

CORONAVIRUS PANDEMIC

LATEST UPDATES

MORE THAN 2.5M CASES

2592,845, infections have now been reported and at least 179,646 people have died, according to an AFP tally at 1800 GMT yesterday based on official sources. The United States has the most deaths of any country with 45,150. Italy is the second hardest-hit country, with 24,648 dead. Spain follows with 21,717, then France with 20,829 and Britain with 18,141.

US STATE SUES CHINA'S LEADERS

The US state of Missouri on Tuesday sued China's leadership over the pandemic, seeking damages over what it described as deliberate deception and insufficient action to stop the pandemic. The first-of-a-kind state lawsuit comes amid calls in Congress to punish China and a campaign by President Donald Trump to focus on Beijing's role, amid criticism of his own handling of the crisis.

TARAWIH AT HOLY MOSQUES

Saudi king Salman approved performing Tarawih in the two holy mosques and reducing them with the continued suspension of entry of pilgrims, the Presidency of the Two Holy Mosques' Affairs said in a statement yesterday. Saudi Arabia plans to ease curfew hours it imposed on several cities during the month of Ramadan.

HUMAN TRIAL OF VACCINE IN UK

Human trials of a potential coronavirus vaccine developed at the University of Oxford are to begin on Thursday, health secretary Matt Hancock has announced. And one member of the Oxford team said that if trials are successful, millions of doses of vaccine could be available for use by the autumn of this year.

ITALY SIGNALS LONGER LOCKDOWN

Prime Minister Giuseppe Conte prepared Italians for a longer lockdown Tuesday despite a second successive drop in the number of registered coronavirus cases. Italy is approaching a fateful decision on whether to lift stay-at-home orders and reopen businesses for the first time in nearly two months on May 4.

SPAIN TO LET CHILDREN TAKE WALKS

Spain will allow children to go outside for walks from next weekend in a loosening of the country's strict coronavirus lockdown. The change came hours after the government first announced that young children, who are currently banned from leaving home under any circumstances, would be allowed to accompany their parents on essential trips.

SCARE IN SOUTH ASIA

About 500 people entered self-isolation in staff quarters of India's presidential palace on Tuesday after a person was tested positive of the virus. Afghan President Ashraf Ghani and his wife tested negative for the coronavirus, his spokesman said, after at least 20 palace officials were infected last week. In Pakistan, Prime Minister Imran Khan will undergo testing after it was confirmed that the head of the country's biggest charity organisation, Faisal Edhi, whom he met last week, had contracted COVID-19.

SOURCE: AFP



Aerial view of a cemetery dedicated for coronavirus patients shows workers unloading a coffin from a truck in Manaus, Amazonas state, Brazil, on Tuesday.

PHOTO: AFP

HYDROXYCHLOROQUINE IN TREATING COVID-19

Study reports no benefit, shows higher death rate

AFP, Washington

A malaria drug widely touted as a potential cure for COVID-19 showed no benefit against the disease over standard care -- and was in fact associated with more deaths, the biggest study of its kind showed Tuesday.

The US government funded analysis of how American military veterans fared on hydroxychloroquine was posted on a medical preprint site and has not yet been peer reviewed.

The experiment had several important limitations, but adds to a growing body of doubt over the efficacy of the medicine that counts President Donald Trump and right wing news channel Fox News among its biggest backers.

Researchers looked at the medical records of 368 veterans hospitalized nationwide who either died or were discharged by April 11. Death rates for patients on hydroxychloroquine were 28 percent, compared to 22 percent when it was taken with the anti-biotic azithromycin -- a combination favored by French scientist Didier Raoult, whose study on the subject in March triggered a surge of global interest in the drug.

The death rate for those receiving only standard care was 11 percent.

Hydroxychloroquine, with or without azithromycin, was more likely to be prescribed to patients with more severe illness, but the authors found that increased mortality persisted even after they statistically adjusted for higher rates of use.

They have received significant attention during the novel coronavirus pandemic and have been shown in lab settings to block the virus from entering cells and prevent it replicating -- but in the pharmaceutical world, "in vitro" promise often fails to translate into "in vivo" success.

The true answer can only be determined through very large, randomized clinical trials that assign patients to receive either the drug under investigation or a placebo. Several of these are underway, including notably in the United States, Europe, Canada and the United Kingdom.

Not ventilators, lack of oxygen will kill more

Experts warn of oxygen shortages in poorer nations

AFP, Paris

As the coronavirus pandemic bears down on vulnerable nations in Africa and South Asia, experts say there are only weeks to help fill chronic shortages of what medicines need to help people breathe.

Not ventilators, but oxygen itself. Medical oxygen is a core component of the life-saving therapies hospitals are giving patients with severe cases of COVID-19, as the world waits for scientists to find vaccines and treatments.

The pandemic has pushed even the most advanced health systems to their limits, with concerns often focused on the supply of mechanical ventilators at the high-tech end of the breathing assistance spectrum.

But experts fear this has distorted the narrative about what constitutes an effective response, giving the wrong blueprint for nations with under-funded health systems.

"The reality is that oxygen is the only therapy that will save lives in Africa and Asia-Pacific now," said Hamish Graham, a consultant paediatrician and research fellow at Melbourne University Hospital and International Centre for Child Health.

"I fear that undue focus on ventilators without

fixing oxygen systems will kill."

One report in February on thousands of cases in China's epidemic found that nearly 20 percent of patients with COVID-19 required oxygen. Of those, 14 percent needed some form of oxygen therapy, while five percent required mechanical ventilation.

In severe cases of COVID-19, the virus attacks the patient's lungs in the form of pneumonia, causing inflammation that prevents them from absorbing oxygen. This can cause their blood oxygen levels to fall well below normal, a condition known as hypoxaemia that can deprive critical organs of oxygen and "substantially" increase the risk of death, Graham said.

A 2018 report published by Every Breath Counts, a coalition of UN agencies, businesses, donors and aid agencies, said supplies of oxygen were "severely limited" in countries across South Asia and Sub-Saharan Africa.

"These health systems in Africa and South Asia could not be more exposed to a pandemic like this one because they haven't been investing in respiratory therapy," Leith Greenslade, the lead coordinator for Every Breath Counts, told AFP.

"This is what terrifies me."

India halts use of 'faulty' kits

Moves to procure more kits from Korean firms, says 69 pc patients asymptomatic as report says epidemic could peak by mid-May

NDTV, INDIAN EXPRESS, TNN

Following complaints that the rapid antibody test kits are showing varying levels of accuracy, the Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR) has asked all states not to use the serological COVID-19 tests for the next two days, pending field validation by its teams.

"We have been getting complaints that when the serological tests are being done on the blood samples of people who have already tested positive in the RT-PCR test, the accuracy ranges from 6% to 71%. This needs to be investigated," Dr R R Gangakhedkar, head of epidemiology and infectious diseases at ICMR, said.

"This is a first generation test developed in just three-and-a-half months and needs refinement, yet the variations cannot be ignored. We will send personnel from eight institutes to the field to validate the kits. Meanwhile, we have advised the states not to use



the tests for the next two days till we come out with an advisory," he said.

Beijing last week denied that the kits were not up to mark, saying they attach "great importance to the export of medical products".

The rapid test, which uses blood samples instead of swabs, checks for the novel coronavirus (SARS-CoV2) by ascertaining whether the person has developed antibodies against it. It takes less than 30 minutes. The swab test or known as the RT-PCR, on the other hand, comprises two steps -- a screening test and a confirmatory test

-- and takes 8-9 hours.

Indian health ministry has reiterated that the RT-PCR is the 'gold standard' for COVID-19 diagnosis. The World Health Organisation (WHO) has said that the rapid test should be used only in research settings and not for the purpose of controlling the epidemic in the field.

With Chinese testing kits having come under the scanner, India is stepping up procurement and production of testing kits from South Korean companies.

Officials on Tuesday said that a South Korean company, SD Biosensor, has agreed to make and supply 5 lakh rapid antibody testing kits

The coronavirus epidemic could peak in India by the middle of May and gradually peter out after that, a modelling exercise by Times Network in partnership with global consulting firm Protiviti, has predicted.



Trump wishes for Kim's recovery

AFP, Washington

US President Donald Trump wished North Korea's Kim Jong Un "well" on Tuesday but stopped short of directly commenting on the reclusive leader's health amid reports he was in "grave danger" after undergoing a surgery. "I can only say this: I wish him well," Trump told reporters at the White House, noting the "good relationship" he shares with the North Korean leader.

2019 was Europe's hottest year ever

AFP, Paris

Last year was the hottest in history across Europe as temperature records were shattered by a series of extreme heatwaves across the continent, the EU's Copernicus Climate Change Service said yesterday. Overall, temperatures across Europe have been 2C hotter during the last five years than they were in the latter half of the 19th Century, C3S's data showed. 2019 globally was second-hottest only to 2016, a year that experienced an exceptionally strong El Nino warming event.

Iran launches military satellite

AFP, Tehran

Iran's Revolutionary Guards announced they had successfully launched the country's first military satellite yesterday, at a time of fresh tensions with US forces in the Gulf. It said the satellite -- dubbed the Nour -- had been launched from the Qassed two-stage launcher from the Markazi desert. The rocket bore the name 'Qassed' which means messenger. Its fuselage also had a Kuranic inscription.



Israeli forces detain the mother of an alleged Palestinian assailant near the Jewish settlement of Maale Adumim in the Israeli-occupied West Bank, yesterday. A Palestinian man was shot dead yesterday after he hit an Israeli police officer with a van at a West Bank checkpoint and then stabbed him with a pair of scissors, police said.

PHOTO: REUTERS

Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh
 Directorate General of Family Planning
 Mohammadpur Fertility Services & Training Centre
 and 100 Bedded MCH Hospital
 Aurangzeb Road, Mohammadpur, Dhaka-1207

Ref. No. DGFP/MFSTC/PPP-DEV(MCH)-1144/2019-2020/984 Dated: 21/04/2020

Invitation for Tenders (Goods) (2019-2020)

Sealed tenders are hereby invited as per "PPR-2008" from the eligible tenderers as defined in the tender document for the undermentioned goods as per terms and conditions stated below:

1	Ministry/Division	Ministry of Health & Family Welfare.				
2	Agency	Mohammadpur Fertility Services & Training Centre and 100 Bedded MCH Hospital, DGFP.				
3	Procuring entity name	Director, Mohammadpur Fertility Services & Training Centre and 100 Bedded MCH Hospital, DGFP.				
4	Procuring entity code	N/A.				
5	Procuring entity district	Dhaka.				
6	Invitation for	1. Supply of Bedding (lot-1) under package 1. 2. Supply of MSS (lot-1) under package 2. 3. Supply of Consumable Stores (lot-1) under package 3.				
7	Invitation Ref. No.	No. 984				
8	Date	21-April-2020				
9	Procurement method	OTM.				
10	Budget and source of funds	Development Budget (GOB) as per released fund.				
11	Development partner	N/A.				
12	Project/programme code	N/A.				
13	Project/programme name	MC-RAH under HPNSP.				
14	Tender package No.	1. DGFP/MFSTC/mchdev/1/2019-20/ 2. DGFP/MFSTC/mchdev/2/2019-20/ 3. DGFP/MFSTC/mchdev/5/2019-20/				
15	Tender package name	1. Supply of Bedding (lot-1) under package 1. 2. Supply of MSS (lot-1) under package 2. 3. Supply of Consumable Stores (lot-1) under package 3.				
16	Tender publication date	21-April-2020.				
17	Tender last selling date	17-May-2020.				
18	Tender closing date and time	18-May-2020 at 1:00pm.				
19	Tender opening date and time	18-May-2020 at 1:45pm.				
20	Name & addresses of the offices	Selling & receiving tender document: 1. At the Office of the Director, Mohammadpur Fertility Services & Training Centre and 100 Bedded MCH Hospital, Aurangzeb Road, Mohammadpur, Dhaka-1207. 2. At the Office of the Line Director, CCSDP Unit (12th Floor), Directorate General of Family Planning, 6, Kawan Bazar, Dhaka-1215. Opening tender document: 1. At the Office of the Director, Mohammadpur Fertility Services & Training Centre and 100 Bedded MCH Hospital, Aurangzeb Road, Mohammadpur, Dhaka-1207.				
21	Brief eligibility & qualification of tenderer	The tenderer shall have a minimum of 5 (five) years of overall experience in the supply of goods and related services. The tenderer shall have successfully completed minimum 1 (one) number of supply contract of similar goods and related services within last 3 (three) years i.e. years counting backward from the date of publication of IFT in the newspaper and also as described in tender document.				
22	Brief description of goods	1. Supply of Bedding (lot-1) under package 1. 2. Supply of MSS (lot-1) under package 2 and 3. Supply of Consumable Stores (lot-1) under package 3 (detailed in tender schedule).				
23	Brief description of related services	1 (one) year warranty of goods as described in tender document.				
24	Price of tender document	Tk 1000/- (Tk one thousand) for each tender (per package) should be paid in Bangladesh Bank through Treasury Challan in Code No. 1-2781-0000-2366 in favour of Director General, DGFP, 6, Kawan Bazar, Dhaka-1215 and online verification copy must be submitted.				
25	Pkg. No.	Identification	Location	Tender security amount (Tk)	Completion time in weeks	Remarks
1.	DGFP/MFST C/mchdev/1/2 019-2020/	1. Supply of Bedding (lot-1) under package 1	At MFSTC, Mohammadpur, Dhaka	10,000/- (ten thousand) per lot	4 weeks after the signing of the contract	* N.B. Tender security for each lot should be submitted in the form of Bank Draft/Pay Order from any scheduled Bank of Bangladesh in favour of Director, Mohammadpur, Fertility Services & Training Centre, Aurangzeb Road, Mohammadpur, Dhaka-1207
2.	DGFP/MFST C/mchdev/2/ 2019-2020/	2. Supply of MSS (lot-1) under package 2	At MFSTC, Mohammadpur, Dhaka	15,000/- (fifteen thousand) per lot	4 weeks after the signing of the contract	
3.	DGFP/MFST C/mchdev/5/ 2019-20/	3. Supply of Consumable Stores (lot-1) under package 3	At MFSTC, Mohammadpur, Dhaka	10,000/- (ten thousand) per lot	4 weeks after the signing of the contract	
26	Name of official inviting tender	Dr. Md. Muniruzzaman Siddiqui.				
27	Designation of official inviting tender	Director.				
28	Address of official inviting tender	Mohammadpur Fertility Services & Training Centre and 100 Bedded MCH Hospital, Aurangzeb Road, Mohammadpur, Dhaka-1207.				
29	Contact details of official inviting tender	Phone: 9113814, 9131381.				
30	The procuring entity reserves the right to accept or reject any/all tender(s) without assigning any reason whatsoever. If schedule submission and opening is interrupted due to unavoidable circumstances, it will duly be conducted in the next working day. All other terms and conditions will remain same.					

Dr. Md. Muniruzzaman Siddiqui
 Director
 MFSTC
 Ph: 9113814 (Off)

GD-750