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Your Right to Know

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"I would like to express my regret and apologise for excessive violence on the part of the Dutch in those years."
DUTCH KING WILLEM-ALEXANDER ON "MASS KILLINGS" DURING INDONESIA'S 1940S INDEPENDENCE STRUGGLE. (PAGE 8)



"We have postponed tomorrow's countrywide demonstration due to the health risk posed during mass gatherings following the coronavirus outbreak."
BNP SECRETARY GENERAL MIRZA FAKHRUL ISLAM ALAMGIR ON POSTPONEMENT OF DEMOS OVER KHALEDA'S RELEASE.



"We're just at the beginning of this epidemic."
PRESIDENT EMMANUEL MACRON ON CORONAVIRUS OUTBREAK IN FRANCE



Screening flimsy at 5 land ports

Health staff checking passengers' body temperature only; situation similar at Ctg, Sylhet airports

STAR REPORT

Despite growing concern over the spread of coronavirus, health screening of incoming travellers remains lax at the country's five busiest land ports.

The situation seems similar at the two international airports in Chattogram and Sylhet.

There was no archway thermal scanner in any of the five land ports -- Hili in Dinajpur, Sonamasjid in Chapainawabganj, Burimari in Lalmonirhat, Akhaura in Brahmanbaria and Benapole in Jashore -- as of Monday, when our correspondents visited the ports.

Health workers were checking people's body temperature using hand-held infrared thermometers, which, port sources said, were giving faulty readings in some cases.

The ports also lacked trained manpower to do the screening, said sources there.

Talking to this newspaper, many travellers complained that the existing health staffers did not seem serious about collecting records from health declaration forms, which people crossing the ports were supposed to fill in and submit to health desks there.

The Daily Star correspondents saw many leaving the ports without submitting the filled-in forms.

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People keep a safe distance as part of precautionary measures against the spread of the novel coronavirus, while lining up to enter a post office in downtown Rome yesterday.

PHOTO:

AFP

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Wash hands frequently, avoid all gatherings

Govt advises school, college students

MOHIUDDIN ALAMGIR

The government has asked all students of secondary schools and colleges to wash their hands frequently and avoid any kind of gathering as preventive measures to curb the spread of coronavirus in the country.

Directorate of Secondary and Higher Education (DSHE) yesterday issued a directive in this regard as the country's first coronavirus cases were detected on Sunday.

"We have issued the directive for all secondary schools, colleges and offices under the directorate," Prof Syed Md Golam Faruk, director general at the DSHE, told The Daily Star.

The DGHS asked students to thoroughly clean their hands with soap and water and not to touch eyes, nose and mouth with unclean hands.

Self-quarantine for two weeks

IEDCR urges all returnees from the countries affected by novel coronavirus

STAR REPORT

Institute of Epidemiology, Disease Control and Research has requested all returnees from the coronavirus-hit countries to self-quarantine for two weeks from the date of their arrival to prevent the spread of the virus in Bangladesh.

The IEDCR also discourages people from travelling abroad.

People, be it local and foreigner, of the sixty out of 102 countries that are affected by coronavirus have been requested to be in self-quarantine mandatorily after entering Bangladesh.

"If anyone of them develops COVID-19 symptoms, they have been asked to communicate with the IEDCR immediately," said its Director Prof Meerjady Sabrina Flora yesterday.

On Sunday, the IEDCR confirmed that two Italy returnees had been infected with the novel coronavirus. A woman, who had come into contact with one of them, also got infected.

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Testing facilities only in Dhaka

No plan now to expand those outside capital for a lack of trained manpower

MD SHAHNAWAZ KHAN CHANDAN

Although the diagnosis of novel coronavirus is so far only Dhaka-based, the authorities prefer not to expand the testing facilities to hospitals outside the capital right now due to a lack of trained manpower and unavailability of the necessary technology.

Besides, the possibility of faulty results and risk of biological hazards are also major concerns for sticking to a centralised diagnostic system, said officials of the Institute of Epidemiology, Disease Control and Research Institute (IEDCR).

At present, only the IEDCR, the national institute for conducting disease surveillance and outbreak investigation, conducts testing for coronavirus.

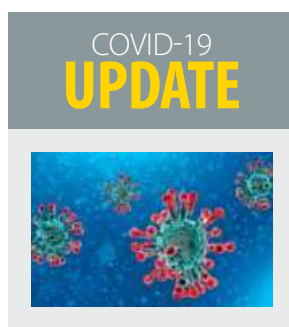
As the country has already confirmed three cases of coronavirus-- known as COVID-19 -- the lack of available testing facilities in different parts of the country has been raised as a concern to dealing with a potential outbreak.

IEDCR officials, however, said the detection of virus is a complex process and requires strict quality control. Most public and private hospitals in the country do not have the trained manpower and technological capacity to diagnose the virus, health experts said.

When a suspected patient is admitted to a hospital outside the capital, the authorities report this to the IEDCR. An IEDCR team will then go to the hospital to collect samples from the patient.

"We take nasal and throat swab samples from the patient, which requires special skills. Therefore, we are sending sample collectors from

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4,067
DEATHS

115,124
confirmed cases in 105 countries

Total cases in China

80,754

Cases outside China

34,370

Mongolia, northern Cyprus confirm first cases

India's total number of confirmed cases rises to 52

Canada records first death

Whole of Italy in lockdown

60m Italians told to stay home; WHO says threat of pandemic now 'very real'

AFP, Rome

About 60 million Italians were told yesterday to stay in their homes to help battle the most deadly coronavirus outbreak outside China, as some Asian nations expressed hope that their outbreaks were abating.

Chinese leader Xi Jinping sought to ease concerns in the country where the virus was first detected in December, making his first visit to the epicentre of Wuhan and declaring the spread in the central city and Hubei province to be "basically curbed".

On the world's financial markets, stocks and oil bounced back on hopes of US economic stimulus measures, after suffering their biggest one-day losses in more than a decade on Monday.

Official figures showed daily infections in China are at their lowest level since record-keeping began in January, with 19 new infections and 17 deaths recorded yesterday, after a similar flatlining of cases in South Korea.

By contrast, Europe's outbreak appeared to be on an upward trajectory.

Italy is the worst affected country outside China with more than 9,000 infections and 463 deaths and has posted huge jumps in cases each day for the past week.

China remains the hardest hit overall with more than 80,000 cases and over 3,000 deaths out of a global total of 114,151 cases and 4,102 deaths across 105 countries and territories, according to an AFP tally based on official data.

Reflecting the differing stages of the outbreak, China relaxed some of its most severe restrictions in Hubei province, the epicentre of the outbreak, at the same moment as several European countries went on full alert mode.

A slew of airlines announced they would cut all flights to Italy for the next few weeks while a number of European countries announced the closure of schools and bans on mass public events.

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Tigers eye the perfect end

SPORTS REPORTER

After a commanding 48-run win in the first T20I, host Bangladesh will be looking to complete the two match T20I series with a clean sweep when they take on Zimbabwe in the final game at the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium in Mirpur today. The game is scheduled to begin from 6:00pm BST.

It has been a portrait of total dominance from the Tigers right from the one-off Test series win, which was followed by a whitewash win in the three-match ODI series. Head coach Russell Domingo will surely want to wrap things up in grand style and look to continue his side's dominance against the African nation.

The Tigers however will

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Two men cover their nose to avoid breathing polluted air near Bangabandhu Avenue in the capital yesterday. A part of the road was dug up for laying cables and sewer pipes underground. Air pollution remains a serious threat to public health in the city as Dhaka's air quality was ranked the third worst in the world in the Air Quality Index yesterday morning.

PHOTO: RASHED SHUMON

Study tour turns into nightmare

Teacher's arm severed, at least 15 students injured as their bus hits parked truck in Gopalganj

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A teacher's left arm was severed below the elbow and at least 15 students of Dhaka's Willes Little Flower School and College were injured when a bus carrying them on a study tour hit a parked truck from behind on Dhaka-Khulna highway in Gopalganj yesterday.

Badly injured Syeda Fahima Begum, 50, of the department of civics of the institution, was flown to Dhaka by an air ambulance.

She was admitted to Sheikh Hasina National Burn and Plastic Surgery Institute around 4:00pm. Doctors last night re-attached her arm after carrying out a seven-hour surgery on her.

Monirul Islam, officer-in-charge of Gopalganj Sadar Police Station, said the accident took place around 12:30pm when the bus was heading for Bangabandhu Mausoleum in Tungipara from Dhaka.

The driver lost control of the vehicle in Ghonapara area of Gopalganj and hit the truck parked along the Dhaka-Khulna highway, leaving the 16 injured, he added.

All the injured was first taken to Gopalganj General Hospital. Later, the wounded students were sent to Dhaka by road.

Quoting victims, police said the teacher was sitting in a front row window seat of the bus.

After being brought to the Burn and Plastic Surgery Institute, the teacher was rushed to an operation theatre.

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Fahima Begum