



# The Daily Star

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Your Right to Know

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BANGLADESH  
UPDATE1,162  
New cases in 24hrs17,822  
Total cases269  
Deaths3,361  
RecoveriesGLOBAL  
UPDATE294,772  
Deaths4,381,956  
Total cases

## Highest 19 deaths reported in a day

1,162 new cases in 24 hrs also a record; experts suggest taking aggressive measures as things will go out of control otherwise

MOUDUD AHMED SUJAN

The number of fatalities and infections due to novel coronavirus is increasing alarmingly in Bangladesh with the country recording 19 deaths and 1,162 new cases in 24 hours -- the highest single-day spike.

With the latest figures, the death toll rose to 269. The total number of confirmed cases crossed the 17,000-mark, breaking previous records and climbing to 17,822.

Worryingly, the number of cases has

surged significantly in the last several days when the government expanding test facilities and easing restrictions on the reopening of markets.

The country may see nearly 50,000 cases in total by the end of this month while the death toll may hit 800 by this time, according to a government estimate made using a projection model.

However, health experts said no projection will be accurate with inadequate detections and the country might continue

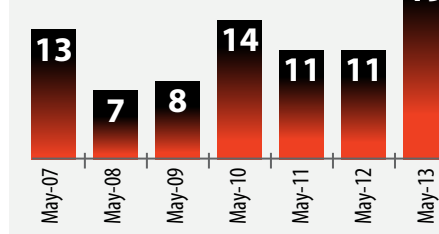
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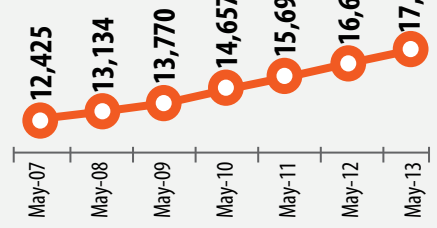
An old widow, in white sari, sitting on the footpath and waiting for her turn to receive her old age allowance from a bank in the capital's Tejgaon. Like the woman sitting next to her with a child, she arrived around 9:00am yesterday and was still waiting in the scorching heat when the photo was taken three hours later. Due to coronavirus restrictions, long queues often build up in front of banks.

PHOTO: RASHED SHUMON

### A BIG JUMP IN DAILY DEATHS



### CASES CONTINUE TO SURGE



## Bangladeshi scientists crack virus genome

Complete its sequencing to study the strain that causes Covid-19 in the country

ZYMA ISLAM

A team from Child Health Research Foundation (CHRF) yesterday successfully completed the genome sequencing of the SARS-CoV-2 virus in Bangladesh.

The announcement came late on Tuesday evening in a press release distributed by CHRF. SARS-CoV-2 is the coronavirus that causes Covid-19.

"We completed genome sequencing of the virus a few hours ago," confirmed Dr Senjuti Saha, the scientist who led the team of three. The others were Roly Malaker and Md Saiful Islam Shajib.

Dr Senjuti's father, eminent microbiologist and Executive Director of CHRF Dr Samir Kumar Saha also played a leadership role.

"The entire CHRF Covid-19 response team of more than 80 people has directly or indirectly helped us make this possible," Dr. Senjuti Saha said.

Genome sequencing is the process of

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## SPECIAL OMS OF 10-TAKA RICE IN B'BARIA

## Affluent persons listed as poor

PARTHA PRATIM BHATTACHARJEE with MASUK HRIDOV

He introduces himself in different ways in line with the different posts he holds.

According to his Facebook profile, Shah Alam is the general secretary of Restaurant Owners' Association in Brahmanbaria, joint-secretary of the district's Jame Mosque committee, a member of the central Federation of Bangladesh Chambers of Commerce & Industries (FBCCI) and a director of district FBCCI.

He is also a member of the sports association and general secretary of the blind welfare association in Brahmanbaria. Besides, he is a former general secretary of Chhatra League and former GS of Red Crescent Society in the district.

His most significant political identity is that he is the industries and commerce affairs secretary of Brahmanbaria Awami League.

The "versatile" AL leader is also an OMS dealer.

But surprisingly, his wife, daughter and some close relatives have been named in

a list of beneficiaries of the government's special open market sale (OMS) programme for Brahmanbaria municipality area, sparking debate. The list was finalised by the municipality authorities as part of an initiative to help the poor and the destitute amid the coronavirus outbreak.

This sensational disclosure came following an investigation by district committee of the OMS programme, according to relevant documents.

On April 1, the government issued a gazette disclosing its decision that it would launch a special OMS sale of rice at a subsidised rate of Tk 10 per kg in all city corporations. The move was aimed at ensuring food for lower-income people hit hard by the ongoing shutdown enforced to curb the spread of coronavirus.

The beneficiaries include beggars, transport workers, rickshaw-van pullers, day labourers, tea stall workers and members of the third gender community.

The gazette also said not more than one person from each family would be entitled to get the benefits of the programme.

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## Ansar man dies from Covid-19

166 others tested positive

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A member of Bangladesh Ansar and Village Defence Party died from Covid-19, and at least 166 others have tested positive as of yesterday, said an official of the force.

Of them, 58 had been discharging their duties at the parliament, 65 in Dhaka Metropolitan Police area, and 43, including a deputy-director-ranked officer, at the Ansar headquarters and different districts, Mehnaz Tabassum Rabin, deputy director of the force, told The Daily Star yesterday.

Eleven of them have so far recovered, she said.

Ansar member Abdul Mazid, who was carrying out his duties at Bhatar Police Station, breathed his last on Monday.

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## Heartbreaks; hope for HERD IMMUNITY

SYED ASHFAQUL HAQUE

"Herd immunity" is the ultimate answer to any pandemic, and Bangladesh, by no choice of its own, is rushing towards it to keep coronavirus at bay.

Eureka (found it)! Shouldn't we all exclaim like Archimedes, the great Greek scientist who ran through the streets naked after discovering the law of buoyancy while taking a bath at his home? No, we're no Archimedes and we've found no remedy. Rather, we're ending up with the lone solution after exhausting all other options.

Too much of stress and tension for the last couple of months! And there seemed to be no respite from the pandemic that brought the world to a grinding halt, claiming over 2.86 lakh lives already. Now, the 17 crore Bangladeshis can clutch at the "herd immunity" straw and try hard to survive.

All past pandemics in the world ended through herd immunity. In lay explanation, we have to become immune to the infectious disease either through natural immunity or vaccination. Vaccine should be off our list for long, as, according to media reports, at least one year would be required for its discovery and subsequent trials before going into long-haul production for 800 crore vaccine for the global population. Following the powerful-countries-first order, vaccine is unlikely to be available in Bangladesh in two years.

So, we're practically left with the only one survival option: natural immunity. What we all have to do now is to contract the disease en masse, get defence mechanism of the body react to it and in time build up an immune response to the invaders.

Sounds surreal?

It's hard to predict things in a pandemic, as situation changes on a daily basis due to the mostly unknown characteristic of virus and world's medical

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## Third doctor dies from coronavirus

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Another doctor, who tested Covid-19 positive, has died at a hospital in the capital.

Maj (ret'd) Abul Mokarim Md Mohsin Uddin, chief consultant (radiology) at Ibn Sina Diagnostic and Imaging Centre, breathed his last at Combined Military Hospital (CMH) around 11:20pm on Tuesday, Shafiqul Islam, manager (admin) at the centre, told The Daily Star.

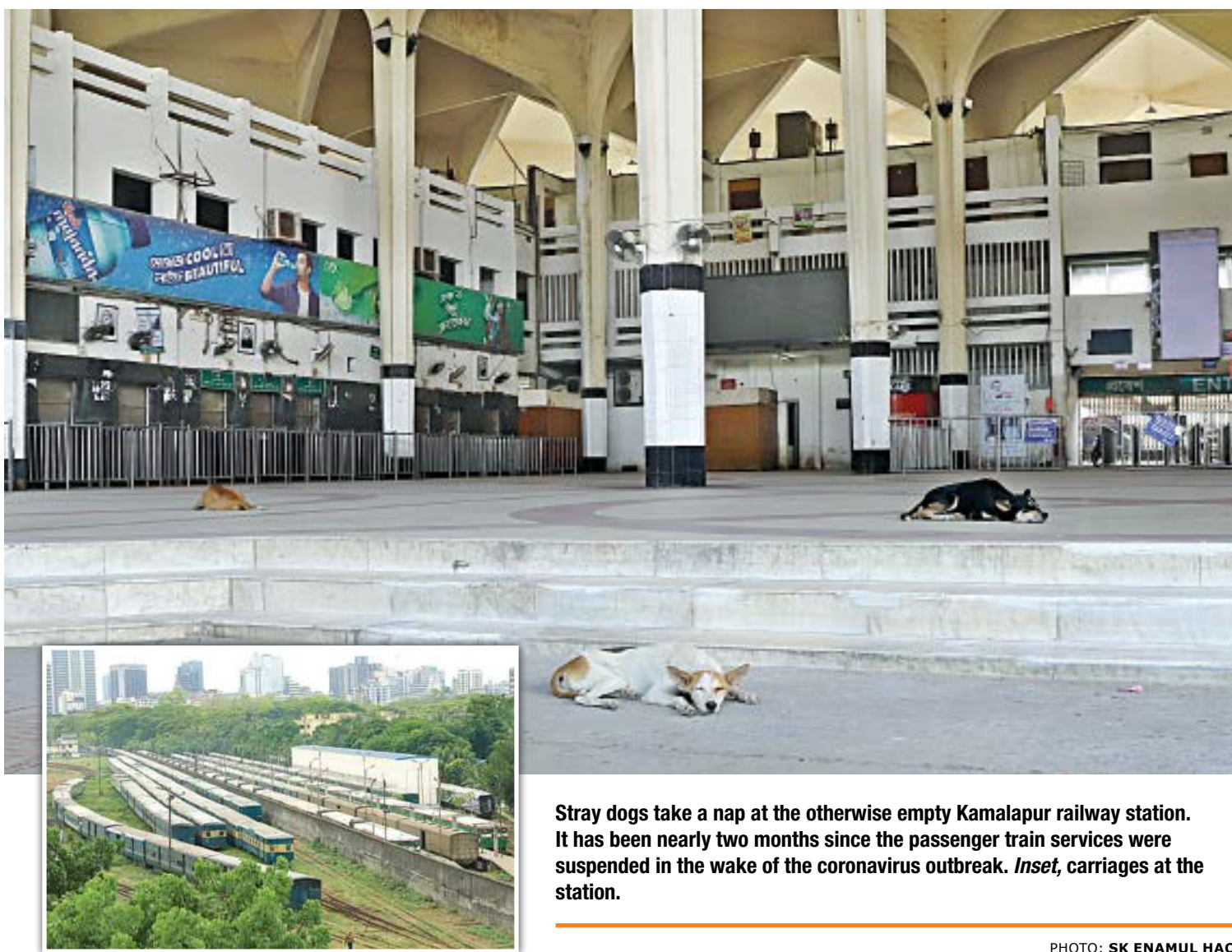
Prof Mokarim, also a freedom fighter, got infected while discharging duties at Ibn Sina, he said.

Mokarim, in a medical apron, was featured in a TV commercial of Ibn Sina in the 90s where he was seen asking viewers: "Why would you pay extra unnecessarily?"

He then urges them to visit the private hospital, which offered 25 percent discounts on medical tests. Many thought Mokarim was an actor, but he was a noted radiologist.

His younger son Samuel

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Stray dogs take a nap at the otherwise empty Kamalapur railway station. It has been nearly two months since the passenger train services were suspended in the wake of the coronavirus outbreak. Inset, carriages at the station.

PHOTO: SK ENAMUL HAQ

## DEATH AFTER VIRUS SYMPTOMS

## 929 die in two months

Study also finds 84 were held for 'spreading rumors'

DU CORRESPONDENT

A total of 929 people died in Bangladesh with Covid-19 symptoms between March 8 and May 12, according to a report of Centre for Genocide Studies of Dhaka University.

Bangladesh Peace Observatory (BPO), a UNDP funded research facility housed at Centre for Genocide Studies, prepared the report based on different media outlets and published it on Tuesday.

The report came out at a time when the authorities recorded only 269 Covid-19 deaths since the first three cases reported on March 8.

Of the 929 deaths with Covid-19 symptoms, 210 were in Dhaka, 167 in Chattogram, 110 in Khulna, 87 in Rajshahi, 84 in Barisal, 66 in Sylhet and 65 in Rangpur divisions, the report mentioned.

The report also mentioned that there were at least 33 incidents of ignorance from medical professionals or reticence to treat non-Covid patients.

Besides, 17 patients were denied burial, eight incidents of forced eviction from homes, 23 cases of abandonment from family or family members or colleagues and two persons died by suicide for social stigma.

The number of harassment or assault originated from social stigma cases are nine while such cases related to medical professionals' stands at 15.

RUMORS AND ARRESTS

The report recorded that as many as 79 incidents of spreading rumours and 84 arrests for spreading rumours has

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