





# New virus could mutate, spread

Warns China; cases reported in US, Thailand, S Korea, Japan and Taiwan as countries step up measures to prevent outbreak; 9 deaths reported so far

AGENCIES

A new virus that has killed nine people, infected hundreds and reached the United States could mutate and spread, China warned yesterday, as authorities urged people to steer clear of the city at the heart of the outbreak.

The coronavirus has caused alarm because of its similarity to SARS (Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome), which killed nearly 650 people across mainland China and Hong Kong in 2002-2003.

With hundreds of millions of people travelling across China this week for the Lunar New Year holiday, the National Health Commission announced measures to contain the disease -- including sterilisation and ventilation at airports and bus stations, as well as inside planes and trains.

Symptoms of the virus, which can cause pneumonia, include fever, coughing and difficulty breathing.

There is no vaccine for the virus, which can be passed from person to person. Fifteen medical personnel are among those infected in China.

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A sinking paddy-laden trawler that hit an iron bridge, causing it to collapse, in Domrabad-Hosnabad area of Patuakhali's Mirzaganj upazila on Tuesday. The accident has caused disruption to road communications between Patuakhali's Mirzaganj and Barguna's Betagi upazila and waterways communications between Jhalakathi and Khulna districts.

PHOTO: SOHRAB HOSSAIN

## Use of EVM Re-election with ballots if turnout below 50pc

Observes Mahbub Talukdar

MOHIUDDIN ALAMGIR

Election Commissioner Mahbub Talukdar yesterday said re-election should be held with traditional ballot papers if polls using EVMs see less than 50 percent voter turnout.

"Re-elections take place in many countries if the turnout is less than 50 percent," he said while speaking at a meeting with the chiefs of different law enforcement agencies at Nirbachan Bhaban.

The meeting was organised ahead of the two Dhaka city corporations polls slated for February 1.

Mahbub read out a written statement at the meeting in the presence of Chief Election Commissioner KM Nurul Huda, two other commissioners and top EC officials.

Mahbub said there were

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## Stalker pushes schoolgirl off vehicle to death

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Moulvibazar

Initially, it appeared to be just another road accident, in which a 15-year-old girl was seriously injured on Sunday and died the next day in Habiganj Sadar upazila.

But after a two-day investigation, police found out that the girl was pushed off a CNG-run autorickshaw by a man who had long been stalking her.

The victim, Madinatul Kibria Jerin, an SSC candidate, was the daughter of Abdul Hye from Dhal village in the upazila and a student of Richi High School, said Mohammad Ullah, superintendent of police in Habiganj, in a press conference at his office yesterday.

The accused, Zakir Hossain, 25, from the same village, confessed to the crime before the court of Habiganj Senior Judicial Magistrate Sultan Uddin on Tuesday, hours after he was arrested, the SP said.

According to the confessional statement, Zahid planned to kidnap Jerin as she had turned down his proposal several times before.

He conspired with Nur Alam, an autorickshaw driver, and told him to be in front of the girl's house on Sunday morning.

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## It's 'Mujib Borsho' gift for the nation

Prime minister says at the launch of electronic passport service

Bss, Dhaka

Launching the much-awaited electronic passport service, along with the automated border control management programme, Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina yesterday said e-passport was a gift for the nation in the "Mujib Borsho".

"We are handing over e-passport to the people of the country in the 'Mujib Borsho', the special year coinciding with the birth centenary celebration of Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman," she said.

The PM was addressing a function at the city's Bangabandhu International Conference Centre, marking the launch of e-passport service and automated border control management programme.

Hasina said the two services would brighten Bangladesh's image in the digital world. She said the country would move another step forward due to the introduction of e-passport.

"There was a problem in the past about the passport as 'galakata' [tampered] passport was used at that time. But due to the launching of the e-passport, it [fraudulence] will never happen... the people will not be cheated any more, and they will move with transparency."

The PM said e-gate was going to be incorporated with e-passport, and once those were introduced, the immigration and passport services would be easier, smooth and of international standard.

She said the government wants to advance through keeping pace with the world, and the Awami League was working to achieve that goal.



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## Three workers electrocuted

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Three workers, including two siblings, died from electrocution while carrying out piling work on the Buriganga in the city's Hazaribagh area yesterday.

Two other workers sustained injuries in the incident.

The dead were identified as Jhoru Sheikh, 45, and his brother Saiful Sheikh, 35, from Sirajganj, and Monjurul Haque, 40, from Bogura.

The workers were electrocuted around 11:00am when an iron pole used for piling work came into contact with a high-voltage electric wire, said Ekram Ali, officer-in-charge of Hazaribagh Police Station.

The victims were doing piling work for installing pillars to demarcate the river boundary. The three died on the spot, he added.

Locals alleged the contractor didn't take any safety measures at the site.

The piling work is

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## 'Dancing dragon' fossil discovered



CNN ONLINE

About 120 million years ago, a "dancing dragon" lived in China's Jehol Province. The discovery of a fossil belonging to the small feathered dinosaur is new to science and helps bridge the gap between dinosaurs and birds.

Researchers named the dinosaur Wulong bohaiensis, which translates to "a dancing dragon."

The dinosaur was about the size of a raven but double its length with a long, bony tail. Its entire body was covered with feathers, complete with two plumes at the tail's end.

Despite its small size, it had a fierce, narrow face and a mouth full of sharp teeth. Like a bird, it had small, light bones and wing-like forelimbs. And there were also a number of feathers on its legs.

The fossil was initially discovered in the fossil-filled Jehol Province a decade ago by a farmer and was placed in China's Dalian Natural History Museum.

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## 4 held over attack on Sarwar Ali

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Police Bureau of Investigation yesterday arrested four men on charges of attempting to kill Liberation War Museum Trustee Sarwar Ali earlier this month.

Sarwar's former chauffeur Nazmul Hossain, who is the main accused in the case, was arrested in Gazipur. The three other suspects were arrested in different districts.

Banaj Kumar Majumdar, chief of PBI, told The Daily Star that they would reveal further details at a press conference at PBI

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PRAYER TIMING JANUARY 23

Fazr Zohr Asr Maghrib Esha  
AZAN 5:30 12:45 4:15 5:43 7:15  
JAMAAT 6:05 1:15 4:30 5:47 7:45

SOURCE: ISLAMIC FOUNDATION

## BSF kills two Bangladeshis

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Lalmonirhat

Two Bangladeshi cattle traders were shot dead allegedly by Indian Border Security Force (BSF) along Hatibandha border in Lalmonirhat yesterday morning.

Omar Faruq, officer-in-charge of Hatibandha Police Station, said they, along with the members of Border Guard Bangladesh (BGB), recovered the bodies from Bonchauki border in Gotamari upazila.

The bodies of Suruj Islam, 18, and Suruj Mia, 37, of Amjhola village in the upazila, were sent to Lalmonirhat Sadar Hospital morgue for autopsies, our Lalmonirhat correspondent reported.

Quoting witnesses, Tapas Chandra, commander of Banchauki BGB Camp, said BSF patrol team of Setai camp in Cooch Behar district of India's West Bengal opened fire on the duo when they were entering Bangladesh with Indian cattle.

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Despite a ban on parking vehicles on roads or footpaths, the TCB office footpath in front of Sonargaon hotel is lined with parked motorcycles, creating obstacles for pedestrians. The photo was taken yesterday.

PHOTO: AMRAN HOSSAIN

## TRUMP IMPEACHMENT GOP-devised trial rules prevail

Senate votes on party lines to reject Democrats' demands

REUTERS, Washington

The Republican-controlled US Senate voted early yesterday on party lines to approve the rules for President Donald Trump's impeachment trial, rejecting Democratic efforts to obtain evidence and ensure witnesses are heard.

As the third presidential impeachment trial in US history began in earnest, Trump's chief legal defender argued the Democratic case was a baseless effort to overturn the 2016 election but a top Democratic lawmaker said there was "overwhelming" evidence of wrongdoing.

Trump was impeached last month by the House of Representatives on charges of abuse of power and obstruction of Congress for pressuring Ukraine to investigate former Democratic Vice President Joe Biden, a political rival, and impeding the inquiry into the matter. The president denies any wrongdoing.

After US Chief Justice John Roberts convened the proceedings, the two sides began more than 12 hours of squabbling that lasted into yesterday morning over Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell's proposed rules for the trial.

Senators voted along party lines, 53-47, to block four separate motions from Democratic leader Chuck Schumer to subpoena records and documents from the White

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