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Your Right to Know

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**BANGLADESH
UPDATE**
**1,202**

New cases in 24hrs

**20,065**

Total cases

**298**

Deaths

**3,882**

Recoveries

**GLOBAL
UPDATE**
**303,825**

Deaths

**4,485,204**

Total cases

AMPLE FOOD STOCK, BUMPER BORO HARVEST

'No worries' for next six months

Bangladesh 3rd in global rice production

PINAKI ROY and SOHEL PARVEZ

Once the Boro harvest is completed across the country, the nation is unlikely to face cereal shortage in the next six months.

Analysing the food stock situation, experts said, by the time the current and upcoming stock of Boro would be consumed, in the next six months, Aman should be ready for harvest unless any natural disaster takes place.

But, they added, the main challenge for the government in coming days will be ensuring supply of other food items including fish, livestock and vegetables. Vegetables and fish farmers are already facing hard times as they are unable to sell their produce.

The prospect of a good harvest of Boro

following an increased production of Aman, higher wheat imports and fairly a good food-grain stock in public godowns provide confidence that the country will be better off in terms of food availability during its war against the rogue Covid-19 pandemic.

Concerns, however, remain high regarding the risk of price spiral of the staple rice as the Boro prices are on the rise in the producing regions.

"We need not worry about food as we have enough food stock. We had 12.75 lakh tonnes of rice even before the start of Boro procurement. Now the procurement of both Boro and wheat has begun. So, no worries for few months," said Sadhan Kumar Majumder, the food minister.

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- Last year's rice production 3.64 crore tonnes
- Annual consumption requirement 3.50 crore tonnes
- Public storage capacity 19.3 lakh tonnes
- Public food stock 12.85 lakh tonnes (May 1, 2020)



The Covid-19 pandemic and a nationwide shutdown have thrown Ayesha Begum's life into uncertainty. A mother of one, the elderly widow had been staying indoors for over a month since the government enforced the shutdown on March 26 to slow the spread of the deadly virus. But she has recently resumed repairing bicycles, rickshaws and rickshaw vans along a road in the capital's Mugda area to make a living. The photo was taken yesterday.

PHOTO: ANISUR RAHMAN

Big spike in new Covid-19 cases

15 more die, 1,202 test positive in 24hrs as case total tops 20,000

MAHBUBUR RAHMAN KHAN

The coronavirus situation will worsen further if the government fails to place the highly affected areas on strict lockdown immediately, experts warn as the number of Covid-19 patients continues to surge despite a nationwide shutdown.

The warning came after the authorities said coronavirus cases in the country crossed the 20,000 mark with a record single-day jump in infections -- 1,202 -- reported yesterday. Besides, 15 more deaths took the death toll to 298.

As many as 10,610 people were found to be infected with Covid-19 in the last 11 days alone, after the first case was reported on March 8.

On the increasing number of infections and fatalities, experts said the shutdown without the enforcement of strict lockdown in the severely affected zones was proving to be futile in curbing the spread of the deadly virus. At the same time, the economy continues to remain under severe

strain, affecting the livelihood of millions of people.

"We are losing the battle in both the ways. ... It's unfortunate that the government keeps extending the closure without any in-depth analysis," Prof Be-Nazir Ahmed, former director of disease control at the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, told The Daily Star.

Recently, the government has extended the shutdown, which was enforced on March 26, for the sixth time to May 28.

Data from the Directorate General of Health Services (DGHS) shows that Dhaka city remains the worst affected region with 58.11 percent of all Covid-19 cases detected here alone. Also, almost 80 percent of all cases were found in city and urban areas.

Talking on the issue, Prof Muzaherul Haq, former adviser (Southeast Asia Region) of the WHO, said, "Dhaka must be put on strict lockdown without any delay. Otherwise, the hospitals in the country will overflow with patients."

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HOSPITALS FOR COVID-19 Uniform system needed to ease patients' hassles

Says head of advisory body

MOHAMMAD AL-MASUM MOLLA

The national technical advisory committee on coronavirus has recommended that all hospitals dedicated to Covid-19 treatment should be brought under a network to reduce the sufferings of patients.

If the recommendation is implemented, patients and their attendants, who would not find seats at a Covid hospital, will not have to take the trouble of finding out another hospital, Professor Dr Mohammad Shahidullah, chair of the committee, told The Daily Star yesterday.

He said, "For example, if a Covid-19 patient finds no seat at Kurmitola General Hospital, the hospital authorities would check the status of other hospitals and refer the patient to the nearest available hospital by issuing a token."

The patient would then be taken to that hospital by an ambulance arranged by the government, which is also a part of the recommendations made by the committee.

He said this simple initiative would reduce the sufferings of patients to a great extent

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TRIBUTE TO PROF ANISUZZAMAN

The man who taught us the beauty of brevity of words

MAHFUZ ANAM

He always finished his speech much earlier than we wanted him to. His capacity to encapsulate all that he had to say in the fewest of words left us all, in his audience, gasping for more. After hour-long speeches that were our wont, the brevity of his address as the chair of the occasion kept us marvelling at his capacity to say so much in so few words. He taught us the beauty of brevity of words. Just as in his speeches so also in his writings -- literally not a word extra.

He was a person one would automatically respect just by being in his presence. He would not have to do anything or say anything. Just standing next to you, he would compel you to be awed by him. He would exude that unique affection, sophistication, decency and a special type of warmth that only a teacher could. The inner glow of his scholarship coupled with genuine humility would make a compelling case for a heartfelt respect for this soft-spoken man.

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Anisuzzaman laid to rest

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

National Professor Anisuzzaman was laid to rest at Azimpur graveyard with state honour yesterday morning.

Tributes for the country's leading intellectual poured in soon after the news of his death was announced on Thursday.

The burial took place around 10:00am after a namaz-e-janaza and guard of honour given by officials at the graveyard.

"My father was laid to rest in the grave of my grandfather," said the national professor's son Ananda Zaman.

Since Prof Anisuzzaman died with coronavirus, the burial adhered to the health guidelines.

Besides Ananda, the professor's brother Akteruzzaman and son-in-law Azimul Haq were present during the burial. Also present were State Minister for cultural affairs KM Khalid and Bengal

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3 more infected with Covid-19 at Rohingya camp

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Cox's Bazar

Three more Rohingyas tested positive for Covid-19 at Ukhia refugee camp yesterday, a day after the first novel coronavirus case was reported in the camp.

Dr Anupam Barua, principal of Cox's Bazar Medical College, said 21 people, including the three Rohingyas, tested positive for Covid-19 in the district yesterday.

He said 184 samples were tested on the day at the field lab of the Institute of Epidemiology, Disease Control and Research (IEDCR) set up at Cox's Bazar Medical College.

Meanwhile, around 5,000 Rohingya refugees from 1,275 families at Ukhia refugee camp were placed under lockdown yesterday.

Dr Abu Toha Rezwan, chief health coordinator at the Refugee Relief and Repatriation Commissioner's (RRRC) office in Cox's Bazar, said

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The water of the Karnaphuli is highly polluted at the conflux of the river and Chaktai canal in Chattogram city's Mariner's Drive area. Green activists blame release of untreated waste water and sewage waste into the river from households and factories for the poor state. The photo was taken yesterday.

PHOTO: RAJIB RAHMAN

BAHRAIN LABOUR MARKET

8,000 expats lose jobs amid shutdown

JAMIL MAHMUD

Some 7,000 to 8,000 Bangladeshi migrant workers in Bahrain have lost their jobs due to economic shutdown enforced by the country's government to contain coronavirus pandemic, an official at Bangladesh embassy in Manama said yesterday.

Recently a top official of Bahrain's Labour Market Regulatory Authority (LMRA) informed Bangladesh ambassador at a bilateral meeting that economic fallout due to the pandemic caused about 10,000 job losses in the tiny Gulf country, according to the embassy sources.

"Of the job losses, some 70 to 80 percent are those of Bangladeshi workers," the official said.

On the other hand, at least 12,600 undocumented Bangladeshi migrant workers have so far applied to get regularised under an amnesty programme declared by Bahrain government in early April, he added.

Bahrain is home to about 150,000 Bangladeshis. About 70 percent of them are low-paid workers in the construction sector. Besides, several thousand Bangladeshis, both male and female, are serving as household workers there, according to the Bangladesh mission in the country.

In Bahrain, authorities allow foreign workers to live and work without any local sponsorship. To avail such work permit, known as "flexi permit", a foreign worker has to get registered with the LMRA.

In contrast, local sponsorship is mandatory under the controversial "kafala system" to avail job in other Arab countries.

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