



The Daily Star



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BANGLADESH UPDATE 497 New cases in 24hrs | 5,913 Total cases | 152 Deaths | 131 Recoveries | **GLOBAL UPDATE** 208,989 Deaths | 3,025,355 Total cases

PRIVATE HOSPITALS

Doctors left unprotected

A third of them yet to get PPE, finds an online survey on 816 doctors across the country; so far, 84 infected with coronavirus

TUHIN SHUBHRA ADHIKARY and WASIM BIN HABIB

When the country is grappling with community transmission of novel coronavirus, more than one third of doctors at private hospitals surveyed said they have still not been provided with any personal protective equipment (PPE).

It is the duty of the hospital authorities to supply those safety gear to all they employ. Any failure to do so throw the physicians and other patients in those hospitals in grave danger, say experts, as their attention was drawn to the issue.

Eight hundred and twenty six doctors from several hundred private hospitals across the country participated in the survey, conducted online by Bangladesh Doctors' Foundation (BDF), a platform of around 1 lakh doctors and medical students, between April 20 and 26.

Of the respondents, 34.1 percent said they did not have any PPEs. Nearly 37 percent said they received the safety gear while 15 percent complained of poor

quality gear, saying those were more like raincoats, unable to protect them from the deadly novel coronavirus.

The rest of the respondents said they were not handed a complete set of PPE, according to the BDF survey.

A complete set of PPE includes head covers, fluid-resistant surgical or N95 masks, disposable gloves, long-sleeved fluid-repellent gowns or aprons, goggles, face shields, and boots or closed shoes.

There are around 5,500 registered private hospitals and clinics across the country, Aminul Islam, director (hospital) of the DGHS, told The Daily Star.

The survey comes at a time when many frontline doctors and medical professionals are contracting coronavirus every day. A sense of alarm has gripped the health professionals over the scarcity of protective gear required to fend off the outbreak, which has so far claimed at least 152 lives. Nearly 6,000 people have already been infected.

SEE PAGE 2 COL 3



Locals of a bordering area in Lalmonirhat's Durgapur upazila sit maintaining social distancing as they are given relief materials by voluntary organisation Bidyanondo Foundation yesterday amid the coronavirus outbreak. The groceries were distributed under the supervision of Border Guard Bangladesh.

PHOTO: DILIP ROY

Deaths, cases keep rising

Seven more die, 497 new cases found in 24 hrs

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Coronavirus cases in the country continue to rise, with health officials reporting 497 new cases yesterday.

The total number of detected cases now stands at 5,913 and the death toll reached 152.

In a worrying development, the daily number of reported deaths again rose from that of the previous day.

Prof Nasima Sultana, additional director general (admin) of the directorate general of health services (DGHS), in the regular press conference reported the deaths of seven more patients.

Of the seven deceased, six were male.

Five of them were over 60, one between 40-51, and one a child under 10.

Of them, five were from Dhaka, one from Sylhet and one from Rajshahi.

According to the Institute of Epidemiology, Disease Control and Research (IEDCR) website, Dhaka city has continued to be the worst affected area in the country.

Of yesterday's new cases, Dhaka accounted for the highest with 232, while Narayanganj was in second spot with 74 new cases.

The total number of cases in Dhaka city reached 2,717, followed by Narayanganj with 699.

As of yesterday, some 52.26 percent of all positive cases were from the capital while 32.31 percent are from the

SEE PAGE 2 COL 1

Schools may stay closed till Sept

Says PM; same goes for other edn institutions; businesses asked not to worry about loan interest

UNB, Dhaka

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina yesterday said educational institutions would remain closed until September if there was no improvement in the coronavirus situation.

"We will not reopen schools and other educational institutions now, at least till September. These schools, colleges and other educational institutions will remain closed as coronavirus prevalence continues," she said.

The PM said the government would reopen those when the coronavirus pandemic would stop.

Hasina was addressing public representatives and officials of eight districts under Rajshahi division on Covid-19. She joined the programme from the Gono Bhaban through videoconferencing.

The districts are Bogura, Chapainawabganj, Joypurhat, Naogaon, Natore, Pabna, Rajshahi and Sirajganj.

The premier requested the businessmen, who took loans for operating their businesses, not to be worried about loan interests.



"You were doing your business taking loans, but your loans have piled up due to the shutdown in these months over the coronavirus... so, don't think about that [loan interest]."

She mentioned that the lenders were not supposed to collect those interests right now.

"After this meeting, I will sit with the finance minister...we will consider suspending the interests [against the loans]. We will consider how much interest can be

SEE PAGE 2 COL 3

Restaurants can now sell takeaway iftar items

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Restaurants in the capital can sell takeaway iftar items from today, Dhaka Metropolitan Police said yesterday.

Owners must ensure buyers' physical distancing while selling iftar items, and no one will be allowed to have iftar inside the restaurants, Masudur Rahman, deputy commissioner (media) of DMP, told The Daily Star.

The restaurants will not be permitted to set up any stalls outside their premises on footpaths as the DMP has decided not to allow any sale of iftar items on streets to ensure social distancing, he said.

In another development, the DMP said shops selling daily necessities in neighborhoods and alleys in the capital will be open from 6:00am to 4:00pm

SEE PAGE 2 COL 2

Factories keep reopening amid virus fear

Some workers satisfied over safety measures, some not; experts lay stress on stringent health protocols

STAR REPORT

More garment factories have reopened in the industrial areas across the country yesterday amid demonstrations by laid off workers and those demanding arrears.

At least 1,820 factories reopened yesterday, a day after 1,427 other export-oriented units reopened, industrial police officials said, adding that there are a total of 7,602 such factories across the country.

Bangladesh is still grappling with the coronavirus pandemic and there is no sign that the outbreak has been contained.

Most of the cases detected are from Dhaka, Saver, Gazipur and Narayanganj. These places are also hubs of most of the factories.

Owners association leaders said only a fraction of the workforce would be at the factories and precautions would be taken to prevent contagion.

However, experts and union leaders expressed concerns.

Of the factories that reopened yesterday there are 718 BCGMEA, 157 BKMEA, 72 Bangladesh Textile Mills Association members, and 206 are under Bangladesh

SEE PAGE 2 COL 6

2 die after showing Covid-19 symptoms

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Patuakhali

Two people died after showing Covid-19-like symptoms in Barguna and Patuakhali yesterday.

Among the dead is a 27-year-old man from KG School Road in Barguna town. He had been suffering from fever for the last few days, said family members.

On Sunday, he developed coughing and respiratory problems. He breathed his last at his home in Barguna town around 3:45am yesterday.

Family members alleged that they contacted officials of Barguna Sadar Upazila Health Complex and Barguna General Hospital for an ambulance to hospitalise their relative, but in vain.

The wife of the deceased fled the house after her husband's death. Later, other family members came to know that she reached her father's home in another upazila of the district.

SEE PAGE 2 COL 5



Garment workers and law enforcers clash while the workers protest unpaid wages at the Bhogra bypass in Gazipur yesterday. Inset, the protest had turned violent and also crowded as the country grapples with the coronavirus outbreak and its resultant economic impacts.

PHOTO: ABU BAKAR SIDDIQUE

Govt won't allow rapid testing kit

No scope now for trial of kit developed by Gonoshasthaya, say health ministry officials

DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT

The government has decided not to do rapid testing for Covid-19 as the World Health Organization has yet to approve such a test, the health ministry has said.

It also said there is no scope now for the trial of the home-grown rapid test kit developed by the Gonoshasthaya Kendra scientists.

"However, the government will have no objection to accepting the Gonoshasthaya Kendra kits in the future when WHO approves it," said Habibur Rahman Khan, additional secretary (admin) of the health ministry and head of the media cell on Covid-19.

The decision was announced at a press conference at the health ministry yesterday, a day after Gonoshasthaya Kendra criticised the government's drug administration for what it said was taking a bureaucratic approach to validating the rapid test kits, instead of considering the urgent situation in the country.

The rapid test kit, which diagnoses antibodies developed within three to seven days after one is infected with coronavirus, is not being used in any country of the world now. Some countries were using it but stopped after questions were raised regarding accuracy, Habibur Rahman told reporters.

In 30 to 46 percent of the cases, rapid test kits give false positive or false negative results, he said. "If that is the case, think of mental and social impact [the false results would have]."

If a Covid-19 positive patient, thinking they are negative

SEE PAGE 2 COL 1