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Your Right to Know

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"Awami League activists are attacking our candidates but no action is being taken against them."
BNP STANDING COMMITTEE MEMBER AMIR KHASRU MAHMUD CHOWDHURY AFTER MEETING WITH CEC



"Returning officer, officer-in-charge of police station concerned and an executive magistrate are investigating it."
CEC KM NURUL HUDA ON SUNDAY'S ATTACK ON MAYOR CANDIDATE ISHRAQUE HOSSAIN



"We should not let Trump and those terrorists in the White House isolate Iran."
IRAN'S ROUHANI ACCUSES TRUMP OF EXPLOITING RIFT (PAGE 8)

DON'T PANIC take caution

Govt urges people; death toll in China hits 81; Bangladeshis stranded in Wuhan not returning in 2 weeks

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The government has urged people not to panic over coronavirus as it has taken necessary preparation to prevent the virus from entering the country.

Healthcare experts also said people should stay alert, but no case should be considered a coronavirus infection without proper tests.

Dhaka had initiated talks with Chinese authorities to bring back the Bangladeshis, mostly students, stranded in China after the outbreak prompted lockdown of several cities there.

State Minister for Foreign Affairs Md Shahriar Alam on his Facebook page yesterday wrote, "We have started discussion with Chinese government to bring back willing Bangladeshi citizen staying in China. The process would be fixed based on consent of the local [Chinese] authorities considering the reality."

But China would not allow any Bangladeshis to leave Wuhan city, the epicenter of the outbreak, for at least the next 14 days, said Foreign Minister AK Abdul Momen last night after Dhaka's communication with Beijing.

"Our prime minister had instructed us to bring back the Bangladeshis living in the Chinese city. We have already prepared a plane, but the Chinese authorities said they won't allow any foreigner to leave the city for the next 14 days because they will be kept under observation," he told The Daily Star over the phone.

It is not only Bangladeshis; there are some 700 Indians and several hundred Sri Lankans there, he said.

The minister said Bangladesh embassy in Beijing established contact

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THE SPREAD OF CORONAVIRUS

SITUATION IN CHINA

81 Deaths
2,827 Confirmed cases
5,794 Suspected cases
461 In critical condition
51 People recovered and discharged from hospital

According to the WHO and other national authorities, there have been 44 confirmed cases outside China

8	THAILAND	5 EACH
	USA	
	AUSTRALIA	
4 EACH	SINGAPORE, TAIWAN, MALAYSIA, S KOREA	
	FRANCE	3 EACH
2	JAPAN	
	VIETNAM	
	NEPAL	1 EACH
	CANADA	



SYMPTOMS

Standard recommendations to prevent infection spread include regular hand washing, covering mouth and nose when coughing and sneezing, thoroughly cooking meat and eggs. Avoid close contact with anyone showing symptoms of respiratory illness such as coughing and sneezing.

Common signs of infection include respiratory symptoms, fever, cough, shortness of breath and breathing difficulties. In more severe cases, infection can cause pneumonia, severe acute respiratory syndrome, kidney failure and even death.

PHOTO: AFP, REUTERS



PREVENTION

'Draconian' travel curbs needed

Says a team of scientists

AFP, Hong Kong

Governments need to implement "draconian" travel curbs to stop a mystery coronavirus in China becoming a global epidemic, a team of experts mapping the outbreak said yesterday.

Scientists at the University of Hong Kong (HKU) presented a briefing warning that the spread of the deadly SARS-like virus that first emerged in the Chinese city of Wuhan was accelerating.

"We have to be prepared that this particular epidemic may be about to become a global epidemic," said Gabriel Leung, head of the team.

"Substantial, draconian measures limiting population mobility should be taken sooner, rather than later."

Leung leads a group of researchers who are mapping the virus, which has so far infected more than 2,700 people in China

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DHAKA CITY

POLLS 2020



No level playing field

Claims BNP at meet with CEC; AL calls for arrest of 'goons' gathering in the capital

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The BNP yesterday alleged that there is no level-playing field for the upcoming Dhaka City Corporations elections while Chief Election Commissioner KM Nurul Huda denied the accusation.

A BNP delegation at a meeting with the CEC also accused the ruling party candidates of violating the electoral code of conduct while campaigning for the Dhaka north and south city corporation elections scheduled for February 1.

After holding a separate meeting with the CEC the same day, Awami League leaders urged the EC to take steps to arrest "outsiders and goons who are gathering in the capital ahead of the election."

NO LEVEL-PLAYING FIELD

"Ruling party candidates are campaigning by setting up camps on footpaths, roads and by putting up posters and banners across the city -- violating the electoral code of conduct," BNP Standing Committee Member Amir Khasru Mahmud Chowdhury told reporters after meeting the CEC at his Election Commission office.

Claiming that the level-playing field is still elusive, Amir Khasru said that ruling party lawmakers and ministers are taking part in campaigns on behalf of AL candidates by breaching the electoral code.

"Awami League activists are attacking our candidates but no action is being taken against them, rather our party men are facing cases. There is no security for our candidates," he said.

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Tabith pledges 'intelligent city'

Comes up with ideas of farmers' market, scientific waste management system

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Tabith Awal, BNP nominated mayoral candidate for the Dhaka North City Corporation (DNCC), unveiled his election manifesto, giving priority to turning Dhaka into an "intelligent city".

He will also focus on tackling the mosquito menace, curbing air pollution and improving traffic management.

The manifesto was unveiled at a press conference at Emmanuel's Banquet Hall in the capital's Gulshan area, in the presence of leaders of the party and the Jatiya Oikyafront.

The mayoral candidate unveiled his 95-point manifesto, which has 19 sections.

In it, he highlighted the importance of improving the

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CASE OVER AL-BNP CLASH AL man claims bullet wound, DMCH says otherwise

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

In a case filed over Sunday's clash between AL and BNP activists in Wari, the complainant claimed an Awami League activist was shot in the head and admitted to DMCH, but hospital documents mention nothing about the bullet wound.

In the case statement, Maksud Ahmed, a local ward level AL leader, also claimed another AL man was admitted to the hospital with a cut in his head after he was struck by a brickbat during the clash.

But according to the documents, the AL activist was never taken to the hospital.

In the case statement, Maksud mentioned that Yeasir Arafat Rocky, 35, suffered bullet wound in the head while Babul Mia was hit by a piece of brick.

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Who is a habitual defaulter?

Finance ministry comes up with a definition, proposes punitive actions in new draft act

AKM ZAMIR UDDIN

The term habitual defaulter is often thrown around casually, without any proper definition. But the government has now spelt out what habitual default is in a draft act, in what can be viewed as a commendable act by Finance Minister AHM Mustafa Kamal.

For long, finance ministers made proclamations that they would tighten up on habitual defaulters. But those turned out to be just lip service as the criteria for a habitual defaulter has been missing until now.

In simple terms, any borrower who fails to pay back his/her loans despite his/her ability to do so will be termed a habitual defaulter, as per the draft prepared by the finance ministry for non-bank financial institutions.

The draft for 'Finance Company Act 2020' has been uploaded on the finance ministry's website on Sunday for the opinion of the general public.

The act will replace the existing one -- the Financial Institutions Act 1993 -- as part of the government's time-befitting measures to ensure corporate governance in the financial sector.

Besides, a person takes loans by giving false and fake

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Tigers return empty-handed after washout

SPORTS REPORTER

The Bangladesh cricket team was scheduled to return last night from Lahore after a disappointing three-match T20I series against Pakistan. The home side had already won the series 2-0 before yesterday's third match at the Gaddafi Stadium was abandoned without a ball being bowled due to incessant rain.

Bangladesh's batting was far behind the level of energy required in T20 cricket, which helped Pakistan win the first match by five wickets on Friday and the second by nine wickets the next day.

The win in the series, which the Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) had

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A woman on the phone, along with her school-going daughter, jaywalks between vehicles stuck in traffic near an intersection in the capital's Shahjahanpur area. Such disregard for traffic rules often leads to road accidents in the capital. The photo was taken around 12:30pm yesterday.

PHOTO: SK ENAMUL HAQ

A tragic farewell

SSC examinee crushed to death by Wasa lorry before attending his school's farewell programme

SHAHEEN MOLLAH

Abir Ahmed spent Sunday night in a state of restless elation, eagerly anticipating the next morning's farewell programme for him and his fellow SSC examinees.

Clad in a panjabi and jeans, he reached Wari High School well before the programme began and, with some time on his hands, the 15-year-old ventured out of school premises along with a friend to have some beverages.

He, however, was never able to return to the farewell programme as an instance of reckless driving brought about the most permanent parting. A Wasa water tanker ran him over at noon near his school, where celebrations were swiftly transformed to tears.

"My son was supposed to get his [SSC] admit card today [yesterday], but instead he got a shroud," said Abir's father Mohammad Hanif at Dhaka Medical College Hospital morgue.

With severe head injuries, he was rushed to Dhaka Medical College Hospital where doctors declared him dead.

Locals caught the driver as he tried to flee with the vehicle and handed him over to police, who also seized the vehicle.

Abir's death sparked protests among fellow students, teachers and locals who blocked Wari road and demonstrated for about an hour. They eventually left after assurances of justice from the police.

His father, a business man, was inconsolable as his elder son Faisal Ahmed drowned in a Gulistan Park pond five

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Abir Ahmed