



Europe gears up for fresh curbs as cases surge

Global Covid-19 cases pass 30m; NYC delays return to school again

AGENCIES

Large parts of Europe yesterday geared up for broad new restrictions to stop the coronavirus and Israel became the first developed country to enforce a second nationwide shutdown, as infections worldwide topped the 30-million mark.

Spain was set to unveil a raft of restrictions as officials in Madrid warned the capital had been overwhelmed by the virus and called for "decisive" action from central government.

Santiago Usoz, a medic working at accident and emergency in Madrid's October 12 hospital, told AFP there was a lack of both beds and staff.

"Intensive care units are overwhelmed with Covid patients," he said.

Britain's government meanwhile warned yesterday that it could reimpose a national lockdown, noting rates of hospitalisation are doubling every eight days, and France prepared to roll out new curbs for major cities.

Almost 950,000 people have now died from the virus since it first emerged in China late last year, with Europe accounting for almost a quarter of those fatalities.

The World Health Organization's regional director for Europe Hans Kluge said a surge seen this month "should serve as a wake-up call" after the continent recorded 54,000 infections in a single day last week -- a new record.

"Although the numbers reflect more comprehensive

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Vehicles wait in long queues to board ferries at Paturia Ferry Terminal in Manikganj yesterday. More than 600 vehicles, including about 500 trucks, were waiting at the terminal around 3:00pm. Truckers said they had to wait for over 24 hours for their turn as the number of vehicles taking the Paturia-Daulatdia ferry route increased significantly since Monday after the suspension of ferry services on Shimulia-Kathalbari route.

PHOTO: ZAHANGIR SHAH

Edn boards to discuss holding of HSC exams

Set to meet Sept 24

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Chairmen of all educational boards will sit in a meeting on Thursday to discuss how to hold the postponed Higher Secondary Certificate (HSC) and its equivalent examinations.

The exams slated for April 1 were postponed on March 22 in fear of coronavirus spread for an indefinite period.

Professor Pradip Chakroborty, chairman of the Chattogram education board, yesterday told The Daily Star that they would discuss different aspects of HSC exams, including sitting arrangement of the students.

He said the beginning of HSC exams depended on the recommendations of the national advisory committee on coronavirus situation and the decisions of Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina and the education ministry.

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25 ROAD PROJECTS IN FARIDPUR LGED cancels Tk 88cr contracts over delay

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Faridpur

The contracts of 25 road and culvert construction projects, worth more than Tk 88 crore, have been cancelled by the Local Government Engineering Department (LGED) in Faridpur.

The projects have been cancelled between September 10 and September 13 as the construction works remained paused for more than 28 days, said LGED officials.

The construction companies -- Pratyasha Enterprise, and Sajjad Barkat Engineering Ltd, owned by Sajjad Hossain Barkat, former general secretary of Faridpur town Awami League; and Rafia Construction Ltd owned by Imtiaz Hasan Rubel, former president of Faridpur Press Club -- did not respond to show-cause letters sent by the LGED.

Both the owners of the construction companies are now in jail for their involvement in multiple cases.

According to the work agreement rules of PPR, LGED has the right to cancel any work if the companies stop work for 28 days or more, said KM Faruk Hossain, executive engineer of LGED.

The contracts of 25 projects have

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FIRST YEAR OF BANGLADESH BANGABANDHU'S NATION-BUILDING CHALLENGES

UNROD chief calls on Bangabandhu



US charge d'affaires Spivack and his wife call on Prime Minister Sheikh Mujibur Rahman at the Gono Bhaban on September 19, 1972.

September 19, 1972

SHAMSUDDOZA SAJEN

BANGLADESH UN TEAM NAMED

A five-member Bangladesh delegation will be in New York during the General Assembly session of the United Nations which commences today. The five-member team will be led by Khurram Khan Panni, Bangladesh envoy to Jakarta. Since Bangladesh is not a member of the United Nations, it will have no locus standi in the UN. The team will be engaged in lobbying for Bangladesh's entry into the world body.

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Rizvi criticises Star editor for his article

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The BNP yesterday harshly criticised The Daily Star Editor Mahfuz Anam for his commentary on democracy and alleged that it was against the party.

On International Day of Democracy (September 15), Anam wrote an article titled "After 30 years of autocracy's demise, democracy still remains a distant dream".

The party held a press briefing at its Nayapaltan headquarters to give a formal reaction about the article.

BNP Senior Joint Secretary General Ruhul Kabir Rizvi, along with former student leaders, addressed the press briefing.

Rizvi alleged that in the article, the writer has given false, misleading, motivated and irrelevant opinions on former prime minister and BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia.

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Human footprints dating back 120,000 yrs found in KSA



AFP, Washington

Around 120,000 years ago in what is now northern Saudi Arabia, a small band of homo sapiens stopped to drink and forage at a shallow lake that was also frequented by camels, buffalo, and elephants bigger than any species seen today.

The people may have hunted the large mammals but they did not stay long, using the watering hole as a waypoint on a longer journey.

This detailed scene was reconstructed by researchers in a new study published in Science Advances on Thursday, following the discovery of ancient human and animal footprints in the

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US OFFICIAL'S VISIT Taiwan scrambles fighter jets as China conducts more drills

REUTERS, Taipei

Taiwan scrambled fighter jets yesterday as 18 Chinese aircraft buzzed the island, crossing the sensitive midline of the Taiwan Strait, in response to a senior US official holding talks in Taipei.

China had earlier announced combat drills and denounced what it called collusion between the island, which it claims as part of its territory, and the United States.

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PRAYER TIMING SEPTEMBER 19

Fajr Zohr Asr Maghrib Esha
AZAN 4:35 12:45 4:30 6:14 7:45
JAMAAT 5:10 1:15 4:45 6:17 8:15

SOURCE: ISLAMIC FOUNDATION

Man stabs wife, in-laws for dowry

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Tangail

Police arrested a man on the charge of stabbing his wife and three other members of his in-laws' family in Tangail's Mirzapur upazila on Thursday.

The arrestee, Swapan Miah, 25, is from Goran village in the upazila.

The injured are Swapan's wife Shila Akter, 20, her father Sirajul Islam, 60, her mother Surya Bhanu, 55, and her elder sister Razia Akter, 25.

They were first taken to Tangail General Hospital and later referred to Dhaka Medical College Hospital for better treatment.

Police said Swapan carried out the attack with a chopper at his father-in-law's house on Thursday as his in-laws refused to meet his demand of Tk 50,000 as a dowry.

Hearing their screams, locals rushed to the spot and detained Swapan.

Later, he was handed over to police.

Quoting family

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Three-wheeler driver Ilias Mollah helps a passenger wash his hands before starting a trip from the capital's Dhamondi-32 area yesterday. Ilias and his vehicle owner have spent some money on health safety of passengers to raise awareness about Covid-19. The driver also provides face masks to those passengers who don't carry them.

PHOTO: PRABIR DAS

FBI fears clashes as US polls nears

Warns ideologically-motivated extremist groups are active

AGENCIES

The FBI is increasingly worried about possible violent clashes between ideologically-motivated extremist groups before the November election, director Chris Wray said Thursday.

Wray said the Federal Bureau of Investigation is keeping a close eye on groups who have faced off in protests in various cities such as Portland, Oregon, and Kenosha, Wisconsin.

In those places, anti-racism and anti-police groups have squared off with right-wing and white nationalist activists who are often armed.

Wray told a Congressional hearing that the FBI was deeply concerned about the growing tension on US streets, and groups that are "hijacking" protests to incite violence.

"Now you've got an additional level of combustible violence," he said, citing "violent extremist groups or individuals committing violence."

"Now you have both groups from the opposite sides adding to the combustibility and danger of the situation," Wray told the House Homeland Security Committee.

"We have certainly seen that in a number of cities. That's a force multiplier, in a bad way, that I'm concerned about."

Several people have been killed in those situations. In August, a 17-year-old with ties to arch-conservative groups was charged with shooting dead two people

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