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Preparation lapses can be deadly

UNHCR warns

DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT

The UN Refugee Agency warned of life-threatening consequences if annual monsoon preparations cannot be completed on time in Bangladesh amid the global outbreak of Covid-19.

"As countries around the world fight the pandemic, the coming of the monsoon rains risks worsening the already difficult situation of refugees in Bangladesh," said UNHCR Spokesperson Andrej Mahecic at a press briefing in Geneva yesterday.

In Bangladesh, so far there are no confirmed cases of Covid-19 infection among the Rohingya refugee population. Despite this, both host communities and refugees in Cox's Bazar are considered to be among the most at risk globally in this pandemic. The area is also seasonally prone to both landslides and flash flooding, the UNHCR said.

In 2019, during the heaviest monsoon downpours in September, over 4,000 households were temporarily displaced in the camps in Cox's Bazar, and more than 16,000 people affected. Thanks to mitigation measures in place, the damage was far less than the previous year. This year now the refugees remain at the centre of preparedness planning and response.

Annual monsoon preparations, however, have been



A child in Savar looks on as a family on a nearby rooftop fly kites, one of the few sporting activities that are possible within the social distancing guidelines during the ongoing countrywide shutdown. This photo was taken on Sunday evening.

PHOTO: PALASH KHAN

He was just abandoned on a char

Old man with Covid-19 symptoms rescued after 2 days

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Pabna

Local administration rescued an elderly person with Covid-19 symptoms left at a char of Jamuna in Pabna's Bera upazila on Monday.

The man was too sick to confirm his identity while the locals too could not recognise him, said Asif Anam Siddiquee, the upazila nirbahi officer (UNO).

Being informed by the locals of Char Safulla, the UNO along with some medical staff rescued the man on Monday evening.

Quoting locals, Asif said the man was abandoned in the char by a passenger boat on Saturday evening and nobody came close to him since then lest they should contract the virus.

"We are suspecting that his family members might have left him here as he showed Covid-19

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Sampadak Parishad concerned over case against two editors

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Sampadak Parishad (Editors' Council) has expressed deep and serious concern over the filing of a case against bdnews24.com Editor-in-Chief Toufique Imrose Khalidi and Jagonews24.com acting editor Mohiuddin Sarker under the controversial Digital Security Act (DSA).

It also demanded immediate withdrawal of the case, according to a statement from the Parishad issued by its President Mahfuz Anam and Secretary General Naem Nizam.

Mominul Islam Bhasani, president of Thakurgaon's Baliadangi upazila Swachhasebak League, filed the case on Friday night after the online news portals ran reports on misappropriation of OMS rice in the upazila recently.

In the case statement, Mominul accused the two editors of "deliberately publishing false and defamatory news". Two Facebook users named Shawan Amin and Rahim Shuvo were also accused in the case filed with Baliadangi Police Station.

The Sampadak Parishad statement said, "We are further concerned by the fact that cases have been filed under the draconian DSA without issuing any rejoinder or lodging any compliant with the Press Council whose job is to deliberate on such matters."

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FIRST YEAR OF BANGLADESH BANGABANDHU'S NATION-BUILDING CHALLENGES

Bangabandhu pays homage to Jalalabad martyrs



British author Robert Pyne calls on Bangabandhu on April 22, 1972.

April 22, 1972

SHAMSUDDOZA SAJEN

POPOV CALLS ON BANGABANDHU Soviet Ambassador to Bangladesh Valentin Popov today calls on Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman at Gono Bhaban. Bangladesh Foreign Minister Abdus Samad Azad also attends the meeting.

HOMAGE TO MARTYRS OF JALALABAD The people of Chittagong today pay homage to the sacred memory

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AL man held for selling rice for poor

STAR REPORT

A ruling Awami League leader in Jamalpur, also a government-appointed dealer of the "rice at Tk 10 per kg" programme, was arrested yesterday for selling rice on the black market.

Law enforcers also recovered over 4 tonnes of misappropriated rice in Jamalpur and Mymensingh on Monday.

In the wake of widespread allegations of irregularities over rice meant for the poor, law enforcers and admin officials continue drives against those involved in the irregularities.

Since March 30, they have recovered over 318 tonnes of rice, 5 tonnes of sugar, 8,048 litres of edible oil, and 25 sacks of chickpea from different districts. Besides, 56 persons were arrested in this connection, according

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STAY HOME, STAY WELL

Strict isolation for mothers to be

MOHAMMAD AL-MASUM MOLLA

Mothers who are between their first and third trimesters of pregnancy should maintain strict isolation in the days of coronavirus.

Sharmin Abbasi, assistant professor of obstetrics and gynecology department at Anwer Khan Modern Medical College Hospital, said the time is crucial for pregnant women as they are more vulnerable to viruses.

"They [mothers] have less prevention ability at the time," she said.

She suggested the mothers to stay at home and keep themselves isolated from other family members and should not rush to hospitals for regular checkups.

"Talk to doctors over phone and visit the nearest hospital to your home only if the situation is alarming," she said, adding, "Less travel means less chance of infection."

Those who are at the final stage should keep the transportation and other belongings ready in advance.

"Transportation is a big problem now. So, it should be wiser to fix those in advance," she said.

Sharmin said that earlier they recommended the patients to stay at hospital for four days but now they are suggesting maximum two days except

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Bogura man sent to jail over rape

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Bogura

A Bogura court yesterday sent a man to jail on charges of raping his housemaid.

The accused is Ansar Ali, 50, of Santahar Yard Colony in the district's Adamdighi upazila.

Jalal Uddin, officer-in-charge of Adamdighi Police Station, said the victim filed a rape case against Ansar Ali on Monday afternoon. The accused was arrested the same night.

According to the case statement, Ansar raped the 35-year-old housemaid on April 16 at his home

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PRAYER TIMING APRIL 22

Fazr Zohr Asr Maghrib Esha
AZAN 4-25 12-45 4-45 6-27 8-00
JAMAAT 5-00 1-15 5-00 6-31 8-30

SOURCE: ISLAMIC FOUNDATION

Facebook powered virus 'heat map' unveiled

AFP, Washington

Researchers Monday unveiled a coronavirus "heat map" powered by Facebook data which is aimed at helping track the spread of the disease and plan for reopening society.

The Carnegie Mellon University project offers "real-time indications of Covid-19 activity not previously available from any other source," according to a university statement.

The map was developed with millions of responses to surveys of Facebook and Google users as part of an effort to monitor the spread of the virus.

Facebook chief executive Mark Zuckerberg said the heat map, currently available for the United States, was being expanded globally with help from University of Maryland research teams.

"As the world fights Covid-19 and countries develop plans to reopen

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Two women waiting for a TCB truck in the capital's Motijheel yesterday to buy essentials at cheaper prices. They had arrived at the spot at 7:00am in a bid to be one of the first in line but when this photo was taken at 1:03pm, they were still waiting.

PHOTO: SKENAMUL HAQ

Virus likely of animal origin

Says WHO as no sign of lab manipulation found; Trump signals immigration ban

AGENCIES

The World Health Organization (WHO) said yesterday that all available evidence suggests the novel coronavirus originated in animals in China late last year and was not manipulated or produced in a laboratory.

US President Donald Trump said last week that his government was trying to determine whether the virus emanated from a lab in the central Chinese city of Wuhan, where the coronavirus pandemic emerged in December.

"All available evidence suggests the virus has an animal origin and is not manipulated or constructed in a lab or somewhere else," WHO spokeswoman Fadelia Chaib told a Geneva news briefing. "It is probable, likely, that the virus is of animal origin."

It was not clear, Chaib added, how the virus had jumped the species barrier to humans but there had "certainly" been an intermediate animal host. "It most likely has its ecological reservoir in bats but how the virus came from bats to humans is still to be seen and discovered."

She did not respond to a request to elaborate on whether it was possible the virus may have inadvertently escaped from a lab. The Wuhan Institute of Virology has dismissed rumours both that it synthesized the virus or allowed it to escape.

Chaib, asked about the impact of Trump's decision last week to suspend funding to the UN agency over its handling of the coronavirus pandemic, said: "We are still assessing the situation about the announcement by

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