

**BANGLADESH UPDATE**

**235**  
New cases in 24hrs

**15,71,669**  
Total cases

**27,906**  
Deaths

**15,35,661**  
Recoveries

**GLOBAL UPDATE**

**5,083,684**  
Deaths

**251,764,622**  
Total cases

**GLOBAL UPDATE**

**5,083,684**  
Deaths

**251,764,622**  
Total cases

**GLOBAL UPDATE**

## UP POLLS IN RAOZAN All candidates in 14 unions to win uncontested

ARUN BIKASH DEY, Ctg

The union parishad (UP) polls in Chattogram's Raozan upazila is going to create a history in the electoral culture of the country as all the chairmen and members of 14 unions are going to be elected uncontested.

Only the ruling Awami League-nominated candidates have submitted their nominations for the chairman posts, 126 general posts for members, and 42 seats reserved for women in member posts.

The last date for submitting nomination was November 2 while the date for verifying nomination papers was November 4.

The last date of withdrawal of candidacy is today for the polls scheduled to be held on November 28.

If no candidate withdraws candidacy, all the candidates would be declared elected uncontested on November 12, said Arun Uday Tripura, returning officer and Raozan Upazila Elections Office.

BNP leaders and locals alleged that many wanted to be candidates but could not due to fear of tyranny by the ruling party men.

"It is the local lawmaker who selects the candidates for chairmen and members in UPs, mayor and councilors in municipality and chairman and vice chairmen in upazila parishad polls for the last five years," a BNP leader said, seeking anonymity.

"No other candidate can submit nomination papers here. If anyone tries to do so, he or she has to come under

tyranny by the ruling party men," the BNP leader added.

BNP sources said Abu Jafar Chowdhury, former president of BNP Raozan municipality unit, got party nomination to vie for mayoral post in this year's municipal polls, adding, although he bought nomination paper, he could not submit it.

Contacted, Jafar denied making any comment on this issue.

Shahadat Hossain, president of BNP Chattogram city unit, said, "Raozan is a locality where one person and his party have suppressed all other democratic forces to turn the area into a hub of autocratic rule."

"No one can even submit nomination paper for polls without getting approval of that person."

Akter Kabir Chowdhury, president of Sushashoner Jonyo Nagorik's (SUJAN) Chattogram district unit, said "It's alarming for our democracy and electoral system."

Despite knowing everything, the state or the election commission has not taken any step, he added.

"The EC should take step to cancel the polls in Raozan UPs weighing the situation," he further said.

Contacted, ABM Fazle Karim Chowdhury, lawmaker from Chattogram-6 constituency, denied all the allegations raised against him.

"I don't have any interest in UP polls. Our local leaders are working for the party nominated candidates."

Asked, he further said, "If none comes to vie in polls, what can we do?"

## Farmers stare

FROM PAGE 1

Prof Saidur Rahman of Bangladesh Agricultural University told The Daily Star, "Farmers will suffer losses if they don't get fair prices. Their woes will compound if the price falls due to good harvest."

He said farmers are the unsung heroes. They kept on feeding the nation during the pandemic. "But their protection needs have been ignored," he said, adding that the government should immediately take steps to protect the farmers.

Farmers in the region of Chapainawabganj, Naogaon, Natore and Rajshahi depend largely on groundwater for irrigation most of the year.

According to Department of Agricultural Extension (DAE), 48.50 percent of the region's 6,91,437 hectares of land, which need irrigation, rely on diesel-run pumps.

The department says that there are around 5,464 low-lift pumps, 72,696 shallow tube-wells, and 471 semi deep tube-wells in the region.

The use of combined harvesters and other machines have increased in the region over the years. There are 305 combined harvesters, 181 reapers, 27 planters, 42,771 power tillers, 1,541 tractors, and 33,518 threshers in the region that also run on diesel.

In Golai village of Rajshahi's Godagari upazila, this correspondent met reputed farmer Boltu Sarder on Monday. He was stacking his aman paddy on a tractor trailer he owns.

"I'm yet to feel the pinch of the diesel price hike as I have stock. But transport service providers have increased fares by Tk 200 for moving paddy of every bigha of land," said Sarder.

He said he was already paying extra for threshing and winnowing.

"I used to pay them 10 kilogram of paddy for threshing paddy of one bigha of land. Now they are demanding 20 kilogram."

"In crop production, the rise of diesel price has a chain reaction. To be honest, if I sit and think about the expenditure, I start to think of changing my profession," he said.

Abdul Momin, another farmer of the same village, said, "Power tiller owners used to charge Tk 300 for

tilling every bigha of land once. Now they are charging Tk 450."

He said winter crops, including wheat, lentil, chickpea, and mustard, need tilling of land twice while paddy needs three times.

Abdul Hamid, a farmer from Bohora village in Tanore upazila, said he used hopper machines for winnowing paddy. Like the threshers, he said, hopper machine owners were asking for 20kg of paddy instead of 10kg for winnowing paddy of every bigha of land.

Majed Ali, a farmer of Godari's Jopgur village, said he would cultivate mustard, wheat, and lentil after harvesting Aman and before starting the production of Boro.

"But the pump owners have already increased irrigation cost by Tk 30 for every hour of irrigation," said Ali.

For preparing the land for Boro, he said, he would have to spend Tk 1,350 on power tiller for every bigha of land. The cost used to be Tk 900.

Abdul Jalil, a farmer of Chalan Beel area in Natore's Singra upazila, said, "With a good harvest being a possibility, I'm now in a dilemma over whether to go for Boro production this year."

Jalil fears fertilizer prices would go up as the price of diesel has a cascading effect.

"I'm scared of not being able to meet the production cost of Boro this year. I will try another crop."

He said he used to grow Boro on 80 bighas and needed to use at least 60 litres of diesel per bigha.

Nirmal Kumar Das of Mohor village in Tanore provides irrigation, power tiller, tractor, and threshing services to farmers.

"I have to raise the prices of every service as I'm buying diesel at a higher rate. I can't survive otherwise," he said.

Although diesel price is now about Tk 80 per litre, Nirmal buys diesel for Tk 85 a litre from local vendors in the remote Barind village under Talanda union. He has to transport the diesel to the pump at the fields, Das said.

Contacted, Sirajul Islam, additional director of the DAE Rajshahi region, said they were monitoring the reactions in the field.

The government raised diesel price by Tk 15 on November 4.

## Mitchell powers

FROM PAGE 1

Williamson's prized scalp for five after the batsman attempted a scoop shot to be caught at fine-leg.

Mitchell and Devon Conway put on 82 runs for the third wicket but Liam Livingstone struck with his leg spin to have Conway stumped for 46.

New man Neesham took the bowling head on as he smashed Chris Jordan for two sixes - one of them nearly caught at the boundary by Bairstow but his knee touched the rope - and a four to get 23 runs from the over.

He finally fell to Adil Rashid's googly with Eoin Morgan holding on to a catch at extra cover.

Earlier Moeen Ali smashed an unbeaten 51 to steer England to 166-4 after being invited to bat as Kiwi skipper Williamson won an all-important toss.

England lost their openers including Jos Buttler for 29, lbw off Ish Sodhi.

But Moeen hit back with his 37-ball knock and put on a key partnership of 63 with Dawid Malan, who hit 41, for

the third wicket.

Pace bowlers Tim Southee and Trent Boult kept a tight leash in the first three overs before Buttler smashed two successive boundaries.

In-form Buttler tried to rebuild but an attempt to reverse sweep leg-spinner Sodhi got him trapped lbw for 29 off 24 deliveries.

The opener, who moved past Pakistan's Babar Azam as the leading batsman in the tournament with 269 runs, reviewed the call but replays suggested the ball would have hit his off stump.

The left-handed Malan, who was dropped on 10 by wicketkeeper Conway off Neesham, hit the first six of the innings off Southee in the 16th over but departed next ball caught behind.

But Moeen launched an attack as he hit Sodhi for a six and then smashed Milne for two hits over the fence.

Livingstone hit 17 off 10 balls before departing and Moeen completed his first fifty of the tournament with a boundary off Neesham.



The father of 17-year-old Bikash Chandra Biswas wailing in front of Bogura Shaheed Ziaur Rahman Medical College Hospital as his son died due to removal of oxygen mask allegedly by a hospital staffer for not getting "satisfactory tip". The photo was taken yesterday.

PHOTO: COLLECTED

## Only Tk 50 shy of life?

FROM PAGE 1

Bikash, a class-VIII student, was injured critically after a motorcycle rear-ended his bicycle when he was returning home from his workshop on Tuesday evening.

He was first taken to Saghata Upazila Health Complex and then moved to the Bogura SZMCH. Doctors there gave him oxygen support and referred him to the surgery ward.

Dholu, who was taking Bikash to the surgery ward on a stretcher from the emergency unit, demanded Tk 200 from his father for this work, said Sachin.

Bikash's father Bishu, a blacksmith in Putimari village, said, "I had only Tk 150 in my pocket. I gave that as his tip. But Dholu refused to take it and demanded Tk 200. Later, a man who was with Dholu took the money and put it in Dholu's pocket and tried to convince him."

"But Dholu became angry and removed the oxygen mask from

my son's mouth, saying that this oxygen cylinder was taken from the emergency unit. You should manage oxygen from somewhere else."

"Within a few minutes, my son started having breathing problems and became silent. Later, doctors declared him dead," the father added.

A four-member body has been formed to probe the incident, said Abdul Wadud, deputy director of the hospital, adding that the committee has been asked to submit its report within next five working days.

"Dholu is not a regular employee ... in our investigation, we'll find out how he gets access to the emergency room."

Quoting the victim's family, Shamim Hossain, sub-inspector of the medical outpost, who visited the spot immediately, told this correspondent that after the incident, other attendants caught Dholu and handed him over to on-duty Ansar

men at the hospital, but "they helped him flee the spot".

Contacted, Selim Reza, officer-in-charge of Bogura Sadar Police Station, said, "After the incident, our officers visited the spot and found the allegation against the hospital staffer was true."

Asked about the legal action, Deputy Director Wadud said they would take legal actions against those involved in the incident. They already filed a written complaint with police in this regard.

However, OC Selim said no such complaint was lodged while taking to this newspaper around 6:00pm yesterday.

Abdul Kader, platoon commander of Ansar at the hospital, refuted the allegation of helping Dholu flee the spot. They rather saved him from the people's wrath. "Later, he managed to flee the hospital, dodging the eyes of Ansar men."

## 'It's not a politically enlightened decision'

FROM PAGE 1

Friday, causing great suffering to the common people and bringing the conveyance of goods to a standstill.

Three days later, to appease the operators the government hiked the bus fare by as much as 28 percent and launch fares by up to 43 percent.

"How come a state that is so powerful in all aspects increase the price this way just because of a two-day strike? The price was increased unreasonably because of pressure from one group -- it is not a politically enlightened decision," Rahman said.

In both cases where the government had the power to administer, the decision of the government went against the consumers.

"This is not a morally acceptable decision," Rahman said.

The think-tank purported that the government had an option to not raise the fuel prices.

If the global oil price continues to escalate, the government would need Tk 20 crore per day and Tk 7,200 crore a year to offset the maximum amount of loss, said Khondaker Golam Moazzem, research director of the CPD.

According to the CPD's calculations, the government will generate additional revenue of Tk 7,838 crore from the BPC in the form of import duty and value-added tax.

The government could have temporarily withdrawn the import

duty and VAT to adjust the losses, according to Moazzem.

"The decision to raise the fuel prices is not a politically timely one and the government should back down from this decision. There was an opportunity for the government to subsidise it and offset the rise in world oil prices," he said.

If the decision was made with consultation with all the stakeholders and through a public hearing by the Bangladesh Energy Regulatory Commission (BERC) as per the law, the opinion of the consumers would have been reflected, the CPD said.

The BERC is a platform for the government to hear out the people's problems.

"These decisions should be taken through a dialogue, not by bypassing the BERC and disabling it is not a solution," Moazzem said.

What transpired was the BPC, which had logged in profits of Tk 43,136 crore between fiscals 2014-15 and 2020-21, wrote to the energy ministry seeking an increase in the prices and it was done, Rahman said.

Because of the state of recovery of the economy from the fallout of the global coronavirus pandemic, the stability of fuel price is critically important given the 'strategic' nature of the commodity, the think-tank said.

The hike will have both immediate and medium-term impacts on various sectors of the economy and derail the

economic recovery.

The fuel price hike implies that there will be an increase in the transportation cost, agricultural cost and electricity cost. Thus, all production costs will increase leading to a spiralling of the cost of living.

For instance, the transport sector is passing on the burden of the hike to the consumers.

"The consumers have no one to pass on their burden," Rahman said.

Besides, the price hike of diesel and kerosene came at a time when the daily necessities are becoming dearer.

The prices of several commodities shot up in November from a year earlier, shows data from the Trading Corporation of Bangladesh.

Subsequently, the think-tank called for reinstating the earlier prices of diesel and kerosene immediately.

The government does not lower the fuel prices when there is a fall in prices in the global market, said Fahmida Khatun, executive director of the CPD.

In April last year, fuel prices hit a trough of \$23.3 per barrel following the coronavirus outbreak.

"But the fuel prices were not adjusted in the domestic market that time following the international rate. Yet, the moment it went up globally, so did the prices here."

There should be a price-setting mechanism instead of the existing arbitrary practice, she said.

## Dhaka, Paris strike deal

FROM PAGE 1

expensive, but Bangladesh can surely buy it if it has the capability and the need for it, he said.

"India is buying Rafale, but Bangladesh does not have open frontiers like that of India."

The Lol with France was signed less than a week after Bangladesh agreed in principle to buy five naval ships from the UK.

"Taking note of the French and European strategies concerning the Indo-Pacific, both parties agreed to work towards promoting regional peace and stability and to explore further opportunities for cooperation in maritime security and blue economy," the Lol said.

Highlighting their commitment to fully observing the 1982 UN Convention on the Law of the Sea as well as the peaceful settlement of disputes, refraining from any threat or use of force, the two countries stated the importance of maintaining security and freedom of navigation and overflight in all seas and oceans.

The development came at a time when the Indo-Pacific region is drawing more global attention.

The US has formulated an "Indo-Pacific Strategy" for an open and rules-based region. On September 15, Australia, the United Kingdom and the United States announced a

security pact called AUKUS for the region that experts say is aimed at countering China.

Bangladesh, however, maintains that it is with any initiative for socio-economic development in the region, but not for defence.

France and Bangladesh also underscored the need to ensure funding for the UN's Joint Response Plan for the Rohingya refugees and enable their voluntary, safe, dignified and sustainable return to Myanmar as soon as possible.

Dhaka and Paris also signed Credit Facility Agreements on strengthening healthcare systems and on a water treatment plant.

Both the countries committed to strengthen connectivity in South Asia in order to facilitate exchanges between Europe and Asia.

They reaffirmed that terrorism, in all its forms and manifestations, is one of the most serious threats to global peace and security and that all terrorist acts are criminal and unjustifiable.

"Both countries, therefore, jointly expressed their support for counter-terrorism efforts and agreed to enhance their cooperation, including under the aegis of the United Nations."

France complimented Bangladesh on being recommended by the UN to

graduate from the LDC in 2026.

Acknowledging Bangladesh's submission of the National Plan of Action on the Labour Sector to the European Union, France stressed the need for its comprehensive implementation and encouraged Bangladesh to pursue its export led growth and economic diversification.

The high-level discussions also covered upgrading of bilateral relations, the 50th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations, which both countries will celebrate next year and major international and regional issues.

Both sides recalled the historic leadership of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, and Bangladesh acknowledged the valuable support of the government and people of the Republic of France during the 1971 Liberation War.

They expressed their wish to strengthen cooperation in order to improve the global governance mechanism and stimulate sustainable economic recovery and growth from the Covid-19 pandemic.

Foreign Minister AK Abdul Momen, Education Minister Dipu Moni, PM's Principal Secretary Ahmad Kaikau, Foreign Secretary Masud Bin Momen and Bangladesh Ambassador Khandaker Mohammad Talha accompanied the prime minister.

## 21 survive Turkey building collapse with no deaths

AFP, Istanbul

Twenty-one people survived being buried under heavy debris when a two-storey building collapsed in eastern Turkey, the government said, with no fatalities reported as search operations ended early yesterday.

The incident occurred Tuesday afternoon on a busy street in the city of Malatya, as residents filled shops on their way home from work.

"Search and rescue operations in the collapsed Malatya building have come to an end. Thank God there are no victims," Interior Minister Suleyman Soylu tweeted early yesterday.

Earlier, interior ministry spokesman Ismail Catakli said rescue workers had pulled 13 people from the rubble, while eight others managed to escape on their own.

Five of those rescued were still hospitalised, but their injuries were not life-threatening, regional governor Aydin Barus said.

## Leaks earned

FROM PAGE 1

The members also distributed images of the question paper among jobseekers through online messaging app -- WhatsApp.

Detectives claimed to have gleaned the information from five people, including the technician and three officials of the state-owned banks, arrested over the scam at different places of the city in the last couple of days.

"We have evidence that the question paper was leaked. Eighty-five out of the 100 questions were found to be identical with the leaked ones," AKM Hafiz Akhtar, additional commissioner (detectives) of Dhaka Metropolitan Police, told a press briefing at the DMP Media Centre yesterday.

Hafiz claimed that the same syndicate leaked question papers of at least three other recruitment tests and has amassed more than Tk 60 crore from several thousand jobseekers.

At least two lakh jobseekers took the recruitment test on Saturday from 3:00pm. The one-hour exam was supervised by Bangladesh Bank's Bankers' Selection Committee.

The DB official said the syndicate was supposed to get Tk 7-15 lakh from each jobseeker. It took 20 percent of the money before the MCQ test. It was supposed to take 20 percent before the written test and the rest after the job is secured.

The DB has got a list of around 200 jobseekers who bought the question paper. It, however, believes the total number of such frauds would be more than 2,000, he said.

The arrestees are: Muktaruzzaman Royel, 26, the ICT technician of the university; three bankers -- Jane Alam Milton, 34, senior officer at Rupali Bank in Savar, Shamsul Haque Shyamol, 34, officer at Janata Bank in Gulshan, and Mostafizur Rahman Milton, 38, senior officer at Pubali Bank in Chawk Bazar; and Raisul Islam Swapan, 36, who got the syndicate clients.

A case was filed with Badda Police Station under the Digital Security Act and the Public Examinations Act against 28 people over the scam.

Police were trying to arrest all the accused.

The DB said they got a tip-off a day before the exam and conducted an undercover operation on the test day. A DB official impersonating as a jobseeker contacted Swapan and paid him in advance for the question paper. Later, Swapan took the officer to a booth in Badda, where the accused was caught red-handed along with the questions, Hafiz said.

A DB team waited till the exam ended at 4:00pm and found that the questions had in fact been leaked.

The DB said Muktaruzzaman, one of the kingpins of the racket, leaked the questions taking help from one of his colleagues. He then handed the question paper to Milton who gave it to Shyamol. Shyamol distributed copies of the paper to different booths. The DB also recovered WhatsApp chat history and screen grabs proving that money exchanged hands between the criminals and jobseekers. "We are considering them as important evidence in the case," said a DB official.

At the briefing, DB Joint Commissioner Harun-or-Rashid said AUST could not avoid its responsibility for the question paper leak.

AUST Vice-Chancellor Prof Muhammad Fazli Ilahi said they suspended three of their staffers, including Muktaruzzaman, over the matter. "They were not part of any examination committee. We will launch an investigation into the incident," he said, adding that they would cooperate with police.

Meanwhile, Bangladesh Bank yesterday sought explanation from the private university in connection with the incident.

Md Serajul Islam, spokesperson for the central bank, said the BB sent a letter to AUST and asked it to reply within November 14.

The central bank will take the next step based on the reply, he added.