

World on brink of 'hunger pandemic'

UN says 'multiple famines of biblical proportions' on cards; WB warns remittance dip

AGENCIES

The world is facing widespread famine "of biblical proportions" because of the coronavirus pandemic, the chief of the UN's food relief agency has warned, with a short time to act before hundreds of millions starve.

The bleak warning came as deaths from the virus surpassed 180,000 worldwide yesterday, with governments anxiously trying to chart a path out of the unprecedented global health and economic emergency. Nearly 2,600,000 people have been infected.

The virus has exposed the vulnerability in the health care systems of the most advanced nations and it is widely feared to wreck more havoc on developing and poor ones. What appears to be certain is that the economic disaster following in the wake of the pandemic will lead to huge strain on resources.

Debates are raging worldwide over when and how to relax lockdowns imposed to prevent the spread of the highly contagious virus. Many leaders fear triggering another wave of infections by doing so but are also worried about the mounting economic costs and signs of social tension.

"We are on the brink of a hunger pandemic," WFP director David Beasley told the UN Security Council in a video conference on Tuesday.

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Two toddlers enjoying a meal sitting on the street near TSC on Dhaka University campus while there is a long line of people behind waiting for their turn to receive the handout provided by a member of the DU students' union.

PHOTO: AMRAN HOSSAIN



Shazneen's 22nd death anniversary today

STAR REPORT

Today is the 22nd death anniversary of Shazneen Tasnim Rahman.

On this day in 1998, 15-year-old Shazneen was raped and brutally murdered in a premeditated manner at her home in Gulshan.

Shazneen, who was a grade-IX student of Scholastica School, was murdered on the night of April 23.

More than 19 years after the shocking incident, the convict in the Shazneen rape and murder case, Shahidul Islam alias Shahid, was

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6 more die after showing Covid-19 symptoms

STAR REPORT

At least six more people died in four districts with coronavirus symptoms between Monday night and yesterday evening.

Officials have put houses of the deceased under lockdown while their samples were collected for Covid-19 tests.

Among the deceased, one died at Dhaka Medical College Hospital on Tuesday night.

A 52-year-old man died with Covid-19-like symptoms early yesterday at the isolation ward of Khulna Medical College Hospital.

The man, a resident of Fultola upazila, died an hour after he was admitted to the hospital around 1:00am, our Khulna correspondent reported, quoting Shailendronath Biswas, spokesperson of the hospital.

A 42-year-old man from Baliakandi upazila of Rajbari died while undergoing treatment at Dhaka Medical College Hospital (DMCH) with Covid-19 symptoms on Tuesday night.

The man was a hawker and lived in a rented house in Narayanganj, Nurul Islam, civil surgeon of Rajbari said.

The patient was admitted to DMCH on Tuesday as he was suffering from cold, cough and respiratory problems, he said.

The body was buried by the Islamic

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FIRST YEAR OF BANGLADESH BANGABANDHU'S NATION-BUILDING CHALLENGES

'Bangladesh will again be Shonar Bangla'



Bangabandhu is seen talking to officials during his visit to the UN office in Dhanmondi on April 20, 1972.

April 23, 1972

SHAMSUDDOZA SAJEN

BANGABANDHU'S SURPRISE VISIT TO A VILLAGE

They can't believe their eyes. Are they dreaming, they wonder. None else but Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman himself is there right in their midst, reports Bangladesh Sanghat Sangstha.

It happened today at Kuria, a village eight miles north of Dhaka. It

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3 arrested for stealing rice for poor

STAR REPORT

Law enforcers and local administration officials recovered over 480 kg rice and 42 litres of soyabean oil meant for the poor in Noakhali and Mymensingh on Tuesday.

Besides, a union parishad chairman in Narail was sued on the same day over embezzling 41 tonnes of rice. Three local Awami League leaders were arrested on charges of stealing rice and edible oil in Noakhali and Mymensingh.

Incidents of embezzling rice and other daily essentials are being reported in different parts of the country at a time when the government is distributing those among the low-income people to support them during the ongoing nationwide Covid-19 shutdown. Some items are also sold at cheaper prices through government-appointed dealers.

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Nasa finds earth-like planet in old data



INDEPENDENT.CO.UK

Nasa in old data from a retired space telescope has found an "intriguing" planet that could be home to life.

The Earth-sized exoplanet orbits around its star's habitable zone, meaning that the temperature is mild enough to allow a rocky planet to support liquid water.

The distant world was discovered when scientists were picking through old observations that came from the Kepler space telescope, which stopped its work in 2018 but provided a vast trove of data from the stars before it did.

The planet had previously been discarded by a computer algorithm that misidentified it. But as part of new research, scientists were able to have another look at the information in the Kepler data and see that it really was a previously

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10-month-old tests positive in Chattogram

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

A 10-month-old baby has been tested positive for coronavirus in Chattogram.

Seikh Fazle Rabbi, civil surgeon of Chattogram, said the boy, of Joara village in the district's Chandanaish upazila, was one of the four persons who were tested positive in the region on Tuesday.

A total of 140 samples were tested at Bangladesh Institute of Tropical and Infectious Disease (BITID)

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PRAYER TIMING APRIL 23

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

'Drug dealer' killed in 'gunfight'

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Dinaipur

A suspected drug peddler was killed in what Rab said was a "gunfight" with officers in Joypurhat early yesterday.

Rab officials claimed Ekramul Hossain, 32, of Gopalpur village in Panchbibi, was accused in at least 17 criminal cases filed with multiple police stations.

Mohaimenur Rashid, additional superintendent of police at Joypurhat Rab Camp, said over 500 bottles of Phensedyl, some yaba pills, two firearms and several bullets were seized at the scene.

Acting on a tip-off, a Rab team raided a quiet place by the Shree river in Joypurhat town around 3:00am, he told The Daily Star.

As soon as the officers reached the area, the gang members started shooting at them, he said.

Rab members retaliated with gunshots ensuing a gunfight that lasted around 15 minutes, he claimed,

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Women and children sit on the asphalt while waiting for the truck of the Trading Corporation of Bangladesh from which they will be able to buy essentials at affordable prices. The sudden loss of income due to the coronavirus have rendered many unable to pay the full retail prices.

PHOTO: AMRAN HOSSAIN

Fish farmers in trouble too

Farmers in north-east find it hard to find buyers, transport

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Mymensingh

Fish farmers in Mymensingh region are incurring losses because of transport disruption caused by Covid-19 shutdown.

Farmers in Mymensingh, Netrakona and Kishoreganj are unable to harvest fish and sell those to different parts of the country due to lack of buyers and smooth inter-district transportation, said fisheries officials and fish farm owners.

If the current situation prevails, fish farms in Mymensingh district may suffer a loss of Tk 400 crore, said Dilip Kumar Saha, the district fisheries officer.

There are around 1,12,000 fish farmers, mostly in Trishal, Gouripur, Phulpur, Tarakanda, Bhaluka and Muktagachha upazilas, as well as 300 hatcheries and 900 nurseries in the district.

The fish from the district are sent to different parts of the country including Dhaka, Sylhet and Chottagram year-round.

But now, many farmers cannot send their fish outside the district and have to keep feeding the adult fish, instead of starting a new fish rearing cycle, said the officer.

Mahbulul Islam, owner of a fish farm on 15 acres of land in Solimpur village under Trishal upazila, invested Tk 50 lakh, including Tk 20 lakh loan. Five employees work at his farm.

Mahbulul said he couldn't get any transport to send his fish to the market. "I am worried about loan repayment now," he said.

Fish farmer Abu Raihan of Dhanikhola village in Trishal claimed he already incurred a loss of over Tk two lakh since the shutdown.

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