



The Daily Star



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BANGLADESH UPDATE 18 infected in 24 hours | **88** Total cases | **33** Total recovery | **9** Death | **GLOBAL UPDATE** 66,542 Total deaths | 252,615 Total recoveries | 1,225,360 Total cases

COVID-19 FALLOUT

Tk 72,750cr bailout plan

PM unveils the package to help offset economic shock



"I hope our economy will rebound and we could reach near the desired economic growth, if the stimulus packages, the previous and the fresh ones, could be quickly implemented."

UNB/BSS

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina yesterday announced four new stimulus packages of Tk 67,750 crore to overcome the possible economic shock from the ongoing shutdown enforced to prevent the coronavirus spread.

With the previously announced Tk 5,000 crore stimulus package, the amount of the whole package now stands at Tk 72,750 crore.

The announcement was made at a press conference held at her official residence the Gonobhaban which was arranged to brief journalists about the possible impacts of the coronavirus outbreak on the national economy and the ways to face the upcoming challenges.

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SEE PAGE 2 COL 3



A ferry crammed with mostly ready-made garment workers leaving Dhaka for home yesterday morning. The photo was taken at Mawa Ghat on the Padma. Hundreds of workers walked for hours to reach the city after the authorities had decided to open the factories, but they had to travel back to their villages as the owners changed their decision following widespread criticism. *Inset*, workers at a factory gate in Savar learn that the factories would remain shut.

PHOTO: COLLECTED, STAR

RMG owners divided when lives at risk

No specific govt guidelines on factory closure; workers left in uncertainty; some factories kept open

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Division among influential owners over the closure of garment factories and an absence of specific instructions from the government had sent thousands of workers into a dangerous scramble to get back to Dhaka.

These workers braved risk of coronavirus infection and trudged to Dhaka only to find their factories closed.

The apex body of the garment industry, Bangladesh Garment Manufacturers and Exporters Association (BGMEA), did not notify workers about the extension of the shutdown declared by the government on April 1.

Citing a lack of authority to close factories, it waited for the government's Department of Inspection for Factories and Establishment (DIFE) to make the announcement as factories need DIFE's permission to shut down.

But the DIFE did not make any such announcement, saying many factories had pending work orders and some were

SEE PAGE 2 COL 1

No entry, exit of people from capital

Countrywide shutdown extended till April 14

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

People are not being allowed to enter or leave Dhaka except for emergency, police said yesterday as countrywide shutdown imposed to slow down coronavirus transmission was extended until April 14.

"With exceptions to the emergency services, we are not allowing anybody to get into Dhaka or to leave Dhaka until further notification from the government," said a press release of Bangladesh Police yesterday.

"Bangladesh Police seeks cooperation of the respected citizens and all concerned for the proper implementation of the government directives and health instructions to this end," reads the release sent by Sohail Rana, assistant inspector general of police (media).

The decision came as a good number of people keep coming and leaving the capital although the government suspended operations of all modes of passenger services since March 26.

SEE PAGE 2 COL 3

COMMUNITY TRANSMISSION

It's there, but confined to 5 clusters: IEDCR

Country sees biggest daily jump of 18 new cases; one more death reported taking tally to nine

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The authorities have said that community transmission of coronavirus is indeed happening, but it is limited to five clusters across the country.

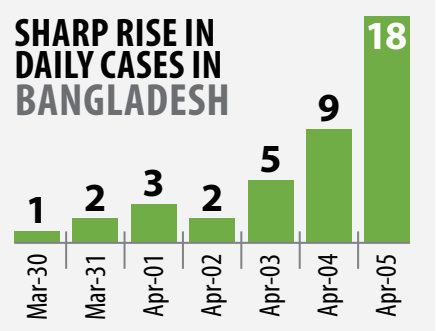
The admission comes after 18 people tested positive for the virus yesterday, highest in a single day.

"We are getting patients from different areas. There are community transmissions, but they are happening in clusters [specific neighbourhoods]. So, there is nothing to worry about," Prof Meerjady Sabrina Flora told a daily briefing via video conference.

The director of Institute of Epidemiology Disease Control And Research (IEDCR) said infections were largely concentrated, often within a family and its circles.

The Institute of Epidemiology Disease Control and Research (IEDCR) yesterday informed that one more coronavirus patient died, bringing the Covid-19 deaths to nine.

She announced that the labs tested 367 individuals in a single day and detected the



18 positive ones.

According to the IEDCR website, the patients are from 11 districts. In the capital, 52 patients have been detected in 30 areas. So far, 88 patients have been detected. The government reported the first three cases on March 8.

The man who died yesterday morning was from Narayanganj, Prof Flora said.

The capital's Bashabo and Tolerbagh

SEE PAGE 2 COL 3

3 die after showing virus-like symptoms

STAR REPORT

At least three people died with Covid-19-like symptoms yesterday in three districts -- Madaripur, Netrakona and Cumilla.

Besides, multiple houses were locked down and many families were home quarantined in different districts to prevent the spread of coronavirus.

In Madaripur, a 50-year-old man died with Covid-19 symptoms at his home under Koiaria union of Kalkini upazila early yesterday.

"The man was suffering from fever, cold and respiratory problems. But we are suspecting that he might have died of cardiac arrest," said Shafiqul Islam, civil surgeon of the district.

Besides, three others were admitted to the corona unit of Madaripur General Hospital yesterday

SEE PAGE 2 COL 3

Doomed, either way

RMG workers forced to make arduous journey to the capital only to find factories closed

ZYMA ISLAM and MD AMINUL ISLAM

If you knew that the beginning of next month, you would have no money, none at all, how badly would you try to save your job?

"Work starts from April 5. We don't know how you will manage to come from your villages but you have to join work, or there will be no salary." This is what Ronny*, a jacquard operator from Posmi Sweaters, claimed his line supervisor told him.

"I had called on April 3, to tell them that there is no transport and it is not possible for me to travel from Netrakona to Gazipur right now. But I was told that I must show up to work," said Ronny.

And show up he did. He set off from his home in Mohanganj upazila in Netrakona and reached Gazipur Chowrasta by walking, taking rickshaws, and hitchhiking on pickup trucks—covering a distance of around 150 kilometres.

He set off around 9:00am on Saturday morning and reached Gazipur late at night. But when an exhausted, sleep-deprived Ronny went to report for work yesterday morning, he found the factory gates locked. Security informed the workers that the shutdown had been extended till April 11 and possibly longer, said Ronny.

"Now, I am stuck here with no way to pay rent this month. I had to spend Tk 800 just to come to Gazipur."

Similarly, another male worker from Posmi Sweaters said he had called his assistant manager on the morning he set off. "I called him on April 4 to make sure that there is work the next day. He said yes, and so I started off from my home in Sreebordi upazila in Sherpur," he said.

His home is 160km from his factory. He, too, was met with closed gates yesterday morning.

"I walked around 40km... and whenever I could, hitchhiked on the back of pickup trucks. The police stopped us at several checkpoints along the highway, and made me get down from my vehicle eight to nine times," he said. The trip cost him over a thousand taka.

SEE PAGE 2 COL 6



A woman buying rice for Tk 10 a kg under the government's open market sale programme in the capital's Mohakhali yesterday. People in the low-income bracket form queues and often wait for hours to buy essentials at affordable prices.

PHOTO: AMRAN HOSSAIN

Trump warns Americans of 'toughest week'

Death toll in US climbs past 8,400; Spain sees drop in deaths for third consecutive day

AGENCIES

President Donald Trump warned Americans to brace for a "very horrendous" number of coronavirus deaths in the coming days as the number of people infected in the US has exceeded 3,00,000 with the death toll climbing past 8,400.

Global deaths from the Covid-19 pandemic have soared past 66,500, with Europe continuing to bear the brunt of the virus which has left roughly half the planet confined at home.

There are now more than 1.2 million confirmed cases across the globe since the virus first emerged in China late last year, according to a Johns Hopkins University tally.

Trump said the United States was entering "a time that's going to be very horrendous" with "some really bad numbers."

"This will probably be the toughest week," he said at the White House. "There will be a lot of death." At the same time, the president stressed the US cannot remain shut down forever. "Mitigation does work but again, we're not going to destroy our country," he said. "I've said it from the beginning -- the cure

cannot be worse than the problem."

Over 45,000 global deaths have been in Europe, with Britain reporting a new daily high in fatalities, taking the overall toll to 4,300 out of nearly 42,000 cases.

Spain saw its third consecutive daily decline in the number of people dying from the pandemic as the country recorded another 674 fatalities yesterday.

Queen Elizabeth II was set to make a rare, "deeply personal" speech yesterday to urge people to rise to the challenge posed by the coronavirus, and personally thank frontline healthcare workers.

The pandemic has hammered the global economy, with businesses hit hard as people are forced to stay indoors to help curb the spread of the coronavirus.

Governments have rolled out massive, unprecedented stimulus programs to ease the pain, but economists have warned that the crisis could worsen poverty levels with millions of jobs lost.

Poor economies, such as Iraq, are struggling, with charities and volunteers rallying to provide food to the needy.

"This is more dangerous than Daesh,"

SEE PAGE 2 COL 2