

World not ready to contain virus

Warns WHO; US says pandemic inevitable

AGENCIES
Governments worldwide were scrambling to prevent the spread of the new coronavirus yesterday after fresh infections emerged linked to European hotspot Italy amid dire warnings that countries are not ready to contain the outbreak.

Giving most concern on that score in the Middle East, Iran emerged as a major hotspot, with 44 further infections reported across the country in the past 24 hours.

In another crucial hotspot, South Korea, the COVID-19 epidemic appeared to pick up speed, with the most infections -- more than 280 -- recorded in a day.

Meanwhile, the number of new cases and deaths declined at the disease epicentre in China although experts warned against being too optimistic on that count.

Italy has become the latest major cause for concern after France, Austria, Croatia and Switzerland all reported infections in people who had recently been to its worst-hit Lombardy region.

France additionally reported a second death -- this time of one of its nationals after a Chinese tourist died earlier this month. French authorities are investigating how the man contracted the virus.

Algeria also reported its first case, an Italian national who had arrived in the country last week.

Hundreds of tourists on the Spanish island of Tenerife
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Members of the Italian army wear protective face masks as they guard the entrance of the red zone in Turano Lodigiano of northern Italy yesterday which has been closed off due to a coronavirus outbreak.

PHOTO: REUTERS

Bangladeshis in Singapore scramble to come home

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Bangladeshi nationals living in Singapore are rushing to come back home amidst fears of the coronavirus infection in this island city-state off southern Malaysia.

Many Bangladeshis have already returned home from Singapore over the last week, Reuters news agency reported citing Bangladeshi workers living there.

"A lot of people have gone back [to Bangladesh]," Tariqul Islam, 52, a Bangladeshi shopkeeper in Singapore told Reuters as a few customers wearing masks perused the fruit and vegetables spread outside his shop on Lembu Road in Singapore's Little India neighbourhood.

"When people think about life or family, they don't care about money," he said.

Unease over the virus has gripped groups of migrant workers across Asia who often live in crowded, cramped conditions.

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RAPE, MURDER OF STUDENT Four madrasa teachers land in jail

STAR REPORT

A Brahmanbaria court yesterday sent four teachers of a madrasa, including its principal, to jail on charge of killing a female student of the institution after rape.

The accused are -- Maulana Gulam Mostafa, principal of Salimganj Jannatul Ferdous Mahila Madrasa, and its teachers Maulana Anwar Hossain, Maulana Al-Amin and Hafez Md Yunus Mia.

On Monday evening, police recovered the hanging body of Amina Akter, 12, a sixth-grader of the madrasa, from a room in the institution. The victim was the daughter of Saudi expat Mominul Islam, a resident of Kanchanpur village under Nabinagar upazila.

A day later, her mother, Selina Khatun, filed a case against six people, including the four arrestees, alleging that they killed her daughter after raping her, police said.

Speaking to The Daily Star, the mother alleged that the principal often sexually harassed the girl and asked her to have a sexual relationship with him. The girl always refused.

Angry with the refusal, the principal, along with the three others, raped and
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FIRST YEAR OF BANGLADESH BANGABANDHU'S NATION-BUILDING CHALLENGES

Appointment based on merit



Bangabandhu talking to masons who call on the prime minister at his residence to vent their grievances.

FEBRUARY 27, 1972

SHAMSUDDOZA SAJEN

NO RECOMMENDATION FOR JOB
Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman declares that commissions will be set up to appoint suitable persons in government services according to merit. Addressing a mammoth public meeting at Pabna, Bangabandhu asks public leaders not to recommend for jobs, transfers, promotions or appointments to satisfy party men. Any application bearing a recommendation would render the applicant disqualified. The Prime Minister tells his audience that he has
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Criminal dies in gunfight with security force: ISPR

STAR REPORT

A criminal was killed in a gunfight between his gang and security force members in Rangamati early yesterday, according to an Inter Services Public Relations (ISPR) press release.

The deceased was identified as Arpon Chakma alias Babudhan Chakma. He was a FIR-named accused in the murder case of Naniarchar upazila chairman Shaktiman Chakma, the release read.

Arpon was a member of the armed wing of United People's Democratic Front, it added.

According to the press release, the gunfight ensued when a group of armed criminals from a hilltop opened fire on a patrol team of Shuvolong camp as its boat was crossing Bandukbhanga area in the
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'Noah's Ark' seed vault gets new crops



AFP, Longyearbyen

A "doomsday vault" nestled deep in the Arctic received 60,000 new seed samples on Tuesday, including Prince Charles' cowslips and Cherokee sacred corn, increasing stocks of the world's agricultural bounty in case of global catastrophe.

Mounting concern over climate change and species loss is driving groups worldwide to add their seeds to the collection inside a mountain near Longyearbyen on Spitsbergen Island in Norway's Svalbard archipelago, about 1,300 kilometres (about 800 miles) from the North Pole.

The "Noah's Ark" of food crops is set up to preserve plants that can feed a growing population facing climate change.

"As the pace of climate change and biodiversity loss increases, there is new urgency surrounding efforts to save food crops at risk of extinction," said
SEE PAGE 10 COL 2

Dhaka zoo suspends elephant rides

AFP, Dhaka

The Dhaka zoo has called time on elephant rides following a long-running campaign by animal rights activists.

The ban was quietly introduced last month, said Nurul Islam, curator of the zoo.

"We agree that these rides were not good for the animals. Elephant rides are a kind of animal abuse and cruelty towards the animal," he said acknowledging efforts of the animal groups.
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PRAYER TIMING FEBRUARY 27

Fazr Zohr Asr Maghrib Esha
AZAN 5-15 12-45 4-30 6-05 7-30
JAMAAT 5-50 1-15 4-45 6-10 8-00

SOURCE: ISLAMIC FOUNDATION



This looks like something a stunt rider would do within the safety of a movie set. But looking at your phone screen while steering the motorcycle with one hand, like this man is doing on the busy Lalkhan Bazar road in Chattogram yesterday, may lead to a tragedy.

PHOTO: RAJIB RATHAN

Five killed in bike crashes in Dhaka city

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Five people, including two women, were killed in three motorcycle accidents in the city's Mohakhali, Demra and Sabujbagh areas yesterday.

The women killed in Mohakhali are Duldana Akhter Kochi, 37, and Sonia 35. They were employees of a private organisation, said police.

The accident took place when a vehicle hit their scooter near Setu Bhaban around 12:45am, said Sub-inspector Afzal Hossain of Banani Police Station.

They were rushed to Dhaka Medical College Hospital where doctors declared them dead, said the police officer.

Police could not seize the vehicle as the driver sped up after the accident, he said, adding that they were trying to identify the vehicle scrutinising CCTV footage.

Meanwhile, two youths sustained severe injuries after their motorcycle crashed into a bridge
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“A great soul serves everyone all the time. A great soul never dies. It brings us together again and again”

- Maya Angelou



Abu Yusuf Sayeem Jami

Father of Kayhan and Nuha
Son of Munira Afza and Late. AYM Naim

31 December 1971 - 22 February, 2020

(Inna Lillahi wa inna ilayhi raji'un)

إِنَّا لِلّٰهِ وَإِنَّا إِلَيْهِ رَاجِعُونَ

Doa Mehfili to pray for the salvation of his departed soul will be held on Friday 28th February after Asr prayers at Baitul Atik Mosque, Road 9, Baridhara.