

BANGLADESH UPDATE **269** New cases in 24hrs **15,78,819** Total cases **28,017** Deaths **15,43,740** Recoveries **GLOBAL UPDATE** **5,307,320** Deaths **269,015,074** Total cases

'CULTURE OF PEACE' UN unanimously adopts Bangladesh's resolution

Bss, Dhaka

The United Nations General Assembly has unanimously adopted Bangladesh's flagship resolution on the "Culture of Peace".

Permanent Representative of Bangladesh to the UN Ambassador Rabab Fatima introduced the resolution at the UNGA on Thursday, according to a press release received here yesterday.

"The resolution this year assumes greater relevance and urgency as we continue to grapple with the unprecedented, multifaceted challenges posed by the Covid-19 pandemic," she said while introducing the resolution.

The resolution was first adopted on September 13 in 1999, during the first tenure of Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina.

Since then, Bangladesh has been facilitating this resolution at the Assembly every year and also convening a High-level Forum on the "Culture of Peace" in the General Assembly.

This year's High-Level forum,

which was held on September 7, focused on transformative role of the "Culture of Peace" in promoting inclusion and resilience in the post Covid recovery.

Bangladesh's permanent representative said the resolution of the "Culture of Peace" has over time, grown in relevance, and evolved into a dominant theme finding larger footprints and recognition in all major UN discourses.

"In the rapidly changing global situation, it has proved to be a useful means to complement UN Charter obligations of maintaining peace in the world," Fatima added.

This year, 109 countries from a cross-regional representation of the UN member states co-sponsored this resolution, showing the broad-based support for the notion of the "Culture of Peace".

The continued support to this resolution, facilitated by Bangladesh every year, is a testimony to the huge confidence of international community on Bangladesh as a proponent of global peace.



Banners hanging from electricity poles and tangled webs of cables mar the beauty of the entrance to Lalbagh Fort, an architectural jewel of the Mughal Empire, in Old Dhaka. The photo was taken yesterday.

PHOTO: STAR

This Nobel light is blinding

FROM PAGE 1

"Up until today, from the time I was told... You know that painting 'The Scream'," she said, describing her feelings as she brought her hands to her face, mimicking the figure in the painting by Norway's Edvard Munch.

Ressa was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize in early October, together with Russia's Dmitry Muratov, editor-in-chief of the independent newspaper Novaya Gazeta, for "their efforts to safeguard freedom of expression."

The two investigative journalists, facing pressure from authorities in their respective countries, received the prestigious award yesterday at a small ceremony at Oslo's City Hall.

"This Nobel light is blinding," Ressa said.

"There's no brighter light than this," she added.

"It's for all journalists around the world. We've seen the decline in terms of the quality of journalism, the safety

of journalist and then the quality of democracies over the last decade," she said.

Ressa, whose website is highly critical of Philippines President Rodrigo Duterte, is the subject of seven lawsuits in her country, that she says risk putting her in jail for 100 years.

Currently on parole, pending an appeal after being convicted of defamation last year, she needed to ask four courts for permission to be able to travel and collect her Nobel in person.

"It was never an option," she replied when asked if she considered life in exile.

"If I were to leave at a time when (our work) is most necessary, then I wouldn't be who I am or I would be far weaker than I thought I was," she said.

An election to find a successor to Duterte is scheduled in the Philippines on May 9.

Want justice

FROM PAGE 1

Mohidul Islam Daud, another road safety campaigner, said, "Even in the 50 years of independence, there is no discipline on the roads. A student of Noakhali Science and Technology University was killed three days ago. The young ones who would run the country in the future are being killed on roads."

The protestors demanded realisation of the nine-point demand that include compensation for those killed and injured in road crashes and half-fare for students on all modes of public transport across the country ensured through a government order.

If their demands are not met by December 14, they would begin a hunger strike from December 15, in front of the Secretariat in the capital and in front of the deputy commissioners' offices in the districts.

Jagannath University student Shahidul Islam Apon said, "We live in a country where parents fear that their children would return home dead because of road crashes. Many dreams have been shattered on the roads. We know that the transport company owners instruct drivers to drive hastily to be able to make more money. Many novice drivers are getting licence before they are fully trained. That's why the number of deaths on roads is increasing."



Three out of four boys rescued

FROM PAGE 1

Rohingya camp of Hila union.

Two abductors were arrested, Rab said. But they did not disclose their names.

On Tuesday, two Rohingya men -- Ibrahim and Jahangir Alam -- abducted the four schoolboys, alluring them to take to St Martin's Island, said the victims' guardians.

The four schoolboys are from Himchhari Panchardwip area in Ramu upazila. Jahangir and Ibrahim used to work in a cottage there.

While going to school in front of the cottage, the schoolboys were talking to Ibrahim and Jahangir and a friendly-relation developed among them, said the victims' families.

The kidnappers first took the four to Rohingya Camp-26, confined them in an unknown place and then demanded a ransom of Tk 20 lakh from their families, the guardians said.

Before rescuing the three schoolboys, APBn-16 yesterday arrested three Rohingyas for their alleged involvement in the abduction.

Arrestees Nur Salam, 50, his 13-year-old daughter and Saddam Mia, 35, are residents of the camp. They were later handed over to Teknaf Police Station.

Commander Tariqul told this correspondent that the arrestees are relatives of Ibrahim involved in the abduction.

Sources claimed that Rohingyas are found getting involved in different types of crimes in Cox's Bazar. In November, two APBn units arrested around 334 Rohingyas for their alleged involvement in different criminal activities.

3 actors sued

FROM PAGE 1

Sabnam the chief public relations officer and Mithila a brand ambassador of Evaly.

Other accused in the case are Evaly Chairperson Shamima Nasrin, founder and CEO Mohammad Rassel, Vice-President Akash, Chief Marketing Officer Arif R Hossain, Category Head Mohammad Abu Taher Saddam and Evaly Executive of Operations Abu Evely.

Nasrin and Rassel are behind bars since Rab arrested them from their Mohammadpur residence on September 16.

The couple and many other Evaly officials and staffers are facing several cases in Dhaka and other districts for fraudulence, embezzlement, cheque fraud, etc. The Criminal Investigation Department (CID) has been carrying out money laundering inquiry against the e-commerce platform.

Complainant Saad said he trusted Evaly after seeing that the three celebrities were involved with the platform.

He then ordered a motorcycle worth Tk 3.18 lakh, but did not get the bike despite serious efforts, said the case statement.

Contacted yesterday, Saad told The Daily Star that soon after the arrest of Evaly CEO and chairperson, he went to Gulshan and Dhanmondi police stations to file a case, but police did

not register any.

He then lodged an appeal with a Dhaka court, which ordered Dhanmondi Police Station to accept his case.

Investigation Officer of the case, Sub-Inspector Rajib Hasan of Dhanmondi Police Station said Rassel and Shamima have been formally shown arrested in the case.

"We have opened an investigation. Legal action will be taken against other accused if their involvement is found," he told The Daily Star.

The Daily Star talked to Tahsan and Faria for their comments. Mithila could not be reached after several attempts.

Tahsan, who is now staying in the US, said, "Evaly had been requesting me repeatedly for a year. When I did not agree, they said, 'We are with the Bangladesh Cricket Board. We are with Rab's movie Operation Sundarbans. We got the ICT award, so why don't you agree?'"

"After many requests, I made a deal. But I did not act according to that agreement. Before that, I terminated the contract in May. I was supposed to advertise [for Evaly] according to the contract. But I did not. I was getting a lot of complaints after doing two Facebook Live videos, so I cancelled the agreement with them."

He added, "There are brand ambassadors from many organisations

around the world. They are not responsible for the activities of the organisations, because they are just promoters. They will move away when the company has problems. It is by no means a crime to promote a company. And what does it mean by 'arrest at any moment' or 'under surveillance'? Law enforcers keep an eye on those who are accused. Such a headline is not expected. I will file a defamation suit in this regard."

Sabnam Faria said, "These things are being done mainly to harass me. I hope the police will not find any involvement in the investigation. I am not connected to the crimes that have been mentioned in the case. And I haven't yet received a single penny from Evaly. I have nothing to do with the allegations. I never did a promotion."

Evaly, in response to a commerce minister's directive to explain the whereabouts of around Tk 338 crore it owed customers and suppliers, reported that its total liabilities were Tk 543 crore, including Tk 311 crore to more than 2 lakh shoppers and Tk 206 crore to suppliers as of July 15.

It did not disclose the number of vendors. Nor did it clearly mention when the dues might be cleared.

On October 18, the High Court formed the five-member committee to run the e-commerce platform.

US sanctions Rab, seven top officials

FROM PAGE 1

abuse, it said on its website.

"NGOs have alleged that Rab and other Bangladeshi law enforcement are responsible for more than 600 disappearances since 2009, nearly 600 extrajudicial killings since 2018, and torture. Some reports suggest these incidents target opposition party members, journalists, and human rights activists."

Widespread allegations of serious human rights abuse in Bangladesh by Rab -- as part of the Bangladesh government's war on drugs -- threaten US national security interests by undermining the rule of law and respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms, and the economic prosperity of the people of Bangladesh, it added.

Additionally, the six individuals are designated pursuant to EO 13818 for being foreign persons who are or have been a leader or official of Rab, an entity that has engaged in, or whose members have engaged in, serious human rights abuse relating to their tenure.

Executive Order (EO) 13818 was issued in 2017. It is titled "Blocking the Property of Persons Involved in Serious Human Rights Abuse or Corruption".

As a result of Treasury Department's action, all property and interests in property of the persons above that

are in the United States or in the possession or control of US persons are blocked and must be reported to Office of Foreign Assets Control.

The State Department in a separate release said Benazir and Miftah, an ex-CEO of Rab-7, were designated under Section 7031(c) of Department of State, Foreign Operations, and Related Programs Appropriations Act, 2021.

It was for their involvement in a gross violation of human rights, namely the May 2018 extrajudicial killing of Teknaf City Municipal councillor, according to the release.

This action makes the two "ineligible for entry into the United States".

Contacted last night, Rab Director General Chowdhury Abdullah Al-Mamun said he was busy at a programme and would talk later. But he didn't respond to calls later.

Rab's ADG Khan Mohammad Azad also didn't pick up the phone.

Talking to The Daily Star, Commander Khandaker Al Mo'in, director of the Legal and Media Wing of Rab, said they were not informed officially about the sanctions and had not yet received any letter regarding this.

"We came to know about it from the media. If we are informed formally or get any letter, we would address the issue through Ministry of Foreign Affairs," said the official.

Talking to a private TV channel, Home Minister Asaduzzaman Khan said he did not think the US imposed the sanctions in line with facts. "Maybe they [the US] have got some exaggerated information and taken the action based on that."

The US imposed sanctions yesterday also on people and entities tied to China, Myanmar and North Korea and added Chinese artificial intelligence startup SenseTime Group to an economic blacklist.

The Treasury said it was imposing sanctions on two Myanmar military entities and an organisation that provides reserves for the military, reports Reuters.

The Directorate of Defense Industries, one of the entities targeted, makes weapons for the military and police that have been used in a brutal crackdown on opponents of the military's February 1 coup.

"On International Human Rights Day, Treasury is using its tools to expose and hold accountable perpetrators of serious human rights abuse," said Deputy Secretary of the Treasury Wally Adeyemo.

"Our actions today, particularly those in partnership with the United Kingdom and Canada, send a message that democracies around the world will act against those who abuse the power of the state to inflict suffering and repression."

BBC calls on Iran to end campaign against its staff

AFP, London

The BBC yesterday urged Iran to end what it said was a mounting campaign of threats and intimidation against its journalists and their families at home and abroad.

The corporation said staff from its Persian-language service have endured a decade of harassment and attacks, including asset freezes and arbitrary arrest of relatives.

"In the past year, threats against BBC News Persian staff and Persian-speaking journalists outside Iran have escalated," the broadcaster said in a statement.

"Death threats and threats of extra-territorial harm have been made towards BBC News Persian staff in London, leading to police involvement and protection."

The campaign has extended to journalists from other organisations perceived to be critical of the regime, forced returns from overseas and imprisonment, it added.

The UN has voiced concern about treatment of BBC Persian staff, saying the authorities in Tehran were prepared to go to illegal lengths to silence reporters.

The broadcaster's World Service operation is part-funded by Britain's Foreign Commonwealth and Development Office but is editorially independent of government.

Return our loved

FROM PAGE 1

victims, including people involved in politics and businessmen, went missing, but the law enforcers are yet to trace their whereabouts.

Eminent citizens also joined the human chain to express their solidarity with the victims' family members and relatives.

Shafiqur Rahman, father of former Gulshan unit Chhatra Dal leader Saifur Rahman, alleged that his son was picked up on February 18, 2015 from the capital's Bhatara area.

He said he filed a general diary with the local police station regarding the incident, but his son remains missing.

Shafiqur said he pleaded to the government to locate the whereabouts of his son or at least ascertain whether he was killed and buried somewhere so that they could pray for the departed soul.

"My son was involved in politics. Was it his fault?" he asked.

Saleha Begum, mother of another victim Moazzem Hossain Topu, said her son was picked up on January 26, 2016.

She said she sought the prime minister's intervention in the incident and also requested some government high-ups to help her in this regard.

However, Moazzem, a former president of Rampura unit Chhatra League, remains untraced.

Mayer Daak Coordinator Afroza Islam said they want a change in the culture of impunity and violation of rights in the country.

"We want our dear ones back," she said.

Nagorik Oikya Convener Mahmudur Rahman Manna, Prof Asif Nazrul of Dhaka University and Ganosamhati Andolon Chief Coordinator Zonayed Saki, among others, addressed the human chain.

US court rejects Trump bid to keep Capitol riot documents secret

AFP, Washington

A US federal appeals court on Thursday rejected former president Donald Trump's bid to prevent the release of White House records relating to the January 6 attack on the Capitol.

The appeals court agreed with a lower court ruling that President Joe Biden could waive executive privilege on the records, so that they could be handed over to a Congressional panel investigating the violence by Trump supporters.

Trump, who has been accused of fomenting the attack on the US

Congress, sought to exercise his privilege as a former president to keep the documents and phone records that might relate to the attack a secret.

But the court said Biden's judgment carried more weight in the case.

"The right of a former president certainly enjoys no greater weight than that of the incumbent," the appeals court said in its ruling.

"In this case, President Biden, as the head of the Executive Branch, has specifically found that Congress has demonstrated a compelling need for these very documents and that disclosure is in the best interests of the nation," the court said.

The ruling did not trigger the immediate release of the records. The appeals court said that Trump's lawyers would have two weeks to appeal the case to the Supreme Court.

There, Trump's attorneys are expected to request a new freeze on the release while the high court reviews the unprecedented case.

"Regardless of today's decision by the appeals court, this case was always destined for the Supreme Court," said Trump spokeswoman Liz Harrington.

Father, daughter

FROM PAGE 1

Locals detained the trucker, he said, adding that the bodies were sent to Narayanganj General Hospital for autopsies.

Witnesses told The Daily Star that the truck was over speeding. It hit the rickshaw as soon as it entered the Dhaka-Narayanganj road.