



The Daily Star

www.thedailystar.net

Your Right to Know

SECOND EDITION



REGD. No. DA 781

Vol. XXX No. 72

CHAITRA 11, 1426 BS

RAJAB 29, 1441 HUIJI

20 PAGES PRICE: Tk 12.00

"To save India, to save its every citizen, you, your family... every street, every neighbourhood is being put under lockdown."
INDIAN PRIME MINISTER NARENDRA MODI WHILE DECLARING 21-DAY "TOTAL LOCKDOWN"



"Enough is enough. Go home and stay home."
CANADIAN PM JUSTIN TRUDEAU TELLS CANADIANS FLOUTING QUARANTINE



"They are amazing people, and the spreading of the Virus is not their fault in any way, shape, or form."
TRUMP ON ASIAN AMERICANS AMID ANGER



Closer to lockdown

Govt suspends train, bus, launch services, domestic flights to check movement of people across the country

TUHIN SHUBHRA ADHIKARY and RASHIDUL HASAN

The government has decided to suspend all public transport services to slow the spread of novel coronavirus, inching closer to enforcing a lockdown.

It already suspended operations of all passenger trains, launches and domestic flights yesterday. Buses, minibuses, CNG-run auto-rickshaws and human hauliers will be off the roads from tomorrow.

Freight trains, cargo vessels, trucks and lorries carrying goods, medicine, fuel and perishable items will, however, operate as usual, according to directives from different ministries.

The measures came a day after the government announced closure of all public and private offices from March 26 to April 4 as part of its efforts to contain the spread of Covid-19. It also declared general holidays for the period.

On Monday afternoon, Cabinet Secretary Khandker Anwarul Islam announced a series of measures, including closing down the offices and limiting public transport services.

He also said the army would start assisting

the local administration at divisional cities and district towns from yesterday in ensuring social distancing and implementing other precautionary measures.

At the same press conference, Principal Secretary to the Prime Minister Ahmed Kaikaus had said the government would not close down public transport services so that low-income people could travel to their village home.

Replying to a query, he said the services would not be shut down completely.

After the announcement, a huge number of people thronged different bus and train terminals and the Sadarghat Launch Terminal in the capital to go home, posing risks of coronavirus transmission.

Our correspondents reported a similar situation in Chattogram.

The situation turned so bad that the health ministry had to step in and issue a notice yesterday, asking all to stay in isolation in their home during March 26-April 24.

The notice said Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina directed the authorities to announce general holidays for the period to prevent the spread of the virus, but many were

SEE PAGE 2 COL 3

SUSPENSION



BUSES, CNG-RUN AUTO-RICKSHAWS
from tomorrow till April 4



TRAINS
from yesterday until further notice



RIDE-SHARING SERVICES
from tomorrow till April 4



LAUNCHES
from yesterday until further notice



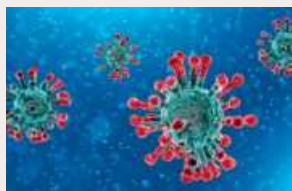
ALL DOMESTIC FLIGHTS
from early today until further notice



ALL EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS
March 17 to April 9



ALL GOVT AND PRIVATE OFFICES
from tomorrow till April 4



4 DEATHS

New Cases
6
New Deaths
01
Total Cases
39

Total tests **712**
92 in last 24 hours



Elderly man dies from Covid-19

Death toll now 4; 6 fresh cases confirmed

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Another coronavirus patient, aged around 70, has died while six new cases have been confirmed by the Institute of Epidemiology, Disease Control and Research (IEDCR).

With this, the number of deaths from Covid-19 stands at four and infected at 39 in the country. Of the infected, five were recovered.

Meerjady Sabrina Flora, director of IEDCR, shared the updates in her regular briefing to the media through videoconference yesterday.

The first coronavirus case was confirmed in the country on March 8 and the first death was reported on March 18.

Besides, a Bangladeshi housewife, aged around 38, died after being tested positive for Covid-19 on Monday in New York, reports Somoy TV.

SEE PAGE 2 COL 6

Govt to free Khaleda Zia for 6 months

Law minister says the decision taken on humanitarian grounds; she must stay home, can't leave country

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The government has decided to release BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia, suspending her sentence for six months.

Party leaders hoped that Khaleda, who is now receiving treatment at the BSMMU, would be freed today. But the authorities did not specify any date for her release.

At a press briefing at his Gulshan residence yesterday afternoon, law Minister Anisul Huq said she will be released from jail on humanitarian grounds.

Khaleda would have to stay at her Dhaka home and she would not be allowed to leave the country. The minister said the decision to suspend Khaleda's sentence was taken on Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina's instructions following an appeal by Khaleda's family members.

"Khaleda Zia's family members had appealed to the home ministry for her release from jail under



an executive order so that she could have treatment in London. The appeal was forwarded to me.

"Later, Khaleda Zia's brother Shamim Iskandar, her sister Selima Rahman, and her [Selima's] husband Rafiqul Islam met the prime minister and made similar appeals. I gave my opinion to the home ministry to suspend her sentence and release her from jail on condition that she cannot go abroad," he said.

In reply to a question, Anisul said the home ministry would decide when she would be released.

The government made the decision on Khaleda's release as per section 401 (1) of the Criminal Code of Procedure (CrPC), which allows such suspension of sentence, the minister mentioned.

If necessary, Khaleda could seek treatment from any hospital in the country. She would stay home for the six months, he said.

SEE PAGE 2 COL 1

Cops clueless about most of the returnees

Located, ensured quarantine of only 2.7pc of 6.58 lakh returnees in last 3 months

MOHAMMAD JAMIL KHAN

Amid mounting concerns over the spread of coronavirus, police have so far been able to locate and ensure the quarantine of only 2.7 percent of the total number of returnees from different countries in the last three months.

From January 21 to March 23, around 6.58 lakh people have come to Bangladesh from different countries, according to the Directorate General of Health Services database.

Of the returnees, around 2.98 lakh people entered the country in the first 21 days of this month, according to police data.

"We have managed to locate and ensure quarantine of only 17,834 returnees across the country so far," a high official of Police Headquarters (PHQ) told The Daily Star yesterday.

SEE PAGE 2 COL 3
CITY CORPORATIONS CAN'T FIND OVERSEAS RETURNES! -- PAGE 3

Home rush ups fear of spread

Experts say govt shouldn't have allowed people to leave capital

WASIM BIN HABIB and MOUDUD AHMED SUJAN

The government has repeatedly been asking people to stay home in efforts to contain the spread of the novel coronavirus. It also announced closure of all public and private offices to make people stay indoors.

But soon after the announcement, people in droves started leaving the capital for their village homes.

Yesterday too, hundreds of city dwellers boarded buses, trains and launches to head back home, oblivious to the risk of contracting the deadly virus.

Experts fear the government decision to close down offices, without adequate measures to make people stay indoors, could further help spread the virus throughout the country.

They also said it appears that the government steps to tackle the situation were not carefully planned, and there

has been a lack of coordination among different government bodies and experts.

On Monday, the government declared the shutdown effective from March 26 to April 4 to contain the spread of the virus. The announcement came following three deaths from Covid-19 and a steady rise in the number of positive cases.

Also, people were advised not to go out of home unless they need to collect food, medicine or receive treatment.

But what happened after the announcement was very shocking: people in hordes left for their village homes. The rush of homebound people forced Bangladesh Inland Water Transport Corporation yesterday to carry only passengers, instead of vehicles, on ferries on Shimulia-Kathalbari route in the Padma river.

World Health Organisation (WHO)
SEE PAGE 2 COL 3

Genocide Day today

BSS, Dhaka

The nation is observing the Genocide Day today, commemorating the brutalities and cowardly attacks carried out by the Pakistani occupation forces on the unarmed Bangalees on the black night of March 25, 1971.

This year, the government and political, social and cultural organisations, including the ruling Awami League, have suspended all programmes on the occasion of the Day in the wake of the deadly coronavirus outbreak.

National dailies have published special supplements and television channels are airing special programmes highlighting the significance of the day.

On the black night of March 25, the Pakistani military junta carried out mass killings in Dhaka as part of its blueprint to thwart the Awami League's assumption of office following the victory in the

SEE PAGE 2 COL 1



MADNESS: People wait in long queues to buy tickets at Kamalapur Railway Station. The city's train and bus stations saw a huge rush yesterday as many scrambled to leave the capital defying a government advice to stay at home during a 10-day general holiday beginning tomorrow. The government declared the holiday to slow down the spread of novel coronavirus.

PHOTO: SK ENAMUL HAQ

CORONAVIRUS PANDEMIC

India declares 21-day 'curfew'

2.6b worldwide in lockdown; 743 die in Italy breaking 2-day trend; travel curbs lifted in China's Hubei

AGENCIES

Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi yesterday ordered a 21-day lockdown of the world's second most populous country, following China's example to halt the coronavirus pandemic that has now forced more than 2.6 billion people to remain at home.

Despite warning signals from the United States and Europe that the unprecedented shutdown is pushing the economy towards collapse, more governments are opting not to risk allowing potential virus-carriers to go out and about.

With India, the highly contagious coronavirus has putting a third of the world on lockdown. Across the planet, the grim toll continued to mount, with close to 17,000 fatalities and almost 390,000 declared infections -- including more than 200,000 in Europe alone, according to an AFP tally.

With more than 200,000 cases, including 11,475 deaths, Europe is the continent worst hit by the pandemic, ahead of Asia with 98,748 cases and 3,570 deaths. The first outbreak was in China in December.

In Italy, the epicenter of the disease now, 743 new deaths broke two days of successive declines.

But the rate of officially registered new infections was just eight percent -- the same as Monday and the lowest level since Italy registered its first death on February 21. It had been as high as 50 percent at the start of March.

SEE PAGE 2 COL 1