

BANGLADESH
UPDATE



199
New cases in 24hrs



15,74,088
Total cases



27,953
Deaths



15,38,198
Recoveries

GLOBAL
UPDATE



5,166,393
Deaths



257,606,280
Total cases

SALE OF ‘MINIKET’, ‘NAJIRSHAIL’

HC seeks lists of auto rice millers in seven dists

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The High Court yesterday directed the government to prepare lists of auto rice millers in seven districts who sell “miniket” and “najirshail” rice after polishing different varieties of rice in machines.



The deputy commissioners and superintendents of police of seven districts -- Rangpur, Kushtia, Joypurhat, Naogaon, Jashore, Gopalganj and Netrakona -- have been asked to prepare the lists and submit those to the HC within four months.

In response to a writ petition, the

court also wanted to know whether polishing of rice in mills poses any public health risk or damages nutrition standard.

Chairman of Bangladesh Council of Scientific and Industrial Research and director generals of Bangladesh Rice Research Institute and Bangladesh Agricultural Research Institute have been ordered to submit research reports on this issue before the HC by the same deadline.

The court also issued a rule asking the authorities concerned to explain within three weeks why they should not be directed to stop production and sale of polished rice in the name of “miniket” and “najirshail”.

The bench of Justice Md Ashfaqul Islam and Justice Md Iqbal Kabir came up with the order and rule following a writ petition filed by rights organisation -- Human Rights and Peace for Bangladesh -- seeking necessary directives.

Lawyer Manzill Murshid appeared for the petitioners, while Deputy Attorney General Kazi Mynul Hasan represented the state.

Show your plan

FROM PAGE 1

Hasan, who moved the writ petition, told The Daily Star that different government departments mention different numbers of rivers of the country. The numbers of grabbers also vary.

According to the Bangladesh Water Development Board, there are 405 rivers while NRCC says the number is over 770, and shipping ministry data says the number is 496. However, river researcher M Inamul Haque said he prepared a list of 1,182 rivers.

The NRCC in its 2019 report said the number of river grabbers is 57,390 in the country, but the state minister for shipping recently told parliament that the number is 65,127, Rizwan said.

In a verdict pronounced in 2016, the HC termed river grabbing a criminal offence. “Killing a river is virtually a collective suicide for all,” the court observed and added, “Killing a river is killing both the present and the future generations.”

HC DIRECTIVES

- Prepare lists of all rivers
- Make action plan to evict grabbers
- Demarcate the Turag as per CS record
- Submit report by June 5, 2022

Another HC bench of Justice M Enayetur Rahim and Justice Md Mostafizur Rahman yesterday asked four officials to explain in four weeks why contempt of court proceedings should not be initiated against them for failing to submit to the court a report on the steps taken to evict encroachers from the Bangshi river in Savar.

The officials are: the director general of the Department of Environment, deputy commissioner of Dhaka, and the upazila nirbahi officer and assistant commissioner (land) of Savar.

Let Khaleda go abroad

FROM PAGE 1

condition can improve or deteriorate anytime. Thus, any concrete comment on her health may be confusing.”

The medical board, formed to treat her, is meticulously observing her physical condition round the clock and examining the vital organs constantly.

The former prime minister needs to stay at the Critical Care Unit of the hospital for a few more days and the medical board is readjusting her medication, Zahid said.

She is suffering from chronic kidney conditions, decompensated liver diseases, unstable haemoglobin, uncontrolled blood sugar, arthritis and other old-aged complications.

Family members of Khaleda applied to the government to allow her to go abroad for better treatment but the government rejected the plea.

Meanwhile, five parties of the BNP-led 20-party alliance filed a separate application to the government via the Ministry of Home Affairs, on the same ground.

A five-member delegation, led by Kalyan Party Chairman major general (ret'd) Syed Mohammad Ibrahim, met the home minister at the secretariat.

“We have submitted an application to allow Khaleda Zia to go abroad for treatment. We explained verbally too. The home minister listened to us and assured us that the application will be sent to the prime minister,” Ibrahim told journalists after the meeting.

Later Home Minister Asaduzzaman Khan Kamal said, “I will send their application to the prime minister.”

Meanwhile, BNP’s lawmakers formed a human chain in front of the south plaza of the National Parliament demanding to allow Khaleda to go abroad for treatment.

They demanded to the president to intervene on the issue of Khaleda’s treatment.

Khaleda has long been suffering from arthritis, diabetes, as well as dental and eye problems. In April this year, she contracted coronavirus.

She recovered while under treatment at home, but as other health complications cropped up, she was admitted to Evercare Hospital on April 27.

Khaleda was admitted to the hospital on November 13 night and moved to the CCU on the next day, nearly a week after she was discharged

from the same healthcare facility.

When she developed health problems, she was placed in the CCU and remained there for almost two months. She returned home on June 19.

On October 12, she was admitted to the hospital as her temperature had started fluctuating. At that time, a lump was found on her body and she was in the hospital for around three weeks.

Khaleda was sent to jail on February 8, 2018, in a corruption case. Due to the coronavirus pandemic, she was given a temporary release on certain conditions on March 25 last year. The term of her release has been extended four times so far.

Over 240,000 Lebanon expats register to vote in polls

AFP, Beirut

Nearly 245,000 Lebanese living abroad have signed up to vote in next year’s parliamentary polls, Lebanon’s foreign ministry said yesterday, after it closed the window for registration.

The vote scheduled for March 2022 is seen by many as a chance to challenge the ruling elite’s stranglehold on a country mired in its worse-ever financial crisis.

Lebanon’s diaspora -- estimated to number at least three times the country’s 6-million population -- will take part in the vote for the 128-seat parliament, making them a powerful electoral force.

The foreign ministry said the final expat voter count reached 244,442 -- more than double the almost 93,000 who registered for the last parliamentary polls in 2018, Lebanon’s first expat vote.

While the first was poorly publicised, this time around opposition activists at home and abroad organised social media campaigns to explain the registration process.

In some parts of Europe, volunteers set up registration centres to help compatriots sign up.



Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina with high-ranking officials of the armed forces yesterday. Hasina virtually joined a reception at the Army Multipurpose Complex at Dhaka Cantonment from the Gono Bhaban on the occasion of the Armed Forces Day-2021.

PHOTO: PID

People dig deeper into their pockets

FROM PAGE 1

is 28 percent in India.

The excessive outlay on medicine is because of two reasons: irrational prescription and aggressive marketing, said Md Nurul Amin, director of research at HEU, in his keynote presentation at the event.

As much as 60 percent of the patients take medicines by self-medication and excessive prescription by informal providers like drug sellers and quacks, while 25 percent of the patients are victims of prescription of costly non-listed drugs.

About 58 percent of the employees of pharmaceutical companies are engaged in marketing and distribution, found the study. For instance, in 2010, 27 percent of the pharmaceutical companies’ revenue was spent on marketing.

To curtail the cost of medicine, the researchers recommended revising and expanding the list of emergency medicines and following the treatment protocol by the physicians.

Inpatient and outpatient services

account for 12 percent and 11 percent of OOP expenditure respectively.

There is a target to halve the OOP expenditure to 32 percent by 2032, according to the Health Financing Strategy 2012-2032.

But, it is on the rise, meaning Bangladesh’s target for Universal Health Coverage (UHC) by 2032 is unlikely to be met.

Financial risk protection for the people is one of the three aspects for UHC and the country is worse day by day in this. It has done well in terms of population coverage, service coverage.

The excessive tests for diagnosis are one of the main causes for increased OOP, said Health Minister Zahid Maleque at the event.

Disease diagnosis accounts for 8 percent of OOP expenditure.

“We are working to reduce the diagnosis cost. I would urge the private healthcare service providers for help in this regard,” he added.

Patients are forced to seek services from private diagnostic centres and

hospitals due to inadequate primary healthcare systems in rural and urban areas.

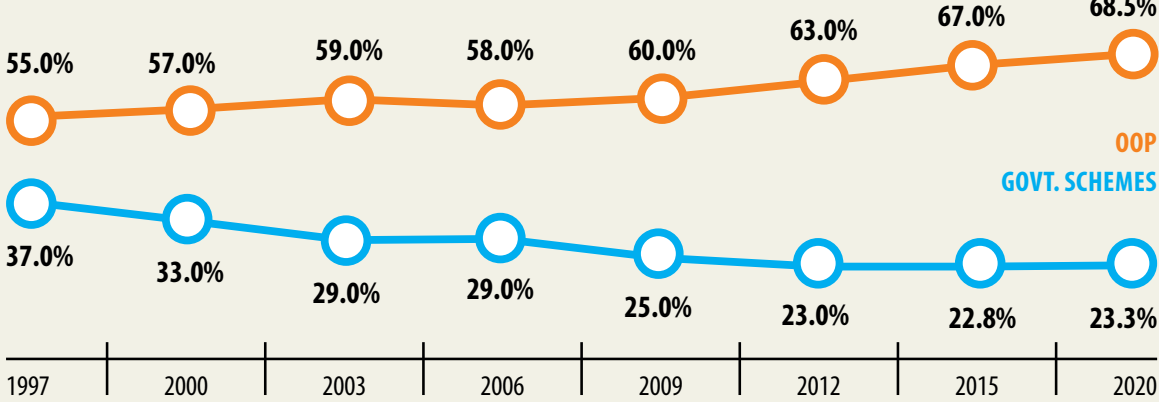
Statistics show that only 3 percent of the patients get medicine from the government hospitals while only 14.9 percent of the tests are done there, Amin said.

To eliminate poverty, there is no alternative to addressing the underlying factors of high OOP, he told The Daily Star.

To reduce the OOP expenditure, the researchers recommended coordination between community clinics and Upazila Health Complexes by introducing e-health services, ensuring efficiency of the public healthcare facilities and introducing social health insurance system.

They also recommended introducing an accreditation system for private healthcare facilities to control healthcare costs and standards and making use of generic names in prescriptions mandatory to discourage the drug-makers from aggressive marketing.

MAJOR SOURCES OF HEALTH FINANCING: 1997-2020



SOURCE: BANGLADESH NATIONAL HEALTH ACCOUNTS:1997-2020

Japan-born kids to stay with father

FROM PAGE 1

registrar general’s office every three months

The HC bench delivered the verdict following a writ petition filed by Eriko Nakano, 46, a doctor based in Tokyo, seeking custody of her children.

It kept the writ petition as a continuous mandamus so that any party of the case can approach it for necessary directives in the future.

The bench, however, rejected another petition filed by Imran seeking custody of his and Eriko’s third daughter Nakano Sania Hena, 6.

The grounds on which the HC delivered the verdict in this regard could not be known as its written text was not released yesterday.

After the court delivered the verdict, Imran’s lawyer Fawzia Karim Firoze told reporters that the children wanted to remain with their father.

“The children have won in the HC verdict... Child rights have been established through this verdict,” she

added.

Meanwhile, Eriko’s lawyer Mohammad Shishir Manir told reporters that they will take necessary steps after examining the written verdict.

Earlier on August 31, the HC bench directed the authorities concerned to shift Jasmine and Laila to a residence in the capital’s Gulshan from the victim support centre in order to ensure their welfare and give them a familiar environment.

“Both the father and mother will stay with the children till further orders so that they can lead a family life with the affection of their parents,” the court had said, adding that both Imran and Eriko will equally bear the expenses of the residence, their living and other relevant issues.

Eriko said in the petition that she and Imran got married on July 11, 2008, in Japan under Japanese law.

They have three daughters Nakano Jasmine Malika, Nakano Laila Lina, and Nakano Sania Hena.

Imran submitted an application to a Japanese court on January 18 this year to divorce Eriko, but did not appear before the court on the scheduled dates of hearing.

Imran picked his two daughters from their school in Tokyo on January 21 this year and came to Bangladesh with them on February 21, Eriko’s petition said.

Eriko then came to Bangladesh on July 18 this year and filed the writ petition with the HC seeking a directives on Imran to hand over the children to her custody.

She mentioned in the petition that she feared Imran may flee Bangladesh with the girls.

Speaking the The Daily Star recently, Imran said he communicated with the Japanese court regularly over their divorce case, but the divorce was not yet complete.

“My children are Bangladeshi nationals. Their names are now Jasmine Malika and Laila Lina.”

Death toll hits four from flooding in western Canada

AFP, Montreal

The death toll from record flooding in western Canada has risen to four, with a fifth person still missing, local authorities there said Saturday.

Torrential rains hit southwestern British Columbia last Sunday and Monday causing widespread flooding and landslides that damaged or destroyed roads and bridges.

The body of a woman was found on Monday, near a large section of highway that had been swept away by a landslide.

That highway, which links Vancouver to remote northern parts of the province,

was reopened Saturday for “essential travel only,” the authorities said.

The Royal Canadian Mounted Police confirmed Saturday that the bodies of three men listed earlier as missing have now been found near Duffey Lake, northeast of Vancouver.

“We have been continuing the search for one more man, however search efforts have been hampered by weather and site conditions,” Sergeant Janelle Shoihet of the RCMP said in a statement.

The authorities have had to ration fuel as the area struggles with storm-related supply difficulties.

Individuals are being limited to

purchases of no more than 30 liters (eight gallons) of fuel at the pump -- a measure that might remain in place for 10 days, according to Mike Farnworth, the province’s minister of public security.

The Trans Mountain pipeline, a crucial link carrying oil from the huge petroleum industry in Alberta Province to the west coast, was temporarily closed by flood damage.

Farms have struggled to obtain needed supplies. In Abbotsford, where the army was deployed to deal with severe flooding, four tons of feed were delivered to a pig farm by helicopter on Saturday, the authorities said.

COLLEGE STUDENT’S DEATH Court extends time for PBI to probe

COURT CORRESPONDENT

A Dhaka court yesterday again extended the date for the Police Bureau of Investigation (PBI) to submit the probe report of the case filed against Bashundhara Group Managing Director Sayem Sobhan Anvir and seven others over the rape and murder of a college student in the capital’s Gulshan.

The new date fixed for the submission of the report is December 8.

Dhaka Metropolitan Magistrate Begum Yasmin Ara passed the order after Investigation Officer Golam Moktar Ashrafuddin, also a PBI inspector, failed to submit the probe report yesterday -- the previously scheduled date, court sources said.

This is the third time a date was scheduled for the submission of the report.

Earlier, the same court on November 2 asked the PBI to submit the report by yesterday.

Anvir was made the prime accused in the case, while chairman of the group Ahmed Akbar Sobhan alias Shah Alam and six others -- Shah Alam’s wife Afroza Begum, Anvir’s wife Sabrina Sayem, model Faria Mahbub Piyasha, Saifa Rahman Mim, the flat’s landlord Ibrahim Ahmed Ripon and his wife Sharmim -- were accused of assisting Anvir in committing the offence.

The High Court on September 29 refused to grant anticipatory bail to Anvir in the case.

After police recovered the body of the 21-year-old college student in a Gulshan flat on April 26, her elder sister had filed a case with Gulshan Police Station against Anvir on charges of suicide abetment.

On July 19, Abul Hasan, investigation officer of that case and also Gulshan Police Station’s office-in-charge, submitted the final report to the Chief Metropolitan Magistrate’s Court.

On August 18, a Dhaka court accepted the final report and relieved Anvir from the case.

However, the victim’s sister on September 6 filed another case with Dhaka’s Women and Children Repression Prevention Tribunal-8 against Anvir over the rape and murder of the victim and seven others for assisting him.

Tigresses stun

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smashed 42 runs in the next 25 balls to deliver a thrilling win.

Earlier, Bangladesh had made a terrific start with the ball, reducing Pakistan to 49 for five in 17.5 overs, thanks to two wickets apiece from Ritu and Nahida Akter.

Nida Dar (87) and Aliya Riaz (61 not out) then strung together a 137-run partnership for the sixth wicket before Salma got Dar out leg-before. Two more wickets fell in the dying overs but Pakistan made sure they crossed the 200-mark, which at that moment looked like a massive challenge for Bangladesh.

The win puts Bangladesh firmly on top of Group B, with three teams to eventually qualifying from among nine teams for next year’s World Cup to be held in New Zealand from March 4 to April 3.

Bangladesh will play their next match against USA tomorrow. The two other teams in the group are Thailand and Zimbabwe. Three teams from each group will qualify for the Super Six stage before the top three qualify for the World Cup.

Cost goes up 44pc

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This will cost about Tk 14,327 crore and an additional three years, according to the revised proposal, which will be placed at tomorrow’s Executive Committee of National Economic Council meeting.

Japan International Cooperation Agency would largely be footing the additional cost of Tk 15,870.4 crore to take the donor agency’s total commitment to the project to Tk 43,921 crore, up 51.8 percent from the original plan.

The additional expenditure will be for beefed-up security for employees, consultants’ fee as the implementing period of the project has now been extended, and the increase in value-added tax for the imported products, among others.

The project, which started in July 2014, will now wrap up in December 2026 instead of June 2023, meaning there would be an additional consultancy fee of Tk 327.8 crore.

According to the new guidelines of the National Board of Revenue, the VAT has been increased, as a result of which the expenditure will rise to Tk 5,186 crore from Tk 3,020 crore, the proposal said.

At present, the project, a 1,200 megawatt power plant in Cox’s Bazar’s Maheshkhali using the ultra-super-critical technology, is 44.5 percent complete, according to the documents.