

BANGLADESH UPDATE



277

New cases in 24hrs



15,77,720

Total cases



28,005

Deaths



15,42,270

Recoveries

GLOBAL UPDATE



5,274,148

Deaths



266,312,851

Total cases

PANAMA, PARADISE PAPERS

Give details of Bangladeshis mentioned

HC asks CID, BFIU

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The High Court yesterday directed the Criminal Investigation Department and the Bangladesh Financial Intelligence Unit to submit by January 9 next year the details of Bangladeshis nationals or entities whose names appeared in the Panama and Paradise papers.

Some 32 individuals and two corporations were named in 2016's Panama Papers and at least 23 names came out in the following year's Paradise Papers.

The directive came after a hearing on two separate rules issued over taking actions against the Bangladeshis nationals who purchased properties abroad through laundered money.

The Anti-Corruption Commission (ACC) was asked by the court to furnish a report on the matter but it failed due to the non-cooperation of the BFIU and home and foreign ministries and its limited jurisdiction, its lawyer Khurshid Alam Khan told the court.

"We want to see what action has been taken against the persons whose names have been disclosed in the Panama Papers. If you are unable to, admit it -- we cannot sit idle folding our hands. We must do something," the HC bench of Justice Md Nazrul Islam Talukder and Justice AKM Zahirul Huq told Khan at the hearing.

In response, Khan sought information from the BFIU and the two ministries.

This prompted the court to ask the BFIU and the CID to give details of the steps taken to bring back

the laundered money and against those named in the leaked offshore documents.

The two government agencies were also asked why they have failed to provide information and documents about money launderers to the ACC.

"The corrupt people must be brought to the book," Talukder said.

Deputy Attorney General AKM Amin Uddin Manik told the court that the ACC takes action against petty corruption but not against big corruption.

In response, Khan said the ACC takes action against any instance of corruption when it gets information and documents.

For instance, a former prime minister and a former chief justice have been convicted and sentenced to imprisonments in corruption cases filed by the commission, he said.

Earlier on Sunday, the ACC had furnished a compliance report to the HC bench containing the names of 43 individuals reportedly published in the Paradise Papers and the Panama Papers as money launderers in 2016 and 2017.

Meanwhile, the same bench yesterday said the black hand of corruption must be broken.

"This court is very much tough against corruption. There is no scope to consider any corruption from lenient view," it said during the hearing of a bail petition filed by Refatul Huq, a suspended official of Dhaka Bank's Bangshal Branch in Dhaka, in a case filed on charge of about Tk 4 crore missing from the branch's vault.

The court rejected the bail petition.



Oblivious to their own safety, two people left their hands dangerously sticking out of a bus in the city's Purana Paltan intersection yesterday. On October 8, a university teacher travelling by a bus in Mymensingh lost his right arm, as he was resting it on the window, when a truck coming from the opposite direction scraped the side of the bus.

PHOTO: SK ENAMUL HAQ

PM asks Murad to quit by today

FROM PAGE 1

In another interview with the same Facebook page host on Sunday, Murad made derogatory remarks on some former female Chhatra league leaders of Dhaka University unit.

He then got embroiled in controversy again when an audio clip of his phone call with actors Emon and Mahiya Mahi was leaked and went viral on social media yesterday.

During the conversation with Mahi, Murad was heard making abusive comments and pressuring her to come to a city hotel, where he was staying.

As she refused, he threatened to have her hauled to the hotel by members of law enforcement and intelligence agencies. At one stage, he even threatened to rape her.

Before this, the state minister had asked Emon to hold the actress by the neck and bring her to him.

Mahi, in a video message from Makkah, where she has gone to perform Umrah, yesterday said she was a victim of circumstances. "I was very embarrassed that day and also after the conversation got leaked."

She further said the state minister

has gotten what he deserved.

Contacted, Emon said the conversation took place around two years ago. "When a minister calls, it cannot be avoided," he added.

Murad could not be reached over phone despite repeated attempts. He also did not respond to text messages.

After the interview and the phone conversation made rounds on social media, many came down hard on the state minister.

Acclaimed film director Mostofa Sarwar Farooki wrote on his Facebook page: "As a citizen, I am so angry. I want to believe that other members of the cabinet would be ashamed to sit at the same table with this man. In this short life I have had the opportunity to see a couple of ministers. I had praised some of them in my writings. I believe they don't want this man to be their face."

Also yesterday, the BNP sought explanation from the government regarding its stance on Murad's comments on Khaleda and her family members.

"... Murad has claimed that whatever he did, he did it on

instructions of the prime minister, and she knows everything. This is dangerous," Mirza Fakhru Islam Alamgir, secretary general of the party, said while addressing a discussion at Institution of Engineers, Bangladesh.

Fakhru also said Murad was once the publicity affairs secretary of Mymensingh Medical College unit of Chhatra Dal, the student wing of BNP, and later joined pro-AL student body Chhatra League.

Naripokkho, a women's rights body, in a statement questioned how a lawmaker and state minister can pass such "vulgar and misogynistic remarks". The organisation asked for the prime minister's intervention.

Ain o Salish Kendra in its statement said such remarks by a person holding a responsible government position is unacceptable, and hoped that the government would take action in this regard.

Supreme Court Bar Association's Secretary Md Ruhul Quddus demanded Murad immediately withdraw his remark and offer apology before the nation, otherwise there would be necessary legal action.

A retreat from '71

FROM PAGE 1

deficiencies in governance originate both in the incapacity of the government to discharge its commitments and in the emerging political economy where an increasingly powerful business elite, patronised by the state, is empowered to influence policies and public action."

"If we want to ensure just democracy, we need to ensure that the institutions of democracy operate on just principles and it lies with the domain of the government," he said.

Prof Sobhan recommended that the government establish an institutional mechanism preferably through legislation or even by executive order to select a non-partisan Election Commission that is also empowered to fully enforce the authority over the machinery of the government.

Presenting a paper, Prof Ali Riaz, distinguished professor, Department of Politics and Government, Illinois State University, USA, said Jamaat-e-Islami has been a significant factor in Bangladesh politics and it has succeeded in changing sides between the BNP and the Awami League.

"But it happened at the expense of the other Islamist forces. As a result, we hardly understand the latter's politics -- and now they are coming forward," he said. "There is state support for conservative elements."

In the meantime, less democratic space would give more space to the orthodox and conservatives Islamist

groups which have been seen in the case of Hefajat-e-Islam.

"We have seen proliferation and dramatic changes in terms of the nature of politics... one in four registered political party is an Islamist party," he said.

Mirza M Hassan, who heads the governance and politics cluster of BIGD of Brac University, said "Citizens want their MPs to be development agents rather than lawmakers."

He argued that during the Covid-19 lockdown it was the state's responsibility to ensure that a lockdown is in effect, while also at the same time providing adequate relief -- but "instead the authority chose to allow the members of the poor community to fend for themselves."

"Officials responsible for enforcing lockdown adopted a policy of forbearance. So when lockdown ended, people were happy," said Hassan.

Rounaq Jahon, distinguished fellow at CPD, and Ahrar Ahmad, director general, Gyantapas Abdur Razzaq Foundation, chaired the event. Professor Naomi Hossain, research professor, Accountability Research Center, American University; Prof Habibul Haque Khondker, Zayed University, Abu Dhabi, UAE; Dr Philip K Oldenburg, adjunct associate professor, Department of Political Science, Columbia University; and Prof Arild Engelsen Ruud of University of Oslo's South Asia Studies also took part in the discussion.

Braving rain

FROM PAGE 1

said the administration remains silent though people are being frequently killed on the road.

She said they have, however, decided to postpone their protests until the weather improves, after which they will hold a cycle rally from Mainuddin's school to Nayeem's college.

They will also hold a student-teacher rally to press home their 11-point demand.

Meanwhile, a student of Dakshin Banasree Model High School and College -- Kaniz Fatema Sejuti -- who has been protesting in Rampura for the last several days, alleged that the principal of the school has been telling her not to join the movement.

"My father was called to the school today [yesterday]. The principal told me that our demands are logical and that the government has agreed to them and told me not to join the protest anymore."

"He [the principal] asked what would we do if police arrest my father...I asked why they would arrest him if he is not a criminal."

"The principal then said if I have any wish to join politics, he would try to get me involved with Chhatra League through his channels," she told The Daily Star last evening.

"I told him that I have no wish to join any political party. I am taking part in a logical movement for safe roads," said Sejuti.

Contacted, Alam Sarder, acting principal of the institution, told The

Daily Star that he just called Sejuti's father "to check their background".

"What she said is not true. If they protest unnecessarily on roads even after the government agreed to their demands, I, as a teacher, can talk to them. The final exam is over. I wanted to know if our students are protesting on roads," he said, refuting the allegations.

Meanwhile in the evening, another group of students, under the banner of Nirapad Sarak Andalan, lit candles on the Central Shaheed Minar premises in order to eradicate the "darkness in the road sector".

They also organised a session where rebel music was played.

On Sunday, they submitted a memorandum to the railway ministry and to the shipping ministry, to realise half fare for students in all public transports across the country.

Inzamul Haque Ramim, one of the campaigners, said they would hold human chain programmes across the country today.

On December 10, they would hold a rally where family members of the victims in road accidents would take part.

Meanwhile, some students of Green University also took to the streets in Mirpur, protesting the death of Mahdi Hasan Lemon, 21, a fourth-year student of the university.

In Chattogram and Lakshimpur, students from several schools and colleges brought out rallies to demand safe roads.

Rain brings fear, tears

FROM PAGE 1

Our correspondents from different districts yesterday reported on crop damage.

In Patuakhali, vast areas of cropland have gone under water due to heavy rain and high tide in the last five days. The crops include Aman paddy, Khesari pulse, fruits and winter vegetable.

Farmers fear that half of the submerged Aman crop will be damaged, while local agriculture officers said only five percent of the paddy will be damaged.

"I cultivated Aman on around two acres of land. My crop was supposed to ripen within the next two to three weeks, but now all the paddy has been submerged. I fear that over half my crop will be damaged," said Abul Hossain, a farmer of Patuakhali Sadar upazila's Sharikkhali village.

Watermelon plants on around 400 bighas of land have gone under water. All of these will be damaged, said Mohammad Saifullah, an agriculture officer in Kalapara upazila.

Contacted, KM Mohiuddin, DAE deputy director, said, "Around five percent of submerged Aman paddy will be damaged. But most of the Khesari pulse, watermelon and winter vegetables will be damaged."

In Barguna, an almost similar situation prevailed as large portions

of cropland got inundated.

"This year, I had good production of Aman paddy. I expected to make some profit. But all of my paddy has gone under water," said Abul Hasan, a farmer of Badarkhali village in Barguna Sadar upazila.

In Munshiganj, potato seeds of around 4,000 hectares of land are feared to have been damaged due to incessant rains, said the local agriculture office.

The damage will increase if rain continues, said Md Khurshid Alam, deputy director of DAE.

"I planted potato seeds on around 15 acres of land around two weeks ago. All of my land has gone under water," said Kamrul Hasan Russell, a farmer of Hamidpur village in Sadar upazila.

In six districts of Barishal division, Boro seedlings were planted on around 3,000 hectares of land, said Md Toufiqul Alam, deputy director of DAE in Barishal. Around three percent of these would be affected due to the rain water, he said.

In Jhenaidah, Ropa Aman paddy of around 2,300 hectares of land lie submerged.

A very small portion of these crops would be damaged if rain stops immediately, but the damage will be worse if rain continues, said Azgar Ali, deputy director of DAE.

Focus should be on trade, connectivity

FROM PAGE 1

partnership has matured, taking dynamic, comprehensive and strategic shape, and is based on sovereignty, equality, trust and mutual respect," said the PM.

Noting that India recognised Bangladesh as an independent and sovereign state on December 6, 1971, Hasina said Bangladesh and India are celebrating the Golden Jubilee of establishment of diplomatic relations. "This is a milestone in the journey of our bilateral relations."

The premier said this anniversary is an opportunity to reflect on the foundation of the bilateral relations of the two countries and the path ahead. "It's also an occasion for both the countries to recommit to work towards further strengthening the longstanding dynamic partnership."

She expressed confidence that together the two countries and two peoples will continue to turn their

vision and ideas into realities, for decades to come.

The foundation of Bangladesh-India relations was laid by Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, said Hasina.

"We've a very special relationship with India. The relationship is the friendliest. The friendship of Bangladesh and India is in our hearts. The bonds of friendship will remain firm and long-lasting," she quoted Bangabandhu as saying in 1972.

Hasina also recalled the generosity of late Indian prime minister Indira Gandhi and her government, leaders of other political parties, and overall the people of India towards the people of Bangladesh in 1971. They provided accommodation to 10 million refugees from Bangladesh, gave space for the Mujibnagar government and waged a diplomatic campaign in favour of Bangladesh, she mentioned.

State Minister for Cultural Affairs

in Bagerhat, fishermen and traders who earn their livelihood drying fish, have to incur huge losses due to rains.

Some 15,000 people of Alorchol, Majher Char, Narkel Baria and Shalar Char areas of Sundarbans depend on fish drying.

Fish worth around Tk 2 crore have already been damaged, said Mohammad Belayet Hossain, divisional forest officer of the Sundarbans East Forest Department. The losses may increase if rains continue, he added.

In Noakhali, communication through waterways from the mainland to Hatiya island remained suspended due to rough weather.

As a result, some tourists were stranded on the island, said Md Selim Hossain Khan, Hatiya Upazila Nirbahi Officer (UNO).

Besides, operation of passenger vessels, which operate on the Dhaka-Chattogram-Bhola route, remained suspended.

In Khulna, over 200 families of Gatigheri and Hariharpur villages of Koyra upazila have been marooned by the tidal surge after breaching of an embankment.

In Shariatpur, vast areas of cropland cultivating paddy, onion, pulse, spices and winter fruits have been submerged, posing the risk of substantial damages, said local DAE officers.

12 Niger soldiers killed in battle with 'terrorists': ministry

AFP, Niamey

At least 12 soldiers and "dozens of terrorists" were killed in a battle in western Niger, the defence ministry announced Sunday, in the conflict-racked "three borders" zone.

Another eight soldiers were wounded in the clash with "hundreds of armed terrorists" five kilometres (three miles) from Fantio, said the ministry statement.

Several motorbikes used by the attackers had been destroyed and communications equipment recovered, the statement added.

The soldiers had "defended themselves ferociously" killing dozens of the attackers before being overwhelmed by their numbers, said the ministry.

Reinforcements from nearby positions and air support had finally forced the enemy to retreat.

Fantio is a small rural community in the Tera district of Tillaberie region regularly targeted by jihadist groups affiliated with al-Qaeda or the Islamic State group.

Five villagers were killed and two others seriously wounded in an attack there in May during the Muslim festival of Eid at the end of the Ramadan, said the ministry.

In late June two civilians, a school director and a retired police inspector, were killed during another raid, during which their killers also stole livestock.

As well as the attacks from jihadist groups such as Islamic State in the Greater Sahara (EIGS) in the west of the country, Niger also has to contend with Boko Haram and the Islamic State West Africa Province (ISWAP) in the southwest of the country, near the border with Nigeria.

Body of Lankan factory manager killed by Pakistan mob flown home

AFP, Lahore

Pakistan yesterday repatriated the remains of a Sri Lankan factory manager who was beaten to death and set ablaze by a mob after they accused him of blasphemy.

The vigilante attack has sparked outrage, with Prime Minister Imran Khan calling it a "day of shame for Pakistan".

Few issues are as galvanising in the country as blasphemy, and even the slightest suggestion of an insult to Islam can supercharge protests and incite lynchings.

Priyantha Diyawadana was killed on Friday in the central district of Sialkot, in Punjab province, about 200 kilometres (125 miles) southeast of the capital Islamabad.

"The dead body of the Sri Lankan manager has been airlifted and sent to Colombo," Tahir Ashrafi, a religious scholar and special representative of the prime minister on religious harmony, told AFP.

Police have so far arrested 131 people including 26 prime suspects who have been remanded in custody, Sialkot police spokesman Khuram Shehzad told AFP.

Several gruesome video clips shared on social media showed a mob beating the prone victim while chanting slogans against blasphemy.

Many in the crowd made no attempt to hide their identity and some took selfies in front of the burning corpse.

However prime minister Khan announced a bravery medal would be awarded to a man who had attempted to save Diyawadana, endangering his own life.

Rise in cost

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assistance did not materialise, compelling the government to proceed with the project with its own funds.

Then on June 26, 2018, the project's cost was cut by Tk 340 crore to Tk 8,722 crore and the implementation period extended to June this year from the original deadline of December 2019.

The pandemic and delays in land acquisition have dragged the project, said its Project Director Md Nojibur Rahman.

And the delay means the original budgeting made based on 2014's prices is no longer valid; the rates of labour and construction materials have increased by 25 to 30 percent, he said.

As of November, about 37.5 percent of the physical works for the project is complete.

The finance ministry has given a target of completing the construction of 100 mosques by this fiscal year, according to Rahman.

"Hopefully, this can be achieved," he added.

Earlier on June 10, Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina inaugurated 50 of the model mosques, which have libraries and provide Quran learning sessions and training for Hajj aspirants and Imams.