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Your Right to Know

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BANGLADESH
UPDATE549
New cases in 24hrs6,462
Total cases155
Deaths139
RecoveriesGLOBAL
UPDATE213,623
Deaths3,099,427
Total cases

HOSPITALS FOR COVID-19 TREATMENT

Not all ICUs functional

MOHAMMAD AL-MASUM MOLLA

The intensive care units for coronavirus patients have yet to become functional in many of the 17 hospitals dedicated to Covid-19 treatment, even a month and a half after the authorities reported the first case in the country.

While ventilators have been installed in most of the hospitals, infrastructural development, oxygen supply and other necessary equipment are still required for the ICUs to be operational, according to a DGHS letter sent to the health ministry on April 18.

The Daily Star obtained a copy of the letter, which names the 17 hospitals, saying initiatives have been taken to set up the ICUs for treatment of Covid-19 patients at these facilities.

Though ventilators have been allocated for the hospitals, 12 types of equipment are needed for the smooth operations of the ICUs, it reads.

Contacted yesterday, Sirajul Islam, additional secretary (hospital) of the health ministry, said, "We received the letter and we have written to the Central Medical Store Depot (CMSD) to purchase the necessary equipment."

The CMSD runs under the ministry's Health Services Division and procures medicine and equipment through bidding.

The additional secretary further said the equipment needed for the ICUs will be installed soon. He, however, could not say exactly when that will be.

"Such equipment is not easily available but we are trying our best," he added.

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Breaching social distancing guidelines, transport workers crowd a road in the capital's Rayerbagh bus stop area yesterday to collect relief materials. The operator of Mayor Mohammad Hanif Flyover handed relief materials to more than 400 workers who have been without work for over a month.

PHOTO:
AMRAN HOSSAIN

Hundreds block roads demanding food aid

STAR REPORT

Several hundreds of people yesterday blocked two highways in Jashore and Savar demanding food aid.

They claimed that they had lost their sources of income since the countrywide shutdown imposed about a month ago, but no government officials or representatives were yet to give them a hand, leaving them to starve.

Later, they withdrew the blockades after local administrations convinced them that relief materials would soon be distributed.

In Jashore, hundreds took position at Bahadurpur Bazar point on Dhaka-Jashore highway around noon.

On information, officials of armed forces, police and civil administration rushed

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FOOD AID FOR THE POOR

Smart cards for 1.25cr families

Govt working to prepare database, plug loopholes to stop irregularities

MUHAMMAD ZAHIDUL ISLAM and SOHEL PARVEZ

The government is working to develop a database of nearly 1.25 crore beneficiary families to ensure proper distribution of food aid and plug the loopholes in the current distribution system, said officials at two ministries.

Each recipient would be handed a smart Quick Response (QR) card, the officials said, adding that the cards would be issued soon for the distribution of rice and other aid among poor and low income families, who are facing food insecurity and hunger in absence of income as the economy remains under severe strain for a month-long shutdown since March 26.

The database and the issuance of smart cards will help remove duplication, eliminate ghost lists and reduce corruption related to the government's safety net programs, said NM Zeaul Alam, senior secretary at Information and Communication Technology (ICT) Division under the Ministry of Posts, Telecommunications and Information Technology.

It is one of the two ministries that are working to develop the database to distribute the food aid in May and June, said the officials, adding that the Ministry of Disaster Management and Relief was collecting information from other ministries such as the Ministry of Social Welfare in this regard.

Access to Information programme (a2i) under the ICT Division is helping develop the software for the database, they said.

The initiative comes at a time when the countrywide shutdown, enforced to fend off the coronavirus outbreak, has forced tens of thousands of people to remain half-fed or unfed and government officials are frequently seizing

SEE PAGE 2 COL 1

Record surge in infections

Confirmed cases cross 6,000; 549 new cases, 3 deaths; experts worry over slackening of shutdown

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The number of coronavirus cases in Bangladesh crossed 6,000 yesterday as the authorities reported a record 549 infections in a single day.

The officials also reported three deaths yesterday, bringing the total number of fatalities to 155.

The continuous upsurge in the number of infection hits the country at a time when the government weighs in favour of reopening parts of the economy.

Amid the countrywide shutdown, the government allowed garment factories' owners to resume work on a limited scale, raising fears of deteriorating the spread of the disease.

The factories in Dhaka and Chattogram reopened on Monday, spurring a huge influx of workers to the Covid-19 hotspots -- Dhaka Narayanganj and Gazipur -- from different districts.

Besides, restaurants in the capital were also allowed to sell takeaway iftar items yesterday.

Experts fear that the reopening of such a huge number of the garment factories may increase the risk of faster spreading of the virus.

Prof Ridwanur Rahman, a medicine and infectious disease specialist, said, "The garment workers will gather inside the factories. So, there will be transmission of the virus."

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PROF JAMILUR REZA
CHOUDHURY
(NOV 15, 1943 -- APR 28, 2020)

A colossal loss for the nation

Tributes pour in for Prof Jamilur Reza Choudhury

MOHIUDDIN ALAMGIR

National Professor Jamilur Reza Choudhury will be remembered for his extraordinary service to the nation.

He would be among the leading personalities of any country of the world.

His death was a colossal and irreparable loss for the nation. No one would be able to fill his place as he was second to none in the engineering field, eminent personalities told The Daily Star yesterday.

They also described him as a dedicated, talented, patriotic, honest, and cordial person, as a pall of gloom descended on them after hearing the news of their friend's and colleague's death.

Prof Jamilur was not only the most eminent personality in the country's engineering community

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Litmus paper we have lost

ARCHITECT PROF
NIZAMUDDIN AHMED

The London 2012 Summer Olympics had just concluded. On meeting me, a beaming JRC disclosed with some gratification that he had seen the fantastic opening ceremony. When I said, "We saw it too, Sir," he ached a return, "At the Olympic Stadium!!"

That sportiveness accompanied the man, who had been occupied with a variety of serious occupations over five decades.

Gifted with an enviable memory, supreme scholarly intelligence,

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Garment workers washing hands before entering an apparel factory in Savar's Ulail area yesterday. Before that, they had to walk through a disinfectant arch, inset. Over 3,000 garment factories reopened in industrial areas across the country this week amid concern over the rising number of Covid-19 cases.

PHOTO: PALASH KHAN

Nearly half of RMG factories reopen

ILO calls for action to minimise infection risk at workplaces

STAR REPORT

More than a thousand garment factories reopened yesterday amid coronavirus fears with many workers finding it difficult to reach workplaces for a lack of transport.

Some of them said they had to pay two to three times the usual fare.

Of the 7,602 apparel factories across the country, 2,916 resumed operation as of yesterday after remaining closed for around two weeks till April 26, according to the Industrial Police.

So far, 460 factories have reopened in Dhaka, 1,518 in Gazipur, 548 in Chattogram, 225 in Narayanganj, 79 in Mymensingh and 86 in Khulna, Mohammad Amzad Hossain, superintendent of police of the Industrial Police, told The Daily Star.

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আমরা শোকাহত

বরেণ্য শিক্ষাবিদ
একুশে পদকপ্রাপ্ত জাতীয় অধ্যাপক
ইউনিভার্সিটি অব এশিয়া প্যাসিফিক এর
উপাচার্য
ড. জামিলুর রেজা চৌধুরী-র মৃত্যুতে
ইউএপি পরিবার গভীরভাবে শোকাহত

ইউনিভার্সিটি অব এশিয়া প্যাসিফিক