

BANGLADESH UPDATE

262
New cases in 24hrs

15,78,550
Total cases

28,016
Deaths

15,43,491
Recoveries

GLOBAL UPDATE

5,298,933
Deaths

268,326,045
Total cases

Nine get death over 2013 murder of BCL man

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Rajshahi

A Rajshahi court yesterday sentenced nine people to death for murdering Chhatra League leader Shahen Shah more than eight years ago.



Shahen Shah

Metropolitan Sessions Judge OHM Ilias Hossain also handed life imprisonment to 22 other accused in the case, public prosecutor of the court Md Musabbirul Islam said.

All the convicts were present in the court when the judge announced the verdict, he said.

Among those given the capital punishment are: Md Munsur Rahman, a former ward councillor of Rajshahi City Corporation and city unit BNP member; Awami League leaders Hasanuzzaman Himel, former joint secretary of an AL ward unit, and Tawfiqul Islam Chand, former joint secretary of Rajpara thana AL.

The six others sentenced to death are Md Mohosin, Md Sairul, Rajab, Biplob, Md Momin and Md Ariful Islam.

All were fined Tk 1 lakh each while those sentenced to life terms were fined Tk 50,000 each.

The family of the victim would get the fines paid by the convicts, according to the verdict.

The victim -- Shahen Shah of Guripara area in Rajshahi city -- was a former general secretary of Rajshahi Court College unit of Chhatra League and an apprentice lawyer.

According to the public prosecutor, on August 28, 2013, the convicts stopped Shahen Shah's motorcycle in Guripara area and mercilessly hacked

the victim, leaving him fatally injured.

Shahen Shah was declared dead after being taken to Rajshahi Medical College Hospital.

Quoting the first information report (FIR) and charge sheet of the murder case, the public

prosecutor said the killing took place due to enmity between Md Munsur Rahman and Shahen Shah's brother Rajab Ali.

An AL leader, Rajab Ali is now the councillor of ward-1 of RCC and also a panel mayor.

During the 2013 RCC polls, Rajab and Munsur were rival ward councillor candidates and the latter won a third term.

According to the case documents, Shahen Shah filed a complaint with the Election Commission alleging that Munsur violated the electoral code of conduct.

On August 27, 2013, Munsur and his supporters attacked and vandalised Rajab Ali's home and private chamber.

Unable to find Rajab and his brothers, the attackers also openly announced that they would be killed wherever found.

The murder occurred the next day. Nahid Akter, another brother of Shahen Shah, filed the murder case with Rajpara Police Station accusing 29 people and 30 unnamed ones.

Police later charge-sheeted 31 people in the case, which was transferred to a speedy trial tribunal and later sent to the Metropolitan Sessions Judge's Court in December 2016.



People have to wait in queues for hours to buy daily essentials at subsidised prices from trucks of Trading Corporation of Bangladesh (TCB). In this photo taken yesterday in Khulna's Shibbari intersection, a woman in a TCB line is seen furious as others tried to cut in.

PHOTO: HABIBUR RAHMAN

The drains of dread

FROM PAGE 1

Earlier in August, an elderly vegetable seller Saleh Ahmed went missing after falling into the same drain in which Kamal had fallen.

Saleh has since been missing despite a seven-day rescue operation by Chattogram Fire Service and Civil Defence divers.

On June 30, two people died when a CNG-run auto-rickshaw plunged into a drain in Sholoshahar area of the city.

In 2020, two children died falling into the Maheshkhal canal in Halishahar area.

In June 2018, a seven-year-old boy died after he fell into a drain in Baizid area.

In 2017, a government official died after falling into a sewer near Chattogram Shilpakala.

While in July 2015, two people were killed as a CNG-run auto-rickshaw fell into a drain in Agrabad-CNB area.

Earlier in August, an elderly vegetable seller Saleh Ahmed went missing after falling into the same drain in which Kamal had fallen.

Saleh has since been missing despite a seven-day rescue operation by Chattogram Fire Service and Civil Defence divers.

On June 30, two people died when a CNG-run auto-rickshaw plunged into a drain in Sholoshahar area of the city.

In 2020, two children died falling into the Maheshkhal canal in Halishahar area.

In June 2018, a seven-year-old boy died after he fell into a drain in Baizid area.

In 2017, a government official died after falling into a sewer near Chattogram Shilpakala.

While in July 2015, two people were killed as a CNG-run auto-rickshaw fell into a drain in Agrabad-CNB area.

Boycott the corrupt

FROM PAGE 1

"You have to eliminate your own irregularities and dishonesty before identifying the corruption of others and bringing them to justice. Those who abuse the responsibilities and powers vested in them by the state must be strictly controlled and brought to justice through customary law," he added.

The President also said that the confidence of the people in the ACC will increase if the idea is created in the minds of the people that no corrupt will be able to escape.

To mark this date, the ACC has also arranged a human chain in the city's different areas alongside a discussion programme.

On the other hand, Transparency International Bangladesh (TIB) organised a cartoon exhibition on the occasion.

On October 31, 2003, the General Assembly adopted the United Nations Convention against corruption and designated the office of the secretary general of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) as the secretariat for the Convention's Conference of States Parties.

The Assembly also fixed December 9 as International Anti-Corruption Day to raise awareness against corruption and of the role of the Convention in combating and preventing it.

He also urged the employees at all levels of the Commission to show utmost impartiality and ethics in the discharge of their duties.

"You have to eliminate your own irregularities and dishonesty before identifying the corruption of others and bringing them to justice. Those who abuse the responsibilities and powers vested in them by the state must be strictly controlled and brought to justice through customary law," he added.

The President also said that the confidence of the people in the ACC will increase if the idea is created in the minds of the people that no corrupt will be able to escape.

To mark this date, the ACC has also arranged a human chain in the city's different areas alongside a discussion programme.

On the other hand, Transparency International Bangladesh (TIB) organised a cartoon exhibition on the occasion.

On October 31, 2003, the General Assembly adopted the United Nations Convention against corruption and designated the office of the secretary general of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) as the secretariat for the Convention's Conference of States Parties.

The Assembly also fixed December 9 as International Anti-Corruption Day to raise awareness against corruption and of the role of the Convention in combating and preventing it.

He also urged the employees at all levels of the Commission to show utmost impartiality and ethics in the discharge of their duties.

Break barriers, move forward

FROM PAGE 1

Huda and Dr Saria Sultana.

The women and children affairs ministry arranged the programme at the city's Osmani Smiti Auditorium, marking the 141th birth and the 89th death anniversary of Begum Rokeya Shakawat Hossain, the pioneer of women's rights in this subcontinent.

"Had she not lit the light of education by breaking the social barriers, we wouldn't have been able to come so far today. She had shown us the path."

Hasina said her government has largely been able to fulfil Begum Rokeya's dream of empowering women.

She said what hurts her most is violence against women, adding that though the government has enacted laws against rape, repression of women and domestic violence, it is essential to change the mindset of men to stop violence against women.

"We've to change our mentality... We've to believe that women are not objects of enjoyment, women are co-fighters and co-partners and they have to move forward equally and be given equal rights."

In her virtual speech, Hasina further

said she had taken some steps for women's economic freedom after forming her 1996 government.

It made women's education free and kept 60 percent posts of teachers in primary schools reserved for women. Such steps stopped many parents from preventing their daughters to get education, she said.

When the government introduced women's football in the country, it faced many obstacles, Hasina said, adding "Now women have been given the scope to join every sector, including judiciary, army, naval force, air force and the BCB."

She said the female officers of the Bangladesh Army, air force and police are doing well in UN peacekeeping missions, which is why they are also in high demand for such missions.

"Our girls are now taking up risky jobs as well. They are even operating fighter planes. So, girls are no longer lagging behind in any area. In some cases, women are doing better than men."

Hasina also urged everyone to pray for her daughter Saima Wazed Putul, a globally renowned activist for autism awareness, on her birthday.

Political govt, thus political consideration

FROM PAGE 1

been superseded by those at the bottom of the gradation list, also known as the fit list.

The posts were handed out in violation of the youth and sports ministry order of October 28, 2021, which asked the department to process the promotion based on the gradation list.

The department failed to follow the list, and a senior secretary said the order issuing the posts should have stuck to the fit list.

Officers who have been denied new posts alleged bribery, nepotism and political favouritism.

"Some of my colleagues tried to persuade me to arrange Tk 5 lakh to bribe higher officials. But I refused," said an officer, who was in the top 10 of the fit list.

"Now, I have to work under my junior, which is humiliating," he said, wishing anonymity.

He said he too has a clean service record.

New posts with "current charge" of upazila youth development officer is a crucial step for future promotions. Those carrying out the "current charge" of any post generally get the position whenever a post becomes vacant.

Once promoted as upazila youth development officer, they become first-class officers with higher pay and status.

On November 28, three days after the department issued the order, some aggrieved officers wrote to the parliamentary standing committee

on youth and sports ministry, alleging irregularities and seeking interventions.

They also challenged the order at the Administrative Tribunal-1, Dhaka, two days later.

"Incumbent Director General [of the department] Azharul Islam Khan indulged himself deeply in irregularities and corruption. He has created a syndicate, through which he realised Tk 5 lakh from each and gave posts in current charge to officials who are even at the bottom of the gradation list," reads the letter, seen by The Daily Star.

Parliamentary Committee Chairman Abdullah Al Islam Jakob could not be reached for comments. His personal secretary Monjurul Hossain said Jakob forwarded the letter to the senior secretary of the ministry for necessary actions.

Md Akhter Hossain, senior secretary to the Ministry of Youth and Sports, said they too received a letter from some officers who alleged irregularities in handing out posts.

The ministry would demand an explanation from the department on the matter and take action accordingly, he said. "Current charge is not a promotion. But as per rules, such a charge should be given in line with the gradation list."

He added that the ministry would send a proposal to the Public Service Commission division to promote the officers in line with the fit list.

DG Azharul downplayed the allegations of irregularities. "No money changed hands," he

insisted, saying some poor-performing officers, who had taken out loans but failed to pay, and those who have show-cause notices issued against them were not considered for the new posts.

But multiple officials who did not get new posts said they performed their job without any bad service records. When this was pointed out to him, the DG said, "Since it is a political government, we also kept in mind the political consideration while giving promotions."

Asked about an officer who was the general secretary of a thana unit of the pro-Awami League student body before joining the department, Azharul said, "Political issue was not that serious. Rather, previous service record was considered since they would be in charge of an office."

Asked if 70 people getting superseded was normal, he sidestepped the question and said those who were fit but did not get posts would be considered for new posts in future subject to the availability of vacant posts.

Asked why the fit list was not followed, he said this was not a case of promotion. The fit list was not followed as it was a case of "current charge".

Deprived officers alleged that Md Mokhlesur Rahman, deputy director (admin) of DYD, who signed off the promotion order, played a key role in "giving the posts in exchange of bribes".

Mokhlesur dismissed this as "absolutely false", and said posts in current charge need not be in line with the gradation list.

Murad leaves the country

FROM PAGE 1

phone call between him and film actors Emon and Mahiya Mahi leaked and went viral on social media.

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

As she was refusing, Murad threatened to haul her to the hotel by members of law enforcement and intelligence agencies. 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.

On Monday noon, Murad along with a couple of his aides went to Chattogram from Dhaka and checked in at Radisson Blu hotel.

He was informed about the prime minister's instruction in the evening. He left the hotel just after 2:00am Tuesday, said a top police official in the port city.

Until yesterday, Murad's close aides, ministry officials and even law enforcement agency members could not provide any information on his whereabouts.



Murad inside the Dhaka airport last night.

PHOTO: COLLECTED

Home Minister Asaduzzaman Khan yesterday said he was not aware whether lawmaker Murad was going abroad.

Talking to journalists at his Secretariat office, he said, "I don't know whether he [Murad] will go abroad or stay here. It's his business. We have nothing to say about it."

Since Wednesday night, news started to circulate that Murad purchased an air ticket and would fly to Canada last night.

Contacted, MA Kamal Billah,

personal secretary to Jatiya Sangsad Speaker Shirin Sharmin Chaudhury, said a lawmaker needs to inform the speaker before leaving the country when parliament remains in session.

"As parliament is not in session now, they [lawmakers] don't have to inform anything to the speaker," he told The Daily Star.

A Supreme Court lawyer on Wednesday filed a writ petition with the High Court challenging the legality of JS membership of Murad.

Murad was appointed state minister for health following the formation of the new cabinet on January 7, 2019. He was transferred to the information ministry a few months later.

Meanwhile, Facebook has removed 94 video links of obscene and vulgar remarks of Murad.

BTRC Director General of Systems and Services Nasim Parvez shared the information in an exchange of views between Telecom Reporters Network Bangladesh (TRNB) and BTRC Chairman Shyam Sunder Sikder yesterday. The exchange of views was held at the BTRC office in the capital.

HC commutes jail sentence of BNP MP Harun

FROM PAGE 12

Harunur's lawyer AM Mahub Uddin Khokon told The Daily Star that there was no legal bar for his client to remain as a lawmaker and to contest elections for the same post in future as the HC has upheld his 16 months' jail sentence.

"We will move an appeal before the Appellate Division of the Supreme Court against the High Court verdict and seeking acquittal of the case," he added.

Meanwhile, Anti-Corruption Commission's (ACC) lawyer Khurshid Alam Khan told this correspondent

that five years' imprisonment of lawmaker Harunur Rashid has been upheld as the HC has dismissed his appeal and therefore, he cannot remain as a member of parliament following the HC verdict.

Yesterday, the HC also dismissed two separate appeals filed by Enayetur Rahman Bappi, former managing director of NTV, and Istiaq Sadek, owner of Sky Autos, who were also convicted and sentenced to imprisonments for separate periods in the same case.

The HC bench of Justice Md Salim delivered the verdict holding

hearing on all the three appeals filed by Harunur, Enayetur and Istiaq challenging the trial court verdict.

"All three appeals are dismissed. However, the sentence is served out," the bench said in the short verdict.

A Dhaka court on October 21, 2019, sentenced Harunur Rashid to five years' imprisonment, Enayetur Rahman Bappi to two years' imprisonment and Istiaq Sadek to three years' imprisonment in the case filed for tax evasion.

The tax was dodged by abusing the MPs' duty-free car import facilities, according to the case statement.

HC issues arrest warrants for 14 loan defaulters of PLFSL

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The High Court yesterday issued arrest warrants for 14 loan defaulters of People's Leasing and Financial Services Ltd (PLFSL), a troubled non-bank financial institution, as they neither refunded the borrowed money nor contacted its board members despite the court's earlier directive.

Among the defaulters, 11 are companies and three individuals, Mejbahur Rahman, lawyer for PLFSL, told The Daily Star.

The bench of Justice Muhammad Khurshid Alam Sarkar ordered the law enforcers to arrest and produce the three individuals and managing directors of the companies, who borrowed around Tk 300 crore but did not pay back the money, before it on January 9 next year.

The bench came up with the directive during hearing an application filed by PLFSL seeking necessary orders on this issue.

The 11 defaulting companies are: three organisations of Nahar International Company, SS Filling Station, Badhon Food Industries Ltd, and Shova International (Pvt) Ltd, two organisations of Jayson Pharmaceuticals Ltd, Jayson Agrovat Ltd, Jayson Breeders Ltd, and Jayson Natural Products Ltd.

Three individuals are Sameer Quader Chowdhury, Samihah Quader Chowdhury and Sazia Quader Chowdhury.

Challenge

FROM PAGE 1

Iqbal said food grain import has been steadily increasing reflecting the challenges of food production.

"Scientific decision making is not very strong when it comes to environmental resource management," he added.

Fahmida Khatun, executive director of the Centre for Policy Dialogue, which organised the webinar, said power has always affected environmental decisions. "The government could not move the tanneries out of the city because of their [the tanners'] clout. The forest department has neither the efficiency nor the power to stop encroachment. If we are subsidising resources which are scarce there will be a tendency to overconsume. Subsidies lead to overconsumption."

Rizwanul Islam, formerspecial adviser, Employment Sector, International Labour Office, Geneva, pointed out that Bangladesh's trade account is always in the negative, but when remittances is taken into account, the balance of accounts becomes positive.

The labour productivity is a major driver of development as opposed to the quantity of labour, he said, adding, "Surplus labour has not been absorbed and the employment growth rate has declined."

Bring it down

FROM PAGE 1

Monsur Ahmed Kalam, president of Atab, a platform of around 3,500 registered travel agencies, said the airfare for the Dhaka-Dubai or Dhaka-Abu Dhabi route is now Tk 87,000, which was Tk 40,000 just last month.

He added that the airfare for Dhaka-Muscat route is Tk 72,000, which was Tk 35,000 a few months ago.

The airfares for Riyadh, Jeddah and Madina from Dhaka were between Tk 42,000 and 45,000. Now, they are between Tk 75,000 and Tk 80,000, said Atab leaders.

It costs Tk 1.10 lakh to Tk 1.20 lakh to go to Bahrain by Gulf Air, said sources at Hazrat Shahjalal International Airport.

On the contrary, airfare of different Middle Eastern countries in Nepal, Sri Lanka and India is lower than that of Bangladesh, he said.

They also demanded additional flights to Middle Eastern destinations of Biman and other airlines concerned be operated so that the airfare can be brought back to previous rates.

A top official of Biman Bangladesh Airlines said the air ticket price has increased due to high demand and shortage of seats.

"Due to Covid-19 restrictions, we are now flying four flights weekly to different destinations in Saudi Arabia which was seven in the past. For shortage of seats, airfare has gone up," he said, wishing anonymity.

M Mahub Ali, state minister for civil aviation, yesterday told this correspondent that they would request different airlines to reduce the airfare.

Record number

FROM PAGE 1

"Imprisoning journalists for reporting the news is the hallmark of an authoritarian regime," he said in a statement.

For 40 years, the CPJ has denounced journalists being murdered, imprisoned, censored, physically hurt and threatened.

"It's distressing to see many countries on the list year after year, but it is especially horrifying that Myanmar and Ethiopia have so brutally slammed the door on press freedom."

The association also counted at least 24 journalists killed around the world this year.

Mexico "remained the Western hemisphere's deadliest country for journalists, with three murdered for their reporting and the motives for six other killings under investigation," the CPJ said.

India was also high on the list, with four journalists killed this year.

The CPJ said the number of journalists behind bars reflects "increasing intolerance for independent reporting around the world."

Should you floss?

FROM PAGE 12

Here's where flossing comes in. When flossing is done properly, it remains the most effective way to remove damaging plaque from between two teeth, dentists say.

Each of our teeth has five surfaces. The three of these -- front, back and biting edge -- can be cleaned with a toothbrush.

However, the sides of your teeth, which sit adjacent to other teeth and can capture food particles and bacteria, require a different tool to be cleaned.

Here's where flossing comes in. When flossing is done properly, it remains the most effective way to remove damaging plaque from between two teeth, dentists say.

Each of our teeth has five surfaces. The three of these -- front, back and biting edge -- can be cleaned with a toothbrush.

However, the sides of your teeth, which sit adjacent to other teeth and can capture food particles and bacteria, require a different tool to be cleaned.

expert help to clean.

However, flossing properly is important to reap its benefits.

If you find thin, soft threaded floss hard to use, you can try dental tape, which is thicker. Do not be too aggressive with the floss to avoid harming your gums.

Gums sometimes bleed when you first begin to floss. It usually stops after a few days. If it does not, see your dentist.