

BANGLADESH UPDATE

237

New cases in 24hrs

15,75,185

Total cases

27,970

Deaths

15,39,553

Recoveries

GLOBAL UPDATE

5,196,413

Deaths

259,991,605

Total cases

**Students demanding justice for Notre Dame College student Nayeem Hasan, who died after being hit by a Dhaka South City Corporation garbage truck on Wednesday, demonstrate in front of Nagar Bhaban and Farmgate among other places in the capital yesterday. They also occupied GPO intersection and checked if vehicles on the streets were being driven by individuals with valid driving licences. They also wrote on vehicles the drivers of which failed to show licences. A police vehicle was one of them. Their demonstration caused gridlocks city wide, forcing many to walk to their destinations.**

PHOTO: STAR/COLLECTED

## Next few days ‘very critical’

FROM PAGE 1

health conditions, the 76-year-old former prime minister is now undergoing treatment at the capital's Evercare Hospital

Zahid said after conducting an endoscopy, the medical board treating the BNP chief suggested keeping her under constant observation at the Critical Care Unit of Evercare Hospital for the next few days.

“We are constantly monitoring her health. The next few days are going to be very critical,” he added.

On Tuesday, blood was detected in Khaleda's vomit and stool and she was given blood.

Colonoscopy and endoscopy were performed on the BNP chief the following day to find the cause of the bleeding.

Khaleda was admitted to the hospital on November 13, nearly a week after being discharged from the healthcare facility.

She was moved to the CCU on November 14.

Family members said Khaleda cannot eat anything. She only has liquids.

“Her tendency of vomiting has decreased but she is getting weaker gradually,” said a close relative of Khaleda requesting not to be named.

The government should allow Khaleda to go abroad for better treatment immediately without or with condition and it may be any country, the family source said.

Meanwhile, the BNP yesterday raised a question whether the party

chairperson was “poisoned slowly” after being taken to a hospital from the old Dhaka central jail.

“Khaleda Zia was taken to hospital from an abandoned building in the old Dhaka central jail where she was given no treatment. Was there any arrangement for slow poisoning of Khaleda Zia? We want clear answers,” BNP Secretary General Mirza Fakhrul Islam Alamgir said.

He was addressing a protest rally organised by Jubo Dal in front of the Jatiya Press Club.

Demanding that the government allow Khaleda to go abroad for better treatment, he said, “As part of a plot hatched during the 1/11 changeover, she [Khaleda] was kept behind bars by getting her convicted in false cases. She was kept in prison for about two years in an abandoned damp building of the old Dhaka central jail.”

The BNP leader said it was possible for the government to do this as it assumed office by “vote robbery” the night before the voting day, filing false cases against 35 lakh people, maiming many pro-democracy leaders and activists, and making around 500 opposition leaders and activists disappear.

Khaleda has long been suffering from arthritis, diabetes, dental and eye problems. She was sent to jail on February 8, 2018, in a corruption case.

Amid the coronavirus pandemic, the BNP chief was released temporarily on certain conditions on March 25 last year. The term of her release has so far been extended four times.

## Chaos-driven

FROM PAGE 1

Miah, the designated driver for the truck, gave the keys to Md Harun, who then gave them to Russel. Both Harun and Russel are cleaners of the city corporation.

Russel took the vehicle out from the capital's Sayedabad area, Deputy Commissioner of Motijheel Division police Abdul Ahad said yesterday.

Another man, Ahsan Kabir Khan, a graphic designer of Dainik Sangbad, was killed when a DNCC garbage truck rear-ended a motorbike and then ran over his head across the street from Bashundhara City around 2:30pm yesterday. Ahsan was the pillion rider.

This accident happened a time when students were protesting, demanding road safety.

Police were yet to arrest the truck's driver.

However, a DNCC source told The Daily Star that the vehicle's registered driver is one Rashed, but cleaner Fatik was at the wheel when the accident happened.

The DNCC has only 76 drivers against 183 garbage trucks. It also appoints contractual drivers on “no work, no pay” basis, the source said.

But they often hire somebody else to do the job.

“They are not skilled enough to drive heavy or even light vehicles,” the source added.

The DNCC has 609 vehicles and most of them are not registered with BRTA,

said sources.

To address the shortage of drivers, the DNCC wrote to the local government authority last year to appoint 107 drivers for the garbage trucks, but the authority approved appointment of only 50.

The DNCC published an advertisement for the appointment of 50 drivers on January 29.

“But we could only appoint 19 drivers so far,” said an official, adding that they did not get enough application for the jobs.

DSCC Mayor Sheikh Fazle Noor Taposh yesterday said the designated driver was not driving the vehicle rather another one was at the wheel.

He said they have already suspended the designated driver and would remove him from the job.

“We will take stern action so that no outsiders can drive DSCC vehicles,” the mayor said.

The DNCC has 333 vehicles. Of them, 147 are garbage trucks.

“We have 34 drivers on the payroll. And the rest of the vehicles are driven by cleaners who have driving licences,” Mizanur Rahman, general manager of DNCC's transport department, told this newspaper yesterday.

Contacted, DNCC Mayor Atiqul Islam said, “We have a shortage of drivers.”

He added that all their vehicles are not registered with the BRTA.

The mayor also vowed to take action against the driver in question.

## Libya election panel rejects Gaddafi's son as presidential candidate

REUTERS, Tripoli

Libya's election commission said on Wednesday that Saif al-Islam Gaddafi, the son of the former ruler and a major candidate in December's planned presidential election, was ineligible to run, compounding the turmoil surrounding the vote.

Gaddafi was one of 25 candidates the commission disqualified in an initial decision pending an appeals process that will ultimately be decided by the judiciary. Some 98 Libyans

registered as candidates.

Disputes over the election rules, including the legal basis of the vote and who should be eligible to stand, threaten to derail an internationally backed peace process aimed at ending a decade of violent factional chaos.

The commission said Gaddafi was ineligible because he had been convicted of a crime. A Tripoli court sentenced him to death in absentia in 2015 for war crimes committed during the uprising against his late father Muammar Gaddafi in 2011.

## Protests on, deaths too

FROM PAGE 1

a DNCC garbage truck hit a motorbike from behind and then ran over his head around 2:30pm opposite Bashundhara City.

Ahsan, who was the pillion rider, fell on the street as the truck rammed the motorcyclist.

Driven by cleaner Fatik, the truck accelerated forwards and ran its wheels over Ahsan's head. Ahsan was wearing a helmet, but underneath the truck's wheels, the helmet smashed into smithereens and only served to impale him further.

The registered driver of the vehicle is one Rashed, who was not in the truck at the time of the accident.

These descriptions were provided by a traffic sergeant at the intersection, Md Saddam Hossain, and an eyewitness, Alam who works at a furniture store nearby.

Ahsan had previously worked at the daily Prothom Alo for 17 years. He left behind a son and a daughter, said his family members.

The traffic sergeant said the driver and his helpers fled the scene as soon as possible.

Meanwhile in Chandpur, a Dhaka-bound BRIC bus rammed an auto-rickshaw carrying four college students. Three people died on the spot and two were injured.

The dead were identified as Urmi Majumder, 24, Mahbub Alam, 24, and Saddam Hossain, 23, who were on their way to college.

Quoting locals and eyewitnesses, Md Mohiuddin, officer-in-charge of Kachua Police Station, said the accident took place in Kanua area of Kachua upazila at 7:00am yesterday.

In this case too, the driver fled.

The day road accidents took at least four more lives across the country, road safety protests like the ones in 2018 re-emerged on the streets yesterday.

The students of Notre Dame College took to the streets again to demand prompt justice for those responsible for the death of their peer, Nayeem Hasan, who was killed on Wednesday.

A group of outraged students marched in front of the college in Dhaka's Arambagh area at 11:00am. The procession proceeded to Shapla Chattar, where it paused for a while. The students later left for Gulistan to block the intersection and meet the DSCC mayor.

The students had a six-point demand, including speedy justice for Nayeem's death and compensation for his family.

They also demanded enquiries into why police did not promptly take Nayeem to hospital, why drivers without skills can still be on the steering wheel,

and how a city corporation vehicle can be driven by an unskilled driver.

They also demanded that all vehicles without the required fitness be taken off the streets.

Protesters also said they want their six-point demand to be realised by tomorrow (Saturday) or they will restart demonstrations from Sunday.

DNCC Mayor Atiqul Islam and DSCC Mayor Sheikh Fazle Noor Taposh pledged that legal action will be taken against the respective drivers.

Atiqul said, “A four-member committee has been formed to investigate the matter, following which we will take legal action.”

He also said he will extend help towards the family.

Meanwhile, Taposh demanded death for the driver who killed Nayeem.

“The garbage truck was not being driven by a registered driver. Both he and the one who was supposed to drive it have to be punished ... I will strive to ensure capital punishment to

**Ahsan Kabir Khan**

the murderer.”

Police said a cleaner was on the steering of the garbage truck instead of its designated driver.

According to a DSCC press release, Iran Miah, the designated driver of the truck, gave the keys to Md Harun, who then gave them to Russel Khan. Both Harun and Russel are cleaners of the city corporation.

Russel took the vehicle out from the capital's Sayedabad area, said Abdul Ahad, deputy commissioner of Motijheel Division police, yesterday.

Police detained Russel near the Awami League office of Gulistan while he was trying to flee the truck after the accident.

Upon interrogating Russel and checking the vehicle documents, police came to know the registered driver was not in the truck when the accident occurred.

Police are now searching for Harun and he would be arrested soon, he said, adding, “We would interrogate him to know why he gave the keys to Russel.”

He further said that Russel does not

have a job in the city corporation.

Russel told police during interrogation that his relative worked in the city corporation, who helped him get a job there as a cleaner. He, however, did not have a driver's licence.

Replying to a query, DC Ahad said Russel often took the keys from Harun and drove the truck.

He has been taken on a three-day remand, granted by Tofazzal Hossain, Dhaka's additional chief metropolitan magistrate.

In addition to Gulistan, students also protested in other areas of the city, including Farmgate, Kalabagan, Panthapath and Shantinagar.

Rallying cries of “My brother is in the grave, why is the murderer still outside?” rang through the streets of Dhaka as uniformed children protested for what is a basic right – the right to live.

Students also checked the licences of drivers at Farmgate, not even shying away from checking the licences those of law enforcement agencies and other security forces.

They withdrew their protests around 4:00pm.

However, some 100 students protesting and demanding for half fare for public transport in Chattogram's Sholashahar were chased by police with batons around 1:00pm.

They tried to take position in the middle of the road when police drove them out of the area.

Raihan Uddin, president of Chattogram city's Samajtantrik Chhatra Front, claimed at least 10 students were injured as police attacked their programme.

Police picked up Saifur Rudra, joint convener of the city's Chhatra Federation, Miraj Uddin, organising secretary of Samajtantrik Chhatra Front, Jahedul Rafi, a student of Patiya Govt College, and Jamsheedul Haque.

The students later tried to organise a rally at the New Market intersection but police again dispersed them around 3:00pm.

Raihan claimed at least five of their activists were injured in police attacks at New Market intersection.

Atif Mainuddin, a leader of Gonatantrik Chhatra Council, said police charged the students with batons without any instigation.

Contacted, Jahedul Kabir Chowdhury, officer-in-charge of Panchlaish Police Station, said police did not attack the activists. “They [students] fled the scene after seeing police.”

He added that those picked up were released.

## Eleven dead, dozens missing in Siberia coal mine accident

AFP, Gramotino

At least 11 people are dead and dozens still missing underground after an accident at a Russian coal mine in Siberia yesterday, officials said.

There were 285 people inside the Listvyazhnaya mine, in the Kemerovo region near the town of Belovo, when the accident occurred, local governor Sergei Tsivilev said on Telegram.

There was no official statement on the cause of the accident at the mine, where a methane blast in 2004 killed 13 people.

At least 11 people died in yesterday's accident and 46 remained underground, Tsivilev said in a statement on the local government's website.

## Zahangir loses

FROM PAGE 1

Asked, he said they had the allegations “before the recent incidents” took place and those were under investigation. “He is suspended for the sake of proper investigation.”

Hours after the briefing, LGD issued a gazette notification on Zahangir's suspension.

According to the notification, there are allegations of floating fake tenders and quotes, recruiting people unnecessarily, misappropriating money from different projects, ljtema and lease against Zahangir.

Several thousand residents of Gazipur city lost valuable lands as the city corporation “encroached” on their private property and demolished their buildings to widen streets, drains and footpaths. The affected people were not given any compensation.

In the gazette notification, it is said that the LGD had issued a show cause to the GCC on the issues of land grabbing and expanding roads without giving compensation to affected people.

However, the GCC failed to give replies to the notice, it added.

According to section 13(1) of the City Corporation Act, 2009, a mayor can be expelled for the offences.

“Since the process of removal has begun through the initiation of the investigation, for the sake of conducting a fair probe Mohammad Zahangir Alam is suspended from the mayor post,” reads the gazette.

Within the three days of receiving the order, the suspended mayor will hand over his responsibilities within three days to the panel mayor.

In order, the LGD selected the three-member mayoral panel. Ward Councillors Asadur Rahman Kiron, Abdul Alim Molla and Ayesha Aktar are selected members of the panel.

Meanwhile, Ataullah Mondal was appointed as the acting general secretary of Gazipur Metropolitan Unit Awami League yesterday, after Zahangir was expelled from the general secretary post on Friday.

## US possibly

FROM PAGE 1

Momen said, “We should think about how we have our democracy. We will not do it on the basis of others' advice.

“We work for peoples' welfare. We are continuously trying to improve it.”

He also commented that the US rather was in trouble with its democracy that is of 250 years. “You saw what happened in the US a few days back.”

The US President Joe Biden's Summit for Democracy is scheduled on December 9 and 10. It will be held virtually.

Bangladesh has been excluded from the list of 110 invitees. Its South Asian peers India, Pakistan and Nepal made it to the list.