

160 new

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installation of beds is underway,” he said, adding, “The hospital will be managed in collaboration with the government.”

“A total of 12 ventilators will be set up for treating patients in the hospital,” he said.

Contacted, Dr Faisal Iqbal Chowdhury, general secretary of Bangladesh Medical Association, Chattogram, hailed the initiatives.

“Covid-19 patients should get all sorts of treatment including ICU support in the privately initiated hospitals free of cost,” he said, adding, “I will urge the government to make sure that patients can receive treatment in the hospitals free of cost.”

Dr Bidduth said patients will get treatment in Chattogram Field Hospital free of cost. “We have made a 10-member medical team ready to treat patients,” he said.

Dr Liakat said government would post doctors and health staffers in Holy Crescent Covid Hospital and bear the necessary expenses of maintenance.

Contacted, Dr Hasan Shahriar Kabir, Chattogram divisional director of Directorate General of Health Services, said the patients would be benefited once the two hospitals go on operation.

Meanwhile, a 10-bed ICU is going to open in Chattogram General Hospital by next week.

“A team from Dhaka is now working to set up the ventilators and we expect to open the unit at the end of this week or by next week,” said Dr Asim Kumar Nath, superintendent of the hospital.

Contacted, Chattogram Civil Surgeon Sheikh Fazle Rabbi said trained manpower will be posted in the hospital immediately to run ICU.

ICU among

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upazila in Kishoreganj was admitted to the hospital for kidney dialysis.

He underwent a dialysis the following day and the doctors found that the patient was suffering from mild fever, said the hospital sources.

Similarly, his sample was collected on that day it and he was tested Covid-19 positive on Sunday, said Dr Saiful Islam.

Later, the lone dialysis unit of the hospital was also locked down, he added.

Both the patients were sent to the nearby Covid-19 isolation ward of SK Hospital under the MMCH, said the physician.

Moreover, around 35 staff members of MMCH and 15 doctors involved in their treatments were asked to be in home quarantine, the doctor added.

WFP distributing

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of coordination to overcome this crisis. If the lockdown continues, as it is happening throughout the world, the sufferings will multiply soon.

Therefore, the district administration is grateful to WFP for supporting the host community of Cox’s Bazar,” he added.

WFP always believes that a collective effort is the key to dealing with a crisis like the spread of Covid-19, said Richard Ragan, the representative of the UN organisation to Bangladesh.

“Hence, to support people in the host community and in the Rohingya camps we have taken these initiatives alongside the Government of Bangladesh to mitigate the risks and impacts of this virus,” he said.

The distributions began this week and will continue on a monthly basis.

As more funding becomes available, WFP will be able to reach more people with further assistance including unconditional cash transfers, WFP further said in the statement.



During a time when maintaing distance is essential, commuters are huddled together in rickshaws and three-wheelers, and that too on a road where slow-moving vehicles are illegal. They are just calling in double the trouble. This photo was taken recently from Tongi-Ashulia-Zerabo-EPZ Road.

PHOTO: RASHED SHUMON

Barishal

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departmental action.

Barishal Divisional Commissioner Md Yamin Chowdhury told the Daily Star that the order was passed to maintain official discipline and practices.

On Saturday, defying the lockdown, some staffers of DNC in Barishal drew a crowd of conservancy workers and sold alcohol. At he time, the employees assaulted Kamal Hossain, video journalist of private TV channel Bangla Vision, after he went there to inspect.

Ensure loan

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to ensure mobility of agro-based labourers from different parts of the country during the Boro season with ensuring their health safety and availability of transportation.

It also demanded that a higher amount of paddy be procured directly from the farmers under government initiative.

It further demanded transparency and accountability in all government and non-government support schemes for farmers including the stimulus package.

The 56-member National Committee of RtFb is chaired by eminent economist and PKSF Chairman Dr Qazi Kholiquzzaman Ahmad.

Parts of Europe ease virus curbs

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waves of infections, warnings that life will not be back to normal for many months and deep concern over the devastating impact the virus is having on the global economy.

But even the smallest return to normality was welcome.

In the German city of Leipzig, fashion store owner Manuela Fischer said she was “incredibly happy” to be welcoming shoppers again.

In Norway, Silje Skiffell dropped off her boys Isaak and Kasper at a nursery in the north of the capital Oslo.

“He was so excited we had to leave the house early to come here and see the other children,” she said of four-year-old Isaak, her eldest.

“I almost cried, he was so happy to see his friends.”

Governments around the world are mulling how and when to ease lockdowns that have kept more than half of humanity confined to their homes.

The virus has so far infected more than 2.3 million people globally and killed roughly 165,000, with nearly two thirds of the victims in Europe, according to an AFP tally.

Germany, which has been hailed for keeping fatalities low despite a significant number of cases, was allowing smaller shops to reopen in some regions from yesterday.

HOPEFUL SIGNS

Larger shops and those in major German cities will open later as part of an attempted phased return to a more normal existence that will also see some students go back to school from May 4.

But officials are keeping a watchful eye, with Chancellor Angela Merkel saying yesterday she is “greatly concerned” that virus-fighting discipline among the German public may ebb.

Hard-hit Spain, where a nationwide lockdown has been extended, also said it would ease some restrictions to allow children time outside.

Spain yesterday recorded 399 coronavirus deaths in the last 24 hours, its lowest daily count in weeks, and authorities are starting to shut some makeshift facilities set up to relieve the overburdened health system, including a morgue at a Madrid ice rink.

France, which on Sunday recorded its lowest number of hospital deaths since March 23, also said a nationwide lockdown in force for a month was beginning to bear fruit.

“We are scoring points against the epidemic,” French Prime Minister Edouard Philippe said, adding a strong note of caution.

“To imagine that, because the situation has stopped worsening and is starting to improve, the epidemic is behind us, would be a mistake,” Philippe said.

In Australia, authorities in Sydney reopened three beaches for walking, running, swimming or surfing, while New Zealand announced that it will ease a nationwide lockdown next week, with Prime Minister Jacinda Ardern saying: “We

have stopped a wave of devastation.”

And in the United States -- the country with the highest number of deaths and infections -- the governor of hard-hit New York, Andrew Cuomo, said the outbreak was “on the descent”.

Many governments are anxious to get their countries up and running again, with huge parts of their economies shut down, millions thrown out of work and economists warning of a second Great Depression.

Spain yesterday became the latest country to warn of unprecedented economic hardship, with the Bank of Spain saying the country’s economy could contract by a whopping 13.6 percent this year.

ANTI-LOCKDOWN PROTESTS

In the United States, which has the more than 759,000 confirmed infections and nearly 41,000 deaths, some are increasingly chafing under stay-at-home orders and are taking to the streets to protest.

Anti-lockdown demonstrations over the weekend drew hundreds of people in several states, including Colorado, Texas, Maryland, New Hampshire and Ohio.

Many waved American flags, and some carried weapons. But others stayed in their cars or wore protective masks.

President Donald Trump fuelled another bout of fury over the weekend by lending support to the protests against the lockdown restrictions -- which medical experts say save countless lives.

In India, absent staff and broken supply chains scuppered efforts by some industries to restart yesterday.

Although the national lockdown has been extended until May 3, officials said certain key sectors could resume operations under strict conditions in a bid to stop the economy from haemorrhaging further.

In Brazil, President Jair Bolsonaro -- who has repeatedly claimed the virus threat is overblown -- joined hundreds of protesters in Brasilia who objected to state governors’ stay-at-home orders.

A BLEAK RAMADAN

Orthodox Christians meanwhile spent Sunday marking Easter with subdued ceremonies, with churches empty or worshippers forced to stand apart.

Muslims in the Middle East and beyond are also preparing for a bleak Ramadan -- the holiest month in the Islamic calendar -- which begins later this week.

Mosque prayers have been suspended and iftar feasts cancelled in many countries.

Several countries’ religious authorities, including Saudi Arabia’s Grand Mufti Abdulaziz al-Sheikh, have ruled that prayers during Ramadan and Eid be performed at home.

US oil prices dived to 22-year lows at just \$11 yesterday after crashing almost 40 percent in a market flooded with crude and slammed by evaporating demand in the face of the coronavirus pandemic.

Just before 1200 GMT, the US benchmark West Texas Intermediate (WTI) crude for May delivery tanked to \$11.04 -- the lowest level since 1998.

Devote

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Pakistan lost 5,400 officers and men in its fight against Mukti Bahini before December 1971

and another 3000 between December 4 and 16 of 1971 in Bangladesh, marking a total of 8,400 killed, according to the Indian Defence Ministry Annual Report. The number of Pakistanis wounded by Mukti Bahini is estimated to be 4,675.

YAHYA AN USURPER

The Pakistan Supreme Court has ruled that former President Yahya Khan’s assumption of power was an act of “usurpation, illegal and unconstitutional”.

The Court also holds that all legislative and administrative measures except those covered under the doctrine

of necessity taken by Yahya’s unauthorised and unconstitutional regime cannot be upheld on the basis of legitimacy.

RENEGOTIATION ON BONN-FINANCED

PROJECTS NEEDED

Finance Minister Tajuddin Ahmad today tells the visiting West German economic delegation that renegotiation on the ongoing projects in Bangladesh financed

by West Germany is necessary under the changed circumstances. Renegotiation should be made on common interests

and cooperation, adds the finance minister. The delegation also calls on the Minister for Power and Natural Resources

Dr Mafiz Chowdhury and discusses in detail early re-commissioning and servicing of the West Germany-aided 120MW Ashuganj Power Station

and supply of spare parts for the installation. They also discuss setting up of a training school to train power plant operators and technicians at Ashuganj.

REGULAR SUPPLY OF CRUDE OIL ENSURED

To meet the shortage of petroleum products in the country arising out of discontinuance of the contract for supply of crude oil to the Eastern Refinery entered into in

pre-Independence days, the government of Bangladesh earlier arranged one lakh tonnes of crude oil from India as grant-in-aid and now has arranged a further five lakh tonnes through India under normal

trade arrangement, says a government press note.

SOURCES: April 22, 1972 issues of Bangladesh Observer, Dainik Bangla and Ittefaq

First virus death in Nigeria

AFP, Lagos

Nigeria yesterday confirmed its first coronavirus case in the insurgency-hit northeast of the country, a medic with Doctors Without Borders who died from Covid-19.

16 murdered, suspect dead

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officers were alerted to shots fired in the town of Portapique, around 100 kilometres (60 miles) from Halifax.

Gun violence in Canada is far less frequent than in the neighbouring United States, and weapons more strictly controlled, but the killings were the country’s worst ever, exceeding the toll in 1989 when a gunman murdered 14 female students at Montreal’s Ecole Polytechnique.

“This is one of the most senseless acts of violence in our province’s history,” said Nova Scotia Premier Stephen McNeil.

Public broadcaster CBC quoted RCMP Commissioner Brenda Lucki as saying police know of at least 16 victims, besides the shooter.

“What has unfolded overnight and into this morning is incomprehensible and many families are experiencing the loss of a loved one,” Nova Scotia RCMP commanding officer, Assistant Commissioner Lee Bergerman, wrote on the force’s local Facebook page.

Bergerman said the dead included Constable Heidi Stevenson, a 23-year veteran of the force.

In addition to Stevenson, a mother of two, a male officer was injured and was in the hospital with non-life threatening injuries, Bergerman said.

The National Post newspaper said another victim was an elementary school teacher, citing a Facebook post from the woman’s sister.

Several victims were discovered both outside and inside a house in Portapique, sparking the manhunt through multiple communities, police said.

They’re breeding in construction sites

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grounds.

Shahnila also urged everyone to clean their own houses, gardens, roofs and roof gardens to eradicate Aedes mosquitoes, adding that everyone should use mosquito nets while sleeping.

She said they have given instructions to all civil surgeons of districts across the country to also prioritise suspected dengue patients when someone comes to the hospital with a fever.

It does not necessarily mean that a person coming in with fever is infected with Covid-19; the patient could be suffering from dengue as well, she said.

“We have distributed around 44,000 kits to 68 districts to distribute at upazila level in order to diagnose dengue,” she said.

New doctors in upazila hospitals were trained on dengue patient management in January, she added.

According to the DGHS data, 289 dengue-infected patients were hospitalised in different parts of the country since January, of whom 64 were outside Dhaka.

Brig Gen Mominur Rahman Mamun, chief health officer at Dhaka North City Corporation, said they are applying larvicide and adulticide every day.

“The search for the suspect ended this morning when the suspect was located. And I can confirm that he is deceased,” RCMP Chief Superintendent Chris Leather told a press conference.

Leather said that at one point, the suspect appeared to be wearing part of a police uniform and was driving a vehicle made to look like an RCMP cruiser.

FIRES BURNED

RCMP tweeted several times that he was not an officer and warned he was considered “armed and dangerous.”

“The initial search for the suspect led to multiple sites in the area, including structures that were on fire,” Leather told the news conference.

He said: “There are several locations across the province where persons have been killed.”

Leather said the gunman had exchanged fire with police at one point.

“Our officers were involved in terminating the threat,” he said, adding that the independent Serious Incident Response Team (SIRT), which probes certain incidents involving the province’s police, was now handling that part of the investigation.

SIRT said in a statement that a confrontation had occurred in Enfield, which is near Halifax airport, “resulting in officers discharging their firearms. The suspect was found to be deceased at the scene.”

Police said they had no indication of a motive and that the killer had acted alone.

“We believe it to be one person who’s responsible for all the killings and that he alone moved across the

northern part of the province and committed, it would appear, several homicides,” said Leather.

Several of the victims did not appear to be related to the shooter, he said, but added that the “the fact that this individual had a uniform and a police car at his disposal certainly speaks to it not being a random act.”

Leather said police would be investigating if there was any connection to the coronavirus, which has seen non-essential businesses closed under measures to combat the pandemic.

“That certainly is an aspect that we will look at, we’ll examine, but we have not yet determined if there is any link to the Covid-19 crisis,” he said.

Media reports said the shooter was a dentist with clinics in Halifax and Dartmouth. Dentists in Nova Scotia have been ordered to close unless needed for emergency procedures.

Prime Minister Justin Trudeau said in a statement that he “was saddened to learn about the senseless violence in Nova Scotia,” and he hoped for a full recovery of the wounded.

The National Post quoted Tom Taggart, a councillor who represents Portapique in the Municipality of Colchester, as saying the community was devastated.

He described the community as a “subdivision in the woods where people have acre lots along the shore,” and where Wortman owned three properties.

“It’s absolutely unbelievable this could happen in our community. I never dreamt this would happen here,” Taggart said.

In addition, they are also applying antiseptic through water browsers.

He said they are also focusing on construction sites, so that Aedes mosquitoes do not breed there.

Entomologist Kabirul Bashar of Jahangirnagar University said the light rain last week had helped the breeding of Aedes and it would take 15 days for the larvae to become adult mosquitoes.

Cleaning activities and awareness campaigns should be launched across the country, he added.

Train stations, bus stops, and police stations should be cleaned, he said.

The construction site owners should be very careful. At such sites, the authorities should use bleach in the ditches, containers and reservoirs, he added.

He pointed out that in union and upazila parishads, there is no equipment to control mosquito infestation.

Clear and stagnant water in discarded containers, flooded floors, water reservoirs, plastic drums at construction sites may eventually become sources of armies of mosquitoes in the coming weeks, he feared.

He also urged that necessary steps be taken to keep different government and private structures clean during this shutdown.

Create fund

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Meanwhile, the organisations said some steps undertaken to reduce the spread of coronavirus have unwittingly created a negative mindset against migrants. In cases, they are not allowed to stay in their villages, while some face harassment in accessing medical services.

“Some were attacked or faced extortion. In some localities, burials of deceased migrants were resisted,” the letter said, requesting the PM to issue a compassionate statement and strict directive to the administration to treat migrants with dignity.

They also protested the move by some countries to deport irregular migrants, saying under international law, it is incumbent on the countries to provide protection to all migrants irrespective of status.

The signatories to the letter include RMMRU, WARBE Development Foundation, Bangladesh Ovivashi Mohila Sramik Association, IMA Research Foundation, Manusher Jonno Foundation, Ain O Salish Kendra, Bangladesh Support Group, INAFI, BCWWF, YPSA, BOAF, Bastob, Rights Jessore, Devcom, Film 4 Peace and Change Makers.