



# The Daily Star



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|                          |                                  |                             |                      |                          |                      |                          |                                 |
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| <b>BANGLADESH UPDATE</b> | <b>309</b><br>New cases in 24hrs | <b>4,998</b><br>Total cases | <b>140</b><br>Deaths | <b>112</b><br>Recoveries | <b>GLOBAL UPDATE</b> | <b>200,430</b><br>Deaths | <b>2,867,984</b><br>Total cases |
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## Wobbling as the going gets tough

*Critically under-resourced public health system failing to rise to the outbreak challenge*

ZYMA ISLAM

On April 14, a doctor at the surgery department of Sir Salimullah Medical College Hospital sent The Daily Star a list of protective gear they were supplied that day. Quoting the relevant entry, signed by the department's assistant registrar, the doctor said there were eight caps, 28 pieces of gloves, 10 masks and a half bottle of Hexisol in total. "This is the supply for a 30-hour shift. The department has 7-12 doctors and interns. We will be seeing 200-250 patients," the physician said that day, adding, "The masks were not standard N95 ones either." Two days later, five doctors, four nurses and three ward helpers of that very department were found to be Covid-19 positive. Two more tested positive the next day. The doctors suspect they contracted

the virus from one patient from Gazipur, who went to the department with volvulus (twisted bowels) on April 11. The woman needed an emergency surgery and the doctors dutifully performed it. Later, it was found she had been carrying the coronavirus. That one patient was all it took to infect so many health professionals, because they did not have proper protection. The doctors are now fundraising to buy their own protective equipment, unwilling to take any more risks. As the news spread among the community, other physicians started taking to social media with photos of their own flimsy protection gear. Aminul Mamun, an anesthesiologist at Dhaka Medical College Hospital (DMCH) recently posted to Mohanagar General Hospital to treat coronavirus patients, sent photos of his "gloves".

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**Chawkbazar, the wonderland of hundreds of iftar items and sugary treats in Ramadan, is almost quiet in the absence of street vendors and tourists on the first day of Ramadan, due to the coronavirus restrictions. Last year, there was no room left on the street in Old Dhaka, inset.**

PHOTO: ANISUR RAHMAN

## Buzzing iftar bazaar now missing

HELEMUL ALAM and SHAHEEN MOLLAH

The historic iftar market in capital's Chawkbazar area remained almost empty on the first day of Ramadan amid shutdown for coronavirus.

People throng the centennial market every Ramadan to buy various iftar items that are unique in taste and shape, but not this time.

Around 1,000 makeshift stalls are usually set up to sell iftar items prepared from meat, vegetable, sweet, milk and other ingredients in the market.

In fact, some of the iftar items in the market can be traced back to the Mughal era.

However, on April 23 this year, the Ministry of Religious Affairs passed

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## BGMEA issues reopen timetable

*RMG workers from some areas returning to factory hubs on their own*

STAR REPORT

Ignoring the risks of contracting and spreading the coronavirus, hundreds of garment factory workers left their villages yesterday on foot or jammed into whatever vehicle they could get to join work in Dhaka and its outskirts. The race to the cities began after a section of owners announced that they would open the factories from today. This has happened although the Bangladesh Garment Manufacturers and Exporters Association (BGMEA) directed all of its members not to ask their workers, who are currently at their villages, to return to Dhaka until a concrete decision was taken about reopening of factories. "To keep the economy running and considering the overall situation, the BGMEA will advise you on opening of factories," it said in a general directive to its members on Friday, reports UNB. Mentioning that a zone-wise staggered approach will be adopted to open the factories in a limited capacity, the association advised asking only the workers who are living near the factories to join the factories. Besides, it called for not retrenching any worker on humanitarian grounds. Meanwhile, scores of men and women were seen walking on Dhaka-Tangail highway for hours or hitchhiking to their workplaces since

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## WHO again warns about immunity

*Says 'no evidence' infected are immunised; global death toll tops 200,000*

AGENCIES

The World Health Organization yesterday warned recovering from coronavirus may not protect people from reinfection as the death toll from the pandemic crossed 200,000.

Governments across the world are struggling to limit the economic devastation unleashed by the virus, which has infected nearly 2.8 million people and left half of humanity under some form of lockdown.

The United Nations has joined world leaders in a push to speed up development of a vaccine, but effective treatments for COVID-19, the disease caused by coronavirus, are still far off.

But with signs the disease is peaking

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## COVID-19 HOSPITALS

## Gasping for oxygen

*Patients in critical condition suffer in the absence of central supply system*

ZYMA ISLAM

While the Directorate General of Health Services (DGHS) claims that providing oxygen to patients will not be a problem, patients and doctors beg to differ.

"We have sufficient oxygen cylinders for coronavirus patients," said Additional Director Dr Nasima Sultana.

"At the upazila level, we have 10,394 cylinders. In divisional cities,

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## Death rate higher than that of recovery

MAHBUBUR RAHMAN KHAN

Bangladesh appears to be the only country in the world where the Covid-19 death rate is higher than the recovery rate.

Of the total 4,998 people infected with novel coronavirus until 2:30pm yesterday, 140 died and 113 recovered, according to statistics of the Directorate General of

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**Garment factory workers in Mymensingh's Bhaluka jam into a pickup to join their workplace in Gazipur yesterday. People of low-income group often can't afford to maintain social distancing and other coronavirus rules as they have no choice but to go to work with limited amount to spend on transport.**

PHOTO: AMINUL ISLAM

## HOME-GROWN TEST KIT Gonoshasthaya gives samples for approval

DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT

In another step towards the extensive production of Covid-19 test kits in Bangladesh, Gonoshasthaya Kendra (GK) yesterday handed over samples of the kit devised by its scientists to Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujib Medical University and the US Centre for Disease Control for validation checks.

Gonoshasthaya Kendra Trust

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## 30 doctors infected a day over last week

*Doctors' foundation says 345 physicians are now Covid-19 positive*

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

On average, more than 30 doctors have tested positive for coronavirus daily in the last week, according to the records of Bangladesh Doctors Foundation (BDF).

As many as 345 doctors at government, private and specialised hospitals were infected with Covid-19 until 8:00pm yesterday, Nirupam Das, chief administrator of BDS, told The Daily Star.

The number of infected doctors was 100 until April 17, he added.

According to BDF, the main reason behind the high rate of infection

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হে আল্লাহ! হে মহান সৃষ্টিকর্তা!  
সব সংকট, বিপদ-আপদ থেকে  
তোমার সকল সৃষ্টিকে তুমি রক্ষা করে।  
আমাদের রোজা-নামাজ কবুল করে।

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