



People line up to be tested for coronavirus in Beijing, China yesterday, part of a drive to test two million people in 48 hours as the city rushes to snuff out a new local cluster of cases believed to be linked to a more contagious virus variant.

PHOTO: AFP

Dispel people's

FROM PAGE 12 procuring vaccine shots at a higher rate and a private company is given the opportunity to make money, he said.

He then urged the government not to allow private companies to import vaccines before the government's free vaccination programme ends.

Private companies that have the permission to import and sell the coronavirus vaccines will increase the prices, he said.

"Dishonest businessmen [will] take the opportunity to make money by selling counterfeit vaccines."

Zafullah requested Finance Minister AHM Mustafa Kamal to allocate half a billion dollar for research on coronavirus vaccines.

Former vice-chancellor of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman Medical University (BSMMU) Professor Dr Nazrul Islam said the effectiveness of the imported vaccines might expire after six months.

The vaccine will create more effective antibodies than the ones created after people recover from Covid-19, he said.

Zakir Hossain, former director of Primary Health Care and Disease Control at the Directorate General of Health Services, said the vaccines will be effective against all strains of the virus.

Chairman of Pharmacology at BSMMU Dr Sayedur Rahman was also present.

Israeli strikes kill 4 civilians in Syria: state media

AFP, Damascus

Four civilians, including two children, were killed by Israeli strikes on the Syrian province of Hama at dawn yesterday, the Syrian state news agency SANA reported.

SANA cited a Syrian military source as saying that the country's air defences responded to Israeli missiles in the central province, "intercepting most" of them.

It later said "the Israeli aggression resulted in the martyrdom of a family, including a father, mother and two children", adding another four people were wounded and three houses destroyed on the western edges of Hama city.

The Syrian Observatory for Human Rights said the Israeli raids targeted Syrian military sites and resulted in the "destruction" of five of them in an area of Hama where Iran-backed fighters are present.

But the war monitor said the civilians were killed by "debris from one of the Syrian anti-aircraft defence

missiles that fell on a house in a densely populated neighbourhood".

The Israeli army rarely acknowledges individual raids on Syria and refused to comment on the latest reports when contacted by AFP yesterday.

Israeli strikes on eastern Syria killed 57 government and allied fighters on January 13, in the deadliest raids since the Jewish state launched its air assault on targets in the war-torn country, the Observatory said.

The Observatory is a Britain-based monitor that relies on sources on the ground in Syria for its reports.

Israel rarely confirms it has carried out strikes in Syria, but the army said it hit about 50 targets in the war-torn country in 2020, without providing details.

The Jewish state routinely carries out raids in Syria, mostly against targets linked to Iran in what it says is a bid to prevent its arch foe from consolidating a foothold on its northern border.

Rohingya

FROM PAGE 12 to 10 persons entering Bangladesh from a hilly area of Myanmar, the press release added.

As the BGB men asked them to halt and identify themselves, they opened fire at the BGB personnel, prompting retaliation and triggering a "gunfight", it adds.

At one point, the men fled the scene. Later, the BGB team found an injured man at the spot.

He was taken to Ukhiya Upazila Health Complex where the doctor declared him dead, the press release read.

Two BGB members were also injured who took primary treatment from Ukhiya Upazila Health Complex, the release claimed.

On October 21 last year, another Rohingya youth who was suspected to be a yaba trader was killed in a "gunfight" with BGB members.

15 more die

FROM PAGE 12 The DGHS handout said the daily detection rate was 4.17 percent while the overall rate is 15.04 percent.

Until yesterday morning, 475,561 patients - 89.58 percent - have recovered. "The mortality rate is 1.50 percent," the DGHS said.

Tricked

FROM PAGE 12 On information, a police team, headed by Abdulla Al Tayebir, officer-in-charge of Goalandia Police Station, conducted an operation inside Daulatdia brothel and rescued 14 women, aged between 18 and 30.

A case was filed under the Prevention and Suppression of Human Trafficking Act 2012 after the drive.

On Thursday, all 14 of the victims were produced before the court of the Chief Judicial Magistrate.

The court directed police to send them to the safe home run by Faridpur Social Welfare Department.

"We couldn't arrest pimp and her assistant as they escaped after being informed about the raid. We are hoping to arrest them soon," he said.

"Since last January till today, we have rescued 21 girls and women from the brothel," the OC said.

"Of them, we have handed over 7 girls and women to their family members," he added.

"We have already collected the contact details and addresses of their families and messaged the respective police stations to contact their family members. After the verification, they will be sent to their home," he further said.

Biden declares war

FROM PAGE 12 "One of the things we're going to do is to be completely transparent, open and honest if things go wrong," he said, noting he had discussed this with Biden minutes earlier.

"The idea that you can get up here and talk about what you know... it is somewhat of a liberating feeling," Fauci said.

In Brazil, the second worst-hit country in terms of deaths, was standing to finally receive two million doses of the British AstraZeneca/Oxford vaccine that were made in India. Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi yesterday sought to dispel fears and misconceptions over the efficacy and safety of Covid vaccines as the country vaccinated a million and a half of its health workers so far.

Modi's online interaction with vaccinators and vaccine recipients came in the backdrop of Indian authorities grappling with hesitancy to take the vaccination, with many health workers not turning up to get themselves inoculated at their assigned centres.

Meanwhile, Myanmar yesterday received 1.5 million doses of a Covid-19 vaccine supplied by India to inoculate 750,000 people, the first vaccine batch delivered to the Southeast Asian country as it fights one of the worst Covid-19 outbreaks in the region.

India is donating millions of doses of vaccines to a string of countries in Asia, drawing praise from neighbours and pushing back against China's dominating presence in the region.

Shipments of AstraZeneca's vaccine manufactured by the Serum Institute of India, the world's biggest producer of vaccines, have already gone to the Maldives, Bhutan, Bangladesh and Nepal.

In China, Beijing launched mass Covid-19 testing in some areas yesterday and Shanghai was testing all hospital staff as China battles its worst outbreak of the disease since March, with families fretting over Lunar New Year reunion plans amid new curbs.

Mainland China reported a slight decline in new daily cases yesterday - 103 from 144 infections a day earlier, reports Reuters. Meanwhile, Australia's second most populous state of Victoria eased social gathering restrictions yesterday after recording 16 days without any new coronavirus infections in the community, doubling the number of people allowed to gather at home to 30.

The country has fared better than most developed economies in the pandemic through swift border closures, lockdowns, widespread testing and social distancing. It achieved a fifth day of zero cases in the community nationwide yesterday.

Overcapacity a new

FROM PAGE 12 running round the clock. But most of the power plants approved by the government are peaking power plants. These plants run three to four hours each day during peak hours. These plants are the results of wrong planning.

"It is a mystery why the power generating capacity is being increased this way. Most of these plants were not constructed through solicited, open tender competitions."

There are allegations that some people built the small power plants just to take the money against the plant's generating capacity.

The government has to pay a 100MW power plant around Tk 90 crore per year, said a BPDB official preferring anonymity.

Tk 7,500 crore was spent in subsidies for power in FY 2019-20, which was almost as much as the capacity charges of private power plants.

The BPDB pays for the oil, gas, coal or any fuel used in the private and government-owned plants.

The authorities, however, hold different views on capacity.

"The annual surplus should not be counted. We will have to count the demand and maximum generation," BPDB Chairman Belayet Hossain told the Daily Star.

He said that the BPDB has the electricity generation capacity of around 20,000MW and generated 13,000MW.

"Of the capacity, 35 percent is needed for various reasons. We need five percent for the plant's own use, 10 percent for maintenance, 10 percent for spinning capacity and another 10 percent for system loss," said the BPDB chairman.

"We are doing what we have planned. We expect the demand to rise, we don't want to suffer shortage," he added.

Cold-related illness sees rise

FROM PAGE 12 hospital, are infected with different cold-related diseases. Another 193 adult patients are at other wards of the hospital. Most of them are suffering from cold-related diseases, said Resident Medical Officer Rakibul Alam Chayan.

In Nilphamari, as the cold spell continues, cold-related diseases affected people, particularly children and the elderly.

At the children ward of the 250-bed Nilphamari General Hospital, there were 24 patients against its 12-bed capacity who are suffering from acute pneumonia, diarrhoea, fever, cough, etc.

Hospital staffers are struggling to manage space for the patients and their attendants.

The elderly, suffering from asthma, bronchitis and other respiratory problems, are the worst victims of cold wave.

Sale of inhalers and nebulisers for treating those patients have gone up, said drugstore owners.

Asthma patient Rehana Begum, 60, of Sabuj para in Nilphamari municipality, said as her condition deteriorated, her family had to manage oxygen for removing her breathing difficulties.

On the Shimulia-Banglabazar

route, ferry service was suspended for around five hours from 3:00am yesterday due to thick fog.

Over 600 vehicles had to wait to cross the Padma river on both the sides, causing passengers and transport workers to suffer immensely.

"I reached the Shimulia ghat around 6:00am. I had to wait for over two hours to board a ferry to cross the river," said Zakaria Hossain, a Shariatpur-bound passenger.

On the Paturia-Daulatdia route, the ferry service was halted for around nine hours from around 2:30am due to poor visibility in the river.

The service resumed around 11:00am yesterday when the fog started disappearing.

Several hundred vehicles got stuck at both the ends of the river.

In Tangail, passengers and transport workers faced immense hardships as traffic operation was suspended on the Bangabandhu bridge on multiple times from Thursday night to yesterday morning due to poor visibility.

This resulted in long tailbacks on both the sides of the bridge.

[Our correspondents from Thakurgaon, Nilphamari, Manikganj and Tangail contributed to this report.]

Italy arrests alleged white supremacist for terrorism

AFP, Rome

A 22-year-old Italian linked to white supremacist groups was arrested yesterday on terrorism charges, Italian police said.

The man is accused of terrorist association and incitement to commit racist and anti-Semitic attacks, also through the spread of propaganda.

He was apprehended in the northwestern port city of Savona, a statement said.

Police also searched the homes of 12 suspected associates in other cities, including Turin in the north and Sicily's capital Palermo.

Italy's fringe, sometimes violent, far-right groups have roots in the country's Fascist dictatorship from 1922 to 1943 under Benito Mussolini.

7-year-old raped in Bagerhat

FROM PAGE 12 would look into the matter.

In the meantime, her daughter became physically and mentally weak. She informed Zakir and his father of the matter, but they did not take any action.

"I want justice for my daughter," the mother said. Pannu Fakir, officer-in-charge (investigation) of Bagerhat Model Police Station, said, "I have recorded the case based on the complainant's allegations."

"Immediately after the case was lodged, we have started drives to arrest the accused. We are preparing to send the victim to Bagerhat Sadar Hospital for medical examinations."

Butterflies

FROM PAGE 12 of air propulsion.

But they also found that the butterflies perform this move "in a far more advanced way than we ever realised", said co-author Per Henningson, a professor in the department of biology at Lund University.

At the moment the wings beat together they "were not just two flat surfaces slamming together", he told AFP.

Instead, they form a "pocket" shape believed to trap more air.

AUCTION NOTICE FOR OLD MOTOR VEHICLES

Sealed bids are invited from the interested bidders /institutions/persons subject to the general terms and conditions defined in auction tender documents for selling of old motor vehicles "As is where is" condition. (i) KIA-Sorento Jeep 2013, "As is where is basis"; (ii) Mitsubishi Pajero Sport 2012, "As is where is basis"; (iii) Axio G 2010, "As is where is basis". Auction documents will be available for collection at House # 15, Road # 12, Block F, Niketon, Gulshan-1, Dhaka-1212 or softcopy by sending request to this mail address auction@zfc-bd.com from January 24, 2021 to January 28, 2021 during 10.00 am to 5 pm. Sealed bids should be dropped in the tender box kept in the HFC office on or before 1pm up to February 01, 2021. Details terms and conditions are available in the "Auction Tender Document".

Manager Admin Hussain Farhad & Co. Chartered Accountants

Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh

Department of Public Health Engineering Office of the Executive Engineer Manikganj District, Manikganj Phone No. 027710398, E-mail: ee.manikganj@dphe.gov.bd

Memo No. 544

Date: 21/01/2021

Invitation for e-Tender Notice

e-Tender is invited in the National e-GP System Portal (http://www.eprocure.gov.bd) for the procurement of

Table with 3 columns: SL No., e-Tender ID, Work name. Row 1: 1, 535844, 535817, 535815, 429985, 538213, 536305, Construction of 2-storied RCC WASH Block having 4-storied foundation for MT & boys and FT & girls including all associated construction sanitary plumbing & electrical works & Primary Education Development Program-4 PEDP 4 & Installation of 100 x 38mm dia. deep tube well with submersible pump at different primary schools of Manikganj district.

Gazi Fatima Ferdous Executive Engineer DPHE Manikganj District, Manikganj

গণপ্রজাতন্ত্রী বাংলাদেশ সরকার. বাংলাদেশ পুলিশ. পুলিশ সুপার-এর কার্যালয়. শিল্পাঞ্চল পুলিশ-১, ঢাকা. পুনঃ দরপত্র বিজ্ঞপ্তি. "The Public Procurement Act-2006", "The Public Procurement Regulations-2008" ও তদীয় সংশোধনী মোতাবেক শিল্পাঞ্চল পুলিশ-১, ঢাকার ২০২০-২০২১ অর্থ বৎসরের ৩৩ ও ৪র্থ কোয়ার্টার (জানুয়ারি-জুন/২০২১) এর নিম্নবর্ণিত কাজের জন্য ঠিকাদার নিয়োগের লক্ষ্যে প্রকৃত বাংলাদেশী অভিজ্ঞ ঠিকাদার/সরবরাহকারী প্রতিষ্ঠানের নিকট হতে নিম্ন প্রকল্পের প্যাকেজ প্রতিযোগীতামূলক সীলমোহরযুক্ত খামে পুনঃ দরপত্র আহ্বান করা যাচ্ছে।