



The Daily Star

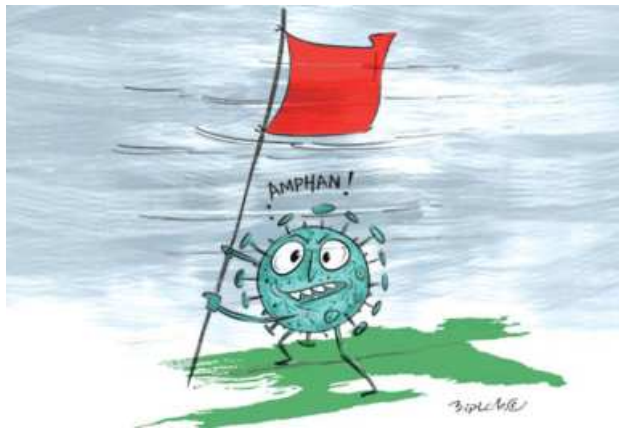


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Bracing for Amphan fury

Landfall this evening; thousands hunker down in shelters to evade the brunt of one of the strongest cyclones formed in the Bay



PINAKI ROY and MOHIUDDIN ALAMGIR

Thousands of people have been moved to storm shelters in 19 coastal districts of the country as Cyclone Amphan is set to make landfall this evening with heavy rainfall and storm surges above 10 feet.

"This is one of the strongest cyclones formed in the Bay of Bengal and will hit the coast with a wind speed of around 160 miles per hour if it does not become weaker or change its course," Dr Samarendra Karmakar, former director of Bangladesh Meteorological Department, told this newspaper.

It will batter coastal areas of Bangladesh as well as India, said

SEE PAGE 2 COL 1



Waves crashing into the Patenga Beach in Chattogram yesterday as the country braces for cyclone Amphan. Inset, people from a char in Bholas Charfassion upazila are being taken to a cyclone shelter in the upazila town on a trawler.

PHOTO: RAJIB RAIHAN, STAR



Tide could be the key factor

MOHAMMAD AL-MASUM MOLLA

Already downgraded to Category 4, Cyclone Amphan could weaken further by the time it makes landfall close to the western Sundarbans, experts said yesterday.

They, however, expressed concern that it might still wreak serious havoc on Bangladesh as a storm surge, depending on the tide.

Md Shah Alam, former director of Bangladesh Meteorological Department (BMD), said the wind speed of the cyclone would certainly be less at landfall than at the sea.

He said the storm surge would depend on when the cyclone makes landfall -- during high tide or low tide.

Another point of concern was that the cyclone still continued to cover a large swathe of the funnel-like Bay, pushing waters northwards, which would only worsen the storm surge around the time it hits, Shah Alam added.

Quamrul Hasan, the BMD forecast officer on duty, said the main feature

SEE PAGE 2 COL 1

BANGLADESH UPDATE



1,251 New cases in 24hrs



25,121 Total cases



370 Deaths



4,993 Recoveries

GLOBAL UPDATE



321,567 Deaths



4,938,701 Total cases

Tobacco users, smokers at higher risk

Says DGHS; 1,251 more infected, 21 die

MAHBUBUR RAHMAN KHAN

The risk of smokers contracting Covid-19 is two times higher than non-smokers, said Prof Dr Nasima Sultana, additional director general (administration) of the Directorate General of Health Services (DGHS).

She said this yesterday at the regular online briefing on the coronavirus pandemic and suggested that people refrain from using tobacco.

"Tobacco damages the lungs and creates breathing complications. The risk of contracting the diseases becomes twice as high," she said.

Quit smoking and remain healthy, she suggested.

According to WHO, Covid-19 is an infectious disease that primarily attacks the lungs. Since smoking impairs lung function, it is harder for the body to fight off coronavirus.

It further said that tobacco is a major risk factor for non-communicable diseases like cardiovascular disease, cancer, respiratory disease and diabetes.

SEE PAGE 2 COL 3

'Nobody can feel our pain'

With no salaries, majority of teachers at private schools, colleges suffer in silence before Eid

MOHIUDDIN ALAMGIR and AHMED HUMAYUN KABIR TOPU

This will be the first Eid for Arafat Haque, a lecturer of Demra University College, when he will not be able to buy anything new for his seven-year-old boy.

A non-MPO teacher, Arafat did not get salaries of March and April but his colleagues who enjoy the benefits under the MPO drew salaries on time and they will even get the festival bonus for Eid-ul-Fitr.

Under the monthly payment order (MPO), teachers get 100 percent basic salary from the exchequer with some house rent and medical allowance.

"I am running my families by borrowing from relatives and friends but that too will not be possible in the near future. We are teachers -- we cannot just stand on the roads asking for money, or start selling vegetables," Arafat said.

According to Bangladesh Teachers Association President Nazrul Islam Rony, the situation of more than two lakh non-MPO teachers at 37,000 secondary school, madrasas and technical institutions are more or less the same in this time of pandemic.

"In the absence of salaries, the teachers are living an inhuman life. If the situation worsens, it will be catastrophic for them," Rony said.

The authorities, on the other hand, argue that they were unable to pay the teachers' salaries as the tuition fees from students, their only source of earnings, could not be collected.

SEE PAGE 2 COL 4

SSC results via text for the first time

MOHIUDDIN ALAMGIR

For the very first time in the history of Bangladesh, the education boards have decided to send results of Secondary School Certificate (SSC) and equivalent exams to guardians' mobile phones via SMS.

The results would be published after Eid-ul-Fitr, Mahbub Hossain, secretary to the Secondary and Higher Education Division, told The Daily Star yesterday evening.

Monjurul Kabir, senior systems analyst of Dhaka Education Board, said they started sending messages to all mobile operators to alert their consumers about the process of receiving results of the exams.

"We hope that all the candidates or their guardians will register for receiving their results," he said.

Prof Ziaul Haque, chairman of Dhaka Education Board who is also the head of inter-board

SEE PAGE 2 COL 6

Restrictions they do not heed

Thousands leave capital to spend Eid with their loved ones; police say they're overwhelmed

MOHAMMAD JAMIL KHAN and TUHIN SHUBHRA ADHIKARY

Thousands of people left Dhaka for the second straight day yesterday to celebrate Eid in their village homes, violating travel restrictions imposed to curb the spread of Covid-19.

Desperate to be at home with their loved ones, they ignored the risks of contracting novel coronavirus and spreading it to others.

It happened at a time when the country's coronavirus situation has been deteriorating every day. The authorities yesterday reported the total number of Covid-19 cases crossed the 25,000 mark while the death toll hit 370.

Police, which stepped up measures to curb people's movement, claimed that they tried to stop the home-goers, but failed since so many of them descended on roads at a time.

In the absence of public transport amid the ongoing shutdown, the home-goers travelled by pickups, motorcycles and battery-run three wheelers, ignoring social distancing rules. When they came near check-posts set up by the law enforcers at the

exit points of the capital, they crossed them on foot.

Ferry services on Shimulia-Kathalbari and the Paturia-Daulatdia routes remained suspended like the previous day. Many remained stuck at the ferry ghats while many others crossed the Padma river by trawlers, risking their lives when super cyclone Amphan was approaching.

Besides, vehicles remained stuck in tailbacks on the Dhaka-Tangail highway, said witnesses.

Meanwhile, Inspector General of Police (IGP) Benazir Ahmed yesterday urged those stuck at the ghats not to go home.

"Stay where you are," he said while addressing a briefing on law and order ahead of the upcoming Eid-ul-Fitr and the coronavirus situation, at the Police Lines Auditorium in the capital's Rajarbagh.

He said many were crowding the ferry terminals although warning signal number 3 was raised before the storm. "Many others are trying to cross the river risking their lives, but we've instructed the authorities to curb the movement."

SEE PAGE 4 COL 4

THE BUSINESS



ROBI SUBSIDIARY TO LAUNCH GAME CHANGING ONLINE VIDEO-ON-DEMAND SERVICE

Red Dot Digital, a subsidiary of Robi, is set to roll out a device that can change the way people view television. Called Binge, it provides online video service. Red Dot claims Binge has one of the widest entertainment catalogues, including more than 100 live HD TV channels both in local and international, web series, latest web films, exclusive originals.

STORY ON B1

HEALTH GETS THE BIGGEST BUMP IN DEVELOPMENT BUDGET B2

CONSTRUCTION SECTOR SHOULD RESTART IN PHASES B2

UBER EATS TO WRAP UP BANGLADESH OPERATIONS B2



Vehicles are caught in long tailbacks on Dhaka-Mawa highway in Munshiganj's Kuchiamara area yesterday morning after police enforced a ban on entering and leaving Dhaka ahead of the Eid-ul-Fitr to contain the spread of Covid-19. Failing to move towards Mawa, a truck carrying poultry makes a U-turn.

PHOTO: ANISUR RAHMAN

Burden now HEAVIER

What 'work-from-home' means for women

ZYMA ISLAM

As the lockdown to curb the spread of coronavirus continues to have an impact on people from all walks of life, a generation of working women is learning that their "work-from-home" is not quite the same as that of men.

This generation is highly educated. They hold tertiary degrees, and are often the first women in their families to have jobs -- and they are dependent on domestic staff to help them with household chores, because the men in their lives do not.

The abundance of cheap, exploitable labour has always meant that whatever domestic chores working women were not able to do could be passed off to the hired help. This arrangement allowed them to spend eight hours or more a day at office. This arrangement also paved the way for men not to do their part at home.

Now, with domestic staff being given leave and women confined at home, they are suddenly back to where society has always stereotypically told them they "belong" -- in the kitchen.

And many, for the first time in their marriages, or family lives, are having to confront the fact that the men in their lives do not practise equal distribution of work at home.

Nadia (not her real name) jotted down the daily routine of her and her husband's day. Her routine, titled "An Architect's Day" starts with making breakfast for the family at 10:00am, followed by feeding their two-year-old daughter, followed by doing the laundry and "occasional" bathroom cleaning.

Her afternoons are taken up with making lunch, feeding the baby once again, folding clothes, then making tea and

SEE PAGE 2 COL 4