City

PHOTO: BSS

City dwellers have started streaming into the capital after their Eid holidays in their homes outside Dhaka. The photo was taken at Kamalapur Railway Station yesterday.

EBOLA EPIDEMIC

African states seal off outbreak epicenter

Launch \$100m emergency fund to battle crisis

AFP, Conakry

Guinea, Liberia and Sierra Leone yesterday announced an isolation zone sealing off the epicentre of the world's worst-ever Ebola outbreak, where the three countries meet.

"We have agreed to take important and extraordinary actions at the intercountry level to focus on cross-border regions that have more than 70 percent of the epidemic," said Hadja Saran Darab, the secretary-general of the Mano River Union bloc grouping the West African nations.

"These areas will be isolated by police and military. The people in these areas being isolated will be provided with material support."

The announcement came at the end of an emergency summit, also attended by Ivory Coast and the World Health Organization, to launch a \$100 million response to an epidemic which has killed more 700 people.

"The healthcare services in these zones will be strengthened for treatment, testing and contact tracing to be done effectively.

"Burials will be done in accordance

with national health regulations. We agreed to provide our health personnel with incentives, treatment and protection so they could come back to work."

Darab did not outline the exact area to be part of the isolation zone, but the epicentre of the outbreak spreads from Kenema in eastern Sierra Leone to Macenta in southern Guinea, almost 300 kilometres away.

Organization warned west Africa's Ebola-hit nations yesterday that the epidemic was spiralling out of control and could spread to other countries, causing "catastrophic" loss of life and severe economic disruption.

Meanwhile, the World Health

WHO chief Margaret Chan told the leaders of Guinea, Sierra Leone and Liberia at the regional summit the

recorded before the plane plunged

Flight GE222 carrying 54 passen-

gers and four crew crashed near the

airport in Magong in the Penghu

islands last Wednesday, leaving just 10

survivors, some of them badly injured.

Two French nationals were among the

The ATR 72-500 propeller plane

aborted its first attempt to land during

thunder and heavy rain as Typhoon

Matmo pounded Taiwan, officials

Examination of the plane's two

black boxes -- which record cockpit

voice and other in-flight data -- showed

that the two pilots had discussed

among themselves to request a go-

into houses after an aborted landing.

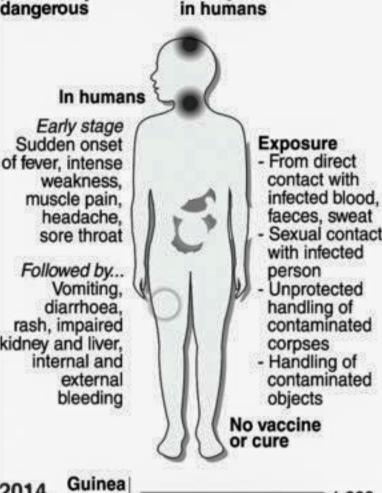
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have said.

named.

THE DEADLY EBOLA VIRUS One of the most dangerous viruses known to man

First identified in 1976 in DR Congo and Sudan Named after the Ebola river in DR Congo The most species of severe strains the virus, 90 percent particularly fatality rate in humans



response to the epidemic had been "woefully inadequate", revealing that the outbreak was "moving faster than our efforts to control it".

Liberia

Sierra Leone

Black boxes have no distress

around.

The plan will also bolster efforts to prevent and detect suspected cases, urge better border surveillance, and reinforce WHO's sub-regional outbreak coordination centre in Guinea.

"If the situation continues to deteriorate, the consequences can be catastrophic in terms of lost lives but also severe socio-economic disruption and a high risk of spread to other countries," Chan said.

The request was made to the control

tower three seconds before the record-

ings stopped, said the Aviation Safety

Council, in the first findings from the

Two unidentified sounds were also

recorded shortly before the plane

crashed, likely the sounds of the plane

colliding with woods about one kilo-

metre off the airport and then plung-

ing into ground, said Thomas Wang,

No distress call was recorded in the

black boxes, Wang said, adding that

the transcript of the black boxes will be

released at a later date pending verifi-

cation by relevant authorities of its

black boxes to be made public.

director of the council.

The meeting came after Dubai's Emirates became the first global airline

to announce it was suspending flights

to the stricken area while the United

States, Germany and France issued

warnings against travel to the three African countries. Meanwhile Nigeria quarantined two people who had "primary contact" with a man who died of Ebola in Lagos last week as west Africa battled to tame

The WHO raised the death toll by 57 to 729 on Thursday, announcing that new cases had been detected between Thursday and Sunday last week, bringing the total to more than 1,300.

the outbreak.

Sierra Leone's leader Ernest Bai Koroma has announced a state of emergency, quarantining Ebola-hit areas and cancelling foreign trips by ministers, while Liberia has closed all of its schools and put government workers on leave. Liberian President Ellen Johnson

Sirleaf warned ahead of the summit that the crisis was "nearing a catastrophe" and appealed for more doctors and supplies.

Ebola, which has no vaccine, causes severe muscular pains, fever, headaches and, in the worst cases, unstoppable bleeding.

It has killed around two-thirds of those it has infected since its emergence in 1976, with two outbreaks registering case fatality rates approaching 90 percent. The death rate in the current outbreak is a lower-thanaverage 55 percent.

Fears that it could spread to other continents through air travel have been growing, with European and Asian countries on alert alongside African countries outside the Ebola crisis zone.

In Britain, Sierra Leone cyclist Moses Sesay was quarantined and tested for Ebola at the Commonwealth Games in Glasgow, before being given the all-clear, the athlete told a British newspaper.

"From the black box recordings we

constructed the flight path of the plane

showing it veered off the due descend-

ing course then colliding with trees

and houses but the cause of the crash it

is still under investigation," Wang said,

adding a final report on the incident is

authorities and TransAsia for the worst

air disaster in a decade in Taiwan,

questioning why the plane was cleared

the decision to allow the flight to go

ahead, saying the meteorology data

showed that aviation safety require-

ments were met when the plane was

Taiwanese officials have defended

to take off in stormy weather.

Angry relatives have blamed the

expected in 18 months.

cleared to fly.

US Senate confirms new Russia envoy

AFP, Washington

The US Senate approved President Barack Obama's nominee for ambassador to Moscow Thursday, a quick confirmation amid a long backlog of would-be envoys awaiting a vote.

John Tefft, a career diplomat specializing in Eastern Europe, fills a post that has been vacant during a period of high tension between the Kremlin and Washington.

The approval comes only weeks after his

nomination, amid the most challenging period in US-Russia relations since the end of the Cold War, with the rivals at odds over what Washington sees as Moscow's interference in Ukraine and its annexation of Crimea. A former US ambassador to Ukraine and

Georgia, Tefft has served as deputy assistant secretary of state for European and Eurasian Affairs and served as chief of mission in the US embassy in Moscow in the 1990s. Tefft, who was confirmed by a Senate voice

vote, fills a post vacated by Michael McFaul, who resigned in February. The White House is increasingly frustrated

that many of Obama's ambassadorial picks are in limbo on Capitol Hill, casualties of an era of dysfunction and gridlock in Washington. Some ambassadorial picks and nominees

for State Department posts have waited months for confirmation votes.

2 more bodies

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some five kilometres from Mituani point of Jamuna river after a motorboat bound for Char Salimabad turned over with some 70 passengers at Chowhali upazila in Sirajganj on Thursday. The victim was identified as Renu

Khatun of Jotpara village under Shahzadpur upazila of the district. The boat was overloaded and it

Some 55 of the 70 passengers managed to swim ashore, witnesses said. PADMA CAPSIZE Local people recovered the body of a girl from the Boiragir Char area yesterday afternoon after a boat carrying

capsized after hitting a pillar of a bridge

area in the Padma river in Kushtia. The tragedy took place on the Eid day.

21 passengers capsized at the same

The victim was identified as Mushria Jahan alias Tinni, 7, daughter of Tazul Islam under Daulatpur upazila of the district.

The boatman is currently in jail, Enamul Haq, officer-in-charge of Daulatpur Police Station, said yesterday

One more girl named Keyamoni was still missing, said locals and officials of Kushtia district administration.

(Our Kushtia and Pabna correspondents contributed to this report)

Danger lurks

FROM PAGE 1

the highways should have 12 gatemen in three shifts, and those on one-lane roads should have three gatemen," he said, adding the rule was sometimes ignored in some case due to shortage of manpower. The railway secretary said there

were around 40,000 sanctioned posts for gatemen and other personnel, but they had only 25,000 staff.

He added the LGED and the RHD illegally built around 1,100 level crossings across the country in violation of laws.

Azad further said though the LGED and the RHD needed approva from the railway ministry to construct roads crossing rail tracks, they had defied it.

Even after the approval, the department concerned was bound to erect bars and bear the cost of gatemen if they made such roads, the railway secretary added.

Army, cops

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The Thai military seized power after nearly seven months of protests saw 28 people killed and paralysed the government of former prime minister Yingluck Shinawatra.

Earlier this month the junta, formally known as the National Counci for Peace and Order (NCPO), said it would remain in place alongside an interim government to maintain control of national security. Army chief Prayut Chan-O-Cha

has ruled out holding elections in Thailand until around October 2015, despite appeals from the United States and the European Union for a return to democracy. The coup was the latest chapter in a

long-running political crisis broadly pitting Yingluck's brother, ex-premier Thaksin Shinawatra, and his supporters against a royalist establishment backed by parts of the military and judiciary.

2 killed

FROM PAGE 1

the police officer.

noon over the incident.

The locals also clashed with the railway police when they went to the spot to calm the situation. But police finally brought the

situation under control, said the SP, adding that they were trying to arrest the criminals. Additional police were deployed at

the spot to avoid any untoward situation.

The bodies of the deceased were sent to the morgue of Natore Sadar Hospital for autopsy reports, added

other Western nations during the election campaign, sending its ambas-Amzad Ali, brother of one of the sador to meet Modi who since taking victims Jamat Ali, filed a case with office has shown no visible signs of Lalpur Police Station yesterday afterholding a grudge over his past treat-

No rules left to be broken

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As many as 20 private universities do not have vice-chancellors. Most of them have been running with acting or nominated VCs over the years, though the law makes it mandatory for universities to propose names for the VCs from which the president of the country, who is also the chancellor of all the public and private universities, will pick one.

The situation is even more deplorable when it comes to the post of pro-VCs and treasurers. Sixty-one universities have no pro-VC while 49 are running without treasurers. The report also states that almost all

the private universities have a shortage of teachers while many teachers lack experience and efficiency. "The UGC rules on teachers' appointment are not followed prop-

erly," it said, adding that people with comparatively poor academic results get appointed as teachers in many cases and they fail to ensure quality education. At least three private universities

have disputes in their boards of trustee with the members filing cases against each other. The universities are Darul Ihsan University, IBAIS University and Prime University. The report also pointed out that

many private universities do not hold regular syndicate meetings. Syndicate members nominated by the education ministry and the UGC often allege that some universities never held syndicate meetings since their inception. Some universities do not inform the syndicate members about their academic and other activities. SHIFTING TO OWN CAMPUS

The Private University Act-2010 makes

it compulsory for a private university to have a permanent campus within five years of launching, a condition which only 17 universities met, the report said. Eleven universities are running their

academic activities on the land owned by their foundations while six more are building infrastructures on the land belonging to their foundations. Four universities are constructing

infrastructures on their own land while 12 have bought land but have not started construction. Another 11 universities bought land

but they neither applied to the authorities for using it nor prepared the design. Two universities have land less than the specified amount and one university is tangled in land disputes, according to the UGC. Despite repeated warnings, a num-

ber of universities did not shift to their own campuses. Eventually, the government this year set September 15, 2015, as the new deadline for the universities to comply with this. **OUTER CAMPUS**

Nine private universities are illegally

running outer campuses in and outside the capital, after securing stay orders from the High Court. They are Darul Ihsan University,

Bangladesh, Atish Dipankar University of Science & Technology, Southern University Bangladesh, Northern University Bangladesh, The People's University of Bangladesh, BGC Trust University Bangladesh and IBAIS University. These universities are doing busi-

ness in the name of education by running such unapproved campuses in

district towns, affecting the educational life of the students, the UGC

"Allegations of selling certificates are also rife against these universities," it added.

Darul Ihsan University in Dhanmondi has many outer campuses in different regions of the country. Its board is divided into four groups, with each group running multiple outer campuses.

According to education ministry sources, this university has around 300 campuses scattered across the country. Prime University in Mirpur, Dhaka,

is operating its educational activities on its Uttara campus by obtaining a stay order from the HC. This university too has disputes within its trustee board. One group based in Uttara is running four unapproved campuses in Dhaka city, the report said. Asian University of Bangladesh operates outer campuses at the capi-

tal's Motijheel and in Khulna; Atish Dipankar University in Mirpur, Panthapath, Uttara and Purana Paltan; and The People's University at Purana Paltan and Pragati Sarani in the capi-Northern University runs outer

campuses in Rajshahi and Khulna and an unapproved campus in Banani with the help of a High Court order. IBAIS University has campuses in Uttara and Mohammadpur. Chittagong-based Southern

University of Bangladesh has three unapproved campuses in the port city. BGC Trust University Bangladesh in Chittagong also runs an outer campus in the city by securing an HC order, said the UGC report. LIBRARY, LABORATORY, RESEARCH

With a few exceptions, most private universities offer poor library and laboratory facilities, according to the report. The laboratories are not spacious

enough; nor are the apparatus and

chemicals adequate. The libraries do not have adequate books and research journals essential for quality education. The private universities are not much interested in research activities "The universities do not allocate

money for research and, as a result, the universities cannot confer MPhil and PhD degrees," it said, adding that only a few universities publish research papers.

'THINGS ARE IMPROVING'

When the Awami League government took office in 2009, only two private universities had their own campus and these universities used to be regulated under a 1992 law, Education Minister Nurul Islam Nahid told The Daily Star last night.

Things improved a lot in the past five years, he said, adding that more than 12 universities (17, according to the UGC) now had their own campus.

"But still there are some problems Prime University, Asian University of and we have some shortcomings. We are trying to discipline this sector. We are also trying to empower the UGC further so it can monitor the universities," he said.

> The minister said some universities were operating on illegal campuses by securing High Court orders. "We are trying to have these orders vacated by the court. We will then take action against them."

WTO deal sees impasse

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odds with his desire to open up the country's economy. "We note that the prime minister is

very focused on his signal of open to business and creating opportunities and therefore the failure of implementing TFA (Trade Facilitation Agreement) sends a confusing signal and undermines that very message that he is seeking to send about India," a US official quoted Kerry as saying. "While we understand India's food

security concerns, the trade facilitation agreement is one that will bring tremendous benefit, particularly to the world's poor. India's actions therefore are not in keeping with the prime minister's vision." Kerry urged India to work with the

United States to move the WTO process forward, the official said. Speaking on condition of anonym-

ity, the official also said Modi told Kerry that while areas of difference would always exist, "what is critical is what we do to enhance and build on Earlier, Kerry said the United States

wanted "try to really take the relationship to a new place", following a series of diplomatic spats with India.

Washington has little relationship with Modi, a Hindu nationalist who was refused a US visa in 2005 over allegations that he turned a blind eye to anti-Muslim riots as leader of the western state of Gujarat. The United States caught up with

But US officials, who value frank and free-wheeling relationships with foreign leaders, are unsure what to expect from Modi who is known for his austere, solitary lifestyle and is not believed to be at ease in English. Modi is seen as a very different char-

acter than his predecessor Manmohan Singh, a bookish Oxford-educated economist with whom President Barack Obama had found a kinship. The United States has sought to put relations with India on firmer ground

after the Modi visa row and a crisis in December when US authorities arrested an Indian diplomat for allegedly mistreating her servant, infuriating New Delhi. But new disputes have kept arising.

On Thursday, the WTO said that the 160-member body had failed to approve a landmark pact that would streamline global customs procedures. India had stalled the pact as it

pushed for the WTO to give the green light on the developing power's stockpiling of subsidised food. India says the policy is vital to help the poor, but rich nations charge that the practice distorts global trade. The United States voiced "disap-

pointment" and "regret" over India's stance, while India said it protested to Kerry over reports from former NSA contractor Edward Snowden that US intelligence had snooped on Modi's Bharatiya Janata Party while it was in opposition. US officials, however, have sig-

nalled that they do not want to create a new rift by renewing past concerns about Modi's track record on minority rights.

Umrah, told The Daily Star yesterday "Therefore, we will keep Dhaka city in that Tarique advised his mother to go that Fakhrul is yet to become the secreour main focus while waging the move-

BNP-led alliance eyes

ment this time. Our target will be the fall of the capital. Otherwise, the movement will not succeed," a joint secretary general of the BNP told The Daily Star last night. He too wished not to be

Saudi Arabia to perform Umrah late last month, she held several closed-door meetings with the party's second-incommand Tarique Rahman, who had flown in there from London, over the movement and some other crucial issues. A BNP leader, who met Khaleda and

When BNP chief Khaleda Zia went to

tough on the government through the tary general of the party although more movement aimed to boost the morale of party grassroots. Against this background, BNP act-

ing secretary general Mirza Fakhrul Islam Alamgir yesterday left the coun-

try for Singapore for medical check-up. According to party sources, Fakhrul's main target is to talk with Tarique, who has been living in London since 2008, over the antigovernment movement.

If Tarique agrees, Fakhrul will fly to London from Singapore to meet him. It is an open secret in the party that her elder son Tarique during the Tarique does not trust Fakhrul.

than three years have passed since he was made the acting secretary general after the demise of Khandaker Delwar Hossain, BNP leaders believe. According to party insiders, the

It is because of Tarique's opposition

main aim of Fakhrul's Singapore visit is to convince Tarique and to win his trust. If Tarique decides not to meet him, Fakhrul will try other alternatives to communicate with the BNP senior vice-chairman. To ensure a tougher movement in

the capital, Khaleda brought changes in her party's Dhaka city unit in last month.