

BANGLADESH UPDATE

256

New cases in 24hrs



15,70,238

Total cases



27,880

Deaths



15,34,073

Recoveries



GLOBAL UPDATE

5,032,252

Deaths



248,466,602

Total cases

Effective climate plans not possible without funds: Hasina

UNB, Glasgow

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina has said effective action plans are not possible without adequate, sustained, and flexible climate finance.

"It's sad and disappointing that till now, the major greenhouse gas-emitting countries have failed to deliver their promised annual amount of 100 billion dollars," she said while presiding over Climate Vulnerable Forum Leaders' Dialogue: Forging a CVF-COP26 Climate Emergency Pact at the COP26 venue on Tuesday.

United Nations Secretary-General Antonio Guterres and Thematic Ambassador of the Climate Vulnerable Forum (CVF) Saima Wazed Hossain, among others, spoke at the event.

"Faced with the existential threat of climate change, we, the CVF members, at this COP, demand that developed countries provide a Delivery Plan of a total of 500 billion dollars for each of the entire 5-year period from 2020 to 2024, with a 50:50 ratio between adaptation and mitigation," Hasina said.

"This will ensure continuous progress so that the temperature rise is contained within 1.5 degree Celsius. We call upon the presidency of COP26, and all members of the UNFCCC, to adopt the climate emergency pact as a part of the COP26 declaration."

Under the programme, a digital system for tax payment and submission of income tax returns would be introduced, said a finance ministry official.

The programme is also aimed at providing loans among the CMSMEs as well as introducing a digitised system to properly disburse the loan and ensure its monitoring.

It would also progressively digitalise the disbursement of social protection benefits and close down 25 loss-making mills, he said.

Steps would be taken for approving, restructuring, closing or privatising loss-making sugar mills under the Bangladesh Sugar and Food Industries Corporation.

The \$700 million project of the Bangladesh government has the ADB as the lead financier.

Last month, the ADB has approved its loan of \$250 million, while the Export-Import Bank of Korea and OPEC will provide \$100 million each for the programme.

The repayment period of the loan from AIBB is 20 years including three years of grace period, according to a press release from the finance ministry.

Bangladesh to get

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In October, the finance ministry released \$741 million of the \$940 million pledged by the Manila-based multilateral lender to buy 10.5 crore doses of Covid vaccines from two Chinese drug makers.

Of the doses, about 7.5 crore shots will be procured from Beijing-based biopharmaceutical company Sinovac and the rest from Sinopharm, a Chinese state-owned company, finance ministry officials said.

The government has planned to spend an estimated Tk 17,000 crore this fiscal year to procure Covid-19 vaccines, Tk 3,200 crore more than in fiscal 2020-21.

Meanwhile, on Tuesday, the government signed a loan agreement worth \$250 million with the AIBB to implement policy reforms to accelerate economic recovery from the pandemic.

The loan would be used for enhancing: (i) fiscal space through improved public financial management for revenue and public expenditure, and (ii) enabling environment to foster the growth of cottage, micro, small and medium-sized enterprises (CMSMEs) and associated employment, in line with initiatives of country's Eighth Five

A curious cause

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murdering a former union parishad member of Chuadanga's Alandanga, Md Manwar Hossain, on June 28, 1994. The two convicts appealed against the HC decision, but the highest court of the country rejected their appeal, paving way for the execution.

All of a sudden, their appeals against the death sentence appeared on yesterday's cause list of the Appellate Division for a hearing, leaving everybody perplexed: Had the state executed two men even before their appeals were heard?

Deputy Attorney General Bishwajit Debnath said it could not be understood without examining all the relevant files and documents.

Humayun Kabir, the state-appointed counsel for the two men, said he learned only a few days ago that his clients were executed. Their appeal was filed in 2013, it has been eight years since then.

The lawyer told The Daily Star that right before the hearing, he got in touch with the families and learnt that Mokim and Jharu were hanged in 2017.

Asked why they did not launch a legal battle after Jashore jail authorities executed the two when their petitions were still pending with the SC, the lawyer said they were not approached by the families of the two.

As his attention was drawn to the matter, eminent jurist Dr Shahdeen Malik said, "Most of the death-row convicts have to depend on the state-appointed lawyers to fight their

US SC to hear high-stakes gun rights case

AFP, Washington

The conservative-majority US Supreme Court is to hear a gun rights case yesterday that could lead to looser restrictions on carrying firearms in public.

At issue is a challenge backed by the gun lobby to a New York law that regulates the carrying of guns outside the home.

It will be the first major case involving the Second Amendment constitutional right to bear arms heard by the nation's highest court in more than a decade.

The high-stakes case will be argued before a Supreme Court with a 6-3 conservative majority following the nomination of three justices by former president Donald Trump.

The court had previously declined to take up several Second Amendment cases, but it underwent a shift to the right under Trump and the three justices he named have been historically sympathetic to the arguments of gun owners.

This has raised fears among gun control advocates that local restrictions such as the New York law could be in jeopardy.

In a landmark 2008 case, the Supreme Court ruled the Second Amendment ensured a right to gun ownership, but left it up to cities and states to set their own rules on carrying weapons outside the home.

This has led to a patchwork of regulations across the country.



Climate activists march through the streets of Glasgow, Scotland yesterday, on the sidelines of the COP26 Climate Conference. Focus at the COP26 summit turned to how the world will pay for its ambitions to quit fossil fuels and help vulnerable nations survive climate change, as campaigners yesterday urged caution over promises of billions from financiers and governments.

PHOTO: AFP

Water woes worsen in CHT

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Then last year, he noticed the water in the stream was dwindling fast -- so much that he could not fill his container.

"As long as there was water, I did not mind taking such a long journey. But I saw the stream drying up in front of my eyes. You can endure many difficulties but you can't live without water. So, I decided to relocate my family elsewhere," Pankhuya told The Daily Star.

An official figure on internal displacements such as Pankhuya's family is hard to come by, but on The Daily Star's visit to six remote areas of the Hill Tracts, at least 50 families were found who had shifted in pursuit of safe drinking water.

"The water crisis is the biggest concern in the remote areas now," said Apu Chowdhury, chairman of Khagrachari District Council.

Several hundred streams and springs in Rangamati, Khagrachari and Bandarban districts that the locals relied on for water are no longer flowing like before.

The crisis emerged due to climate change coupled with deforestation, stone extraction from streambeds used to provide hilly people with water, Chowdhury said.

"In the dry season, the situation turns the worst. We distributed water in various areas by trucks," he said, adding that the Khagrachari District Council has taken up an awareness campaign on forest conservation in 65 areas.

The natural ecosystem in CHT

has been disturbed, said Kamal Hossen, a professor at the Institute of Environmental Science of Chattogram University.

About 80,000 hectares of forest land have been lost to deforestation in the last five years, according to Hossen.

With the damage to the ecosystem, the watershed -- an area of land that drains all the streams and rainfall to a common outlet -- of the hilly region has disappeared, drying up streams and springs, he added.

And due to global warming, the pattern of rainfall in CHT has changed from unimodal to bimodal.

A unimodal wet season is one in which there is only one rainfall peak (i.e., no alternation of humid and dry months within the wet season). A wet season with two rainfall peaks, separated by at least one dry month, is bimodal.

At the beginning of the monsoon, the rainfall lasts a few days with a long pause in the middle of the season. The penultimate day in the season sees precipitation.

Kazi Humayun Rashid, an assistant meteorologist and the in-charge of the Rangamati Meteorology Office, said the rainfall pattern changed to the extent that it sometimes contradicts their forecast.

"There was an abnormal downpour in 2017 when 343 millimetres of rainfall were recorded in 24 hours triggering a massive landslide across the region. But the following year the rainfall was less than it was forecasted."

In the rainy season, the number of rainless days is increasing, Rashid said, adding that the pattern was bimodal during 2019 and 2020.

Munsi Rashid Ahmed, chief scientific officer of Hill Agriculture Research Centre, said he has been observing a change in weather patterns since his joining in 2016.

"When there is a change in the pattern, the hardest hit will be the agriculture in a region where 90 percent of the population make a living on agriculture."

Agriculture in the hilly region is solely dependent on a steady downpour, he said, adding that steps have been taken for storing rainwater for the dry season.

"But more focus is required to address the crisis. Or else, time will run out soon to stave off the looming danger," he said, adding that the natural coverage of forests and the streams and springs of the hills have reduced to an alarming extent.

To mitigate the crisis, the United Nations Development Programme in cooperation with the Danish International Development Agency took up a project in 2018 titled "CHT Climate Resilience Project".

The project has been using multiple technologies -- the gravity flow system, the infiltration gallery system, water lifting through solar energy and community water supply by solar power -- to support a total of 107 villages under 10 upazilas of Rangamati, Khagrachari and Bandarban, according to its officials.

Hasina among 5 influential dealmakers

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depends on these five negotiators, who have a major influence on the outcome.

This is mainly because the countries not only have varying national priorities, but nations forge alliances with each other and form negotiating blocs even within the dialogue. Hence, countries can be part of different negotiating groups simultaneously.

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina represents the Climate Vulnerable Forum, a group of 48 countries who would be the worst sufferers of climate change.

She is the mouthpiece of those who experience climate change firsthand to the COP. Last year, about one-fourth of Bangladesh was hit by floods, leaving millions inundated, the BBC report said.

"People like Prime Minister Hasina put a human face on climate change and can help world leaders understand what climate change already looks like," Dr Jen Allan, an expert in international relations from Cardiff University, told BBC.

When it comes to negotiations, the Climate Vulnerable Forum and the Least Developed Countries group

have had a strong track record, despite not being so economically well-off.

"These countries punch above their economic weight, so to speak," said Dr Allan.

"Because they are a strong moral voice, and because decisions are taken by consensus, they have been able to get a good deal of progressive decisions through the UN machinery," she added.

Bangladeshi negotiator Quamrul Chowdhury, who belongs to Sheikh Hasina's negotiation team, when talking to BBC, said the vulnerable nations are coming to Glasgow with a clear set of goals.

"There are over one billion people now on the hook of adverse climate impacts," he told BBC. "We want to get them off the hook by getting the richest countries to steeply cut back emissions, to fix the outstanding Paris rules, to ramp up climate finance and to address loss and damage."

China's veteran climate negotiator Xie Zhenhua had a close working relationship with the US climate ambassador Senator John Kerry. Their relationship was crucial in building the 2015 Paris agreement, which made countries commit to reduce

emissions.

China's importance lies in its size, being the world's biggest emitter of carbon dioxide -- and at COP26 it is a key member of several negotiating blocs.

Many Arab countries and developing nations follow the lead of Saudi Arabia. A successful outcome will not be possible in the COP26, without their agreement. Formerly an employee of state oil company Saudi Aramco, in the last decade, Saudi Arabia's Ayman Shasly has been chairman of the Arab group of climate negotiators.

The man tasked with bringing the COP26 talks to a successful conclusion is British minister Alok Sharma. Serving as President for COP26, his words and actions would be subject to intense scrutiny.

Spain's minister for the ecological transition Teresa Ribera has been involved in the UN climate negotiations process for decades.

During her time in the government, she has helped oversee Spain's transition away from coal, which has been hailed as a model for countries to make the move to renewables without eliminating jobs.

Diesel, kerosene prices 23pc up

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Subsequently, many countries, including neighbouring India, are adjusting the prices of the two fuels at regular intervals, said the energy ministry in a statement yesterday following the price hike.

For instance, on November 1, the price of diesel in India was Rs 101.56, which is about Tk 124.41, whereas it was Tk 65 in Bangladesh.

Considering the current purchase price, the BPC is losing about Tk 20 crore per day: it is selling each litre of diesel at Tk 13.01 lower than the purchase price and furnace oil Tk 6.21 less.

Subsequently, in October, the BPC logged in losses of Tk 726.7 crore, the statement said, adding that the government agency has been racking up losses of about Tk 20 crore a day.

Bangladesh consumes 40 lakh tonnes of diesel -- 76 percent of which is by the transport sector and 20 percent by the farmers during the boro harvesting season -- and about

1 lakh tonnes of kerosene mainly for cooking, lighting and aviation fuel.

So their price increase is bound to fan the flames of inflation.

In September, inflation rose for the third consecutive month to 5.59 percent.

The ultimate effect of the increased prices of kerosene and diesel will fall on the users of public transport, said Khondaker Golam Moazzem, research director of the Centre for Policy Dialogue.

"This will stoke inflation further and increase the cost of living, which is not desirable at this time," he said, adding that the government could have provided a subsidy to the BPC instead of raising the prices.

Besides, the government did not bring down the prices of petroleum locally after oil prices plunged internationally for the pandemic.

"At that time, BPC made a tidy profit," he added.

The government last hiked the price of diesel in 2013, and then on

April 24, 2018, it was brought down by 4.4 percent to Tk 65 a litre, said a senior BPC official.

"Our losses will come down following the increase," he added.

ARSA leader

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Mahabubur Rahman, sub-inspector of Whykong police outpost, said Hashim was probably beaten to death by a mob. "However, the exact cause of his death will be clear after post-mortem," he said.

According to police sources, Hashim used to assault Rohingya Muslims, identifying himself as an ARSA leader.