



# The Daily Star

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Your Right to Know

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HELPING THE POOR

## Govt needs to do more, faster

Say experts as authorities prepare list of those in dire need of food aid, other support amid coronavirus fallout

WASIM BIN HABIB, REJAUL KARIM BYRON and MAHBUBUR RAHMAN KHAN

Anwara Begum was seeking alms sitting in front of her shanty at the capital's Bhashantek slum with the summer sun dipping towards the horizon yesterday.

The widow in her mid-60s received only Tk 150 from the slum dwellers in the previous two days, but yesterday turned out to be even more difficult for her. She got just Tk 20 the entire day.

"People are stuck at home and shops are closed. Who will give [me] money? I cannot even go outside the slum now," said a frustrated Anwara, whose day labourer husband died years ago.

For decades, Anwara has been depending on her daily income to survive. Asked whether she had any money left at home, she said she could not save anything after buying food and paying a monthly rent of Tk 1,200 for her 50 square feet room, where she now lives alone after marrying off her three daughters.

"If I don't earn much, I don't know how will I survive," she told The Daily Star.

Like Anwara, thousands of other marginalised people are left in a tight spot amid a 10-day government shutdown from Thursday. They cannot go out of their home and earn their living.

The government is enforcing the shutdown as part of its efforts to contain the spread of coronavirus, which so far has claimed five lives in the country.

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A volunteer pours hand sanitizer into the palm of a rickshaw puller to help him guard against novel coronavirus in the capital's Sadarghat area yesterday. *Shuddho Path*, a voluntary organisation, also gave out masks to the people from low-income families and sprayed disinfectant on rickshaws and motorcycles.

PHOTO: PRABIR DAS

## Two doctors among four new cases

70-yr-old man with virus-like symptoms dies in Jashore

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Four more people have tested positive for novel coronavirus in the country, taking the number of confirmed cases to 48, said the Institute of Epidemiology, Disease Control and Research (IEDCR) yesterday.

Of the four, two are physicians, said IEDCR Director Prof Meerjady Sabrina Flora at her regular press briefing on Covid-19.

They are aged between 20 and 60. All of them, except one, were infected after coming in contact with Covid-19 patients, she added.

Briefing journalists through video conferencing from the capital's Mohakhali, the IEDCR director urged people to follow the instructions of the government, IEDCR,

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## A plea from the valley of death

PORIMOL PALMA

Ignatius Rozario, a Bangladeshi living in Milan, is acutely depressed. The 45-year-old man who always likes to dress up and look sharp now has a black-and-grey beard after staying home for two weeks amid Italy's countrywide lockdown.

"Dead bodies and coffins are occupying the hospitals. Doctors are struggling to cope with the situation. Is there anything more tragic than losing both parents and not being able to see them for the last time?" Ignatius told The Daily Star yesterday.

"Lombardy in Milan is the place where the virus has struck the hardest. We are seeing the highest number of infections and deaths. This is something beyond my worst nightmare."

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## COMMENTARY

## Story of a 'circular' and its withdrawal

Is monitoring private TV channels a way to fight coronavirus?

MAHFUZ ANAM

We condemn the official who issued it, commend the one who withdrew it and ask the question why was it necessary?

When the whole world is in panic and our country is deeply concerned about the pandemic and when every part of the government machinery is being (hopefully) geared to face the challenge at hand, is this how the information ministry proposed to fight the coronavirus?

On Thursday evening, the ministry issued a circular, thankfully withdrawn a few hours later, announcing the formation of a cell to monitor whether private TV channels were broadcasting misinformation or rumours regarding coronavirus. If found guilty of doing so, the "cell" would immediately stop the airing of such programmes through the intervention of the ministry. Fifteen high officials -- four additional secretaries and 11 deputy secretaries -- of the ministry were assigned, each to monitor two TV channels.

The first question that comes to my mind is how will these 15 functionaries do the monitoring? How will they identify which news is "misinformation" and which one is a "rumour" and do so on a real time basis? What will be the criteria of their decisions? Is there a common definition of what constitutes "misinformation" and "rumour"? How will they handle "breaking stories"?

What these officials have been tasked with is virtually impossible to perform. We are afraid this will lead to

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## Factories can run but must ensure safety of workers

Govt to owners

REFAJET ULLAH MIRDHA

The government yesterday said the factories making protective equipment against coronavirus or working on previous orders can remain open.

However, the factories will have to ensure adequate safety measures for the workers, Department of Inspection for Factories and Establishments (DIFE) said in a statement.

The statement comes a day after Bangladesh Garment Manufacturers and Exporters Association asked its members to consider shutting down the factories.

The DIFE statement said different information regarding factory closure were being spread by different media outlets.

The factory owners are confused as to what they should do, it said.

The factories that have

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## Biman folds its wings

Suspends flights on all international routes

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Biman Bangladesh Airlines yesterday decided that it will suspend flights on its two remaining routes to London and Manchester from March 30 till April 7, marking a temporary halt to all its flights, both international and domestic.

Biman Managing Director and Chief Executive Officer Mokabbir Hossain disclosed the decision.

Biman will operate its next flights to London and Manchester on March 29 and fly back to Dhaka on March 30, he said.

After that, the suspension will be effective, he said, adding that they may extend the suspension, depending on the situation over the coronavirus outbreak.

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## STAY HOME, STAY WELL

## Build stronger emotional ties

MOHAMMAD AL-MASUM MOLLA

People need to have strong mental connection with each other at this time of social distancing, said a noted psychiatrist while talking about fighting coronavirus.

Mekhala Sarkar, associate professor of the psychiatry

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A health worker in hazmat suit stands with an ambulance driver and a child at the entrance to corona isolation unit of Dhaka Medical College Hospital yesterday. The driver and the child run the risk of being exposed to coronavirus as they are only wearing face masks.

PHOTO: ANISUR RAHMAN

## Foreigners flying back home amid virus scare

DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT

A large number of foreigners are leaving Bangladesh as the government has put the country on a 10-day shutdown since Thursday to prevent contagious spread of coronavirus.


Some foreign governments are also sending charter flights to fly their citizens from the country.

The diplomats of different countries met Foreign Minister AK Abdul Momen on Wednesday and informed him that some of their non-essential staffers wanted to return home, said a foreign ministry official.


Khalilur Rahman, additional foreign secretary, said the foreign ministry authorities told the diplomats that there was no issue at all if the foreigners wanted to return.

"We said they could use charter flights of Biman Bangladesh Airlines or other airlines. In case of other flights, the carriers will have to fly to Bangladesh empty," he said.

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# গণবিজ্ঞপ্তি



মুজিব বর্ষে স্বাস্থ্য খাত  
এগিয়ে যাবে অনেক দাপ

- বিদেশ থেকে আগত, তাদের সংস্পর্শে বা ইতোমধ্যে করোনাভাইরাসে আক্রান্ত ব্যক্তির সংস্পর্শে আসা সকল ব্যক্তিকে ১৪ দিন পর্যন্ত স্থানীয় প্রশাসন ও স্বাস্থ্য কর্তৃপক্ষের নজরদারিতে কোয়ারেন্টিনে যেতে হবে। এ ব্যাপারে সর্বসাধারণের সহযোগিতা প্রয়োজন।
- সকলের চলাচল সীমিত করতে হবে। গণপরিবহন ও সব রকম জনসমাগম এড়িয়ে চলতে হবে। জরুরী প্রয়োজন ছাড়া ঘরের বাইরে বের হবেন না। ঘরের বাইরে গেলে পরস্পর ৩ ফুট দূরত্ব বজায় রাখতে হবে এবং মাস্ক পরিধান করতে হবে।
- বাজারে মাস্কের সংকট থাকলে তিন স্তর বিশিষ্ট কাপড় ব্যবহার করে মাস্ক বানানো যেতে পারে। কাপড়ের মাস্ক সাবান পানি দিয়ে ভাল করে ধুয়ে শুকিয়ে নিতে হবে।
- ঘন ঘন বাজারে বা দোকানে না গিয়ে এক সপ্তাহের বাজার করে রাখা যেতে পারে। নিত্য প্রয়োজনীয় পণ্য মজুদ করা থেকে বিরত থাকুন।
- দর্শনাধীরা হাসপাতালে প্রবেশ করবেন না। জরুরী সমস্যা নেই এবং যাদের অস্বাভাবিক কয়েক সপ্তাহ বা মাস পরে করলেও চলবে, তাদের এখন হাসপাতালে ভর্তি হওয়া উচিত হবে না।
- জ্বর, সর্দি, হাঁচি-কাশি, গলাব্যথা বা গা ম্যাজম্যাজ ভাব হলে এবং শ্বাসকষ্ট না থাকলে বাড়িতে থাকুন। জ্বর কমানোর জন্য প্যারাসিটামল ও সর্দি-কাশির জন্য এন্টিহিস্টামিন (যেমন ফেন্সোফেনাডিন, ক্লোরফেনিরামিন ইত্যাদি) খেতে পারেন। গলা ব্যথায় কুসুম গরম পানি পান করুন। গরম পানি দিয়ে গড়গড়া করতে পারেন। বাড়িতে অতিথিদের আসা বন্ধ করুন। ঘন ঘন সাবান পানি দিয়ে কমপক্ষে ২০ সেকেন্ড হাত ধুতে হবে। হাত দিয়ে নাক, চোখ, মুখ ছোবেন না।
- ঘরে বসে চিকিৎসকের পরামর্শ নিতে কল করুন **১৬২৬৩ (স্বাস্থ্য বাতায়ন) বা ৩৩৩ নাম্বারে**। প্রয়োজনে সন্দেহভাজন করোনাভাইরাসে আক্রান্ত ব্যক্তির বাড়িতে গিয়ে নমুনা সংগ্রহ করা হবে।
- উপরোক্ত উপসর্গ থাকলে এবং বয়স ৬০ এর বেশি হলে বা অন্যান্য অসুস্থতা যেমন হাঁপানি, ডায়াবেটিস, উচ্চ রক্তচাপ, হৃদরোগ অথবা গর্ভাবস্থা থাকলে বা শ্বাসকষ্ট ও অন্যান্য জটিলতা দেখা দিলে দ্রুত চিকিৎসকের পরামর্শ নিন।



## স্বাস্থ্য অধিদপ্তর

### স্বাস্থ্য ও পরিবার কল্যাণ মন্ত্রণালয়