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Crisis brews as Mahathir rejects new premier

AFP, Kuala Lumpur

Malaysia's political crisis deepened yesterday after 94-year-old Mahathir Mohamad rejected a decision by the king to pick his rival as the next prime minister, insisting he had enough backing to return to the role.

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CORONAVIRUS FALLOUT

Aviation flies into turbulence

Number of passengers on Middle-East, other Asian routes falls by 85-90pc, on European, US routes by 55-60pc

RASHIDUL HASAN

The aviation industry is suffering a massive blow in the aftermath of coronavirus outbreak as the number of outgoing and incoming air passengers from Dhaka has already taken a tumble, officials said.

The number of those flying to different destinations in Asian countries, including many Middle Eastern ones, dropped by 85 to 90 percent last month compared to the usual time, said sources in the Association

of Travel Agents of Bangladesh (ATAB), Tour Operators Association of Bangladesh (TOAB), Biman Bangladesh Airlines and Civil Aviation Authority of Bangladesh (CAAB).

There has been a 90-95 percent decline in the number of flyers travelling to Singapore, Bangkok, Malaysia, and Vietnam, SN Manzur Murshed, immediate-past president of ATAB, told The Daily Star yesterday. "For destinations SEE PAGE 2 COL 3



A long queue of students early in the morning in front of Dhaka University's central library recently. Students, mainly those who hope to sit for recruitment tests for government jobs, start forming such lines before daybreak to be able to secure a desk and chair inside the library. Some leave their backpacks in the queue, inset, and take rest nearby.

PHOTO: ANISUR RAHMAN



Tigers face Zim in first ODI today

SPORTS REPORTER from Sylhet

Bangladesh are set to return to their favoured format after almost seven months when they take on Zimbabwe in the first of the three-match ODI series at the Sylhet International Cricket Stadium today.

The day-night game is scheduled to start from 1:00pm local time.

The series has its own SEE PAGE 2 COL 6

WHO issues highest alert

S Korea reports biggest jump in cases; US confirms first death

AGENCIES

South Korea reported its biggest surge in new coronavirus cases yesterday as concerns grew of a possible epidemic in the United States and the World Health Organization raised its risk alert to its highest level.

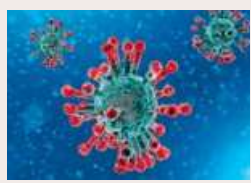
Meanwhile, a patient infected with the virus in Washington state died, a state official said, reports CNN. It marks the first death due to the virus in the US.

The virus has rapidly spread across the world in the past week, causing stock markets to sink to their lowest levels since the 2008 global financial crisis over fears that the disease could wreak havoc on the world economy.

More than 2,900 people have died and over 85,000 have been infected worldwide since it was first detected in the central Chinese city of Wuhan late last year.

The vast majority of infections have been in China but more daily cases are now logged outside the country, SEE PAGE 2 COL 1

CORONAVIRUS



Total deaths **2,933**

Deaths in mainland China **2,835**

Confirmed cases **85,311**

Confirmed cases in China **79,389**

ACADEMIC BOOKS ON SHELVES BCS guides on tables

Job seekers crowd DU libraries, which see 61pc decline in books issued in last 10 years

ASIFUR RAHMAN

It's an everyday scene on the Dhaka University campus.

With the first light of day still more than an hour away, DU students, mainly those willing to sit for recruitment tests for BCS and other government jobs, start gathering in front of the Central Library gate from 5:00am. They use their bags, a book or two, or even a newspaper page to secure a spot in the seemingly never-ending queues there.

The library actually opens at 8:00am.

Over the years, the number of those going to the library has increased, but there has been a sharp decline in the number of books issued. The situation in nearby Science Library on the campus and other libraries elsewhere in the city is similar.

Most of the library goers appear to be government jobseekers and they bring their own study materials, including guides and notebooks.

According to DU statistics, the number of books issued by the two university libraries has declined by 61 percent in the last 10 years.

Data shows that the two libraries

issued 9,15,425 books to DU teachers and students in 2008-09 academic session. This comes to an average of around 2,500 books a day.

In 2017-18, the total number stood at 3,52,310 -- an average of only 965 books a day. Students and teachers also downloaded 4,86,991 full-text e-journal articles from the DU libraries' website.

The total number of printed and e-books that academic year is still less than the number of printed books issued in 2008-09.

Although no formal research was found in the case of the libraries in SEE PAGE 2 COL 3



New Journey Towards Endless Opportunity

MGI family is proud to host the inauguration program of 9 newly built industrial units on 29 February, 2020. We are much obliged to the distinguished guests, patrons and well-wishers for their unconditional support to our cause.

The Hon'ble Finance Minister of Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh Mr. A H M Mustafa Kamal, FCA, MP was the chief guest of the inauguration program. Hon'ble Minister of Commerce Mr. Tipu Munshi, MP, Hon'ble State Minister of Shipping Mr. Khalid Mahmud Chowdhury, MP, Mr. Leakoat Hossain Khoka, MP Narayanganj-3, Mr. Sheikh Fazle Fahim, President of FBCCI and Mr. Paban Chowdhury, Executive Chairman, BEZA have graced the occasion as special guests.

The Program was presided over by Mr. Mostafa Kamal, Chairman & Managing Director, Meghna Group of Industries.

Newly Built Industrial Units:

Meghna Sugar Refinery Ltd. | Sonargaon Seeds Crushing Mills Ltd. | Meghna Ballpen & Accessories MFG Ltd.
Meghna Noodles and Biscuit Factory Ltd. | Sonargaon Printing & Packaging Industries Ltd. | Fresh Welding Electrodes & Wire
Meghna Fresh LPG Ltd. | Sonargaon Shipbuilders & Dockyard Ltd. | Fresh Cement Industries Ltd. (Unit-2)



BREAKING BOUNDARIES