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WHO warns of 'infodemic'

Says fake news threatens Covid-19 vaccine distribution

AFP, Paris

As early as February, with the global pandemic spreading fast, the World Health Organization issued a warning about an "infodemic", a wave of fake news and misinformation about the deadly new disease on social media.

Now with hopes hanging on Covid-19 vaccines, the WHO and experts are warning those same phenomena may jeopardise roll-out of immunisation programmes meant to bring an end to the suffering.

"The coronavirus disease is the first pandemic in history in which technology and social media are being used on a massive scale to keep people safe, informed, productive and connected," the WHO said.

"At the same time, the technology we rely on to keep connected and informed is enabling and amplifying an infodemic that continues to undermine the global response and jeopardises measures to control the pandemic."

More than 1.4 million people have died since the pandemic emerged in China late last year, but three developers are already applying for approval for their vaccines to be used as early as December.

Beyond logistics, though, governments must also contend with scepticism over vaccines developed with record speed at a time when social media has been both a tool for information and falsehood about the virus.

The WHO defined an infodemic as an overabundance of information, both online and offline, including "deliberate attempts to disseminate wrong information".

Last month, a study from Cornell University in the

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Most of the people who crowded Chattogram city's new Fishery Ghat area Wednesday morning are not following the health guidelines, as if the pandemic is over. Experts apprehend a second wave of Covid-19 in winter as infections are rising.

PHOTO: RAJIB RAIHAN

CLIMATE CHANGE

Dhaka seeks partnership with the UK

DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT

Dhaka seeks a strong partnership with the UK to address the fallout of climate change that poses a threat to lives and livelihoods of millions of people.

At a virtual meeting with UK State Minister Lord Ahmed on Wednesday, State Minister for Foreign Affairs Shahriar Alam expressed his expectation for a strong engagement of the UK both for Climate Vulnerable Forum (CVF) and Global Centre on Adaptation (GCA) South Asia.

Shahriar hoped that Bangladesh and the UK would build momentum ahead of COP26 due in November next year for a resilient world.

He said Bangladesh being a non-emitter country has constantly been bearing the burden of incessant carbon emission of the developed countries. For climate change mitigation and adaptation, Bangladesh

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Swechhasebak League leader beaten to death

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Cumilla

A ward-level leader of Swechhasebak League was beaten and hacked to death in Barura upazila of Cumilla yesterday.

The victim was Jahirul Islam, 36, general secretary of ward-5 Swechhasebak League under Barura municipality, Moinul Islam, a local Awami League leader and chairman of the upazila, told The Daily Star.

Abu Ishahak, chairman of Uttar Shilmuri union in the upazila, said the incident happened around 2:00pm when Jahir, son of Abdul Malek of Jinsar village, was taking part in an arbitration between two groups of people in Jibonpur Hashem market area.

"During the arbitration, one of the groups brought hired goons in a show of strength. At one point, a chaos ensued and Jahir was attacked with bamboo sticks and sharp weapons," he said, but could not confirm who carried out the attack or what was the arbitration for.

Doctors declared Jahir dead after he was rushed to Barura Upazila Health complex.

Ikbal Bahar Chowdhury, officer-in-charge of Barura Police Station, said the body would be sent to Cumilla Medical College morgue for an autopsy.

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FIRST YEAR OF BANGLADESH BANGABANDHU'S NATION-BUILDING CHALLENGES

Cargil calls on Bangabandhu

Shamsuddoza Sajan

NOVEMBER 27, 1972

BANGABANDHU, CARGIL TALK AID PROGRAMME

Prime Minister Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman and World Bank Vice-president Peter Cargil have a 45-minute talk at the Gono Bhaban today. Problems of flood control, food and the future aid programme are discussed at the meeting. The discussion also covers the bank's role in the development of Bangladesh. While discussing flood control problems, Bangabandhu emphasises on short-term projects along with long-term projects. He also emphasises on training and dredging of river channels.

It is learnt that the World Bank will take up short-term flood control and water development schemes in Bangladesh. These schemes could be taken up during the next fiscal year, pending the finalisation of the first five-year plan of Bangladesh.

JOURNALIST TEAM CALLS ON PM

A 10-member delegation on behalf of working journalists of Dhaka and Chittagong meets Bangabandhu at the Gono Bhaban today. In an hourlong meeting, the working journalists discuss various problems of the profession with the PM. Bangabandhu gives them a patient hearing. He also assures them of looking into their problems seriously.

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Up a notch

DU ranks 134th among Asian unives

DU CORRESPONDENT

Dhaka University has ranked 134th, climbing one step from last year, in a list of Asia's top 1,000 universities.

The data was published on the website of the UK-based Quacquarelli Symonds World University Rankings on Wednesday.

Bangladesh University of Engineering and Technology (Buet) ranked 199th.

Singapore National University was ranked the best.

A total of 11 universities of Bangladesh have made it to the list.

Bangladesh's North South University ranked 228th, Brac University ranked somewhere between 271st and 280th, Independent University between 350th and 400th, Daffodil International University, East West University and United International University between 401st and

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N Korean 'pole vaults to freedom'



INDEPENDENT.CO.UK

A North Korean defector has left authorities in the South baffled after claiming to have vaulted over an almost 10ft high fence during his audacious escape.

The man, in his late twenties, was interrogated upon his capture in South Korea and claimed he was a former gymnast who "jumped over the 3-metre fence" between the two countries in the demilitarised zone, a Seoul official told The Korea Herald.

The news has sparked urgent questions in South Korea over how the man was able to cross the heavily guarded border without triggering any alarms.

The defector, said to be a civilian, was described

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BUSINESS

Expand stimulus packages as second wave looms

Experts tell govt dialogue

The government should think of rolling out more stimulus packages to ensure a quick economic recovery and protect firms and people as the threat of a second wave of coronavirus infections looms, experts said yesterday. Given the uncertainties going forward, the government should be ready to expand the size of the stimulus packages, said Mercy Miyang Tembon, World Bank's country director, at a dialogue organised by the finance ministry.

STORY ON B1



PRAYER TIMING NOVEMBER 27

Fazr Juma Asr Maghrib Esha
AZAN 5-10 12-30 3-45 5-19 7-00
JAMAAT 5-45 1-15 4-00 5-22 7-30

SOURCE: ISLAMIC FOUNDATION

JOB SECURITY

Trump order can spark mass firings

Warn lawmakers, watchdog groups

REUTERS, Washington

US government civil servants could face mass firings under an executive order before President Donald Trump leaves office, and Democratic lawmakers, watchdog groups and unions are scrambling to block it.

Thirteen House Democrats, including Gerry Connolly, Chairman of the House Subcommittee on Government Operations and Majority Leader Steny Hoyer, on Tuesday urged appropriators in a letter to reverse the October order in their next spending bill.

The October 21 order allows agencies to reclassify workers involved in policy-making to a new "Schedule F" category without the job protections they have now. The agencies must complete their reviews by January 19, the day before President-elect Joe Biden's

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A black-capped kingfisher resting on a tree branch at Ukilmani in the Sundarbans. This species is found mainly near the coast in mangrove forests and along estuaries and rivers. The photo was taken recently.

PHOTO: COURTESY OF TAMZEED ALAM TAKEN



LAUNDERING Tk 236 CRORE

ACC sues 23

AB Bank board in 2015 okayed loan for 3 fake companies; money siphoned off to US. UAE, S'pore

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Anti-Corruption Commission yesterday filed three cases against 23 people, including former AB Bank chairman M Wahidul Haque, for their alleged involvement in laundering about Tk 236 crore to the USA, the UAE and Singapore.

The cases were filed following an enquiry for about three and a half years, said ACC sources.

In another development, the anti-graft watchdog yesterday sought information on the wealth of arrested Monir Hossain alias "Golden Monir" and his wife Raushan Akhter.

The ACC in two of the three cases sued 23 people while 21 were made accused in the other.

According to the case statements, three companies -- Semacity General Trading LLC, ATZ Communications Pte Ltd and Euro Cars Holdings Pte Ltd -- which only exist on papers, applied for loans from the private bank's offshore banking unit (OBU) in Chattogram.

Semacity, which claims to be a general trading company, is owned by UAE citizen Fatima Abdulla Mohammad Al Karrani and Bangladesh-born Canadian citizen ANM Tayebur Rashid, the statements say.

Rashid is also a co-owner of First Manhattan Energy Co situated in Chattogram. His business partner Bimal Raj Bastula is a Nepal-born US citizen. Rashid had a current account with AB Bank's OBU. He applied for a loan of \$20 million to the bank on May 03, 2015 for selling bitumen to KITM, a Nepalese company. Semacity and KITM had signed

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