

BANGLADESH UPDATE

229
New cases in 24hrs

15,69,982
Total cases

27,873
Deaths

15,33,836
Recoveries

GLOBAL UPDATE

5,024,258
Deaths

248,023,907
Total cases

COVID JABS FOR SCHOOLCHILDREN Campaign goes outside Dhaka

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The vaccination programme for schoolchildren aged between 12 and 17 would be expanded outside the capital.

Students in Manikganj and Kishoreganj have already received jabs on the second day of the vaccination drive amid some mismanagements.

Talking to The Daily Star, Shamsul Haque, member secretary of the Covid-19 Vaccine Management Taskforce Committee of DGHS, yesterday said, "We have plans to set up vaccination centres [dedicated for students] in every district."

The government has around 80 lakh Pfizer vaccines in hand and more vaccines will come in the coming weeks, he said.

According to the Department of Information and Communication Technology, around 474,835 students submitted their National ID card numbers from various educational institutions.

A total of 131,771 students have already registered with the Surokkha apps for the vaccine.

Visiting a vaccine centre at the Banani branch of Chittagong Grammar School in the capital, this correspondent found that hundreds of students stood in a queue for the vaccine yesterday morning.

Seeking anonymity, a student of Holy Cross Girl's School and College

said, "I received an SMS to be at the centre to receive the vaccine."

She stood in front of the centre till 4:00pm and then returned without receiving any jabs. Many had waited like her amid chaos in the queue. One even fell and fainted.

Asked, Syed Md Golam Faruk, director general of Directorate of Secondary and Higher Education, said, "We received some complaints. More students rushed to the centre than the number of jabs and that could be a reason."

He also said, "We request the DGHS to increase the number of vaccines to avert such type of incidents."

The government has started inoculating students on Monday and eight vaccination centres were set up in as many schools in the capital.

Vaccines started administering from the eight centres and each centre was supposed to administer 5,000 doses a day, to inoculate 40,000 children in Dhaka a day.

On October 14, the authorities administered the Pfizer Covid vaccine to 120 students from several schools in Manikganj. None of them showed signs of side effects and after that, the government started going for mass vaccination.

Over two dozen countries have so far approved or started giving Covid shots to children below 18, according to media reports.



Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina addresses the "Women's Climate Leadership Event-COP26: High-Level Panel on Women and Climate Change" at the Scottish Pavilion in Glasgow yesterday.

PHOTO: PID

Women bear the brunt: Hasina

FROM PAGE 1

change, it is important to create space for them in the decision-making process.

"In a bid to ensure that, Bangladesh has already secured women's leadership from the national parliament to the grassroots of decision-making processes."

The PM mentioned that the National Adaptation Programme of Action (NAPA) of Bangladesh has incorporated gender in a comprehensive manner as part of adaptation solutions. "We have prepared the National Climate Change and Gender Action Plan to ensure gender equality in climate change-related policies, strategies, and interventions."

She said the current updated Bangladesh Climate Change Strategy and Action Plan includes gender as one of the core strategic areas to undertake practical and action-oriented programmes to tackle climate change.

"Most importantly, my government has introduced Gender Responsive Budgeting, allocating around a 30 percent share of expenditure to women development to mainstream gender in all policy and decision-making processes," she said.

Hasina argued that it is a scientific fact that women are more resilient than men. Even in the most difficult cases of natural calamities, it is women who first turn around to take care of their families and households.

"Therefore, starting from policy-making to the ground response to climate led disasters, we are ensuring equal participation. In climate disaster preparedness programmes, we have engaged 76,000 volunteers and 50 percent of which are women."

The premier said Bangladesh's disaster preparedness programme is a success story as it reduced the death toll from half a million in a cyclone 50 years ago to only a couple of hundreds in a similar cyclone a year ago.

She also said the government is going to implement the "Mujib Climate Prosperity Plan" named after Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman.

In this plan, a strong role of women in the journey of climate vulnerability to climate resilience, to climate prosperity has been mainstreamed, the PM added.

Hasina said this is high time to connect the climate change ambition with a future that will be inclusive of

both men and women. "For this, we must reflect the priorities and concerns of women in various climate related policies."

She said women should be included in the driver's role in every level of initiatives, starting from the planning to resource allocation and implementation. "Therefore, financing gender responsive adaptation and mitigation measures will be the key."

The PM urged all to amplify the voices of women across the world to ensure equal access to finance to address the needs and priorities of women on climate change issues.

PM MEETS JOHNSON, CHARLES
Yesterday, Hasina held a bilateral meeting with her British counterpart Boris Johnson on the sidelines of COP26.

The two premiers discussed various issues of bilateral and multilateral importance.

The meeting was held at the designated UK Meeting Room of the Scottish Exhibition Centre in Glasgow, where the UN-led COP26 climate conference is being held.

Earlier, Hasina called on Prince Charles, heir to the British throne.

Rozina wins Free Press Award

FROM PAGE 1

"We have found that free media and journalists face unbelievable pressure. We are amazed by the integrity of journalists worldwide, who continue to do journalism despite pressures. We are proud to confer the Free Press Awards to you [Rozina Islam]," it said.

Explaining why Rozina was given the award, the organisation said she is playing a courageous role in upholding the peoples' right to information despite various obstacles.

The jury of the award said Rozina is a good example of how independent journalists work as observers for the people and make contributions in protecting democracy and ensuring accountability in the society.

The announcement also said Rozina works for Bangladesh's largest newspaper, Prothom Alo, as an investigative journalist. She reported on the irregularities of the health sector and is now facing trial and harassment in her own country.

In May this year, Rozina was confined to a room of the health ministry for six hours. Later, a case was filed against her under the Official Secrets Act and she was arrested. After a week of imprisonment, she was freed on bail.

Noting the incident, the jury said, "We are expressing solidarity with the struggle of the journalist in revealing

irregularities during the crisis period of the coronavirus pandemic... We are calling for the Bangladesh government to stop harassment to Rozina Islam."

While arresting Rozina, police seized her passport, mobile phone and accreditation card, and she is yet to get those back. Therefore, she could not travel to the Hague. In her stead, her husband Md Monirul Islam received the award at the City Hall in the Hague.

Rozina Islam has been working for Prothom Alo for more than a decade.

She has reported on various issues including those related to health, the Liberation War, public administration, crime, environment, power and energy, economy, education and women in politics.

Rozina had earlier received a number of awards, which include Dhaka Reporters Unity Best Reporting Award in years 2021, 2017, 2014 and 2011; UNESCO Award in 2011, UNESCO Club Journalists Award in 2006, Canadian Awards for Excellence in Bangladeshi Journalism in 2011, Prothom Alo Best Reporters Award in years 2013 and 2014, Anti-Drug Best Reporting Award in 2017; and the Bangladesh Mahila Parishad Award and Transparency International Bangladesh's Best Investigative Reporting Award in 2015.

Toll rates raised

FROM PAGE 1

The toll rates of Bangabandhu Bridge were last raised in 2011. This is the first time the rates of Mukterpur Bridge have been increased since its inauguration in 2008.

Transport leaders, however, said they had not been informed about the government decision and that the decision would ultimately put an additional burden on passengers.

It is because with the new rates, rent of vehicles will go up, they said.

The 4.8-kilometre Bangabandhu Bridge, which was opened to traffic in 1998, on the Jamuna river is a vital strategic economic road, rail, energy, and telecommunication link between the western and eastern parts of the country.

The project was implemented at a cost of Tk 3,745 crore.

Quader on June 6 told parliament that Tk 6,434 crore has been collected in toll money from vehicles using the bridge till May this year.

In his scripted answer to a question from an MP, the minister said Tk 4,104.21 crore was spent in operational and maintenance costs and also for payment of DSL (debt service liability) of the bridge during that period.

The loan taken from development partners for the construction of the bridge would be repaid by 2034, he added.

As per the new rates, the toll for a motorcycle crossing Bangabandhu Bridge is Tk 50, a car Tk 550, a microbus and a pickup Tk 600, a minibus Tk 750, a bus Tk 1,000, a small truck (up to 5 tonnes) Tk 1,000, a medium truck (5 and 8 tonnes) Tk 1,250 and a large truck (8 to 11 tonnes) Tk 1,600.

A three-axle truck has to give Tk 2,000 and a 4-axle trailer has to pay Tk 3,000. An additional Tk 1,000 will be charged for each axle above four. There was no mention of this category in the previous toll rates.

Besides, Bangladesh Railway will have to pay Tk 1 crore annually for using the bridge. It was Tk 50 lakh earlier.

The BBA opened the 1.52km Mukterpur Bridge over the Daleshwari river in 2008. The bridge was built under a Tk 208.35 crore project to connect Munshiganj with Dhaka and Narayanganj.

As per the new decision, a motorcycle will pay Tk 15, an auto-rickshaw Tk 30, a car Tk 50, a jeep, microbus, pickup Tk 50, a minibus Tk 150, a bus Tk 250, a small truck (up to 5 tonnes) Tk 200, a medium truck (5 and 8 tonnes) Tk 250 and a large truck (8 to 11 tonnes) Tk 600 for using the structure.

Khondaker Enayet Ullah, secretary general of Bangladesh Road Transport Owners Association, said they were not aware of any move regarding hiking the toll rates.

Rustam Ali Khan, general secretary of Bangladesh Truck-Covered-Van Owners Association, said if the operational costs of vehicles go up, the fares of trucks and covered vans will rise as well.

Once the vehicles' fares rise, the people will ultimately have to bear the brunt, he told The Daily Star yesterday.

When the transport sector has been recouping losses induced by the pandemic, such a decision will put an extra burden on it, he added.

He urged the government to reconsider the decision and postpone the implementation of the new rates.

As his attention was drawn to the matter, Bridges Division Secretary Abu Bakr Siddique said they depend on toll revenues to pay for the bridges' maintenance costs and repay loan money taken for the construction of the structures. They also have to collect funds for new projects.

Replying to a question, he said, "Yes, it will put pressure on the people. But we also have to bear the pressure."

Pledge renewed to end deforestation

FROM PAGE 1

Environment Minister Joaquim Leite also said Brazil would aim to achieve carbon neutrality by 2050.

Brazil also pledged that it would end illegal deforestation by 2028, marking a change of tone after more than two years of soaring destruction under President Jair Bolsonaro.

The summit pledge to "halt and reverse deforestation and land degradation by 2030" encompasses promises to secure the rights of indigenous peoples, and recognise "their role as forest guardians".

While Johnson described the pledge as "unprecedented", a UN climate gathering in New York in 2014 issued a similar declaration to halve the rate of deforestation by 2020, and end it by 2030.

However, trees continue to be cut down on an industrial scale, not least in the Amazon under the far-right government of Bolsonaro.

Deforestation in Brazil surged in

2020, leading to a 9.5-percent increase in its emissions.

Humans have already cut down half of Earth's forests, a practice doubly harmful for the climate when CO2-sucking trees are replaced with livestock or monoculture crops.

Almost a quarter of all man-made emissions of carbon dioxide can be attributed to land use activity such as logging, deforestation and farming.

President Joko Widodo of resource-rich Indonesia said his own archipelago's rainforests, mangroves, seas and peatlands were key to restricting climate change.

"We are committed to protecting these critical carbon sinks and our natural capital for future generations," he said in a statement.

Greenpeace criticised the Glasgow initiative for effectively giving the green light to "another decade of deforestation".

"Indigenous peoples are calling for 80 percent of the Amazon to be

protected by 2025, and they're right, that's what's needed," said Greenpeace Brazil executive director Carolina Pasquali.

"The climate and the natural world can't afford this deal," she said.

Many studies have shown that the best way of protecting forests worldwide is to keep them under the management of locals with generations of preservation knowledge.

The commitment comes a day after UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres harangued the gathered leaders to act to save humanity.

"It's time to say: enough," he said.

"Enough of brutalising biodiversity. Enough of killing ourselves with carbon. Enough of burning and drilling and mining our way deeper. We are digging our own graves."

The UN COP26 conference will continue for another two weeks to try to craft national plans to forestall the most devastating impacts of global warming.

Too dark for an autumn morning

FROM PAGE 1

A first information report (FIR) was filed with Lalbagh Police Station a day after the brutal murder and an inquest report was also prepared. But the infamous Indemnity Ordinance blocked the investigation and the trial.

On August 18, 1996, the Criminal Investigation Department (CID) of police reopened the probe. In 2004, the trial court concerned in Dhaka handed punishment to the 12.

But justice still eludes the nation as the government could implement the verdict only in the case of Abdul Majed, of the 12 convicted killers.

Majed, who was sentenced to life imprisonment in the jail killing case, was arrested on April 7 last year after decades of absconding. Four days after his arrest, Majed, also a convicted killer of Bangabandhu, was executed in connection with the Bangabandhu murder case.

Other than Majed, progress regarding the other 11 killers has not been satisfactory.

The government could not even trace eight of them despite making efforts through diplomatic channels, intelligence agencies and the Interpol to bring the fugitives back home.

Convicted killers Rashed Chowdhury and Noor Chowdhury have been hiding somewhere in the USA and Canada.

As the nation pays tribute to the four slain national leaders on the 46th anniversary of Jail Killing Day today, the government insists that bringing all the 10 fugitives back home is one of its top priorities and all possible efforts are underway to this end.

"The government has continuously been trying and working very seriously to bring the fugitive killers of Bangabandhu and the national leaders," Law Minister Anisul Huq told The Daily Star yesterday.

On several occasions, he said the

The assassinations of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman and four national leaders are intricately linked. They were assets of the nation. I think we should question how much the country has progressed towards the nation that these leaders dreamed of while they were alive.

SIMEEN HUSSAIN RIMI, DAUGHTER OF TAJUDDIN AHMAD

We demand the formation of a commission to identify and punish national and international hands behind the killing of the four national leaders. It will stop the repetition of such gruesome killings.

TANVIR SHAKIL JOY, GRANDSON OF CAPTAIN MANSUR ALI

government was planning to set up a commission to identify all those behind the killings of Bangabandhu and the four leaders.

About the commission, Anisul, who was principal state counsel in the Bangabandhu murder and jail killing cases, said, "As I have said earlier, a commission must be constituted. But I cannot say the specific date and time for its formation."

The Supreme Court's Appellate Division in its judgment in the jail killing case observed that the assassination of the four national leaders was the result of a criminal conspiracy.

The accused couldn't have carried out the killings unless very powerful state machineries had been involved in the conspiracy, the verdict said.

The apex court on April 30, 2013, upheld a Dhaka court's verdict that awarded death sentence to three former army personnel - Muslemuddin, Marfat Ali Shah and Abdul Hashem Mridha - and life imprisonment to eight other people for killing the four leaders.

The eight jailed for life are Khondaker Abdur Rashid, Shariful Haq Dalim, Noor Chowdhury, Rashed Chowdhury, Ahmed Shariful Hossain, Abdul Majed, Kismat Hasem and Nazmul Hossain.

Four other accused - Syed Farooq-ur Rahman, Sultan Shahrar Rashid Khan, Bazul Huda and AKM Mohiuddin Ahmed - were executed in the Bangabandhu murder case in 2010.

The following year, the SC exempted the four from the charges of killing the national leaders as they were executed.

Earlier in August 2008, the High Court had upheld the capital punishment to Muslemuddin and acquitted Marfat, Hashem, Farooq, Shahriar, Mohiuddin and Bazul Huda in the jail killing case.

Barrister Abdullah Al Mamun, the state defence lawyer appointed by the SC for Marfat and Hashem, told this correspondent on October 29 that he did not know the whereabouts of the two convicts.

"Marfat Ali Shah, Abdul Hashem Mridha or their relatives have never communicated with me."

Tinnitus

FROM PAGE 12

depression and sleeplessness.

There is no absolute cure for this but the condition can be managed through various conventional and unconventional methods. A combination of techniques might have to be tried to find out what works for one.

The approaches which were found to be most effective are behavioral strategies and sound-generating devices, often used in combination, according to an article of Harvard Health Publishing.

The following methods are suggested by experts:

COGNITIVE BEHAVIORAL THERAPY (CBT)

CBT uses techniques such as cognitive restructuring and relaxation to change the way patients think about and respond to tinnitus. Therapy is generally short-term.

TINNITUS RETRAINING THERAPY (TRT)

This technique is based on the assumption that tinnitus results from abnormal neuronal activity. The aim is to habituate the auditory system to the tinnitus signals. The main components of TRT are individual counseling - how the auditory system works, how tinnitus develops, how TRT can help, and sound therapy.

MASKING
Masking devices, worn like hearing aids, generate low-level white noise (a high-pitched hiss, for example) that can reduce the perception of tinnitus and sometimes also produce residual inhibition (less noticeable tinnitus for a short time after the masker is turned off.)

A specialised device isn't necessary for masking. Most of the time, playing music or having a radio, fan, or any machine on in the background is enough.

BIOFEEDBACK AND STRESS MANAGEMENT

Tinnitus is stressful, and stress can worsen tinnitus. Biofeedback is a relaxation technique that helps control stress by changing bodily responses. Electrodes attached to the skin feed information about physiological processes into a computer, which displays the output on a monitor.

Patients learn how to alter these processes and reduce the body's stress response by changing their thoughts and feelings. Mindfulness-based stress reduction techniques may also help.

WEST BENGAL ASSEMBLY BYPOLL

TMC wins all four seats

BJP wins all seats in Assam, Manipur, Mizoram and Meghalaya

OUR CORRESPONDENT, New Delhi

West Bengal's ruling Trinamool Congress yesterday swept all the four bypolls in assembly seats in the state wrestling two of them from Bharatiya Janata Party which also suffered setbacks in bye-elections in two northern Indian states of Himachal Pradesh and Haryana.

The saffron party and its allies swept all the bypolls in Assam, Manipur, Mizoram and Meghalaya.

The biggest boost to main opposition Congress came in BJP-ruled Himachal Pradesh where the Sonia Gandhi-led party swept all the four bypolls including one for Lok Sabha and three assembly seats.

Congress, which rules Rajasthan, also retained two assemblies in the desert state where the saffron party is hoping to return to power.

But in Meghalaya, Congress was jolted when BJP ally National People's Party bagged all three assembly seats, wresting Rajabala and Mawryngkneng seats from Congress.

Yesterday's bypoll results must have put BJP in a spot of bother as they came months before the next round of assembly elections in five states including the most populous Uttar Pradesh, Gujarat and Punjab.

Tigers out

FROM PAGE 1

Bangladesh with two wickets for 18 runs.

It was a dreadful batting display from the Bangladesh team after they were sent in to bat, with two changes made to the side - young Shamim Hossain making his World Cup debut in place of injured Shakib Al Hasan and left-arm spinner Nasum Ahmed replacing out-of-sorts Mustafizur Rahman.

Mahedi Hasan's 27 in the latter stage of the innings helped Bangladesh avoid extreme humiliation while Liton Das' 24 and Shamim's 11 were the other notable contributions with the bat.

Bangladesh's top order failings were brutally exposed again as they scored 28 runs losing three wickets in the Powerplay.

The eventual total of 84 was Bangladesh's sixth lowest in T20Is with only three batsmen reaching the double-figure mark.

Bangladesh's lack of skill facing quality seamers was on full display as the likes of Mohammad Naim (9), Soumya Sarkar (0) and Mushfiqur Rahim (0) had no clue to Proteas' speedster Kagiso Rabada.

Bangladesh kept losing wickets at regular intervals and at one point were reeling at 45 for six, from where there was no way back for the Tigers.