

**BANGLADESH UPDATE**

**257**  
New cases in 24hrs

**15,80,559**  
Total cases

**28,041**  
Deaths

**15,45,114**  
Recoveries

**GLOBAL UPDATE**

**5,348,998**  
Deaths

**272,659,022**  
Total cases

**272,659,022**  
Total cases

## Bullets couldn't wipe out Bangabandhu's ideals

Says Kovind; lauds Hasina's determination, resilience

UNB, DHAKA

Visiting Indian President Ram Nath Kovind said yesterday that the anti-liberation forces that brutally killed Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman and most of his family did not realise that bullets and violence could not extinguish an idea that has captured the imagination of millions.

Above all, he said, the anti-liberation forces did not count on the determination and resilience of Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina, who faced assassination attempts and dictatorships with remarkable courage.

The Indian president said Hasina has been driven by the strong conviction to realise the dream of Bangabandhu and his spirit of the "rebel", as set out in the famous poem by the great poet Kazi Nazrul Islam.

He made the remarks at the Victory Day and Mujib Borsho celebrations in the city. President Abdul Hamid spoke as the chief guest.

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina, Speaker Shirin Sharmin Chaudhury, Bangabandhu's daughter Sheikh Rehana, Liberation War Affairs Minister AKM Mozammel Haque and Chief Coordinator, International Implementation Committee, Dr Kamal Abdul Naser Chowdhury also spoke.

The Indian president said today, these ideals of Bangabandhu are being realised by the hardworking and enterprising people of Bangladesh, guided by the leadership of the PM.

"The vision of Bangabandhu was of a Bangladesh that was not only free politically, but also of a nation that was equitable and inclusive. Sadly, his vision could not be realised in his lifetime," he said.

"On this historic 50th anniversary of the Liberation of Bangladesh, I bring you festive greetings from your 1.3 billion brothers and sisters in India. We celebrate with you this historic day: 50 years ago, the ideological map of South Asia changed irreversibly and the proud nation of Bangladesh was born."

President Kovind paid tribute to the memory of the untold suffering of tens of millions of people of Bangladesh, especially the brutalised daughters, sisters and mothers. "It is their sacrifice, and the righteousness of the cause of Bangladesh that has transformed the region."

"As our nations develop and our friendship further deepens, let us continue to work together towards realising the dreams of our peoples," he said.

President Kovind said history will always bear witness to this "unique foundation" of friendship between the two countries, forged in the people's war that liberated Bangladesh.

"Veterans of that war - both from India and Bangladesh - some of whom are here in this audience, including the president of Bangladesh, are living testimony to the power of faith and friendship, which can move mountains," he said.

Terming the invitation for him to visit and participate in this celebration of 50 years of Bangladesh a unique honour, President Kovind said it is also a true reflection of their very special friendship.

"Like Prime Minister Narendra Modi, I'm delighted that my first visit outside India since the outbreak of the Covid pandemic is to your country Bangladesh. I am also honoured to participate in the Mujib Borsho celebrations," he said.

A little over 50 years ago, the vision of an independent Bangladesh inspired millions but it seemed a remote and impossible dream to naysayers, skeptics and detractors, the Indian president observed.

"But the inspiring statesmanship of Bangabandhu; his clear-sighted moral conviction and his unflinching determination to seek justice for the people of East Pakistan were truly the game changers," he said, adding that the world learnt a valuable lesson that the will of the majority of people cannot be subjugated by any force, however brutal.

## Cruel to the core

FROM PAGE 1

March and soon its waves spread all across the country. The situation in Saidpur, a calm town of Nilphamari district, was no different.

Like elsewhere, Bangalees in Saidpur started non-cooperation after Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman delivered his Historic March 7 Speech in Dhaka. They also formed all-party movement committees.

Local Urdu-speaking Biharis, most of whom had migrated to Saidpur after the Partition in 1947, were in favour of Pakistan. They even formed a committee to "Save Pakistan", said Hafizur Rahman, a former principal of Moshirur Rahman Degree College in Saidpur. Hafizur is also a member of the editorial committee of a book, titled "Muktijuddhe Rongopur", which describes the brutal killings at the railway workshop built in 1870.

On March 23 in 1971, the Republic Day of Pakistan, Bangalees hoisted the flag of Bangladesh at the workshop. Biharis, on the other hand, hoisted the Pakistani flag, he said.

The same day, the Biharis surrounded the Bangalees in different places of Saidpur and took them hostages. As the news spread, around 5,000 Bangalee villagers, led by local political leader Mahtab Beg, started marching towards Saidpur from nearby Chirirbandar upazila in Dinajpur.

However, several Bangalees were killed as Pakistani forces and their Bihari collaborators opened fire on the protesters. Mahtab was badly injured. Later, some of the collaborators swooped on him with knives and killed him, said locals, including Hafizur.

The local Biharis became even more brutal after the killings, said Hafizur, adding that the Pakistani occupation forces "Operation Searchlight" on March 25 night further fuelled the fears of the Bangalees in Saidpur.

On March 26 evening, all Bangalee officials and workers were ordered to report to work at the workshop the next morning. They were told that they would face dire consequences if they did not follow the order.

The Bangalee employees had to comply with it, said Siyam, a former employee.

Liberation War researcher Sajjad, who was awarded "Swadhinata Padak" for his outstanding contribution to the war, said on March 27 morning some Biharis killed MA Aziz, one of the Bangalee officials, at the gate of the workshop. He was attacked with sharp knives. Five more Bangalees were killed in a similar manner within minutes.

Locals said most of the killings at the workshop took place between April and June in 1971.

"It was cruel to the core. They threw people alive into three large boilers and furnaces meant for melting iron. The victims' screams could be heard from a large distance," Sajjad said.

The killer gang included Matin Hashmi, Mohammad Habbu, Mohammad Zahid and other non-Bangalee workshop workers. "These heartless killers were directly patronised by the Pakistani army in Saidpur Cantonment ... Biharis did not do

anything without instructions and assistance from the cantonment," he said.

Lutfur Rahman, whose father Osman Goni, was a worker of the workshop said he could clearly recall that his father left home on April 4.

Osman did not come back.

"Later, we heard from his colleagues that Bihari employees killed my father by throwing him in a furnace," Lutfur said, adding that his father begged and cried but the killers showed no mercy.

Talking to The Daily Star, Zaidul Islam, divisional superintendent of Saidpur Railway Workshop, said they prepared a list of 177 employees killed in 1971 and that most of them were burnt alive.

The workshop authorities built a memorial to honour those killed.

The martyrs include -- Mortuza Ali, Amrita Mondol, Abdul Gafur, Ram Chandra Roy, Omiya Bhushan, Kala Mia, Hasmotullah, Md Ishaque, Sheikh Mahatabuddin, Arfan Mia, and Boshiruddin.

Sajjad said so many innocent people were killed as the Pakistani forces and their local collaborators committed unprecedented war crimes in 1971.

"We must keep a record of those killings. It's important because our next generation should know about the price Bangalees had to pay to have a country of their own," Sajjad added.

## Musa used

FROM PAGE 1

him a photo of him, the security guard said.

"On the day of the murder, I was on duty at the building's gate. I went to have tea and found Babul's son crying on the street in front of a store of Well Food. I also found madam's [Mitu] body in the pool of blood on the road.

"I immediately informed Babul sir's housemaid and took his son on my lap. I also informed other residents of the building about it. A few moments later, police rushed to the spot."

Earlier, the Police Bureau of Investigation submitted its final report in the case filed by Babul calling him the "mastermind" behind the murder. Babul was then arrested in another case filed by Mitu's father Mosharraf Hossain.

On June 5, 2016, Mitu was stabbed and shot dead while she was taking her son to the bus stop at the GEC intersection for his school.

After the murder, Babul filed a case against three unidentified men with Panchlailsh Police Station.

On May 11 this year, Chattogram PBI summoned Babul to its office for interrogation. He failed to give satisfactory answers to the detectives and was taken into PBI custody.

The following day, Mitu's father filed a murder case against eight people, making Babul the prime accused. Mitu's father alleged that Babul is the mastermind behind the killing and he killed his wife over extra-marital affairs. Babul is now in Feni district jail.



President Abdul Hamid and Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina welcome visiting Indian President Ram Nath Kovind to the Victory Day Parade-2021 at the National Parade Square in the capital's Tejgaon yesterday. Kovind joined the event as the guest of honour.

PHOTO: PID

## We'll continue to move ahead

FROM PAGE 1

Hasina also said under the leadership of Bangabandhu, Bangladesh had achieved independence through a bloodstained liberation struggle against the exploitation and deprivation of the Pakistani rulers.

"We'll build the country as a developed, prosperous Sonar Bangla with a non-communal spirit. May the Almighty help us," she said, concluding the oath.

Chief coordinator of the National Implementation Committee Kamal Abdul Naser Chowdhury moderated the function.

On December 16, 1971, Bangladesh was liberated as an independent country.

Hasina said Bangabandhu, in his historic March 7 speech, asked the people of Bangladesh to turn every home into a fortress, remain ready to confront the enemy with whatever they had, as well as to form Sangram Parishad immediately under the leadership of Awami League in every village, union, sub-district and district.

"The struggle this time is a struggle for emancipation, the struggle this time is a struggle for independence," she quoted from the speech, adding that the people of Bangladesh followed his instructions word for word.

**'WORKING TO CHANGE THE FATE OF PEOPLE'**

Chairing the celebration of Bangabandhu's birth centenary and the Golden Jubilee of victory at the South Plaza of the Jatiya Sangsad, PM Hasina yesterday promised to bring smiles to the faces of the distressed people as dreamt by Bangabandhu.

President Abdul Hamid also spoke at the function as the chief guest, while Indian President Ram Nath Kovind as the guest of honour.

The PM said Bangabandhu wanted to bring smiles to the faces of the unhappy people and that is the government's goal too.

"This celebration is not merely a festival; rather it's our conviction in our future journey that we must build Bangladesh as a hunger-poverty-free, developed and prosperous Sonar Bangla as dreamt by the Father of the Nation."

She said her government has been

taking the country forward since 2009 and now Bangladesh has earned the status of a developing country.

Hasina said her government reduced the poverty rate to 20 percent from 40 percent, ensured electricity for every house, raised the per capita income to \$2,554 and is now providing free homes to the homeless and landless families.

"Though the Covid-19 slowed down our progress, we'd been able to keep the wheels of economy moving by controlling coronavirus," she said, adding that the government simultaneously took measures to develop the rural economy.

Noting that Bangladesh is a non-communal country, she said people of all faiths can perform their respective religious rituals equally.

The PM said Bangladesh has already become a middle-income country and now the goal is to turn it into a developed country by 2041. "We've been working towards this goal."

Hasina said her government announced "zero tolerance policy" against militancy, terrorism, repression against women and drugs. "We want to ensure peace and security for the people of the country and build a developed and prosperous Sonar Bangla."

At the outset of her speech, the PM showed profound respect to Bangabandhu, the four national leaders, 30 lakh martyrs and two lakh women oppressed during the Liberation War.

She also expressed her gratitude to friendly countries, organisations and persons who extended their support and help by giving food, money, arms, humanitarian assistance during the Liberation War.

The PM particularly recalled the contribution of India as it had set an example for the world to give shelter to 10 million Bangladeshi refugees alongside giving training to freedom fighters and fought for Bangladesh's liberation against the Pakistani occupation forces during the war.

"I recall with due respect the members of Indian armed forces who sacrificed their lives in Bangladesh's Liberation War against Pakistan as members of allied forces."

President Hamid and PM Hasina

received the Indian president when he arrived at the venue.

Bangabandhu's younger daughter Sheikh Rehana handed over the "Eternal Mujib Memorabilia" to the Indian president.

**'NATION BUILDING IS EVERYONE'S RESPONSIBILITY'**

Addressing the event, President Abdul Hamid said the responsibility for developing the country does not lie only with the political leadership.

"The development of the country and the people are not the sole responsibility of the political leadership. As citizens of an independent country, this is the responsibility and duty of all of us," he said.

Mentioning freedom as a human right, Hamid said freedom only makes sense if it can be exercised properly without limiting the acquisition of rights.

He said abuse of power undermines freedom.

The president asked everyone to fulfil one's responsibilities from their respective positions with honesty, devotion and sincerity.

Hamid thanked the Indian president for visiting Dhaka to attend the historic celebrations of Bangabandhu's birth centenary and the Golden Jubilee of the country's Independence.

He said the Bangladesh-India relationship, which started in 1971 during the Liberation War, has now reached a new height.

The president hoped that Kovind's visit will further strengthen the friendly relations between the two countries.

He also expressed optimism that the world community, including India, will play an effective role in resolving the Rohingya issue.

Speaker Shirin Sharmin Chaudhury and Liberation War Affairs Minister AKM Mozammel Haque also spoke on the occasion.

At the function, the cover of a memorial book titled "Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman Birth Centenary Volume" was unveiled. Hasina edited the book which was published in Bangla and English on the occasion of the birth centenary.

## UN agencies congratulate Bangladesh

DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT

The UN agencies have congratulated Bangladesh for its massive success in the last 50 years. They committed to support the country in fighting the future challenges of inequality.

In a letter to Foreign Minister AK Abdul Momen on the eve of the Victory Day, heads of 17 UN agencies in Bangladesh said the country traversed a long and difficult path from new nationhood devastated by war and famine, to its undeniable influence as a UN member state.

Bangladesh is at the threshold of LDC graduation and is providing shelter to 9,00,000 Rohingya refugees, it said, adding that alongside the distress and turmoil that this journey has entailed, there have been massive successes.

Bangladesh's achievements in human development, especially in maternal and child mortality, immunisation, school enrolment, and other social indicators even at relatively lower levels of per capita income made the country an example for other countries to emulate.

"This was well-recognised in the context of the Millennium Development Goals," they said.

"Subsequent achievements in sustained growth and poverty alleviation have brought the country to the point of graduating out of LDC status. Bangladesh has also emerged as an example to emulate in the area of disaster risk management," the letter said.

Stating that the UN has been a partner of Bangladesh for five decades now, it said Bangladesh too has been an active member state in the UN since 1974 and has shaped the UN's development and peace operations.

"Bangladesh was one of the early supporters of the UN Development System Reforms and contributed to the Special Purpose Trust Fund for the Resident Coordinator system.

"It has been a vocal advocate for multilateralism, climate justice and LDCs. Bangladesh sponsored the Culture of Peace resolution that was unanimously adopted by the UN General Assembly in 1999. It is now among the largest troop contributors to the UN's peacekeeping missions."

While the heads of the UN agencies said they celebrate the achievements of the nation and honour the legacy of sacrifices that brought the country to where it is today, they also said the path ahead is long and difficult.

"The country must recover from the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic, achieve the 2030 Agenda of leaving no one person behind, enhance gender equality, end poverty and become a developed nation," they said.

The UN in Bangladesh is committed to supporting the Bangladesh government in every step of the way to achieve these ambitious goals, the letter said.

## Two students killed falling off pick-up for polls campaign

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Noakhali

Two school students died after falling off a pickup truck on Wednesday night in Noakhali's Sader upazila.

The truck they were on was used for a UP-polls candidate's campaign activities in the upazila's Charmatua union.

The dead were identified as Mehraj Uddin, 12, a sixth grader of Hazi Ahmed Ullah High School, and Mohammad Samrat, 11, a fifth grader of Ikra Pre-cadet Academy.

They were among the 17-18 students and youths, campaigning for Kamal Uddin, the AL nominated chairman candidate in the union, who were on the flatbed pickup.

Some eight to 10 schoolchildren participated in the campaign on Wednesday evening, said Promoj Chaudhury, sub-inspector of Shudharam Police Station. Around 8:00pm, some youths joined them and then there were about 20 people crowded on the truck.

An hour later, the driver suddenly pressed the brakes while making a turn at Monarkhil village and around 10 of them fell off the vehicle, he said.

Mehraj was crushed under the wheel and died on the spot. Three others, including Samrat, were injured and rushed to Noakhali General Hospital.

Samrat was being shifted to Dhaka due to his critical condition but died on the way around 2:00am.

The driver managed to flee from the spot and could not yet be identified, the SI added.

Meanwhile, chairman candidate Kamal Uddin denied that the students were campaigning for him.

They were on the truck as part of the Victory Day rally in the area, he said.

Md Shahed Uddin, officer-in-charge of Shudharam Police Station, said the victims' families are not willing to file a case as they are relatives of Kamal Uddin.

## Terrorist activities dropped in 2020

FROM PAGE 1

Although Bangladesh's Antiterrorism Act does not outlaw recruitment and travel in the furtherance of terrorism, the broad language of the act provides several mechanisms by which Bangladesh may implement UNSCR 2396 on addressing foreign terrorist fighters (FTFs), it said.

Despite lacking laws specific to FTFs, Bangladesh arrested suspected FTFs or facilitators of such fighters on other charges under existing laws.

Bangladesh cooperated with the US to strengthen control of its borders and ports of entry, but the international community remains concerned about security procedures at Dhaka's Hazrat Shahjalal International Airport, said the report.

The report also said Bangladesh

actively shared law enforcement information with Interpol, but does not have a dedicated terrorist alert list, but the US and Bangladesh work on building Bangladesh's technical capacity to develop a national-level alert list of known or suspected terrorists.

Bangladesh does not systematically review or analyse Advance Passenger Information/Passenger Name Records (API/PNR), it said.

The Ministry of Religious Affairs and the National Committee on Militancy, Resistance, and Prevention worked with imams and religious scholars to build public awareness about terrorism.

The government included countering violent extremism in its National Action Plan on Women,

Peace, and Security, and a US-funded grantee mentored and developed the skills of at-risk youths to reduce the risk of their joining terrorist organisations.

Throughout 2020, the Counter Terrorism and Transnational Crime (CTTC) unit and the Rapid Action Battalion established "deradicalisation and rehabilitation programmes," in addition to conducting community policing efforts and investigations and arrests of suspected FTFs.

The police engaged religious leaders to counter terrorist propaganda with scripture-based messages and engaged imams to speak to surrendered militants with their own messaging to explain that the Quran does not support terrorist violence, the report added.