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SWINE FLU Mexico urges people to stay home

WHO warns of global epidemic

AP, Mexico City

Mexico is urging citizens to stay home for five days and shutting down nonessential government services in hopes of containing the swine flu outbreak, which the World Health Organisation warns is on the brink of becoming a global epidemic.

In Washington, President Barack Obama told Americans the government was "taking the utmost precautions and preparations" to stop the virus and urged people to wash their hands, cover their coughs and stay home when they feel sick.

The Mexican government also ordered all but the most essential government services shut down from Friday through Tuesday, meaning only functions like transport, supermarkets and hospitals will stay open. School had already been cancelled until Wednesday.

The steps were aimed at stopping further spread of the virus, blamed for 168 deaths in Mexico and one in the United States.

"There is no safer place to protect yourself against catching swine flu than in your house," Mexican President Felipe Calderon said in a televised address Wednesday night. He praised the "heroic work" of doctors and nurses and brushed aside criticism that his government's response was slow.

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Bangladeshi man among dead

Claims Mexico
AP, Dhaka

Mexico's National Epidemiological Center said on Wednesday that the only foreign national among the dead was a Bangladeshi man who had been in the country just six months working as a street vendor.

Bangladesh's Health Minister, AFM Ruhul Haque, told AFP that officials in his country were working closely with the World Health Organization (WHO) as officials in Mexico work to pin down the origin of the H1N1 swine flu.

"This news is with me and we are trying to confirm it with the WHO and other sources. We're monitoring this very seriously and preparing ourselves to tackle this all the way," Haque said, adding Bangladesh had a good stock of flu medicine.

The minister said Bangladesh was prepared for a possible swine flu outbreak because of its experience with

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PHOTO: ANISUR RAHMAN

On the eve of May Day a group of labourers do repairs under the footbridge at Shahbagh intersection lying on a hanging bamboo-made platform during rush hour traffic.

AL workers' rally today, BNP ready for tomorrow

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Political archrivals Awami League (AL) and Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP) are now set to show off their political strength on the occasion of International May Day.

Jatiya Sramik League, labour wing of AL, and Jatiyatabadi Sramik Dal, labour wing of BNP, will hold separate rallies at city's Paltan Maidan today and tomorrow respectively.

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NUCLEAR POWER Dhaka to sign MoU with Moscow in mid-May

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A Russian minister is expected to visit Dhaka in the middle of May to sign a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) regarding peaceful use of nuclear energy and development of related infrastructure, officials said.

Schedule of the visit will be finalised once the Prime Minister's Office (PMO) approves a draft proposal regarding signing an agreement with Russia on setting up two 1,000MW nuclear power plants. Ministry of Science and Information and Communication Technology (ICT) had sent the proposal to

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Rejoinder, our reply

Good's Hill (Chittagong) authorities in a rejoinder said the information given in the caption of The Daily Star picture of trapped squirrels (published on April 29) is wrong. They said these squirrels were caught to prevent damage of coconut and fruit trees and one enthusiastic employee of Good's Hill residence informed photojournalists to take snap of the squirrels. The squirrels were handed over to Chittagong Zoo authority.

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Prayer Timing		
May 1		
	Azan	Jamaat
Fajr	4-15	4-50
Juma	12-30	1-15
Asr	4-45	5-00
Maghrib	6-31	6-35
Esha	8-00	8-30

Source: Islamic Foundation

25,000 primary teachers to be appointed soon

DU CORRESPONDENT

Education Minister Nurul Islam Nahid yesterday said around 25,000 primary school teachers would be appointed soon to improve the quality of primary education.

"We have already appointed some 2,000 teachers at primary levels and 20,000 to 25,000 more will be appointed within two to three months," said the minister.

The government wants enrolment of all children in schools by 2011, Nahid said.

The minister, as the chief guest, was addressing a seminar titled "Use of technology in country's education: problem and possibility," at Nawab Ali Chowdhury Senate Building of Dhaka University organised by Dhaka University Journalists' Association (DUJA).

The minister, on the occasion, also inaugurated the official DUJA website (www.dujabd.com).

Nahid said the government intends to give utmost priority on

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PILKHANA CARNAGE Hunt on for 25 directly involved BDR men

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The investigators are yet to track down 25 directly involved BDR mutineers out of at least 45, said a senior law enforcer assigned for investigation into the Pilkhana carnage.

The investigator seeking anonymity said they had identified the suspected killers through video footages, grilling the arrested jawans, identifications made by the carnage survivors and their families and other sources.

Investigators said few of the absconding murderers might have blended into

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Padma Bridge by 2013

Project advanced by 2 years

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The government has decided to complete the construction of 5.8 kilometre-long Padma Bridge by December 2013, two years ahead of the projected time.

Communications Minister Syed Abul Hossain disclosed it at the presentation of the inception report on Padma Multiple Bridge at a city hotel.

Ken Wheeler, consultant of Maunsell AECOM, assigned to prepare the design of the bridge, presented the report.

According to a previous plan, the bridge was proposed to be completed in December, 2015.

The minister said various donor and development agencies have assured them of giving necessary funds for constructing the bridge.

The prime minister has desired that the bridge be completed within the tenure of her current administration and be dedicated to the memory of the father of the nation, Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, he said.

He said NGOs would be engaged in the

process of resettlement of the people affected by the project on May 11, this year.

The scheme design will be submitted on June 18 and is expected to be approved on June 25 while pre-qualification documents for main bridge tenders will be provided to the authorities concerned on July 27, Abul Hossain said.

The implementation process of the resettlement plan by NGOs will begin on September 24 while pre-qualification documents for River Training Works (RTW) will be submitted on November 26, 2009, he said.

Tenders will be invited for construction of the main bridge and also the RTW from pre-qualified bidders on January 14 and April 15, 2010 while final drawings of the main bridge and the RTW will be issued on May 6 and 31 the same year.

"On receipt of all necessary approvals, construction of the main bridge and the river training works will begin on September 30, 2010," the minister said.

"Pre-qualification tenders will contain a

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OnlinePoll

Do you think proposed salary increase of govt staff will reduce graft in bureaucracy?

- Yes (34.21%)
- No (63.45%)
- No Comments (2.34%)

Total votes: 684

Sircar to be charged with contempt of parliament

RASHIDUL HASAN

A parliamentary sub-committee has decided to charge former speaker Jamiruddin Sircar with 'contempt of parliament' for not

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Urchins slice off fins of tiny sharks at Fishery Ghat in Chittagong city yesterday to sell to a certain quarter that sells them on the international black market. Catching of such fish is illegal in Bangladesh.

PHOTO: ZOBAER HOSSAIN SIKDER

Millions cast votes in India's 3rd round polling

Separatists call for poll boycott in Kashmir

PALLAB BHATTACHARYA, New Delhi

An estimated half of the 14.4 crore electorate yesterday exercised their franchise in the third phase of India's parliamentary elections.

They are to decide the fate of political bigwigs like ruling Congress Party chief Sonia Gandhi and top opposition leader LK Advani among 1,567 candidates.

The polling took place by enlarge peacefully with the exception of a few stray clashes between rival political groups in Bihar and Madhya Pradesh. Polling in Naxal-infested 10 constituencies in Bihar and West Bengal was also peaceful amid tight security.

The third phase saw the voters choosing their representatives for 107 Lok Sabha seats and marked the completion of polling in 372 out of 543 parliamentary constituencies.

Sonia Gandhi is seeking re-election from the Nehru-Gandhi

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Two hacked to death at Aminbazar

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Two alleged drug peddlers were hacked to death by rivals over internal feud at Aminbazar on the outskirts of the capital yesterday.

The deceased were identified as Shahin Mia, 35, and Abul Hossain, 35, of the area.

Locals said unidentified criminals at around 9:30pm on Wednesday hacked Shahin with lethal weapons in front of Abul Hossain's house at Mirdhartek leaving him seriously injured.

Then they also hacked Abul Hossain while attacking on his house.

Locals took Abul Hossain to Dhaka Medical College Hospital (DMCH) where he succumbed to injuries at around 12:30am.

Besides, Shahin was taken

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US has 'huge interests' in Pakistan

Says President Obama

AFP, Washington

President Barack Obama voiced worries Wednesday about the weakness of Pakistan's government and did not rule out US intervention if the Islamic power's nuclear weapons fell into extremist hands.

In a prime-time news conference marking the 100-day milestone of his presidency, Obama said he was increasingly

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JAIL KILLING Govt to appeal against HC acquittal

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The government will file an appeal with the Supreme Court (SC) against the High Court (HC) judgement acquitting six former military personnel in the jail killing case.

They include Syed Farookur Rahman, Sultan Shahrar Rashid Khan, Bazlul Huda and AKM Mohiuddin Ahmed.

Talking to newsmen at his secretariat office yesterday,

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Taliban hold Buner town people hostage

Gun attacks kill 34 in Karachi, 14 militants die in Pak army operation

AP, Islamabad/ Karachi

The Pakistan army says the Taliban are holding the population of one town near the capital hostage.

Army spokesman Maj. Gen. Athar Abbas says troops are encountering stiff resistance from militants in Buner as the troops fight their way toward insurgent strongholds. The district is 100 kilometres from the capital of Islamabad.

Abbas said security forces have killed another 14 militants in operations to reverse the spreading power of the Taliban.

A slew of gun attacks in Pakistan's biggest city killed at least 34 people, officials said Thursday, further rattling a country already tense over a military offensive against Taliban militants in a district near the capital.

The unrest came as President Barack Obama

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Welcome rain in the capital

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The capital experienced a brief but heavy shower late last night, much to the relief of city dwellers who had been suffering a heat wave for the last few days.

Scattered showers were reported also in different districts.

The highest rainfall of 32mm was recorded in Rangpur while Tangail, Gazipur, Bogra, Mymensingh

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