

Political deadlock drags on in Israel

A countdown to a fourth election in Israel in more than a year of political deadlock began yesterday after Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and main rival Benny Gantz missed a deadline to form a government. Both men had pledged to join forces in a national emergency government to battle the coronavirus crisis. But they could not agree on terms for power-sharing. Israel's parliament now has three weeks to agree on a candidate for the task. If no nominee is chosen in the next 21 days or if the appointee does not form a government within two weeks of being chosen, parliament will automatically dissolve and a new election will be held.

Google launches 'journalism relief fund'

Google said it will launch an emergency fund to help local news outlets struggling to maintain operations in the face of the coronavirus pandemic. The internet giant gave no specific figure for its fund, but said it would offer grants ranging from the "low thousands of dollars" for the smallest operations to "low tens of thousands for larger newsrooms." The move comes with the media sector facing deep cutbacks resulting from the global consumer lockdown, an intense economic slump and a retrenchment in advertising revenues that many news outlets depend on. Google News vice president Richard Gingras said the fund will open to outlets "producing original news for local communities during this time of crisis," with applications due by April 29.

WWII veteran, 99, raises £12m for UK health workers



A 99-year-old British World War II veteran yesterday completed 100 laps of his garden in a fundraising challenge for healthcare staff that has captured the heart of the nation, raising more than £12 million. "Incredible and now words fail me," said Tom Moore, a captain who served in India, after finishing the laps of his 25-metre (82-foot) garden with the help of his walking frame. Moore initially set himself the goal of raising £1,000 for a National Health Service charity in time for his 100th birthday at the end of the month. But his efforts have made him a star in his own country and abroad. The final lap of his garden in Bedfordshire, south England, was met with a guard of honour from the Yorkshire Regiment and broadcast live on British TV.



A police officer along with social worker BK Sharma distribute vegetables to people in need during a government-imposed nationwide lockdown in Amritsar. Photo was taken Wednesday.

PHOTO: AFP

SPREAD OF CORONAVIRUS IN INDIA BY TABLIGHI JAMAAT

Culpable homicide charge against leader Saad Kandhalvi

REUTERS, New Delhi

India has brought charges of culpable homicide not amounting to murder against the chief of a Muslim seminary for holding a gathering last month that authorities say led to a big jump in coronavirus infections, police said yesterday.

The headquarters of the Tablighi Jamaat group in a cramped corner of Delhi were sealed and thousands of followers, including some from Indonesia, Malaysia and Bangladesh, were taken into quarantine after it emerged they had attended meetings there in mid-March.

Police initially filed a case against Muhammad Saad Kandhalvi, the chief of the centre, for violating a ban on big gatherings but had now invoked the law against culpable homicide, a police spokesman said.

"Delhi police had filed a first information report earlier against the Tablighi chief, now section 304 has been added," the officer

said, referring to culpable homicide in the penal code, which carries a maximum punishment of a 10-year prison term.

Authorities said at the beginning of the month that a third of the nearly 3,000 coronavirus cases at that time were either people who attended the Tablighi gathering or those who were later exposed to them.

India's tally of coronavirus infections has since jumped to 12,380, including 414 deaths, as of yesterday.

Officials have rejected suggestions they were unfairly targeting the Muslim community, but said they had to rebuke the group because it had behaved irresponsibly by ignoring social-distancing rules.

Pakistan has recorded 6,505 cases according to its latest data, a jump of 520 over the previous day. About 60 percent of Pakistan's cases load was linked to the Tablighi or were people who had gone on religious pilgrimages to Saudi Arabia and Iran, officials said.

Only a vaccine can bring back normalcy

Says UN chief Guterres

AFP, United Nations

A Covid-19 vaccine may be the only thing that can bring back "normalcy," UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres said Wednesday, hoping for just that before the end of the year.

"A safe and effective vaccine may be the only tool that can return the world to a sense of 'normalcy,' saving millions of lives and countless trillions of dollars," he added during a video conference with the 50 or so African countries that are members of the United Nations.

He called for its accelerated development and accessibility to all, adding it must have a "universal global benefit" and "allow us to control the pandemic."

"We need an ambitious effort to ensure that international stakeholders operate through a harmonized, integrated and leveraged approach to maximize the speed and scale needed for the universal deployment of such a vaccine by the end of 2020," he insisted.

Guterres said his appeal on March 25 for \$2 billion in donations for a comprehensive UN humanitarian response to the pandemic had so far raised about 20 percent of that amount.

CORONAVIRUS PANDEMIC

LATEST UPDATES

DEATH TOLL NEARS 140,000

The worldwide death toll from the novel coronavirus pandemic rose to 137,500 yesterday, according to a tally compiled by AFP at 1100 GMT from official sources. More than 2,083,820 declared cases have been registered in 193 countries and territories. In the United States, the death toll stood at 30,985 with 639,664 infections. Italy is the next most-affected country with 21,645 deaths from 165,155 infections. It is followed by Spain with 19,130 fatalities from 182,816 confirmed infections, France with 17,167 deaths and 147,863 infections and Britain with 12,868 deaths from 98,476 cases.

US CASES HAVE 'PASSED PEAK'

President Donald claimed that the US cases had "passed the peak" of the crisis despite a record daily death toll. He promised swift "guidelines" on reopening parts of the country, suggesting less-affected states could ease restrictions before May 1.

JAPAN EXPANDS EMERGENCY

Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe yesterday expanded a state of emergency due to the coronavirus to cover the whole country to stem the growing spread of the disease. The declaration allows regional governors to urge people to stay indoors, but with no punitive measures or legal force, the measure is far weaker than strict lockdowns seen in other parts of the world.

GERMANY TO EASE RESTRICTIONS

Germany has achieved a "fragile intermediate success" in its fight against the coronavirus and will take small steps out of lockdown with the partial reopening of shops next week and schools from May 4. Social distancing rules would remain in place until May 3.

106-YR-OLD BEATS COVID-19

A 106-year-old great-grandmother, thought to be the oldest patient in Britain to beat the novel coronavirus, was discharged from hospital to applause from nurses and health workers. Connie Titchen, from Birmingham, in central England, battled the virus for just under three weeks and was given a clean bill of health by medics at City Hospital.

AUSTRALIA TO KEEP RESTRICTIONS

Australia will retain restrictions on public movement for at least four more weeks, Prime Minister Scott Morrison said yesterday, dashing speculation the country's sustained low growth in new cases could spur a quicker return to normal. Australia has averted the high numbers of coronavirus casualties reported in other countries around the world after closing its borders and imposing strict "social distancing" measures for the past month.

SOURCE: AFP, REUTERS

More relief rice

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A case was filed with Babuganj Police Station accusing four people, including the chairman, in this connection.

Police detained a trader for selling relief rice in Sirajganj's Chowhali upazila on Wednesday night.

Over 40 sacks of such rice were recovered from the trader's warehouse and a UP member's house.

A case was lodged against rice trader Abu Bakar of Jotgari Bazar and UP member Rafiqul Islam of Khaskaulia Dakshinpara village, said Rashidul Hasan Biswas, OC of Chowhali Police Station, adding that the UP member went into hiding.

In Bogura, police held Mirza Golam Hafiz Sohag, BNP-backed chairman of Majhihato Union Parishad, for storing nine sacks, containing 330kg of rice, at home in Shibganj upazila on Wednesday evening.

Mizanur Rahman, OC of Shibganj Police Station, said the case statement would be sent to the Anti-Corruption Commission office in Bogura.

In another incident, police seized 14 sacks of relief rice from a closed shop at Galagaon Bazar in Mymensingh's Tarakanda yesterday afternoon.

Acting on a tip-off, a police team raided the shop of rice trader Emdadul Haque and recovered the rice, said Abul Khayer, officer-in-charge of Tarakanda Police Station.

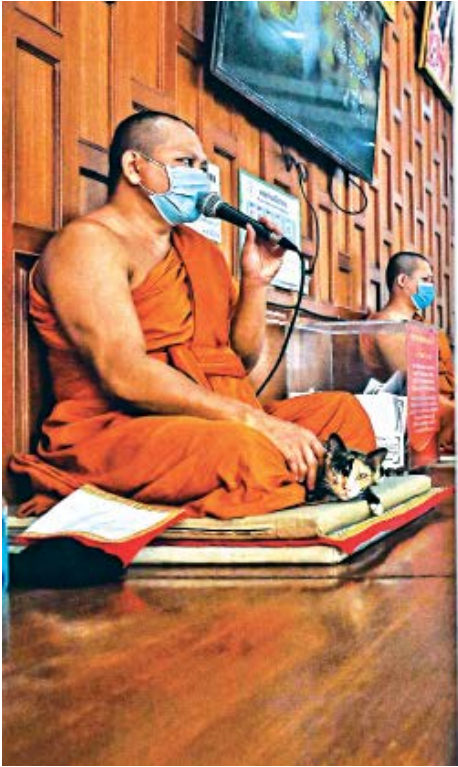
But the trader managed to flee, the OC added.

Besides, a mobile court recovered 11 sacks of such rice from the possession of a dealer of Muktagachha upazila on Wednesday evening. The court jailed him for three days and fined him Tk 30,000.

In two other incidents in the upazila, police rescued 47 sacks of rice from the possession of a dealer in Dagaon and 21 sacks of rice from the possession of two other dealers in Tarati union in the morning.

Two separate cases were lodged.

Our correspondents from Barishal, Bogura, Pabna, and Mymensingh contributed to this report.



Buddhist monks conduct prayers behind a plastic screen, as a preventive measure against the spread of the Covid-19 coronavirus, at Wat Samian Nari temple in Bangkok on Wednesday.

PHOTO: AFP

Workers forced to dismantle ships

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five thousands workers left stranded at various labour camps and forced to join amid fear of being affected by coronavirus.

"Many of the workers left Sitakunda for their homes. We could not do so because of the absence of vehicles on the streets. A colleague of them died in February with coronavirus symptoms. In such a dire situation, we are forced to work from today", he said.

Usually, there were no safety gears for the workers. Due to Coronavirus, the situation turned even worse for the workers as there is no mask, PPE, gloves, and other safety gears, the workers who have been working for a decade or more in ship-breaking yards told The Daily Star.

Mohammad Abu Taher, president of BSBA, said that they kept their yards closed for the last 10 days but began the operations from yesterday at 60 yards.

Asked why they restarted their operation after a pause, he said they did it for the workers who were going through hardship due to the shutdown.

He said there was no government instruction regarding keeping operations close. As many of the workers living in hardship and there were chances for

materials to be stolen if yards suspends operations, they restarted their activities.

He claimed to have ensured all safety measures for workers.

AKM Shamsul Arefin, additional secretary of the ministry of industry, said that he saw no problem in starting the yards' operations.

"It is the workers who urged to restart the works as they could not go home for long distances. There are at least 5,000 workers who are living in dearth of daily needs. Besides, the yard owners have bank loans which they need pay", he said.

He said if they follow the health advisory issued by the government there would be no problem at all.

Mohammed Ali Shahin, coordinator of YPSA (Young Power in Social Action), a platform which monitors ship-breaking activities, told The Daily Star that most ship-breaking yards normally do not have arrangement for occupational safety except few.

"There are enough reason to be doubtful regarding Coronavirus safety issues where normal occupational safety is not followed and maintained. We urge government to step up for workers safety and contain the pandemic", he urged.

Indian hospital segregates patients

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nearly 13 straight years from 2001 before he became India's prime minister in 2014.

When Al Jazeera called Jayanti Ravi, the principal secretary of health in the Gujarat government, about the segregation of patients on religious lines, her personal assistant took the call and suggested we speak to Dr Sanjay Solanki, the resident medical officer at the hospital.

"I have no idea," said the personal assistant, without revealing his name.

Solanki, in turn, asked Al Jazeera to speak to Rathod. "He is the right person to talk to," he said.

Rathod did not answer the phone calls made by Al Jazeera.

Meanwhile, Gujarat's Health Minister and Deputy Chief Minister Nitin Patel told Al Jazeera that nothing of that sort had happened.

"Whatever is needed to give people the best possible treatment is being done," he said and hung up.

The state's health department also put out an official statement, calling reports of separate wards for Muslims and Hindus "baseless".

"Patients are kept in different wards based on their medical condition, severity of the symptoms and age, purely based on the advice of the treating doctors. Therefore, reports appearing in certain media are totally baseless and misleading," it said.

However, in The Indian Express report, a patient was quoted as saying, "On Sunday night, the names of 28 men admitted in the first ward (A-4) were called out. We were then shifted to another ward (C-4)."

"While we were not told why we were being shifted, all the names that were called

out belonged to one community. We spoke to one staff member in our ward and he said this had been done for 'the comfort of both communities'."

According to a doctor quoted in another report by The Hindu newspaper, "Certain patients from the majority community were not comfortable being in the same ward with patients of the minority community."

"After some patients complained, it was decided to segregate them on temporary basis," the doctor told the newspaper on condition of anonymity.

When Ahmedabad-based sociologist Ghanashyam Shah was asked by Al Jazeera if the hospital segregating patients according to their religion amounted to apartheid, he replied, "Absolutely."

"Knowing Gujarat, I am not surprised it has happened," he said.

"It is a very obvious kind of thing. The fake news propaganda around Muslims spreading the virus is probably rampant across India. But I can see it is visible in Gujarat."

Shah was alluding to a widespread Islamophobia fuelled by the coronavirus pandemic, especially after Tablighi Jamaat, a Muslim missionary group, organised a congregation in New Delhi in March.

The congregation was later linked to hundreds of COVID-19 positive cases across the country, triggering a nationwide hunt to trace the attendees.

On Wednesday, Tablighi Jamaat chief Maulana Saad Kandhalvi was charged with "culpable homicide".

Earlier this month, the World Health Organization had warned against any religious profiling of coronavirus patients by the governments across the world.



Bangladesh Railway

Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh

Office of the Project Director

Bangladesh Railway

Outer Circular Road, Kamalapur, Dhaka-1217

No. PD/DTJDLPTENDER/WD2.904

Package No. WD2: Design, Supply, Installation and Testing-Commissioning of Computer Based Interlocked Signaling system at 7 (seven) stations including interlocking of selected level crossings and installation of optical fibre cable based telecommunication system for block operation and CTC interface work (turnkey works) in connection with Construction of 3rd and 4th Dual Gauge Track in Dhaka-Tongi Section and Doubling of Dual Gauge Track in Tongi-Joydebpur Section.

Dated: 15.04.2020

Ref:

1. IFT No. PD/DTJDLPTENDER/WD2-831; Dated 20.02.2020

2. Corrigendum 1: PD/DTJDLPTENDER/WD2-859; Dated 08.03.2020

3. Corrigendum 2: PD/DTJDLPTENDER/WD2-884; Dated 19.03.2020

Corrigendum No. 3 (dated: 15.04.2020)

Sl No. of IFT		Provision as per Corrigendum-2	Provision as per Corrigendum-3
17.	Tender last selling date	18.05.2020 (during office hours)	08.06.2020 (during office hours)
18.	Tender closing date and time	Date 19-05-2020 Time Up to 12.00 hrs BST	Date 09-06-2020 Up to 12:00 hrs BST
19.	Tender opening date and time	Date 19-05-2020 Time At 12:30 hrs BST	Date 09-06-2020 At 12:30 hrs BST
21.	Place/date/time of pre-tender meeting	Conference Room 'Meghna' (5th Floor), Rail Bhaban, 16, Abdul Gani Road Dhaka. Date & time 23.04.2020 at 11:00 hrs BST	Conference Room 'Meghna' (5th Floor), Rail Bhaban, 16, Abdul Gani Road, Dhaka. Date & time: 10.05.2020 at 11:00 hrs BST

All other terms and conditions of the tender notice shall remain unchanged.



Md. Shahidul Islam
Project Director

Construction of 3rd and 4th Dual Gauge Lines in Dhaka-Tongi Section and Doubling of Dual Gauge Line in Tongi-Joydebpur Section Project

Cell phone: +88 01711506113

E-mail: pd_3rd4th@railway.gov.bd

GD-742