bail the High Court had also issued a rule questioning why she should not be granted bail. While her bail order was stayed, the HC will still hold a hearing to argue about whether or not she should be given bail, and they are currently waiting for a court date.

Dipti's mother Anima broke down while talking about her daughter.

"She wanted to be a software engineer. She wanted to go to university, but even if she gets out on bail now, I will have to get her married off because she can no longer stay in this community," she said.

She also said that Muslim customers are already avoiding her husband's shop and so their business too is hampered.

Companies have to register

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The government will not take any responsibility if anyone make transactions with unregistered e-commerce companies, Anwarul said.

Last week, the cabinet secretary said the government wants to bring e-commerce businesses under a strict monitoring and regulation system to stop fraudulence.

"E-commerce firms cannot be shut down. That's why all of them need to be brought under a monitoring and registration system. The [process for] monitoring and registration has been sorted out," he said.

ATTIA FOREST (CONSERVATION) ACT-2021

Yesterday, the cabinet approved in principle the draft of the Attia Forest (conservation) Act-2021.

Anwarul said the age-old Attia forest on about 45,000 acres of land in Tangail was declared a reserve forest during the British rule in 1927.

After the Liberation War, an ordinance was passed to save the forest, he said.

Admitting that many parts of the forest have been occupied, the cabinet secretary said the premier gave directives to carry out a digital survey on the forest immediately.

The land ministry in cooperation with the forest department and deputy commissioners concerned will conduct the survey and find out which parts of the forest have been grabbed.

"We have to admit that many people live there," he said, adding that the inhabitants cannot be evicted overnight.

Hasina gave directives to find a solution to the residency problem of the people who have been living there for ages without damaging the forest.

Replying to a question, Anwarul said, "It cannot be said how many people live in the forest area without conducting a survey. That's why directives have been given to carry out a survey."

About a huge backlog of cases regarding crimes related to forests, the cabinet secretary said the PM gave clear instructions about reviewing those cases and withdrawing the ones having no basis.

The law ministry will review the cases, but the procedures in those of serious nature will continue, he said.

Anwarul said surveys will be carried out not only on the Attia forest, but also on others.

PUBLIC HOLIDAYS

The cabinet yesterday also approved 22 public holidays for the next year. Six of those holidays will fall on weekends.

In 2022, there will be 14 general holidays and three of them coincided with weekends, said the cabinet secretary.

Besides general holidays, eight holidays will be observed upon executive orders.

Prepare list of grabbers

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convenor of the committee.

"We have strongly asked the national river protection commission to free the country's all rivers from grabbers and polluters as soon as possible no matter what are the political identity of the grabbers," Dr Samil Uddin Ahmed Shimul, a member of the JS body who was present at the meeting, told The Daily Star.

He said the committee has asked the NRPC to prepare the list of how many illegal structures and grabbers are there in the four rivers surrounding Dhaka.

The working paper of the meeting showed that the NRPC has recommended forming a separate ministry under the title of Ministry of Rivers and Water Bodies to save the country's rivers.

NRPC argued that the Ministry of Shipping and the Ministry of Water Resources has failed to protect and save the country's 700 rivers from grabbers and polluters.

AL MP Rafiqul Islam chaired the meeting while lawmakers Mazharul Hoque Pradhan, Ranajit Kumar Roy, Samil Uddin, Aslam Hossain and SM Shahjada attended the meeting.

Expression of Interest (EOI)

Prequalification of Retailers and Food Wholesalers for WFP Bhasan Char Island Ref. CXB21NF104EOI

WFP plans to start providing assistance to displaced people through national retailers in Bhasan Char Island of Noakhali district in Bangladesh. WFP beneficiaries receive an entitlement that they can use to purchase a variety of perishable and non-perishable food and non-food items at WFP-designated distribution points.

Retail partners will be responsible for:

- Procurement of food (and some non-food items). WFP contracted retailers will be encouraged to procure fresh and perishable items from local producers in the Noakhali district and other areas across Bangladesh to support the local economy.
- Implementation of a full logistics plan to transport the commodities to the Bhasan Char Island (Noakhali District).
- Running the distribution points in line with the humanitarian principles/code of conduct and in coordination with WFP-designated NGO partners. Strict food quality and safety standards must be implemented and maintained at all stages of the supply chain.

Interested and reputable organizations working in the food retail/wholesale business sector, who have the supply chain capacity to provide the services as mentioned above, are kindly requested to submit their Expression of Interest to the email address coxsbazar.procurement@wfp.org by the mentioned deadline.

Minimum Requirements:

1. Meets all legal requirements for a retailer contract with WFP (Legal registration, Trade License, VAT etc.) or has the ability to acquire all required legal licenses needed for companies to trade in Bangladesh.
2. Company with a minimum of three years' experience as an established business; (retail business experience is preferred) with good understanding of supply chain of food commodity market in Bangladesh.
3. Company accepts WFP's payment terms and conditions.
4. Ability to provide staff training on retail operations and in-store services and / or store maintenance.
5. Ability to provide store operations manuals (including back office, logistics, etc.) in the required language.
6. Ability to meet food quality standards and WFP's monitoring and inspection requirements.
7. Readiness to allocate staff to outlet locations as per the demand of operation.
8. Willingness to improve service quality by learning and applying data analytics for running the retail business efficiently, maintain uninterrupted food supply, delivering high quality service whilst maintaining cleanliness and hygiene levels.
9. Ability and willingness to procure locally produced fresh food (vegetables, eggs, chicken, live fish etc.) from the local farmers.
10. Ability to adhere to WFP's humanitarian principles and standards, including no discrimination against beneficiaries, data protection requirements.

Deadline for registration: 31 October 2021 at 16:00 hrs Dhaka time.

NOAKHALI GANG-RAPE

HC finds police, UP member negligent

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The High Court yesterday observed that the negligence of local police and a union parishad member caused the incident of gang-rape and torture in Noakhali's Begumganj.

On September 2, 2020, the gang-rape and torture took place in Begumganj's Eklashpur union. Footage of the incident went viral on social media in the first week of October the same year.

The HC bench of Justice Md Mozibur Rahman Miah and Justice Md Kamrul Hossain Mollah made the observation while delivering a verdict on a suomoto rule on this issue.

According to the bench, it is evident from documents that the victim informed the local police and a union parishad member about her apprehension of being tortured. They, however, did not take any step to protect her.

The bench also said that the civil society members should come forward and play a role so that no such incident repeats in future.

Besides, the HC bench also directed the authorities to suspend four members of the Bangladesh Police.

They are Begumganj Police Station's then officer-in-charge Harunur Rashid Chowdhury, then sub-inspector Habibur Rahman, then assistant sub-inspector Mafizul Islam, and Ali Asgar, member of village police in the area.

The court also directed the authorities to discharge Moazzem Hossain Sohagh, a member of the union parishad, of his duties.

It ordered to take departmental actions against them.

On October 5 last year, the HC bench issued the suomoto rule asking the authorities to explain why they should not be directed to take appropriate legal and departmental actions against the officials for their negligence.

The HC bench ordered the superintendent of Noakhali police to investigate the incident while ensuring all protection to the victim and her family.

At the same time, the HC formed a three-member committee to conduct an inquiry into whether the police were negligent.

The Bangladesh Telecommunication Regulatory Commission (BTRC) was ordered to remove the viral footage from social media.

Rescue of half-sunk ferry begins today

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Manikganj

Efforts to lift the half-sunk ferry at Paturia terminal may begin by the evening today when the Prattoy, a rescue vessel, is likely to arrive there.

The ferry, Shah Amanat, tipped over at the terminal in Manikganj on Wednesday morning and has been lying on its side in the Padma since then.

Abdus Sattar, assistant general manager (marine) at Bangladesh Inland Water Transport Corporation (BIWTC), said the Prattoy left Narayanganj for Paturia only a few hours after the accident.

But the ship is moving very slowly because of strong current, he told The Daily Star yesterday.

BIWTC sources said the crane in Prattoy can lift 250 tonnes, which is about 30 tonnes less than the weight of Shah Amanat.

Satter said if the Prattoy fails to

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