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Scrambling for survival

Online women entrepreneurs see earnings plummet amid virus scare

NILIMA JAHAN

When Sumaiya Akter got a divorce around four years ago, she had nowhere to go with her baby boy. Her own parents had died when she was a child.

Rising to the challenge, she took a beautification training from a parlour and opened a Facebook page named "Shaffi Glamour World", through which she started providing at-home beauty salon services in Dhaka.

"I built a circle of customers as I promoted my page and my contact number through leaflets. I earned around Tk 3,000 daily," she said, which she supported herself and her son with.

Since March, however, her income has dwindled to "zero" as the country inched to a shutdown. "I called some of my regular customers but they all said they are not letting anyone enter their house due to the virus," said Sumaiya.

"I am currently living on my savings but it is going to finish soon. I don't know how I will get by then and when this situation will come to an end."

In recent times, with the rise of Facebook as a platform to market goods and increased online shopping in the country, some started small online businesses.

Many of these were run by women, some who started working from home alongside raising their children and household work.

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A few women sitting idle around their roadside tea-stalls in the capital's Kalyanpur area yesterday. As people are staying indoors during the shutdown enforced to contain the spread of coronavirus, hundreds of such tea-stall owners are not being able to earn.

PHOTO: SK ENAMUL HAQ

STAY HOME, STAY WELL

Use online services to learn new things

MOHAMMAD AL-MASUM MOLLA

Self-isolation and social distancing are effective in slowing the spread of Covid-19. While staying home without any knowledge on exactly when the situation will improve, one can nurture a hobby and students can engage in extra-curricular activities with the aid of online materials.

Eminent reciter Hasan Arif said staying home without doing anything is impossible. But by engaging in creative activities, people can have a great time and connect with friends and family members.

"I took an initiative. I took this opportunity to teach people how to recite. People like singers can teach the basics of popular songs or can sing to an online audience and be involved with people," he said.

Most of his online students are boy scouts and girl guides, he said.

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An act worth replicating

RMG company in Gazipur gives workers two months' wages before closure

TUHIN SHUBHRA ADHIKARY

At a time when many garment factory owners are facing criticism for keeping their units open during the countrywide coronavirus shutdown, an owner has set a good example by giving two month's salaries to his workers and other staffers.

SP Group, which runs two composite knit garment factories in Memberbari area of Gazipur, also assured its workers and employees of providing Eid bonus and not sacking anyone during this tough time.

AMC Knit Composite Ltd and SP Fashion Ltd were declared closed on March 25. Around 3,300 workers and employees of the factories were paid their salaries and allowances for March and also for April in advance.

Speaking to The Daily Star, SP Group Managing Director Shubal Chandra Saha yesterday said, "As I cannot go to the factories due to health safety issues, I must have to think about the health safety of my workers and employees. So, we shut down the factories."

Asked about paying salaries in advance, he said, "I know their one-month income will be gone with the payment of their

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FIRST YEAR OF BANGLADESH BANGABANDHU'S NATION-BUILDING CHALLENGES

'Rise above petty interest'



Bangabandhu addressing the council session of Awami League on April 7, 1972.

APRIL 7, 1972

SHAMSUDDOZA SAJEN

FIRST COUNCIL OF AWAMI LEAGUE AFTER INDEPENDENCE

Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, president of Bangladesh Awami League, asks his party men to rise above petty interest and engage themselves in constructive work to take the war-ravaged country towards the path of progress.

Addressing the first council meeting of the party after the independence, Bangabandhu refers to reports alleging that some Awami League workers and MCAs are engaged in internecine

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Two 'yaba traders' killed in 'gunfight'

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Cox's Bazar

Two suspected yaba traders were killed in a "gunfight" in Cox's Bazar's Taknaf upazila early yesterday.

The dead were identified as Mahmudullah, 26, and Mohammad Mizan, 28, our Cox's Bazar correspondent reports quoting police.

Searching a microbus, police recovered five thousand yaba pills and arrested its driver Mahmudullah on Sunday around 9:00am, Prodig Kumar Das, officer-in-charge (OC) of Teknaf Police Station, said.

Based on his confessional statement, a police team conducted a raid at

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COVID-19-LIKE SYMPTOMS

12 die in 48 hours

STAR REPORT

At least 12 people, mostly elderly, have died since Sunday after showing Covid-19-like symptoms, while many houses have been locked down and families home-quarantined in different districts to slow down the spread of coronavirus across the country.

In Gazipur, a 25-year-old woman died after showing flu-like symptoms in Torgaon Khandakar para area of Kapasia upazila yesterday.

She was suffering from fever, respiratory disease and a sore throat. A sample from her body would be sent to IEDCR for testing, said Abdus Salam Sarkar, Kapasia upazila health and family planning officer.

In Faridpur, a 70-year-old man died after showing the same symptoms at the isolation unit of Faridpur Medical College Hospital yesterday morning, said Saifur Rahman, superintendent of the hospital.

In Habiganj, a 63-year-old man died at Panchhari Asrayan project

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A Rab official talking to members of a family travelling in an ambulance in the capital's Shyamoli area yesterday amid the nationwide shutdown. The family was on its way to Kishoreganj from Aricha in Manikganj when a Rab team stopped the vehicle at a check-post. The team fined the ambulance driver, took his licence and asked him to collect it after dropping the family off at its destination.

PHOTO: AMRAN HOSSAIN

Death at home

The unseen toll of Italy's coronavirus crisis

REUTERS, Milan

It took Silvia Bertuletti 11 days of frantic phone calls to persuade a doctor to visit her 78-year-old father Alessandro, who was gripped by fever and struggling for breath.

When an on-call physician did go to her house near Bergamo, at the epicentre of the coronavirus outbreak in northern Italy, on the evening of March 18, it was too late.

Alessandro Bertuletti was pronounced dead at 1:10am on March 19, 10 minutes before an ambulance called hours earlier arrived. The only medication he had been

prescribed, over the phone, was a mild painkiller and a broad-spectrum antibiotic.

"My father was left to die alone, at home, without help," Bertuletti, 48, said. "We were simply abandoned. No one deserves an end like that."

Interviews with families, doctors and nurses in Italy's stricken Lombardy region indicate that Bertuletti's experience is not uncommon, that scores are dying at home as symptoms go unchecked and that phone consultations are not always enough.

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PRAYER TIMING APRIL 7

Fazr	Zohr	Asr	Maghrib	Esha
AZAN 4:40	12:45	4:45	6:21	7:45
JAMAAT 5:15	1:15	5:00	6:24	8:15

SOURCE: ISLAMIC FOUNDATION

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- করোনাভাইরাস উদ্ভূত পরিস্থিতিতে মাননীয় প্রধানমন্ত্রীর সদয় নির্দেশনা প্রতিপালনে খাদ্য উৎপাদন বৃদ্ধি করতে হবে। বসতবাড়ির আশ্চিন্দাসহ সকল পতিত জমিতে শাকসবজি, ফলমূল ও অন্যান্য ফসলের চাষ করতে হবে। এক্ষেত্রে সরকারি প্রণোদনা অব্যাহত থাকবে;
- সরকার ঘোষিত সাধারণ ছুটির সময়েও জরুরি পণ্য বিবেচনায় সার, বালাইনাশক, বীজ, সেচযন্ত্রসহ সকল কৃষিযন্ত্র (কম্বাইন হারভেস্টার, রিপার ইত্যাদিসহ) এবং যন্ত্রের খুচরা যন্ত্রাংশ, সেচযন্ত্রসহ কৃষিযন্ত্রে ব্যবহৃত জ্বালানী/ডিজেল, কৃষিপণ্য আমদানি, বন্দরে খালাসকরণ, দেশের অভ্যন্তরে সর্বত্র পরিবহন, ক্রয়-বিক্রয় যথারীতি অব্যাহত থাকবে;
- ঢাকার শেরেবাংলা নগরস্থ 'সেচ ভবন' প্রাঙ্গণে কৃষক কর্তৃক উৎপাদিত নিরাপদ সবজি সরাসরি বিক্রয়ের জন্য স্থাপিত প্রতি স্তর ও শনিবারের 'কৃষকের বাজার' এ আগত কৃষি পণ্যবাহী গাড়ি ও সংশ্লিষ্ট কৃষকদের চলাচল অব্যাহত থাকবে;
- সকল কৃষিপণ্যবাহী গাড়ি চলাচল এবং এ সংক্রান্ত কাজে নিয়োজিত সরকারি-বেসরকারি ব্যক্তিদের চলাচল অব্যাহত থাকবে;
- আউশ উৎপাদন বৃদ্ধির লক্ষ্যে আবাদের লক্ষ্যমাত্রা অর্জন নিশ্চিতকরণে সঠিক সময়ে বীজতলা তৈরি, রোপণ, সেচসহ অন্যান্য প্রয়োজনীয় ব্যবস্থা গ্রহণের জন্য যথাযথ প্রস্তুতি সম্পন্ন করতে হবে;
- কৃষি মন্ত্রণালয়, এর দপ্তর/সংস্থা ও মাঠ পর্যায়ের কর্মকর্তা-কর্মচারীরা নিজ কর্মস্থলে অবস্থান করুন। করোনাভাইরাসের সংক্রমণ ঝুঁকি হ্রাসে নিজের এবং কৃষকের স্বাস্থ্য সুরক্ষায় সময়ে সময়ে সরকারের জারীকৃত নির্দেশনাসমূহ যথাযথভাবে পালন করুন;
- কৃষকের সাথে থাকুন-কৃষকের পাশে থাকুন।

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