

BANGLADESH
UPDATE



264
New cases in 24hrs



15,74,352
Total cases



27,955
Deaths



15,38,537
Recoveries

GLOBAL
UPDATE



5,171,382
Deaths



258,044,829
Total cases

Cooperation deepening

Indian defence minister says on armed
forces of Bangladesh, India

DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT

The cooperation between the Armed Forces of Bangladesh and India is deepening, said Indian Defence Minister Rajnath Singh yesterday.

"I am glad that the cooperation between the Armed Forces of both the countries is steadily progressing, by way of several activities -- defence dialogue, staff talks, joint training, exercise and high-level exchanges," he said.

He made the remarks at a reception hosted by the Bangladesh High Commission in New Delhi to mark the 50th anniversary of the Armed Forces Day by paying homage to Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman and the martyrs of the Liberation War of 1971.

The day is observed on November 21, which signifies the day in 1971 when the members of the Bangladesh army, navy and air force were officially united and launched joint operations along with the people against the Pakistan occupation forces.

Singh said it is remarkable that all three service chiefs of Bangladesh have visited India this year, and from India, the chiefs of army and air force visited Bangladesh this year.

He mentioned that India has extended a line of credit worth \$500 million to Bangladesh for defence equipment.

Muhammad Imran, Bangladesh high commissioner to India; Manoj Mukund Naravane, Indian chief of army staff; Vivek Ram Chaudhury, chief of air staff; Karambir Singh, chief of Naval Staff; and Md Abul Kalam Azad, Bangladesh's defence adviser, were also present.

This is the first time since independence that the union cabinet minister for defence and all the chief of military services of India joined to celebrate armed forces day of Bangladesh, said the Bangladesh High Commission in New Delhi in a statement.

Singh congratulated the armed forces of Bangladesh and saluted the valiant struggle of the Muktibahini in the War of Liberation, and said the spirit of freedom fighters forms the core of today's armed forces of Bangladesh.

He also paid tribute to the sacrifices made by the brave soldiers of the Indian armed Forces.

Recalling that India gave shelter to millions of refugees from Bangladesh, he said a struggling nation gave shoulder to another.

Today, Bangladesh's armed forces are one of the highest contributors to the UN Peacekeeping Forces and are respected globally for their professionalism and commitment to just causes, Singh added.

Cumilla councillor

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Pathuriapara area, demanding arrest and punishment of the killers. Law enforcers were seen trying to pacify them.

Talking to The Daily Star, several residents of the city's Pathuriapara said the killing might have happened due to previous rivalry. But they did not give any details about it.

Sohel, the second among six brothers and four sisters, left behind his wife, a son and two daughters.

Some of his followers told The Daily Star that witnesses saw that the killers came to the spot on motorbikes wearing black dresses and masks. They could identify two of them who are residents of the city.

However, police could not confirm identification of any of the killers.

Talking to the media, Cumilla City Corporation Mayor Monirul Haque Sakku, also a BNP leader, said such a killing in the city is rare.

Sohel had been serving as a councillor for two terms in a row since 2012.

Some locals claimed they saw the attackers fleeing towards the city's Boubazar area after the incident.

Seeking anonymity, some said rivalry was going on between Sohel and another group over establishing supremacy in the area and controlling drug trade and extortion. This newspaper could not verify this independently.

Talking to the press, Sohel's nephew Mohammad Hanif, also general secretary of ward-17 AL, said, "I was offering prayers at a place near my uncle's office. Hearing sounds of firing, I rushed to the spot and saw my uncle lying on the floor. I took him to hospital."

Contacted, around 11:00pm, Anwarul Azim, officer-in-charge of Kotwali Police Station, said police were trying to control the situation in the city. They were yet to know any reason behind the murder, he added.



Relatives of Syed Ahmed Sohel, 48, councillor of Cumilla City Corporation ward-17, who was gunned down at his office, praying for him while he was undergoing surgery at Cumilla Medical College Hospital, three hours before he was pronounced dead at 8:30pm yesterday.

PHOTO: COLLECTED

Work extra to clear Covid-time

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the pace of government and development works like the one we had before the pandemic to restore the growth rate," Cabinet Secretary Khandker Anwarul Islam said the quoting the prime minister as saying at the regular cabinet meeting.

The annual report on the activities of ministries and divisions in fiscal 2020-21 was discussed at the meeting held at the secretariat. The premier joined the meeting virtually from her official residence Gono Bhavan.

The pace of execution of the annual development programme had sunk to a 27-year low of 80.2 percent in fiscal 2019-20 as project works were put on pause for two months for the countrywide shutdown, according to data from the Implementation Monitoring & Evaluation Division of the planning ministry.

It bounced back to 82.2 percent in fiscal 2020-21, but still below the average of 90 percent clocked in the pre-pandemic level, according to the Bangladesh Economic Review.

The pace has picked up in the first four months of this fiscal year. By now, health and safety protocols to keep the coronavirus at bay are well in place.

"The prime minister has asked all to perform better, including those who already did good jobs."

Noting that 87 percent progress

has been made in the works of Padma bridge, said the long-awaited bridge can be opened for traffic on June 30 next year or a date close to it.

Replying to a question, he said due to the introduction of a digital system, the number of cases was brought down by 91,000 to 569,662 in the last fiscal year.

However, the number of rape incidents increased to 7,222 in fiscal 2020-21 from 5,842 in fiscal 2019-20, while the incidents of violence against women escalated by 1,907 to 14,567 during the period.

The cabinet yesterday also approved the draft speech of President Md Abdul Hamid to be delivered in the 15th session of the 11th Parliament on November 24 on the occasion of the Golden Jubilee of Bangladesh's independence.

ZILA PARISHAD ACT AMENDMENT

The cabinet approved a draft bill with a provision barring the Zila Parishad chairmen and members from holding their positions after completion of their five-year tenure.

"Zila Parishad representatives will have to leave the posts after the expiration of their tenure. The government would appoint an administrator to run the local body until the formation of the next council," Islam said.

The cabinet also approved the draft of the Bangladesh Film Certification Act, 2021 bringing some minor changes to the existing law.



BNP supporters at a rally in front of Jatiya Press Club in the capital yesterday. Dhaka city unit of the party held the rally demanding Khaleda Zia's treatment abroad.

PHOTO: AMRAN HOSSAIN

Rise meteoric, fall too

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and demolished their buildings to widen streets, drains and footpaths. Most of the residents said they did not get any compensation.

Moslem Uddin and his wife Setara Begum had four katha of land in Salna area of the city. They had a three-storey building and a semi pucca one on it.

On November 13, Zahangir and his followers asked the couple to demolish half of the building and two rooms of the semi-pucca house to make room for a road.

"They marked the parts we must demolish. When asked about compensation, they said they would only provide the costs of demolishing the building," Setara said. "It is a forcible occupation... Zahangir was oppressing the citizens as a mayor."

Rafiqul Islam, a resident of Harinal area, said he lost one and a half katha of land and a part of his house.

"My house was built on my four-katha land. The city corporation did not acquire it. They just demolished part of my building and the walls. I did not get anything in compensation," he said.

"The mayor called us to his office through his aides. I along with several other affected people went there twice, but he did not meet us," Rafiqul added.

Their frustration was echoed by dozens of affected residents.

Locals said that one of the major sources of Zahangir's income was

the monopoly he established in the business of leftover fabrics of garment factories in Gazipur and nearby areas.

The High Court issued status quo orders in November 2020 on the possession of land of Quasem Lamps Limited, Quasem group's guest house at Baimail, and the properties of Escort Packaging Factory at Itahata, Majlishpur.

Despite the orders, the city corporation took over portions of land of the factories of Quasem Lamps Ltd and the guest house in Baimail, Joydevpur, on August 19 and 20. The corporation demolished the structures and boundary walls.

"The High Court status quo order was hung at the gate of Quasem Lamps Ltd. But they demolished it at the mayor's order," said Tariq Abul Ala, deputy managing director of the factory.

There are allegations that Zahangir made a party billboard with the city corporation money while over 300 individuals working for a charity named after him also get money from the city corporation.

Zahangir at a press conference on Saturday said he got about 8,000 bighas of land from city dwellers to construct and widen roads. "There is no country or city in the world where owners of 32,000 houses and shops gave up their land for roads. They [people in Gazipur] willingly gave the land that I begged for."

There are 2,600 factories in

Gazipur city, he said. "I have never taken money from any of the owners in my life."

"Whenever people faced land-related problems, we solved those," he said.

RISE AND FALL OF ZAHANGIR

Zahangir entered politics as a student in the late 1990s.

Between 2006 and 2010, he was the vice president of Bangladesh Chhatra League central committee. In 2008, he was elected as the vice chairman of Gazipur Upazila Parishad.

In 2013, he sought the AL nomination for mayor of Gazipur City Corporation, but did not get it. He became Gazipur AL general secretary a later that year, and in 2018, he got the AL nomination for mayor and won.

Insiders say Zahangir alienated influential AL leaders like Liberation War Affairs Minister AKM Mozammel Huq, State Minister for Youth and Sports Zahid Ahsan Russel, lawmaker Meher Afroze Chumki and Azmat Ullah.

"He wanted to ensure total supremacy in the area," said a senior local leader.

Contacted about the allegations, Zahangir said, "No one raised such allegations two months ago. It is a conspiracy against me and you [the reporter] raise the questions. Many people are spreading lies because I am in a fix now. If anyone can prove that I... grabbed land, you can put me under trial."

Tunisia intercepts over 200 migrants trying to reach Italian coast

AFP, Tunis

Tunisian authorities said Sunday they had intercepted more than 200 migrants trying to reach the Italian coast, in nine separate operations.

"In the context of the fight against irregular immigration, units from the northern, southern and central regions managed to thwart nine (sea crossing) attempts' overnight Saturday to Sunday, national guard spokesman Houssein Eddine Jebabli said.

The interceptions took place both at sea and on the coast, assisting 223 migrants from different African countries, including 111 Tunisians, the national guard said.

Late last month, Tunisia's coastguard said it had thwarted six departure attempts and rescued 125 Europe-bound migrants, 112 of them from sub-Saharan Africa.

Earlier in October, four Tunisians migrants died and 19 others went missing after their boat capsized off the country's east coast.

More than 58,800 migrants have managed to reach Italy since the start of the year, most of them by sea, according to the UN refugee agency.

More than 1,300 have died or gone missing while trying to make the Mediterranean crossing, particularly to reach Italy, Spain and Greece.

Tunisia is a key departure point for would-be migrants hoping to attempt the dangerous sea crossing to Europe.

The Italian island of Lampedusa is located just 140 kilometres (less than 90 miles) from Tunisia's east coast.

According to the FIDES rights group, the Tunisian coastguard intercepted some 19,500 people attempting to cross the Mediterranean in the first nine months of this year.

It said the trend had accelerated since the establishment in June of a direct line of communication between Rome and Tunis to coordinate efforts against illegal immigration and share information.

Since Tunisia's 2011 revolution, political instability and socio-economic crisis have worsened unemployment, which stands at 18 percent nationally but at more than 40 percent among young people.

Decision

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will let you know about it," he said, without specifying what kind of action will be taken against the GCC mayor.

On Friday, the Awami League (AL) expelled Alam, its Gazipur unit general secretary and city mayor, for life for his controversial comments on Bangabandhu and other local leaders.

The decision was taken at a meeting on Friday of the Awami League Central Working Committee chaired by party chief and Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina.

Immediately after the expulsion, a discussion in the public sphere has begun over his suspension as the mayor as he was elected on AL's party ticket.

In a briefing after the meeting, AL General Secretary Obaidul Quader said legal action might be taken against the Gazipur mayor. "We will officially communicate the party's decision on Zahangir Alam to the LGPD minister."

On October 3, the Awami League issued a show-cause notice to Alam for his recent viral video that includes controversial comments on Bangabandhu, the number of people martyred during the Liberation War and other local leaders.

The notice said the comments damaged the image and popularity of the political organisation. He was asked to reply to the notice within 15 days.

Her criminal judicial powers

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She was also withdrawn from the tribunal and attached to the law ministry the same day.

She made the recommendation while delivering a verdict in the Banani Raintree double-rape case on November 11, which drew flak from different quarters. The verdict was met with a huge outcry and nationwide rage, leading to her suspension from judicial duties.

Her recommendation is, however, missing from the written judgement.

Yesterday morning, Qumrunnaher appeared in person before the Appellate Division during a hearing of the state's petition, as this court on November 15 passed an order on this issue.

She appeared before the five-member bench of the apex court at 9:30am and left the courtroom around 11:00am.

After the hearing, the Appellate Division seized the criminal judicial powers of Begum Mosammam Qumrunnaher, an SC press release said yesterday.

It added that the full text of the verdict will be released later.

The contents of the court proceedings could not be known as no lawyer, official or media person was allowed in the courtroom.

During an earlier hearing on the same petition, the SC on March 12, 2020, summoned Judge Qumrunnaher, directing her to appear before it on April 2 of that year for granting bail to Aslam Shikder in the rape case.

Earlier that same day, the SC called for case documents from the tribunal and found that this court's chamber judge on June 25, 2019, stayed the HC order, which on June 18, 2019, granted bail to Aslam.

However, Qumrunnaher granted the bail on March 2 last year. After issuing the summons order, the state's petition was not heard until November 15 this year as courts' physical functions remained suspended due to the Covid-19 pandemic.

Another Women and Children Repression Prevention Tribunal of Dhaka acquitted Aslam in the rape case on October 20 last year.

The state filed an appeal with the HC challenging the tribunal's verdict of acquittal. The appeal is still pending with the court, court sources said.



NORTH SOUTH UNIVERSITY
Center of Excellence in Higher Education

Tender Notice

Tender No. NSU/21-22-06

North South University is inviting sealed offer from bona fide/ reputed organization/printing house for printing and supplying appointment diary, desk calendar, new year greetings card with envelope and gift carry bag for North South University as described in the tender schedule.

Interested bidders may collect a schedule of tender from Southeast Bank Ltd. Bashundhara Branch, Dhaka from 10:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. on all working days till November 28, 2021 by paying non-refundable amount of Taka 1,000.00 (One Thousand) in cash for each schedule.

The bidders must submit earnest money @ 2.5% of the quoted price in the form of Pay Order issued from any scheduled bank drawn in favor of North South University along with their offer. The sealed offer must be submitted on November 29, 2021 by 2:15 p.m. at the office of the undersigned. The offers will be opened at 2:30 p.m. on the same day. Representatives of the participating bidders may remain present at the time of opening the bids. NSU authority reserves the right to accept or reject any or all the tenders without showing any reason.

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