

Record 51m people displaced internally

AFP, Geneva

Conflict and disaster forced more than 33 million people to flee within their own countries last year, putting them at greater risk amid the global COVID-19 pandemic, monitors said yesterday.

The new figure brings the total number of people living in internal displacement to a record 50.8 million, according to a report by the Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre (IDMC) and the Norwegian Refugee Council (NRC).

The number of internally displaced people (IDPs) is far higher than the some 26 million who have fled across borders as refugees.

"IDPs are often highly vulnerable people living in crowded camps, emergency shelters and informal settlements with little or no access to healthcare," IDMC director Alexandra Bilak said in a statement. "The global coronavirus pandemic will make them more vulnerable still," she said.

The report found that conflict forced 8.5 million IDPs to flee last year in countries like Syria, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Ethiopia and South Sudan.

Together with those already displaced, more than 45 million people live in internal displacement brought on by conflict, including nearly 6.5 million in Syria, which has been ravaged by nine years of civil war.

Another 5.1 million people were living in internal displacement due to natural disasters at the end of 2019, out of nearly 25 million who fled their homes due to such disasters throughout the year.

Some 4.5 million were forced to flee their homes by cyclone Fani in India and Bangladesh, cyclones Idai and Kenneth in Mozambique and hurricane Dorian in the Bahamas.



People surf as Bondi Beach reopens to surfers and swimmers after it was closed to curb the spread of the coronavirus disease, with strict social distancing measures remaining in place, in Sydney, Australia, yesterday.

PHOTO: REUTERS

CORONAVIRUS PANDEMIC LATEST UPDATES

MORE THAN 211,000 DEAD

More than 211,185 people have died worldwide since the epidemic surfaced in China in December, according to an AFP tally at 1100 GMT yesterday based on official sources. In total, 3,030,246 cases have now been reported in 193 countries or territories. The United States has the most deaths of any country with 56,253 fatalities. Italy is the second hardest-hit country, with 26,977 dead. Spain follows with 23,822, then France with 23,293 and the United Kingdom with 21,092.

CAUTIOUS EUROPE EASES CURBS

France and Spain, among the countries with the highest death tolls, was scheduled to announce later yesterday plans to ease their strict lockdowns, in place since March. Meanwhile, first signs that transmission of the virus has again picked up are visible in German official data. The infection rate mounts to around 1.0, meaning each infected person passes the virus on to one other.

ARTHRITIS DRUG SHOWS PROMISE

The arthritis drug tocilizumab has shown early promise in preventing extreme inflammation in gravely ill COVID-19 patients, according to a French clinical study. The treatment, which suppresses the body's natural immune response, was found to reduce "significantly" the number of deaths or life support interventions compared with a control group of patients.

UK TO PAY \$75,000 TO HEROES

Families of British health and care workers who die on the frontline of the COVID-19 pandemic will be paid 60,000 pounds (\$74,472) as part of a new life assurance scheme. The scheme is aimed at families of those who die from coronavirus during the course of essential and life-saving work, and includes those providing direct care as well as cleaners and porters.

CHINA SAYS INDIAN CRITICISM OF TEST KITS IS 'IRRESPONSIBLE'

China has criticised India's decision to stop using Chinese testing kits for the novel coronavirus because of quality issues as unfair and irresponsible in the latest strain in their ties. The Indian Council of Medical Research, the top agency dealing with the coronavirus outbreak, said on Monday it planned to return the kits for antibody tests procured from two Chinese firms because of poor accuracy.

KIM IN ISOLATION!

Kim Jong Un may have missed a key holiday on April 15 because of concerns over the coronavirus, not because he is ill, South Korea's minister for North Korean affairs said yesterday. An authoritative source familiar with US intelligence reporting said on Monday it was entirely possible Kim had disappeared from public view to avoid exposure to COVID-19.

China decries 'barefaced lies' Rising cases complicate India's curb lifting efforts

Says US trying to divert public attention with allegations

AFP, Beijing

China yesterday went on the offensive against international criticism over its handling of the coronavirus pandemic, accusing US politicians of "barefaced lies".

The new virus first emerged in the Chinese city of Wuhan late last year before spreading across the world, and countries including the United States and Australia have called for an investigation into how the disease transformed into a global pandemic.

But Beijing came out swinging on Tuesday in response to foreign criticism, saying the US was attacking China to divert attention from its own handling of the outbreak.

"American politicians have repeatedly ignored the truth and have been telling barefaced lies," foreign ministry spokesman Geng Shuang told reporters at a press briefing.

"They have only one objective: shirk their responsibility for their own poor epidemic prevention and control

ROW OVER CORONAVIRUS RESPONSE



Trump says US might seek damages from China

measures, and divert public attention," he added.

US President Donald Trump suggested on Monday that he might seek damages from China over the

outbreak, saying there were many options to "hold them accountable".

Trump said at a White House briefing that he believed the outbreak could have been stopped at the source.

China also defended its ambassador to Australia who has warned that Chinese people could boycott imported goods from Australia in retaliation to the demands for a virus inquiry.

In a thinly veiled threat, Cheng Jingye had warned the push for an independent inquest into the origins of the outbreak was "dangerous", and might prompt Chinese people not to buy Australian food or attend Australian universities.

But Beijing defended the diplomat in strident comments Tuesday.

"The remarks by the Chinese ambassador are in response to the recent erroneous remarks made by the Australian side, which have aroused the dissatisfaction of the Chinese people and a possible impact on bilateral relations," said Geng.

REUTERS, New Delhi/Islamabad

India was nearing 30,000 coronavirus infections yesterday, second only to China in Asia, a steady rise that would make it difficult to lift a nearly six-week lockdown that ends this weekend, officials said.

Neighbouring Pakistan also recorded a jump in cases and deaths from COVID-10, the respiratory disease caused by the virus, and there were concerns that many people were gathering in mosques for Ramadan prayers despite strict rules on distancing.

Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi's government has allowed some farm and industrial activity to resume in less-affected rural areas after the shutdown of the economy left millions without work and short of food and shelter.

But with about 1,500 new cases each day on an average over the past week, the government is facing calls not to ease further and instead keep the world's biggest shutdown in force beyond May 3, even though the economic distress is deepening. The number of people infected with the coronavirus stood at 29,434, the health ministry said, a rise of 1,543 over the previous day. So far 934 people have died.

Pakistan had 14,079 cases including 301 deaths, 20 of them over the past day the highest single-day toll so far. Pakistan has opened 600 export industries, mainly in Punjab and Sindh province, to reduce the pain for businesses and workers.

Pakistan, under pressure from religious groups, allowed people to pray at mosques during the holy fasting month that began last week provided they kept six feet apart, wore face masks and did not pray in the streets. But an NGO said the rules were largely violated in the 194 mosques it surveyed in 15 cities and towns.

Litmus paper we have lost

FROM PAGE 1

sterling character and a great a sense of humour, the man from Sylhet (we almost forgot because of his luminous nationwide identity) has sat in the (caretaker) government (April-June 1996), served BRAC and the Asia-Pacific University as vice-chancellor, taught civil engineering at BUET for almost four decades, steered national committees on ICT, and delivered countless lectures on a wide range of topics.

A statistical buff from childhood, he enjoyed his time in Dhaka's traffic jam by juggling with vehicle number plates and had been befittingly the president of the Mathematical Olympiad Committee from 2003. The "Computer Center" at BUET is also his brainchild, steering it for 10 years for national service.

For his scientific prudence, he was involved in several state-sponsored mega projects. The professor of civil engineering was Technical Adviser of Bangabandhu Bridge and the ongoing Padma Bridge.

In view of his contribution to infrastructure development, leadership, research and education, the government bestowed on him the Ekushey Padak 2017 for science and technology. Since 2018, he has been honoured as National Professor. The same year, Japan decorated him with the prestigious Order of the Rising Sun: Gold Rays with Neck Ribbon.

Prof Choudhury was an exceptional organiser. Under his stewardship, the BUET Alumni Association has been thriving since 2008. As a founder Trustee, I have seen closely his hard and soft approach, but never a harsh word, to unite several pocket associations of graduates.

One year after the FR Tower fire, BUET Alumni Association organised a National Seminar called "Fire Hazard in Buildings: Recent Crisis" on April 27, 2019. The president called me to deliver a keynote paper, which could have been handled by any EC member. But this was JRC; he

knew how to honour a person for he was an honourable man.

The last time I saw Sir was on October 9 at the protest gathering of alumni at BUET, two days after the brutal killing of the university's student Abrar Fahad. Sir did not look well to me that morning. I am told that he was facing some issues with his health.

Sir was very loyal to BUET and especially the civil engineering department. During a students' protest some two decades ago, Sir told off a high-up, "We were running [BUET] well, before you got involved."

Once he also lightly reprimanded me (from architecture) for not calling to a seminar the expertise of a civil engineering teacher. Despite his towering personality, he was frank in his outlook. He shared with me the driving rain problem at his apartment and the sunlight problem at his university.

Sir was very keen about sports as a follower and player. He was vice-

president of the Bangladesh Table Tennis Federation in the 1970s. He was very excited about Snooker when introduced at the BUET Teachers Club. Cricket was his way of life, a gentleman that is why.

His approach to life was always calculated, hardly ever a rash decision. An avid reader of my column, he joined my anchored show "Chintito" on AIN Bangla, but after deliberating for over a month. After the programme, I dropped him at his house where he passed away yesterday peacefully from a heart attack.

His last SMS to me on April 21 was, "I remember watching one of your videos in which you expressed very strongly your resentment against educated Bangladeshi origin people living abroad, who are in the habit of criticising Bangladesh at every opportunity. Would appreciate it very much if you kindly send me the link." He was interested in anything Bangladesh, a profound patriot.

Pentagon releases UFO videos

CNN ONLINE

The Pentagon has officially released three short videos showing "unidentified aerial phenomena" that had previously been released by a private company.

The videos show what appear to be unidentified flying objects rapidly moving while recorded by infrared cameras. Two of the videos contain service members reacting in awe at how quickly the objects are moving. One voice speculates that it could be a drone.

The Navy previously acknowledged the veracity of the videos in September of last year. They are officially releasing them now, "in order to clear up any misconceptions by the public on whether or not the footage that has been circulating was real, or whether or not there is more to the videos," according to Pentagon spokesperson Sue Gough.

The Pentagon has previously studied recordings of aerial encounters with unknown objects as part of a since-shuttered classified program, which was launched in 2007 and ended in 2012, according to the Pentagon, because they assessed that there



were higher priorities that needed funding. Nevertheless, Luis Elizondo, the former head of the classified program, told CNN in 2017 that he personally believes "there is very compelling evidence that we may not be alone."

"These aircraft -- we'll call them aircraft -- are displaying characteristics that are not currently within the US inventory nor in any foreign inventory that we are aware of," Elizondo said of objects they researched. He says he resigned from the Defense Department in 2017 in protest over the secrecy surrounding the program and the internal opposition to funding it.

North-West Power Generation Company Ltd.
ISO 9001:2015, ISO 14001:2015 & OHSAS 45001:2018 Certified
(An Enterprise of Bangladesh Power Development Board)

Office of the Plant Manager (Superintending Engineer)
Sirajganj 225 MW Combined Cycle Power Plant (Unit-1)
Soydabad, Sirajganj.

Ref: 27.28.8878.101.07.001.19.100 Date: 28/04/2020

e-Tender Notice

The following e-Tenders are invited in the National e-GP System Portal (www.eprocure.gov.bd):

Sl. No.	Tender ID	Brief Description of Tender	Publication Date	Last Selling Date & Time	Opening Date
1	419599	Supply of Mechanical Tools and Lifting Equipment.	28/04/2020	19/05/2020, 3:45 PM	20/05/2020
2	455397	Spare Parts for GT Monitoring & Protection System.	29/04/2020	13/05/2020, 3:45 PM	14/05/2020
3	407879	Medium Voltage Power Cable.	04/05/2020	03/06/2020, 4:40 PM	07/06/2020

This is an online tender where only e-Tender will be accepted in the National e-GP Portal and no offline/hard copies will be accepted. To submit e-Tender, registration in the National e-GP System Portal (www.eprocure.gov.bd) is required. Further information and guidelines are available in the National e-GP System Portal and e-GP Help Desk (helpdesk@eprocure.gov.bd).

Engr. Md. Asad Halim
 Plant Manager (S.E.)
 Sirajganj 225 MW Combined Cycle Power Plant (Unit-1)
 NWPGL, Soydabad, Sirajganj.

GD-767

Government of The Peoples Republic of Bangladesh
Office of the Divisional Forest Officer
Cox's Bazar North Forest Division
Invitation for Tender
Tender Notice Number: 05/Rev/2019-20 Date : 28/04/2020

1	Ministry/Division	Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change			
2	Agency	Forest Department			
3	Procuring Entity Name	Divisional Forest Officer, Cox's Bazar North Forest Division			
4	Procuring Entity District	Cox's Bazar			
5	Invitation for	Construction of Works			
6	Invitation Ref No & Date	Memo No. 22.01.2209.771.10(10)20.1071 Date: 28/04/2020			
7	Procurement Method	Open Tender method (OTM)			
8	Budget and Source of Funds	Revenue Budget			
9	Tender Last Selling Date	Date		Time	
10	Tender Closing Date and Time	13/05/2020		01.00 PM	
11	Tender Opening Date and Time with place	13/05/2020		02.00 PM At Office of the Undersigned	
12	Name & Address of the office(s)	Address			
13	Selling Tender Document	Range officer, Sadar range, Cox's Bazar North Forest Division, Cox's Bazar.			
14	Eligibility of Tenderer	Must have valid VAT, TIN and Trade License			
15	Tender Package No.	Work Name/Package name	Location	Price of Tender Document (Not-refundable)	Tender Security Amount (Tk.)
16	PW-01	Construction of Car House	Sadar Upazila Cox's Bazar, Town Range	Tk. 1000/- (One Thousand) only	Tk. 13,000/- (Thirteen thousand) only
17	PW-02	Construction of Surface Drain	Sadar Upazila Cox's Bazar, Town Range	Tk. 600/- (Six Hundred) only	Tk. 10,000/- (Ten thousand) only
18	PW-03	Repairing work of Ban Kallal Rest House Area Boundary Wall	Sadar Upazila Cox's Bazar, Town Range	Tk. 1000/- (One Thousand) only	Tk. 19,000/- (Nineteen thousand) only
19	Name, Designation & Address of official inviting tender		Md. Tohidul Islam, Divisional Forest Officer, Cox's Bazar North Forest Division, Cox's Bazar		
20	Contact details of official inviting Tender		Phone No- 0341-63409 E-mail : dfocoxsbazarnorth@gmail.com		
21	(a) Details particular of tender can be seen & obtained from the concerned office during office hours. (b) The Procuring entity reserves the right to reject all tenders or annul the Tender proceedings				
22	Special Conditions: a) Rate must be coated both in figures and in words for each items of works in attached BOQ b) The tenderer must sign all page of the tender document				

(Md. Tohidul Islam)
 Divisional Forest Officer
 Cox's Bazar North Forest Division
 Email: dfocoxsbazarnorth@gmail.com
 Phone No- 0341-63409

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