

BANGLADESH UPDATE

237

New cases in 24hrs

15,71,906

Total cases

27,907

Deaths

15,35,982

Recoveries

GLOBAL UPDATE

5,093,463

Deaths

252,487,909

Total cases

‘A little bit of bickering’

Home minister says it happens during UP polls

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Home Minister Asaduzzaman Khan Kamal yesterday said “a little bit of bickering always takes place” during Union Parishad polls.

At a briefing at the secretariat yesterday, he said, “Police are doing their duties. The elections are being held in large areas. The UP election, as you’ve seen, is an election of dominance between groups.”

Meanwhile, immediately after the home minister made the comments, his colleague Murad Hassan, the state minister for the information ministry, said the fighting and bloodshed over the UP polls is very saddening.

“The things happening over the local government election are not acceptable.”

Around 835 UPs took part in the second phase of the local body polls yesterday.

According to media reports, around 31 people were killed due to election-related violence in the two phases and in between those.

Yesterday, six were killed in separate clashes. Three were killed in Narsingdi, and one each in Chattogram, Cumilla and Cox’s Bazar.

Speaking to journalists in the afternoon, Asaduzzaman said that police have identified and arrested many

of those responsible for the killings.

“Steps are being taken to find all those involved in the killings.”

He added that the law enforcement agencies have been working for fair and impartial elections.

Later, State Minister for Information Murad said, “The election is being held at a time when the prime minister is abroad. What is our duty over election? What are we doing?”

“This [polls violence] is not the culture of Awami League politics. It’s also not philosophy of Bangabandhu... The problem lies with our mentality. We’ve to change our mentality and love the country.

“I call upon everyone, especially the activists and leaders of Awami League, to refrain from such clashes from now on.”

Murad suggested appointing someone at the home ministry to help the minister concerned in this regard.

He also urged the law enforcement agencies to be more alert and active at the election centres.

The Election Commission is going to hold more than 4,100 polls to union parishads, upazila parishads and municipalities by December this year.

In the first phase, 160 union parishads took part in the polls on September 20.

Seven lives lost, scores hurt

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shunned by the major opposition parties.

Yesterday’s deadliest violence was in Banshgari, Narsingdi, where at least three men were killed, two of them of bullet wounds. Five others were injured in a clash between the followers of two chairman aspirants.

Two others were killed in Cumilla and one each in Cox’s Bazar and Chattogram districts as elections.

In Shariatpur, two journalists alleged that they were assaulted while filming the ruling party men stuffing a ballot box at Doshrahi Ebtedayee Madrasa in Tulshar UP.

Contacted, AL chairman nominee Jamal Hossain said none of his supporters attacked any journalist.

Law enforcers detained 17 men in Manikganj, five in Feni and two in Jashore on charges of breach of electoral code of conduct.

Election Commission Secretary Humayun Kabir Khandaker last night told reporters that the individuals participating in the polls “become too eager to win. This is the reason why violence happens during elections”.

Contacted in the evening, he told The Daily Star that he thought the election was a good one. “In some places, there was violence outside the polling centre. The candidates were involved in clashes. But they could not enter the premises of the polling centres.”

The secretary also informed that voting was postponed at 10 polling centres and said an estimated 65-70 percent of the voters turned up.

Those who died in Banshgari under Raipura, Narsingdi, were identified as Dulal Miah, 40, Salauddin Mia, 30, and Jahangir, 26. They died in a clash around 6:00am, two hours before the voting started in the UP, said Senior Assistant Superintendent of Police Satyajit Kumar Ghosh.

The clash happened between the supporters of AL chairman nominee Ashraful Haque, who is also the incumbent chairman of the UP, and those of Ratul Hasan Zaki, a disgruntled local AL leader who ran as an independent after the ruling party did not nominate him. The latter is the acting president of Banshgari Union

AL.

The fight began as supporters of both the local leaders tried to take control of the polling centre at Bottoli Primary School.

Ashraful’s supporters Dulal and Salauddin were shot dead. Jahangir was a supporter of Ratul, said locals and police.

In Cumilla, Shaon Ahmed, a resident of Manikar Char UP, and Sanaullah Dhali, 60, a resident of Bahurkhola UP, died in clashes that left 13 others injured, some of whom got shot.

Sanaullah died in an ambulance on the way to Dhaka after he was critically injured in a clash between two UP member aspirants at a primary school around 11:30am.

The second incident happened around 12:00pm at Manikar Char UP where supporters of AL chairman nominee Zakir Hossain and those of AL rebel Harun-or-Rashid began fighting over taking control of a polling centre. Shaon was shot dead and 10 others were injured.

The deaths were confirmed by Abdul Mazid, officer-in-charge of Meghna Police station.

In Cox’s Bazar, a man was killed and nine others, including three policemen, were injured during a clash between followers of two member candidates in Khurshkul UP.

Akhtaruzzaman Putu, 35, of Guillabaper Para area, died in a clash at Taiyaji Government Primary School around 12:30pm, said Presiding Officer Nurul Huda.

In Chattogram, Superintendent of Police SM Rashidul Haque said that a man named Shafi, 55, a resident of Lalpur area, was stabbed to death and 20 others were injured in a clash between activists of two member candidates in Lelang UP of Fatikchhari.

In Natore, a journalist and an independent chairman candidate were among the nine men injured in clashes in three UPs.

In Bogura, an AL activist was stabbed outside a polling centre at Khanpur UP of Sherpur upazila.

Irregularities were reported in different districts including Pabna and Moulvibazar.

China’s Xi cements

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The previous two resolutions were issued under former leaders Mao Zedong in 1945, and Deng Xiaoping in 1981.

The lengthy declaration called for upholding “the correct view of party history”, said official news agency Xinhua, adding that the party has “written the most magnificent epic in the history of the Chinese nation for thousands of years”.

“The Party Central Committee called on the entire party, the entire army and people of all ethnic groups to unite more closely around the Party Central Committee with Comrade Xi Jinping as the core, to fully implement Xi Jinping’s new era of socialism with Chinese characteristics,” the Xinhua readout read.

This year’s closed-door plenum paves the way for the 20th party congress next autumn, at which Xi is widely expected to be handed a third term in office, securing his position as China’s most powerful leader since Mao.

Analysts say the resolution will help Xi shore up his grip on power by setting in stone his vision for China and diminishing the role of previous leaders.

The “thought” of Xi “is the epitome of Chinese culture and soul,” the text

reads, saying that his presence at the “heart” of the ruling party “is of decisive importance... to promote the historic process of the great renewal of the Chinese nation”.

XI THOUGHT

Xi’s tenure has been marked by a sprawling anti-corruption crackdown, repressive policies in regions like Xinjiang, Tibet and Hong Kong, and an increasingly assertive approach to foreign relations.

He has also created a leadership cult that has quashed criticism, stamped out rivals and dissent and introduced his own political theory – dubbed “Xi Jinping Thought” – to school students, reports AFP.

State TV’s evening news broadcast said Xi’s resolution was of “wide-ranging historical significance”, showing footage of Xi addressing rows of delegates in the Great Hall of the People in front of red flags and the Communist symbol.

The first such resolution on the party’s history passed under Mao helped him cement his authority over the Communist Party four years before it seized power.

The second, adopted under Deng, saw the regime adopt economic reforms and recognise the “mistakes” of Mao’s ways.

Carrying her baby, a woman stands in a queue to buy essentials at subsidised prices from a truck of Trading Corporation of Bangladesh (TCB) on Topkhana Road near Bangladesh Secretariat yesterday. PHOTO: ANISUR RAHMAN

It’s no rape

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the five – Shafat, his friend Nayeem Ashraf Halim, driver Billal Hossain, bodyguard Rahmat Ali, and Sadman Sakif – outrage poured on social media.

Many netizens condemned the recommendation that police should not take any rape case after 72 hours of a rape. Around midnight, several women rights organisations staged a demonstration in Shahbagh.

Advocate Salma Ali, president of Bangladesh National Women Lawyers’ Association, which provided legal counsel to the victims, said the judgment was appalling.

The victims’ legal team said rape by legal definition means sexual intercourse without consent. So, it does not matter whether the two girls went willingly to the party or whether they went swimming.

“I cannot accept a judgment like this. A woman who has been raped should be allowed to file a case after months or even years following the incident. A lot of courage is required to file a rape case,” said Salma.

“So, the time frame should not matter here ... most victims can’t go to the court within 72 hours. Circumstantial evidence should be enough.”

Last year in October, the High Court bench of Justice Md Rezaul Haque and Justice Bhishmadev Chakraborty passed a judgment saying that any rape accused cannot be exonerated only due to the lack of medical evidence.

The court also said an accused can be sentenced based on the victim’s testimony and circumstantial evidence.

Dr Bilkis Begum, coordinator of the One-Stop-Crisis Centre (OCC) of the Dhaka Medical College Hospital, said they collect medical evidence up to five days after an alleged rape incident. The OCC conducts the physical examination

of rape and sexual abuse victims.

“The ideal victim is someone who comes straight to the hospital after the rape. In that case, there will be a 99 percent match. Even simple tasks like going to the bathroom or bathing, or washing the clothes can compromise the quality of the semen. Most adults bathe immediately after being raped, while children urinate themselves, requiring immediate cleaning,” said Dr Begum.

‘CHARACTER ASSASSINATION’ While delivering the acquittal order, Judge Kamrunnahar said the prosecution failed to prove the charges brought against the five accused.

The medical report stated that the victims were habituated to having physical relations and that their physical condition was similar to that of someone who engages in regular sexual relations, she said.

Judge Kamrunnahar noted the charge sheet in the case quoted Dr Sohel Mahmud, head of the department of forensic medicine at Dhaka Medical College, as saying, for each of the girls, “no sign of forceful sexual intercourse was found on her body, but she had had knowledge of sexual intercourse.”

The victims’ legal team said during the cross-examination, Section 155(4) of the Evidence Act 1872 was used to assassinate the characters of the victims.

A report published by Bangladesh Legal Aid and Services Trust (BLAST) last year said, “Section 155(4) of the Evidence Act 1872, expressly allows defence lawyers to introduce character evidence against rape complainants during trial.”

In courts, defence lawyers try to establish a “lack of morality” in rape survivors by disclosing details of their personal lives as a way of undermining their credibility, explains the report.

Salma said it does not matter what past relations the victims had because sexual intercourse without consent is legally defined as rape.

“In South Asia, there are many judgments that have observed that rape of a sex worker is also an equally serious crime as that committed against any other woman. So, it does not matter.”

Advocate Faruque Ahmed, the victims’ lawyer, criticised the judgment. “The trauma the victims went through during this trial cannot be described,” he said.

Judge Kamrunnahar further observed that during the investigation, no witnesses could confirm whether the victims were in that hotel that night.

The judge observed that the hotel register did not have the names of the victims and that the devices of the accused did not have the videos that they allegedly took of the victims during alleged rape.

The investigation officer admitted that he could not show any proof that the victims were in the hotel that night,” she said.

The chargesheet mentioned that during digital forensic examination three videos were found to be deleted and the files were corrupt and could not be recovered or analysed.

The case was filed with Banani Police Station on May 6, 2017 accusing Shafat, Nayeem and the three others of raping the two private university girls. The incident had happened on March 28, 2017.

On June 7, 2017, Ismot Ara Ame, inspector of Women Support and Investigation Division of Dhaka Metropolitan Police and investigation officer of the case, pressed charges against the five accused.

On July 13 the same year, the same tribunal framed charges against the five men.

Wade, Stoinis crush Pakistan’s dreams

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22 run that they needed off the final two overs, smashing three sixes to Afridi to reach the 177-run target with an over to spare.

Not many thought the Aussies would pull off an unlikely escape when they needed 62 off the last five overs, but Wade and Marcus Stoinis kept their heads down and started to believe.

Something extraordinary was required and, from 96 for 5 inside 13 overs, Wade and Stoinis did exactly what was needed, adding an unbeaten match-winning 81-run partnership for the sixth wicket.

Man-of-the-match Wade remained not out for 41 off just 17 balls, a knock that featured four sixes and two fours, while Stoinis provided ample support and was unbeaten on a 31-ball 40 that included two sixes and two fours.

With this win, Australia kept their 100 per cent winning record against Pakistan in knockout stages of ICC events intact.

Interestingly, the two teams that Bangladesh had recorded series wins

against prior to the flagship event will now face each other in the final on November 14, with New Zealand booking a place by beating England.

Despite Afridi removing skipper Aaron Finch for a golden duck in the first over of the innings, Australia staged a counter-attack as David Warner and Mitchell Marsh combined for 52 runs in the Powerplay.

But leg-spinner Shadab Khan brought Pakistan back into the game, starting by removing Marsh for a 22-ball 28. He went on to dismiss Steve Smith for five but his biggest contribution was getting the wicket of Warner. The left-hander was given caught behind after scoring 49 off 30 balls, but replays showed that there was no connection between bat and ball.

Australia faced another blow when Shadab bagged his fourth wicket, removing Glenn Maxwell for seven, allowing Pakistan to dream of a place in the final before Wade and Stoinis dashed those hopes.

Earlier, Pakistan put up a perfect display of T20 batting and ticked all the

right boxes to post a challenging 176 for 4 riding on fifties from Mohammad Rizwan and Fakhar Zaman after being asked to bat.

Pakistan rode on a brilliant platform laid by skipper Babar Azam and Rizwan as they had their best Powerplay score in the tournament of 47 without loss. And then some powerful hitting by Fakhar saw Pakistan score 54 runs off the last four overs.

Fakhar remained unbeaten on 55 off just 32 balls, striking four sixes and three fours. In-form Pakistani openers Babar and Rizwan played sensibly but ensured they got a boundary off every over in the Powerplay.

Rizwan was fortunate to be dropped twice early in the innings but both were difficult chances.

From 117 for 1 after 15 overs, Pakistan then initiated a late launch and after Rizwan’s dismissal after scoring a team-high 67 off 52 balls, Fakhar took over. Despite losing the wickets of Asif Ali and Shoaib Malik cheaply Fakhar, who was having a quiet time in the mega-event, fired at the right time.

Surprise US-China deal spurs hopes

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on other issues, sends a powerful message to delegations at the COP26, including to producers of the fossil fuels that are the main cause of manmade global warming.

“Together we set out our support for a successful COP26, including certain elements which will promote ambition,” Kerry told a news conference. “Every step matters right now, and we have a long journey ahead of us.”

Speaking through an interpreter, Xie told reporters that China would strengthen its emissions-cutting targets. “Both sides will work jointly and with other parties to ensure a successful COP26 and to facilitate an outcome that is both ambitious and balanced,” Xie said.

The joint declaration said China, home to half the world’s coal-fired plants, would begin phasing out its coal consumption from 2026-30 and also cut its emissions of methane.

Observers at the climate talks in Glasgow had been worried before the announcement that Chinese President Xi Jinping was not attending and Beijing

had made no substantial new pledges to achieve carbon neutrality before 2060.

China’s climate plan had also not addressed its methane emissions, linked largely to its sprawling coal industry.

The United States has set a goal to decarbonise its economy by 2050, although President Joe Biden has been struggling to pass crucial legislation to do so through a politically divided Congress.

‘BREAKTHROUGH’ Global leaders and climate experts broadly welcomed the agreement, with UN secretary general Antonio Guterres calling the move “an important step in the right direction”.

Genevieve Maricle, director of US climate policy action at WWF, said the world’s two largest economies “have the power to unlock vast financial flows from the public and private sectors that can speed the transition to a low carbon economy.”

“It’s really encouraging to see that those countries that were at odds in so many areas have found common ground on what is the biggest challenge humanity faces today,” EU climate

policy chief Frans Timmermans told Reuters.

“It certainly helps us here at COP to come to an agreement,” he said.

Durwood Zaelke, president of the Institute for Governance and Sustainable Development, said it was “the breakthrough that should set the tone for wrapping an ambitious COP”.

Bernice Lee, research director at the Chatham House think tank, said: “It can only be good news that the US and China are working closely on climate change and slashing methane emissions.”

A first draft of the COP26 deal released on Wednesday received a mixed response from climate activists and experts.

It implicitly acknowledged that current pledges to reduce greenhouse gas emissions up to 2030 were insufficient to avert climate catastrophe, asking countries to “revisit and strengthen” their targets next year.

In a first for a UN climate conference, it also called for the huge state subsidies that support the oil, coal and gas industries to be phased out.

MISUSE OF IT

President urges caution

Bss, Dhaka

President Abdul Hamid yesterday asked experts concerned to be vigilant in tackling the misuse of information technology.

“Information technology has, on one hand, opened the door of huge opportunities for us. But, it has also increased challenges due to its misuse and fraudulences,” he said.

He addressed the inaugural function of four-day World Conference on Information and Communication Technology on “World Congress on IT (WCIT)-2021” and “Associo Digital Summit-2021” joining virtually from the Bangabhaban Gallery Hall.

The president urged the IT professionals to remain alert in confronting the challenges related to IT.

Noting that the exchange and transfer of IT has added a new dimension to global development, he said, “But it is also important to ensure its sustainable use”.

President Hamid also called upon the government as well as private entrepreneurs, professionals and all concerned to come forward to meet the challenges and explore the potentials

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Declare it as global

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Hasina said digitisation has enhanced better services and free flow of information, but there are worries over misuse of digital tools and platforms for spreading harmful contents and hate speech.

“World bodies like Unesco should work for addressing this issue,” she said, mentioning that this has a significant negative impact on the peace and stability of society.

Talking about climate change, the premier said this is a life-threatening reality not only for Bangladesh, but also for many other countries.

“As a leading voice for climate vulnerable countries, we have embarked on ambitious climate commitments. We have cancelled 10 coal-based power plants worth 12 billion US dollars of foreign investments and we hope countries that are much more responsible for global warming will fulfill their commitments to address climate change impacts.”

Hasina urged Unesco to put greater emphasis on climate education and support member states to provide technical assistance to raise greater awareness and sensitivities to climate challenges.

“Faster pace of global warming has affected our ocean environment. This calls for urgent scientific research and knowledge,” she said.

The PM said as a coastal and a frontline country within the Unesco Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission (IOC), Bangladesh has initiated measures for a nature-based solution. “We would like to see a stronger presence of the IOC in our region.”

The premier said the success of Unesco largely depends on its impact on improving people’s lives.

“As we are passing through a difficult time, the need for a strong, dynamic, innovative multilateral organisation is felt more than ever before. Bangladesh is ready to work closely with Unesco in its endeavour to ‘construct the defences of peace’, she said.

Terming Unesco a true friend of Bangladesh, Hasina said ‘Martyrs Day’, the 21st February, marking the great sacrifice for establishing Bangla as the state language, was recognised as the International Mother Language Day.

“We are also grateful for inscribing the historic March 7 speech of our Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman in Unesco’s Memory of the World Register,” she said.

MAIDEN UNESCO-BANGLADESH BANGABANDHU AWARD MoTIV Creations Limited (Uganda) has won the maiden 2021 UNESCO-Bangladesh Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman International Prize for the “Creative Economy”.

Hasina announced the name of the winner and handed over the prize and certificates to the recipient while addressing the award headquarter ceremony at the Unesco headquarters in Paris.

Appreciating the winner, she said, “I congratulate MoTIV Creations Limited (Uganda) on receiving the maiden 2021 UNESCO-Bangladesh Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman International Prize for the Creative Economy”.

The purpose of the Unesco-Bangladesh Bangabandhu Prize is to recognise and reward exceptional initiatives of an individual, institution, an entity or non-governmental organisation which/who, devised and delivered innovative projects or programmes that promote youth entrepreneurship in the area of creative economy.

MoTIV was selected among 69 nominations submitted for the creative economy prize and will receive \$50,000 USD in recognition of its innovative work to promote youth entrepreneurship in the creative economy.

Located in Kampala, Uganda, MoTIV is an integrated creative studio that fosters collaboration in an impactful and sustainable way through providing tools and training.