

BANGLADESH
UPDATE



196
New cases in 24hrs



15,70,681
Total cases



27,890
Deaths



15,34,478
Recoveries

GLOBAL
UPDATE



50,48,489
Deaths



249,506,051
Total cases

Dhaka optimistic about climate cash flow

Bangladesh takes very strong leadership role in COP26, says FM

UNB, Dhaka

Foreign Minister AK Abdul Momen yesterday expressed optimism about adequate flow of funds to address climate change-related challenges, noting that Bangladesh has taken a very strong leadership role in COP26.

"We've got a lot of good assurance from the private sector and the governments. We're hopeful," Momen told reporters at a virtual briefing joining from London.

He said Bangladesh needs to work a lot, especially in preparing good proposals, which he sees as a challenge but achievable.

"We've a long way to go. We've a challenge but we can manage to get plenty of funds," he said, adding that there is willingness to provide funds. The minister noted that Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina has become a moral voice on climate issues.

She told the COP26 that Bangladesh cancelled 10 coal-based power plants

involving 12 billion dollars of foreign investment, just to supplement its efforts against the adverse impacts of climate change.

"Bangladesh has taken a leadership role and the prime minister has made a very decisive action [cancelling coal power plants]. We showed the rest of the world," Momen said, adding that their collective aim is to save the planet.

Responding to a question on fugitive convicts, the foreign minister said he raised it and it will further be discussed in detail in the home minister-level meeting.

"We want good governance. We want the rule of law. You [the UK] should be supportive of us," he conveyed to the British side.

Responding to a question on those spreading disinformation, Dr Momen said some people do not want to see the development of Bangladesh.

"Hopefully, they'll understand their mistakes." False propaganda never sustains."



Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina and her younger sister Sheikh Rehana looking at a photo of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman displayed at the international launching ceremony of two publications titled "Secret Documents" and "Mujib & Introduction" in London on Thursday.

PHOTO: PID

German Covid cases soar as WHO warns over Europe deaths

AFP, Frankfurt

Daily Covid infections hit an all-time high in Germany Thursday as the World Health Organization warned that another 500,000 people could die across Europe, with cases once again on the rise.

The dire projection came as the UK became the first country to approve an anti-Covid pill and the US announced strict new rules for businesses to strongarm employees into getting vaccines, as countries scramble to

avoid another deadly winter wave of the virus.

But with rising infections in Europe, WHO Emergencies Director Michael Ryan cautioned: "I think it's a warning shot for the world to see what's happening in Europe despite the availability of vaccination."

The EU's most populous country Germany set a new record for daily infections, with nearly 34,000 new cases over the past 24 hours, according to the Robert Koch Institute.

Hostage to mindless moves

FROM PAGE 1

For Sathi Akhter, a student from the Jagir area in Manikganj, the strike was particularly costly.

Yesterday, she waited at the bus stop for four hours for a vehicle to take her to Dhaka to sit her recruitment test at 10 am. Unfortunately, she found none and was a no-show for her test.

"I need the job -- who will compensate for my loss?" a frustrated Akhter told our Manikganj correspondent.

The government actually does not bother about people's suffering, said Shakhwat Hossain, another job seeker. "They knew about recruitment tests but did not take any measures to stop the strike," he said.

Their sufferings will go on for two more days as the government body responsible for re-fixing bus fare in light of the fuel price hike set Sunday for discussing the issue.

"There is no possibility of the situation becoming normal until then," said Khondaker Enayet Ullah, the secretary-general of the Bangladesh Road Transport Owners Association.

The transport leaders are demanding the government either change the decision of fuel price hike or increase the bus fare.

No inter-district bus operated to and from the capital, so those who needed to leave Dhaka for emergency reasons were seen hiring minibuses with higher fares.

The strike also affected those who did not need to travel far on a Friday: the prices of fish and vegetables went up in the capital's kitchen markets as the vehicles that bring them supplies each day did not operate.

As a result, the supply of vegetables was low, said Lokman Hossain, manager of Gausia Bhandar at the capital's Karwan Bazar.

Truck driver Salahuddin, who operates between the northern districts and Dhaka, said the sudden increase in fuel price by Tk 15 a litre also put them in trouble.

"The government has increased the fuel price, but not the truck fare. Now it is difficult for us to ask people for paying higher fares."

DELIVERY OF IMPORTED GOODS HAMPERED

The delivery of imported goods from the Chittagong Port was hampered badly since yesterday morning due to the transport strike, reports our Chattogram staff correspondent.

As of yesterday noon, only 204 trucks and covered vans entered the port to take the imported goods from the port yards, said an on-duty officer at the port's security department.

Many vehicles, including trucks and covered vans, arrived to take deliveries but could not enter the port due to obstacles created by transport workers enforcing the strike, said Md Omar Faruq, secretary of the Chittagong Port Authority.

The loading and unloading of containers at the port jetties may slow down if the strike lingers, he added

STRIKE HITS EXPORT

The transport strike has put the fear of missed shipments in the hearts of garment exporters, who are just emerging from the downturn in business brought on by the global coronavirus pandemic.

Most of the shipments were deferred due to the strike, said Shahidullah Azim, vice-president of the Bangladesh Garment Manufacturers and Exporters Association.

"We will have to go for expensive air shipment if we cannot ship goods by sea on time due to the transport strike," said Mohammad Hatem, executive president of the Bangladesh Knitwear Manufacturers and Exporters Association.

The fuel price hike will also increase the production costs: nearly 80 percent of the dyeing and printing plants in the textile and garment industries are run with diesel generators, Azim said.

"We will face a serious crisis," said Syed Nurul Islam, director of the Bangladesh Textile Mills Association.

SITUATION OUTSIDE DHAKA

Like Dhaka, people in other parts of the country suffered from the strike.

Tamalika Mitra and her younger brother Shyamal Mitra came to visit their aunt's house at Chattogram city's Jamal Khan area from their village at Hathazari upazila yesterday to celebrate the Dipaboli festival.

"We have been waiting here for an hour but we don't see any bus," Tamalika said while waiting at the port city's Muradpur bus stop in the morning.

She said she needed to return by yesterday as her brother, a student of class-VIII, needs to prepare for his annual examination.

A similar situation prevailed in Cumilla.

Trucks and buses were not operating in the district, while the movement of transport on the Dhaka-Chattogram highway remained almost halted, reports our local correspondent.

In Barisal, no long-haul bus was operating from Nathullabad and Rupatli bus terminals in the city. No trucks were seen running in those areas.

However, launch services were not halted.

Saidur Rahman Rintu, vice-president of the launch owners' association, said they are fearing huge losses due to the sudden rise in fuel prices.

Meanwhile, the Bangladesh Inland Waterways (passenger carriers) Association yesterday demanded the government double the launch fare from Tk 1.7 per kilometre to Tk 3.4 per km for the first 100 km and from Tk 1.4 per km to Tk 2.8 per km for travelling the distance beyond the first 100 km.

Efforts will be made to keep the extra pressure on the people at a tolerable level through a realistic price adjustment in consultation with the stakeholders concerned, said Obaidul Quader, also the Awami League general secretary, yesterday.

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Mentioning that seven volumes of the publication were being released, Hasina said these are documents and records kept by the Pakistan Intelligence Branch on Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman since Pakistan had been created.

Stating that the Pakistan Intelligence Branch official followed his every movement and activity, the prime minister said Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujib served in prison for 3,053 days during the 24 years of Pakistan.

She also said it was not only Bangabandhu who was under watch, but also her mother Bangamata, Begum Fazilatun Nesa Mujib, who was under surveillance. "She had been under watch especially after the

announcement of Six-Point Demand in 1966," Hasina added.

She said these Secret Documents are not just a record of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujib's political struggle, rather these are historical accounts of how an independent nation was born. These documents are of critical importance for Bangladesh's national history, she added.

Hasina said all these documents show how Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujib's political career took shape over the years and also showcase the immense sufferings and sacrifices of the Father of the Nation. These are narratives of the making of a national leader, a Statesman and an international political figure, she said.

The prime minister said Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujib was targeted from the early days of his

Redress it, right now

FROM PAGE 1

"We did not see any initiative from the government to assess the learning loss. We need the assessment done as early as possible. Recouping the loss should be a priority of the government," Hossain Zillur Rahman, executive director of Power and Participation Research Centre (PPRC), told The Daily Star.

Learning loss causes students to lose their skills, eventually making it hard for them to become human resources in future.

"Early and effective redress is urgently needed. Otherwise, the loss will be more severe," he warned.

On March 17 last year, the government closed schools and other educational institutions across the country to contain the spread of Covid-19. In-person classes resumed partially at the institutions this September 12 after the situation improved.

A joint study by PPRC and Brac Institute of Governance and Development (BIGD), published on October 19, said that about 22 percent of primary school students and 30 percent secondary school students surveyed were at risk of learning loss.

"It means 3.96 million primary and 3.9 million secondary students -- a total of 7.86 million students -- are at the risk of learning loss," Hossain Zillur Rahman said at the report-unveiling programme.

"As a result, the dropout rate might go higher ... The decision to reopen the schools was accurate and timely, but only reopening will not be enough to recover from learning loss."

"Supplementary remedial programmes are essential for both

primary and secondary level students," he had said.

The study carried out in August and September said the learning loss has worsened in six months.

In a previous study in March, PPRC and BIGD had said 5.92 million primary and secondary students in the country were at risk of learning loss because of the closure. It showed that 17 percent primary and 25 percent secondary students were at risk of learning loss in March.

The recent survey was based on telephone interviews of heads of 4,872 households and the one done in March was based on interviews of heads of 6,099 households. Both the survey covered rural and urban slum households with school-going children.

There are 2.16 crore students at 1,33,002 primary educational institutions and 1.02 crore students at 20,849 secondary schools, according to Bangladesh Bureau of Educational Information and Statistics and Directorate of Primary Education.

A World Bank report, published in April, said the prolonged closure of schools is causing an education crisis that may cost Bangladesh and other South Asian countries over \$1 trillion in lost earnings in the long run.

Speaking on the report, Zahid Hussain, former lead economist of the WB's Dhaka office, told The Daily Star at that time, "A Bangladeshi student may lose as much as Tk 3,000 per month as a result of lost schooling. This is a serious loss. It could increase poverty."

After closing down the educational institutions, the education ministry and primary and mass education

political life by those who opposed the values and principles he stood for. The same forces were responsible for the brutal end to his life, along with most of his family members, in August 1975, she added.

Hasina, the eldest daughter of Bangabandhu, conveyed thanks to Taylor and Francis Group for coming forward to partner with Hakkani Publishers of Bangladesh on these publications.

The prime minister said, "We renew our pledge to do justice to his struggles by realising his dream of building a Sonar Bangla."

Hasina also inaugurated an art exhibition titled "Bangabandhu and Britain: A Centenary Collection".

PM's younger sister Sheikh Rehana and her daughter Saima Wazed were present.

ministry took some measures so that students did not suffer.

The ministries launched TV education programmes through state-run Sangsad television channel for secondary and primary students. Later, they asked all schools to introduce online education.

Most of the students in urban areas have access to learning through the internet, but the digital divide has so far proved to be a great disadvantage for the underprivileged learners, mainly for a lack of devices and poor access to the internet.

At the end of last year, the DSHE asked all secondary schools to start giving assignments to students.

Contacted, BEDU chief Robiul Kabir Chowdhury said an assessment on learning loss was necessary to learn about the learning gaps and figure out ways to address it.

"We are planning to hold a special test in the first week of December. About 42,000 students will sit for the test. This is how we will assess the students' learning loss.

"We hope that the assessment will be completed by the end of December."

He said they were now working on preparing the questions keeping in mind what students learned through TV and online classes and assignments given to them.

"We will also make some recommendations to address the learning gap," he said.

NCTB Chairman Prof Narayan Chandra Saha said they were planning on launching a study to know the situation on the ground regarding primary students.

"We will eventually find out ways to recover the learning loss," he added.

Don't want

FROM PAGE 1

candidates or election officials," he said.

Terming some electoral areas "risky" (violence-prone), the election commissioner said, "We don't want to see any mother lose her child anymore because of electoral violence. Please, cooperate with me to hold the elections in a peaceful manner."

He also vowed to create a congenial election atmosphere for all the candidates there.

Elections to 16 union parishads under three upazilas -- Sadar, Rugganj and Bander -- are scheduled to be held on November 11.

Senior officials of the district administration, Election Commission and law enforcement agencies were present at the meeting.

On November 2, Chief Election Commissioner KM Nurul Huda while talking to reporters at his office said the Election Commission was embarrassed by the violence taking place during the ongoing union parishad elections.

He made the comments as more than a dozen people were killed across the country over the union parishad polls in the last few days.

Some 846 union parishads across the country are set to go to the polls on November 11.

Dinajpur elderly couple found murdered

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Dinajpur

An elderly couple was found murdered at their residence in Dinajpur's Nawabganj upazila yesterday morning, said police.

The dead are Hafizul Islam, 75, and his wife Fensi Ara Begum, 60, of Shira Polashbari village in the upazila.

The couple has seven children but nobody stayed with them at their home, said police.

Moinul Islam, a local of the village, said that villagers found the couple's bodies in separate rooms at their residence around 10:30pm. Later, they informed the incident to Nawabganj police.

On information, a police team came there and recovered both bodies.

Ferdous Wahid, officer-in-charge of Nawabganj Police Station, said the entrance door of the couple's residence was found open after police arrived there. The victims' mouths were taped and their hands were found tied.

Their houses were also found ransacked, said police.

Preparing an inquest report, police sent the body to M Abdur Rahim Medical College Hospital for autopsy.

Police have yet to ascertain the motive behind the couple's murder till filing the report. But, police was suspecting the criminals strangled the couple to death.

If not now, when?

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The talks aim to secure enough national promises to cut greenhouse gas emissions - mainly from fossil fuels - to keep the rise in the average global temperature to 1.5 degrees Celsius.

Countries came into COP26 with national climate plans that, when brought together, put Earth on course to warm 2.7C this century, according to the UN.

With just 1.1C of warming so far, communities across the world are already facing ever more intense fire and drought, displacement and economic ruin wrought by the Earth's heating climate.

To that end, the United Nations wants countries to halve their emissions from 1990 levels by 2030, on their way to net-zero emissions by 2050. That would mean the world would release no more climate-warming gases than the amount it is simultaneously recapturing from the atmosphere.

The summit on Thursday saw 23 additional countries pledge to try to phase out coal - albeit over the next three decades, and without the world's biggest consumer, China.

A pledge to reduce deforestation brought a hasty about-turn from Indonesia, home to vast and endangered tropical forests.

But a plan to curb emissions of methane by 30% did appear to strike a blow against greenhouse gases that should produce rapid results.

And city mayors have been working out what they can do to advance climate action more quickly and nimbly than governments.

The Glasgow talks also have showcased a jumble of financial pledges, buoying hopes that national commitments to bring down emissions can actually be implemented.

But time was running short. "It is not possible for a large number of unresolved issues to continue into week 2," COP26 President Alok Sharma said in a note to negotiators published by the United Nations.

Efforts to set a global pricing framework for carbon, as a way to make polluters pay fairly for their emissions and ideally finance efforts to offset them, are likely to continue to the very end of the two-week conference.

New Zealand Prime Minister Jacinda Ardern yesterday warned that the Glasgow climate summit was "make or break" in the fight to curb global warming, saying the world is now paying the price for decades of procrastination.

She called for the UN-brokered talks to result in immediate and meaningful action, adding "we're definitely at a point now where it's moved beyond targets".

However, US climate envoy John Kerry said that it was still possible to reach a deal at the summit settling the final details of the rulebook for how to interpret the 2015 Paris Agreement.

He said the United States was in favour of "the most frequent possible" assessments of whether countries were meeting their goals to reduce emissions.