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SECOND EDITION



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"I don't want to utter the name of the country [Pakistan]."

PROF MUHAMMAD ZAFAR IQBAL TO SCHOOLCHILDREN AT A PROGRAMME ON LIBERATION WAR IN DHAKA UNIVERSITY



"The government is raising the prices of power, gas and water as per its whim to cut into public pockets... They've raised the prices for the benefit of the Awami syndicate."

BNP SENIOR JOINT SECRETARY GENERAL RUHUL KABIR RIZVI AT A BRIEFING



"Just as slavery and colonialism were a stain on previous centuries, women's inequality should shame us all in the 21st."

UN SECRETARY-GENERAL ANTONIO GUTERRES PAGE 11



Now Wasa water gets dearer

25pc hike adds to Dhaka dwellers' woes

- Tariff hiked to **Tk 14.46** from Tk 11.57 per unit (1,000 litres) for residential use
- For commercial use, tariff raised to **Tk 40.65** from Tk 37.04 per unit
- New rate to be effective from **April 1**

WASIM BIN HABIB and MOHIUDDIN ALAMGIR

A day after electricity prices were raised, Wasa has increased water tariffs for residential and commercial uses in Dhaka for the second time in a span of seven months, dealing a double blow to consumers.

In a circular issued yesterday, the Water Supply and Sewerage Authority (Wasa) raised the price per unit (1,000 litre of water) to Tk 14.46 from Tk 11.57 for residential use, a hike of 24.97 percent.

Commercial users, meanwhile, will have to pay Tk 40 for each unit instead of Tk 37.04, a 7.99 percent hike.

The new rates will come into effect from April 1, according to the circular. The state-run water supply authority in the circular said it raised the tariffs to adjust production and operational costs in line with retail prices and increased electricity and gas prices.

"We have hiked the tariff to adjust the rise in operational costs. Besides, we want to reduce the burden of loan Wasa took to implement different projects," said Taqsem A Khan, managing director of Dhaka Wasa.

"There will be no negative impact on the consumers given the extent of the increases," he told The Daily Star yesterday.

Wasa hiked prices by five percent in September last year, citing inflation. According to Section 23 of the Wasa Act-1996, the Wasa board can hike prices by five percent annually.

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Three partially constructed buildings stand on the Baunia canal in BRP residential area in the capital's Mirpur-14, disrupting water flow. The contractor which was building these illegally on the canal stopped work and left nearly seven years ago. The photo was taken last week.

PHOTO: ANISUR RAHMAN

Coronavirus spreads in three continents

Nigeria, NZ, Belarus, Lithuania confirm their first cases; Italy, Iran grapple with crisis; global stocks sink

AGENCIES

The rapid spread of coronavirus raised fears of a pandemic yesterday, with countries on three continents reporting their first cases and Swiss authorities cancelling the giant Geneva car show.

World share markets crashed again, compounding their worst week since the 2008 global financial crisis and bringing the global wipeout to \$5 trillion.

Hopes that the epidemic that started in China late last year would be over in months, and that economic activity would quickly return to normal, have been shattered as the number of international cases have spiralled.

"Investors are trying to price in the worst-case scenario and the biggest risk is what happens now in the United States and other major countries outside of Asia," said SEI Investments Head of Asian Equities John Lau.

"These are highly uncertain times, no one

really knows the answer and the markets are really panicking."

Switzerland joined countries banning big events in an attempt to curb the epidemic, forcing cancellation of next week's Geneva international car show, one of the automotive industry's most important gatherings.

The United States asked its military in Saudi Arabia to avoid crowded venues including malls and cinemas.

Mainland China reported 327 new cases, the lowest since January 23, taking its tally to more than 78,800 cases with almost 2,800 deaths.

China's three biggest airlines restored some international flights and the Shanghai fashion show, initially postponed, went ahead online.

The UN health agency yesterday upgraded the global risk from the new coronavirus to "very high", saying the continued increase in cases and countries affected was "clearly of

SEE PAGE 2 COL 3

Dhaka airport security at risk

Says survey team, cites lack of fire-fighting kits, floodlights, poor CCTV coverage as reasons

MOHAMMAD AL-MASUM MOLLA

Security at the capital's Hazrat Shahjalal International Airport is at risk due to a shortage of fire-fighting equipment, floodlights, and poor CCTV camera coverage at night, a key point installation (KPI) survey team found.

The team, consisting airport, intelligence, civil aviation, and fire service officials, conducted a detailed survey of the airport late last year and submitted its report to the home and civil aviation ministries in December, 2019.

A similar survey was conducted in April last year as well and the latest report said that the recommendations made in the previous report had been implemented only in part, putting the airport security at risk.

The Daily Star obtained a copy of the survey report that identified various security loopholes. For security reasons, this paper is not mentioning the loopholes in details.

According to the report, there was a shortage of firefighting equipment in cargo village and export area. The report termed the areas to be at risk.

Many tall buildings have been built close to the airport which also threaten airport security. The report mentioned that the previous survey had pointed out the issue, but

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NEW DELHI VIOLENCE

Cops arrest over 500

US urges India to allow peaceful assembly; death toll rises to 42

AGENCIES

Indian police have arrested 514 people for deadly violence that broke out in the capital, the government said, as it faced mounting international criticism for failing to protect minority Muslims.

Police said the toll from days of blood-letting stood at 42 as clouds of smoke cleared to reveal the extent of the damage from the worst violence in Delhi in more than three decades and people gingerly stepped out for work and opened shops and other establishments.

More forces had been deployed at mosques in the area for the weekly Friday prayers, the government said. There had been no new violence since Wednesday morning, it said in a statement late on Thursday.

Police are still searching drains and homes that were burnt down for bodies, officers said.

The United States on Thursday urged India to respect the right to peaceful assembly and called on all sides to refrain from violence.

Addressing a press conference, Delhi CM Arvind Kejriwal yesterday said that the government has made arrangements for accommodation for the violence-affected people of northeast Delhi.

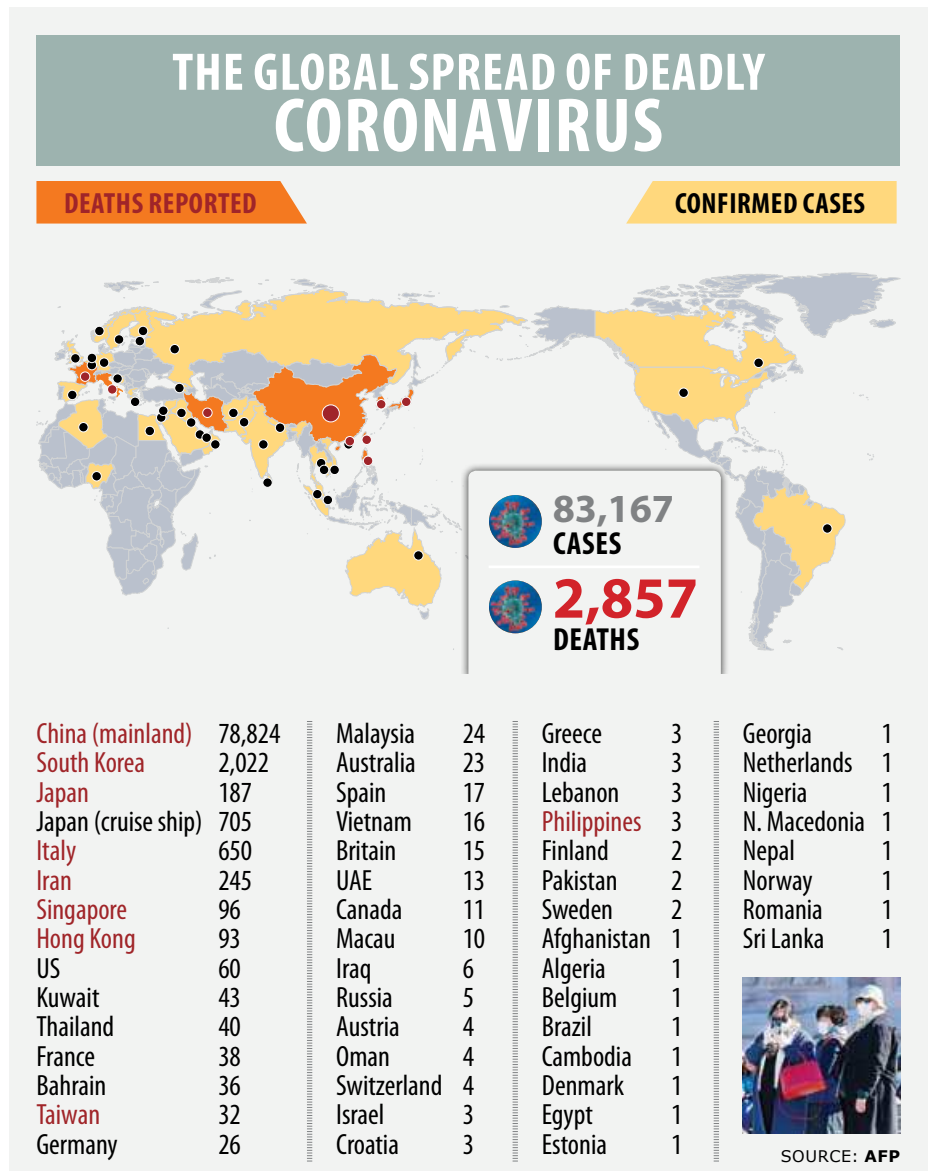
"We've made arrangements for accommodation at our 9 Rain Baseras and local community centres for people whose houses are completely burnt down or those who can't go back to their homes. If needed, we'll also arrange temporary tents for people," Kejriwal announced.

Lieutenant Governor Anil Bajjal yesterday visited the violence-affected areas in northeast Delhi to take stock of the situation and interacted with locals.

Meanwhile, Shrivastava replaced Amulya Patnaik as Delhi Police Commissioner. He was posted with Delhi Police as Special CP and is given additional charge of the post of Commissioner of Police, Delhi with effect from March 1.

NORMALCY RETURNING
Police and paramilitary personnel

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RELATED STORY ON PAGE 16



Blast hurts 3 at police box in Ctg

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

Two policemen and a pedestrian were injured in a "bomb" explosion inside a traffic police box in Chattogram city's Sholoshahar Gate-2 area around 9:30pm last night.

Of the injured, traffic sergeant Arafat Hossain had his face burnt, said Mohammad Shahidullah, deputy commissioner (traffic north) of Chattogram Metropolitan Police.

The identities of the two others, who suffered minor injuries, could not be known immediately. The injured were taken to Chattogram Medical College Hospital.

On information, a bomb disposal unit of the CMP rushed to the spot and cordoned off the area, Shahidullah said.

Officials of the unit suspected that it was an explosion of an improvised explosive device.

Visiting the area around 11:00pm, The Daily Star found the traffic police

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দেখা যাচ্ছে না বলে নেই নাকি?
পানিতে থাকা আয়রন, সীসা সহ নতুন যুগের দূষণ দেখাও যায় না ফুটালেও যায় না। তাই পিওর্বিট

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