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Emergency response plan ready: govt

Experts see challenges; screening only Chinese nationals at airports is unscientific: China envoy

MOUDDUD AHMED SUJAN

The government has finalised an emergency preparedness plan to tackle any possible spread of coronavirus in the country.

The plan has been prepared taking into account four levels of emergency; the current level for Bangladesh is one, meaning it has so far no confirmed coronavirus cases.

For this level, the health department is keeping suspected coronavirus patients isolated and carrying out tests on them. All the hospitals in the country have been instructed to have at least five isolated beds for possible coronavirus patients, said Prof Abul Kalam Azad, director general of the Directorate General of Health Services (DGHS).

If the present situation worsens, the emergency level will increase and so will the preparedness, Prof Kalam explained.

The government move comes as coronavirus continues to spread across the world, claiming lives every day.

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CORONAVIRUS OUTBREAK

3,217 DEATHS

94,000 CONFIRMED CASES IN 81 COUNTRIES

US funds for 25 countries including Bangladesh that are either affected or at high risk of spread

Virus risk is there, but don't panic

Says Dr ABM Abdullah

ROBAB ROSAN

The risks of a coronavirus outbreak in Bangladesh cannot be denied, but people should not panic, noted physician ABM Abdullah said yesterday.

"The virus has spread across the world. However, in many countries the number of infected people is only one or two," Abdullah said while told The Daily Star.

"It's true that the number of infections

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A rickshaw-van going against traffic on the U-loop designed for motor vehicles only. This not only slows down traffic but also creates risks of crashes. The photo was taken at the capital's Badda yesterday.

PHOTO: ANISUR RAHMAN

Padma bridge, rail link work affected

Say project officials

REZAUL KARIM BYRON and TUHIN SHUBHRA ADHIKARY, back from the project sites

The outbreak of coronavirus in China has begun affecting two mega projects in Bangladesh -- the Padma Multipurpose Bridge Project and the Padma Bridge Rail Link Project -- "to some extent", project officials said.

A shortage of Chinese staff involved in these two fast-track projects and disruption of the regular import of construction materials from China are the main reasons behind it, they said.

At least two officials involved in the

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Protective gear in short supply: WHO

AGENCIES

Countries rushed to protect their supply of masks yesterday as panic buying, hoarding and theft spread over fears of the deadly coronavirus epidemic, with global health officials warning that stocks of protective gear were rapidly dwindling.

The disease, which first emerged in China, is appearing in new countries almost every day, with Iran, Italy and South Korea facing growing caseloads.

The death toll in Italy soared to 79, with more than 2,500 people

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- ITALY CLOSES ALL SCHOOLS
- INDIA'S INFECTIONS JUMP TO 28 CASES, 27,000 UNDER SURVEILLANCE
- IRAN TO TEMPORARILY FREE 54,000 INMATES FROM PRISON
- RESEARCHERS IDENTIFY TWO CORONAVIRUS TYPES
- WORLD BANK UNVEILS \$12B AID PACKAGE TO HELP POOREST NATIONS

BGB cannot shrug off responsibility

Says NHRC over killing of 5; camp withdrawn

STAR REPORT

The authorities of Border Guard Bangladesh cannot avoid the responsibilities in the killing of five people in Khagrachhari's Matiranga upazila, thinks the National Human Rights Commission.

The rights body came up with the statement yesterday, a day after a deadly clash that left five people, including

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Why the judge was removed

HC asks govt; law minister says it was done to control situation in Pirojpur

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The High Court yesterday questioned the legality of a government decision to stand release District and Sessions Judge of Pirojpur Md Abdul Mannan.

The decision was made on Tuesday, hours after he passed an order to send former Awami League lawmaker AKMA Awal and his wife Laila Parvin to jail in three corruption cases.

The HC issued a rule asking the law and justice division secretary of the law ministry to explain within a week as to why the decision about Judge Mannan should not be declared illegal.

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BUSINESS

Misinvoicing costs Bangladesh dearly

Bangladesh lost a staggering \$7.53 billion on an average annually between 2008 and 2017 to trade-misinvoicing during its international commerce with trading partners, said the Global Financial Integrity report.

The loss accounted for 17.95 percent of the country's international trade with all trading partners. The country lost \$11.51 billion in 2015, the latest year for which data was available for Bangladesh. No such data was available for the country for 2014, 2016 and 2017.

STORY ON B1

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