

BANGLADESH
UPDATE



177
New cases in 24hrs



15,78,996
Total cases



28,022
Deaths



15,43,862
Recoveries

GLOBAL
UPDATE



5,315,679
Deaths



269,653,514
Total cases

Malaysia to reopen for Bangladeshi migrants

UNB, Sylhet

After a gap of over three years, Malaysia will reopen its job market for Bangladeshis by this year-end, Expatriates' Welfare and Overseas Employment Minister Imran Ahmed said yesterday.

"The Malaysian government has shown interest in signing a memorandum of understanding [MoU] with our government over the issue. The agreement date will be revealed in a day or two after we get the necessary documents," he told reporters at the Sylhet Circuit House.

According to the minister, the Malaysian job market will be reopened

for Bangladeshi workers in several sectors -- tree plantation, gardening, agriculture, production, mining, construction and domestic service.

Besides, another MoU will be signed for sending workers to Greece, said Imran, urging people to refrain from going abroad illegally.

Malaysia is one of the most popular destinations of Bangladeshi workers.

As many as 1,057,056 Bangladeshis found work in Malaysia between 1976 and 2019, according to the Bureau of Manpower, Employment and Training (BMET).

Manpower export to Malaysia has remained suspended since 2018.

Murad denied Canada entry

FROM PAGE 1

Airport at 1:31pm Eastern Standard Time on Friday.

Emirates's only outbound flight from Toronto is to Dubai, shows the airline's website.

Expatriate Bangladeshis in Canada, as well as the Toronto-based Bangla news portals, reported the CBSA denied Hasan, a former state minister for information and broadcasting, entry after receiving an overwhelming volume of objections against him.

Hasan was "escaping Bangladesh and coming to Canada with criminal charges", the expatriate Bangladeshis wrote in their e-mails to the CBSA. He made derogatory, sexist and misogynist comments against some females in Bangladesh and he threatened an actress of violating her.

"The Prime Minister of Bangladesh forced him to resign and after resigning, he is on his way to Canada. We believe, Canada should not be a place for potential rapists and criminals! He is travelling with government official passport, but he may not leave the country once he gets in," said one of the e-mails seen by The Daily Star.

At least 170 complaints on more or less the same grounds were lodged with the CBSA, according to the non-resident Bangladeshis in Canada.

"We do not want Canada to allow in Bangladeshi looters, rapists, violators of women rights, anti-socials, killers and others," said Monjure Khoda Torik, one of the organisers of Luthera Birodhi Mancha.

Two Toronto-based Bangla news portals -- notundesh.com and thebengalitem.com -- reported that Hasan was quizzed by CBSA officials upon arrival in Canada; he was asked about the recent developments surrounding him in Bangladesh.

Due to public outrage over his

misogynistic remarks, the prime minister on December 6 directed Hasan to hand in his resignation. The next day, Hasan sent in his resignation to the prime minister and President Abdul Hamid.

Meanwhile, Home Minister Asaduzzaman Khan yesterday said the state is not offended by the remarks made by Hasan and will not file a case under the Digital Security Act on the matter.

"If someone is aggrieved, they have the right to sue. Why are you asking me? If you are aggrieved, you can sue," he said in response to queries from reporters after attending a programme at the National Press Club.

In an interview recently, Hasan made offensive comments on BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia, acting chairman Tarique Rahman and his daughter Zaima Rahman.

He then got embroiled in another controversy when an audio clip of a phone call between him and actors Mammun Hasan Emon and Mahiya Mahi was leaked. The clip went viral on social media.

In the phone call, Hasan was heard uttering obscenities to Mahi and coercing her to come to a city hotel where he was staying.

Mahi declined to, which prompted Hasan to threaten her to haul her to the hotel by members of the law enforcement and intelligence agencies. He even threatened to rape her.

On January 7, 2019, Hasan, a lawmaker from Jamalpur-4 constituency, was appointed the state minister for health. A few months later, he was transferred to the information ministry.

Jamalpur Awami League unit has relieved Hasan from his post as its health and population affairs secretary.

Mismanagement

FROM PAGE 1

Due to the closure, the schedules for at least 12 international flights, operated by Qatar Airways, Singapore Airlines, Emirates, Saudia Airlines, Turkish Airlines and Malaysian Airlines, had to be changed.

Some 85-90 flights now depart and touch down at the airport within the 16-hour window. Around 10,000 passengers depart for different destinations from HSIA, sources at the airport said.

Several passengers said they had to suffer delays at the airport due to lack of manpower, additional ground handling facilities and other necessary services.

They said signs of mismanagement were everywhere at the airport, including inside and outside the terminal, passenger check-in counters of airlines, immigration and boarding bridges.

Long queues were seen at the check-in counters, immigration and other places due to delays of several flights over the last two days.

"Shahjalal airport authorities failed to ensure that the additional requirements at the airport were met. Due to this problem, several flights departed the airport behind schedule, causing suffering to passengers," said Idris Mia, a Saudi-bound passenger.

Md Harun, another passenger heading for Saudi Arabia, said the authorities should ensure enough check-in counters, boarding bridges, security check-in counters, baggage loading and unloading bays and other related facilities for smooth operation of all flights within the 16-hour window. But they were yet to ensure this.

The airport operations will be tougher for the five days from today as the runway will remain closed for an additional two hours (from 10:30am to 12:30pm) to enable flight management training under the Air Force as part of preparations for the Victory Day celebrations, sources at the HSIA said.

An official at the HSIA admitted that they are struggling to maintain the new schedule.

"But we have taken measures to ensure required services for smooth

operation of flights," the official said wishing anonymity.

Sources at the airport said around 13 flights took off in just one and a half hours since 10:30pm on Thursday, causing problems in airport operations as the authorities couldn't ensure additional facilities for the passengers and the carriers.

Departure of several of the flights were delayed as the airport authorities could not complete immigration process of around 2,400 passengers in time, sources at the airport said.

Group Captain AHM Touhid-ul Ahsan, executive director at HSIA, said some problems arose in the first few days of flight operations under the new schedule.

He said the airport authorities have already given directives to the immigrations authorities to operate all immigration counters so that passengers can complete their immigration on time.

Different airlines have been demanding the authorities ensure additional check-in counters and other necessary facilities to deal with the pressure of passengers under the new tight schedule.

The authorities have announced that Osmani International Airport in Sylhet will be available for any emergency take-off and landing during the closure of the Dhaka airport runway.

Girl going to school

FROM PAGE 1

Maisha was a grade-IV student of Akalom Government Primary School in the upazila.

According to the victim's family, a speedy three-wheeler, locally known as Bow Gari, hit Maisha while she was crossing the road.

Locals rescued the girl and rushed to Nesarabad Upazila Health Complex where on-duty doctors declared her dead.

As the news spread, her schoolmates blocked the road for some time. Local representatives later brought the situation under control.

Contacted, Abir Mohammad Hossain, officer-in-charge of Nesarabad Police Station, said they would take legal steps once the victim's family files a complaint regarding it.



Air quality in the capital is worsening with the arrival of winter. The photo of dust reducing visibility on Shyampur Pagla road in the capital was taken around noon yesterday.

PHOTO:
AMRAN HOSSAIN

Rab in for reckoning

FROM PAGE 1

of Rab Tofayel Mustafa Sorwar, former additional director general (operations) of Rab Mohammad Jahangir Alam, and former additional director general (operations) of Rab Mohammad Anwar Latif Khan.

Besides, a travel ban was imposed on Lt Col Miftah Uddin Ahmed, a former official of Rab.

The executive order prohibits making of any contribution or provision of funds, goods, or services by, to, or for the benefit of any person whose property and interests in property are blocked. It also prohibits the receipt of any contribution or provision of funds, goods, or services from any such person.

Over the years, Human Rights Watch, Robert F Kennedy Human Rights and senate bodies made multiple requests for sanctions on Rab.

On August 30, 2021, a US congressional body, the Tom Lantos Human Rights Commission, which is a caucus body of the US House of Representatives, held a hearing with two international rights bodies that recommended sanctions be taken against Bangladesh over the actions of Rab.

At the hearing, Meenakshi Ganguly, South Asia director at Human Rights Watch, said the US should impose targeted sanctions against top security

forces to spur accountability, while Angelita Baeyens, vice president of the international advocacy and litigation department at Robert F Kennedy Human Rights, called for Rab officials to be banned from joining the UN peacekeeping missions.

At that hearing, Congresswoman Sheila Jackson Lee from Houston said, "Bangladesh has already been exposed. I have heard it; the commission has heard it."

Earlier last year, 10 US senators from the Republican and the Democratic parties urged the Trump administration to impose targeted sanctions on "senior commanders" of Rab, which they said had reportedly killed more than 400 people extrajudicially since 2015.

In the UK on August 24 this year, a human rights-focused international justice chamber, Guernica 37, called on the UK Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office to slap sanctions on nine current and former senior officers of Rab.

It said sanctions would "send a clear message to the government of Bangladesh that the UK does not tolerate serious human rights abuses, even from a partner".

Contacted, Robert Chatterton Dickson, the UK high commissioner in Bangladesh, said, "At this moment, however, we are not imposing any sanctions for any officials or entities

in Bangladesh."

The EU, UK, US and Canada have in the past coordinated with each other regarding sanctions.

On the day the sanctions on Rab were announced, Canada and the UK joined the US in sanctioning specific entities affiliated with the Myanmar military.

On December 2, 2021, they all imposed coordinated sanctions on Belarus for human rights violations and for creating a migrant crisis at the Belarusian borders.

On May 17, 2021, US, UK and Canada imposed parallel sanctions on Myanmar military junta for executing a coup, detaining and deposing Aung San Suu Kyi.

On March 22, 2021, Britain, the EU, the US and Canada imposed sanctions on senior Chinese officials who played a role in the persecution of Uighur Muslims in Xinjiang province.

At present the US does not train Rab and Counter Terrorism and Transnational Crime unit of police because of rights violations.

In 2010, a leaked US Embassy cable published in Wikileaks claimed that the UK had provided training to Rab on "investigative interviewing techniques". Following that, the Human Rights Watch recommended that the UK ends the provision of any training to Rab.

Bangladesh defends Rab

FROM PAGE 1

"resorting to naming and shaming that has proven to be a self-defeating exercise".

"The government has no information on who were killed by the Rab," Foreign Minister AK Abdul Momen said after an event at the Foreign Service Academy yesterday.

"They [the US authorities] should do more fact-finding and not say anything just for the sake of saying," he said, regretting the sanctions on "such an institution that made Bangladesh free of terrorists, including Bangla Bhair".

Momen said people "trust the institution".

He claimed that six lakh people disappear and police kill about 1,000 every year in the US, but no one is punished. "This [sanctions] probably is just for a show."

Asked if the US move could affect the bilateral relationship with Bangladesh, the minister said it may be the case, but the US can say it.

He said the US took actions against many countries but those were beneficial neither to those countries nor the US people.

In another development, Foreign Secretary Masud Bin Momen yesterday summoned US Ambassador Earl R Miller and expressed Bangladesh's disappointment at the US sanctions.

The decision was taken unilaterally and without any prior consultation with the Bangladesh government,

Masud said.

The issues cited for imposing the designated sanctions remain under active discussions, he said, adding that the US decided to undermine an agency that had been on the forefront of combating crimes considered to be shared priorities with successive US administrations.

The foreign secretary regretted that the allegations made against Rab over certain specific incidents had been explained, along with information on the corresponding justice and accountability measures undertaken, to not just the US administration but also to a number of UN human rights mechanisms on multiple occasions.

He emphasised that Bangladesh remained committed to upholding the rule of law and human rights, and maintained a "zero tolerance" approach to any wrongdoings or aberrations by its law enforcement agencies.

Besides, he highlighted that the observance of the 50th anniversary of the diplomatic relations between the two friendly countries next year should open up further avenues to enhance the breadth and dimensions of the existing partnership.

Ambassador Miller took note of the concerns raised, and assured of conveying the same to Washington DC. He expressed the willingness of the US government to remain closely engaged with Bangladesh in

the coming days on issues of mutual interests.

Yesterday, Home Minister Asaduzzaman Khan claimed that the authorities investigate every incident of human rights violation in Bangladesh and take legal action accordingly.

He said the US did not impose the sanctions fairly.

"They did it based on exaggerated news. Maintaining law and order is a challenging task in Bangladesh," he told reporters after attending a programme at Dhaka Wasa.

Meanwhile, Rab claimed that the force does not violate human rights.

At a press conference, Rab Director (Legal and Media Wing) Commander Khandaker Al Moin said 28 members of the force, with a manpower of 9,000, have sacrificed their lives to protect human rights and maintain law and order.

Besides, more than 1,000 members got maimed and 2,000 others injured, he said.

About the "gunfights" involving Rab, he claimed that they open fire only in self-defence and when under attack by criminals during drives.

Moin said Rab initiatives made the Sundarban robber-free with around 326 rehabilitated. Besides, many militants returned to normal life because of their initiatives.

"Rab always takes strict action against its members whenever they violate the law," he added.

Independent runner killed

FROM PAGE 1

Refuting the allegation of attacking Sultan's men, AL nominee Abu Sayeed said followers of Sultan attacked his men, leaving 10 to 12 people, including his brother, injured.

Additional police members were deployed in the union to avoid any fresh law and order situation, said Additional Superintendent of Police Rokonuzzaman Sarkar.

He said police detained two people in connection with the incident. "We have video footage of the incident. We are trying to identify the lawbreakers."

The fourth phase of the UP polls will be held on December 26.

In Tangail, at least 20 people were injured in an attack on supporters of an independent (AL rebel) chairman candidate allegedly by the followers of the ruling party candidate in Nikrail union of Bhuanpur upazila yesterday afternoon.

Independent candidate Masudul Haque Masud alleged that supporters of AL nominee Abdul Matin Sarkar attacked his followers when they were electioneering in Khokar Doba area.

Despite repeated attempts, this newspaper could not reach the AL candidate for comments as his mobile phone was switched off.

In Feni, two AL rebel chairman

candidates -- Saiful Islam and Mohammad Ibrahim -- filed complaints with Feni Model Police Station against the ruling party candidate over vandalising their homes.

The houses were allegedly damaged on Friday evening. However, AL nominee Kalimullah denied the allegation.

In Manikganj, supporters of Hamidur Rahman Alai, AL chairman nominee in Ghior Union Parishad polls, allegedly attacked independent candidate Md Ohidul Islam Tutul and his followers on Friday evening, leaving six people injured.

Digital Bangladesh Day today

BSS, Dhaka

The fifth "Digital Bangladesh Day-2021" will be celebrated through various programmes in the country and Bangladesh missions abroad today.

With the theme "Digital Bangladesh-er Orjon, Upokrito Sokol Jonogon", the Information and Communication Technology (ICT) Division has chalked out elaborate programmes to celebrate the day.

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina will inaugurate the main programme of the day and address the prize-giving ceremony virtually at Bangabandhu International Conference Center (BICC) from the Gono Bhaban residence at 10:00am.

The day's programme, however, will begin with paying homage to Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman by placing a wreath at his portrait at Dhanmondi-32 in the city at 7:00am.

State Minister ICT Division Zunaid Ahmed Palak will be present as the chief guest.

At 8:00am, a procession led by Palak will be brought out from the South Plaza of the Jatiya Sangsad maintaining the social distancing and it will end at the Khamarbari intersection.

A national seminar titled "Digital Bangladesh-er Orjon, Upokrito Sokol Jonogon (achievements of Digital Bangladesh: benefit all people" will be held at the BICC at 3:00pm while Law, Justice and Parliamentary Affairs Minister Anisul Huq will address it as the chief guest.

BNP outraged by Chinese ambassador's remarks on Bangladesh, govt

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The BNP has expressed outraged and surprised by the review and comments made by Chinese ambassador to Bangladesh over Bangladesh and its government.

In a press statement, signed by BNP's Senior Joint General Secretary Ruhul Kabir Rizbi, it said, "A video statement of Chinese ambassador to Bangladesh has come to the notice of the Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP). We, like pro-democracy people, are outraged and surprised by his review and comments about Bangladesh and the government.

"Democracy, equality, human rights and social justice are the key consciousness of our great Liberation War which was achieved at the cost of the lives and sacrifices of millions of martyrs. At a time when this illegal government is continuously depriving the entire country from all these rights, the unrealistic statement made by the Chinese ambassador in favor of Bangladesh and the present government has deeply angered and hurt the people," it said.

Terming the government fascist one, the statement said the current government has snatched the right to vote from the people and destroyed democracy in the country.

The people of the country and Bangladesh Nationalist Party expect that China will stand by the people, not beside illegal government, it said.

Bangladesh

FROM PAGE 1

Hasina said this while delivering her speech at the closing ceremony of a two-day international conference on the 4th Industrial Revolution-2021 held at Bangabandhu International Conference Centre.

She joined the programme, which was organised on the birth centenary of Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman and the Golden Jubilee of independence, virtually from the Gono Bhaban.

Given the perspective of the Fourth Industrial Revolution, three issues are gaining importance -- the development of the industry through innovation of sophisticated technology, creating a skilled workforce, and protecting the environment, the PM said.

She said scientists believe that humans will have to coexist with artificial intelligence devices shortly. And some new types of challenges have to be tackled.

For example, she mentioned, machines will shrink the human workplace; the demand for cheap labour will decline, inequality will increase, and migration will be encouraged. "Foreign investment in developing countries will fall, and inequality in technological know-how will increase."

"We're launching 5-G Network Service soon. It'll completely change the business model, education system, standard of living, and conventional digital and social media."

"I believe the ICT and software industry will enrich our export sector in the future. We're giving special incentives to overseas industries to set up research-development and manufacturing centres in Bangladesh," the PM said.

Education Minister Dr Dipu Moni, Deputy Minister for Education Mohibul Hassan Chowdhury, University Grants Commission of Bangladesh (UGC) chairman Prof Dr Kazi Shahidullah, its Member Sazzad Hossain also spoke at the programme.