

Bracing for Amphan fury

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Samarendra, who has been observing the cyclone since its formation.

The extremely severe cyclone is going to bear down on Bangladesh at a time when the country is struggling to deal with the Covid-19 crisis.

As of 9:00pm yesterday, the cyclone was 650 km off the Mongla port with a wind speed of 160 miles per hour.

In its special bulletin last night, the Met office said it may hit the coastal areas of Bangladesh and India today evening.

The cyclone, under the influence of the new moon phase, could cause storm surges above 10 feet in coastal districts including Satkhira, Khulna, Bagerhat, Jhalakathi, Pirjoipur, Barguna, Patuakhali, Bhola, Barishal, Laxmipur, Chandpur, Noakhali, Feni and Chattogram.

Weather experts said Amphan turned into an extremely severe or category 4 cyclone from category 1 within just 18 hours as the temperature of the sea surface in the Bay had been very high (32 to 34 centigrade) over last two weeks due to impacts of climate change. The high temperature helped the cyclone gain more strength.

“We have never seen such high values until now. These high temperatures can super charge a cyclone since tropical cyclones primarily draw their energy from evaporation at the ocean surface,” Dr Roxy Mathew Koll, a scientist at the Indian Institute of Tropical Meteorology, wrote on his Facebook page yesterday.

EVACUATION
“The evacuation of people in the coastal areas will continue the whole night. Many will move to cyclone shelters after Sehri. The number of evacuees will be nearly 20 lakh by tomorrow morning,” said Enamur Rahman, state minister for disaster management and relief.

“We have arranged almost double the space we need to shelter 20 lakh people, keeping the coronavirus pandemic in mind,” he mentioned.

District administrations in Khulna, Barishal and Chattogram divisions had been evacuating people from the vulnerable areas to cyclone shelters since yesterday morning, he added.

Elias Hossen, deputy commissioner of Chattogram, said district officials along with volunteers of the Cyclone Preparedness Programme and the Red Crescent are making sure that people are evacuated to cyclone centres.

“A total of 284 medical teams are ready, and 4,046 cyclone centres have been prepared to accommodate four lakh people with sufficient stocks of food and medicine,” he said.

Dr Md Anwar Hossain Hawlader,

commissioner of Khulna Division, said the district administrations were asked to strictly follow the health-safety guidelines, including social distancing, at the cyclone shelters.

Some 303 medical teams and 26,213 volunteers are ready in three coastal districts -- Khulna, Bagerhat and Satkhira -- to deal with any situation, he said.

In Barishal Division, many were evacuated to 4972 cyclone shelters.

“We have started evacuation. Directives have been given to ensure social distancing [at the cyclone shelters],” Mohammad Yamin Chowdhury, divisional commissioner of Barishal, told The Daily Star yesterday evening.

THE MOST VULNERABLE ONES

Most of the three lakh people living in char areas remain exposed to Cyclone Amphan.

Many of the chars have no cyclone shelters or any buildings. People have to take shelter in forests to protect themselves from tidal waves and gusts.

It’s a big challenge to evacuate all the people from 21 islands in Bhola, said district officials.

Around 72,000 people were evacuated from the chars, they mentioned.

MEASURES, PREPARATIONS

All the vessels anchored at different jetties of Chattogram port have been sent to the deep sea so that none of those washes ashore during the cyclone.

A total of 19 vessels from the berths were sent to the deep sea by 8:30am while most of the 51 vessels that were at the outer anchorage were sent to the deep sea through the Kutubdia Channel, Captain Faridul Alam, deputy conservator of Chattogram Port Authority.

Flight operations at Chattogram Shah Amanat International Airport will remain suspended today and tomorrow, said ABM Sarwar-e-Jaman, manager of the airport.

In a statement, Inter Services Public Relations Directorate (ISPR) said the navy has kept 25 ships ready for post-cyclone emergency evacuations and relief work.

It has also kept two maritime patrol aircraft and as many helicopters to carry out search operations after the cyclone.

Taking the situation into account, special medical teams will be formed to provide emergency health services in the cyclone hit areas. They will be involved in providing lifesaving medicines, oral saline and other materials.

Our correspondents from Khulna, Barishal and Chattogram contributed to this report.



People bound for northern districts walk along Dhaka-Tangail highway in Gazipur's Chandra area yesterday after police stopped vehicles carrying them on the highway. Law enforcers enforced a restriction on the movement of vehicles to and from Dhaka ahead of the Eid-ul-Fitr to slow the spread of Covid-19. PHOTO: PALASH KHAN

Tobacco users

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A review of studies by public health experts, convened by WHO, on April 29, found that smokers were more likely to develop severe diseases with Covid-19 compared to non-smokers.

According to the estimation by World Bank last June, around 4.6 crore people in the country are users of tobacco products.

In a statement issued on May 11, WHO urged researchers, scientists and the media to be cautious about amplifying unproven claims that tobacco or nicotine could reduce the risk of Covid-19.

“There is currently insufficient information to confirm any link between tobacco or nicotine in the prevention or treatment of Covid-19,” it read.

Meanwhile, there is no data on whether people have reduced smoking during the ongoing shutdown.

Speaking to this correspondent, Jasim Uddin, a motor parts trader, said he is suffering from stress due to the prolonged shutdown and the ceasing of economic activities. “To reduce stress, I now smoke more [than I used to],” he said.

On the other hand, Hasibur Rahman, a private bank official, said it has become difficult for him to smoke now since he has to pass most of his time with his family. “Earlier, I used to smoke at least 10 cigarettes per day. Now, the number dropped to two,” he said.

Both of them, however, said they knew of the risks of smoking associated with Covid-19, adding that it is difficult for them to quit right away.

WHO encouraged nicotine-replacement therapies, such as gum and patches designed to help smokers quit tobacco.

Within 20 minutes of quitting, heart rate is elevated and blood pressure drops. After 12 hours, the carbon monoxide level in the bloodstream drops to normal. Within 2-12 weeks, circulation improves and lung function increases. After one to nine months, coughing and shortness of breath decrease, it said.

Meanwhile, a total of 1,251 more people were infected with Covid-19 in 24 hours since Monday morning. With this, the number of positive cases stands at 25,121, according to the DGHS.

During this period, 21 people died of the infection, said Dr Nasima of the DGHS.

The death toll has now risen to 370, she said, adding that 408 more people have recovered from the infection and the total number of recoveries so far is 4,993.

Till yesterday, a total of 1,93,645 samples were tested for Covid-19.

‘Nobody can feel our pain’

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Over a hundred teachers at Novelty School and College in the capital’s South Banasree said they did not receive salaries of March and April. They have lost hope for festival allowance.

Principal Md Ruhul Amin said they could not pay the teachers’ salaries due to fund crisis as they were not able to collect tuition fees from students.

According to Rony, only a few renowned schools of capital have savings and they can pay the salaries of teachers without being dependent on tuition fees.

Non-government teachers said they are usually ill paid and provide private tuitions besides their job. Now with schools shut and children mostly staying home, they lost both the means of earning.

Jesmin Parveen, a widow and a teacher of Najifa Bright Model School, a Kindergarten in Pabna, said she was passing her days in financial hardship with her income from the job as well as the private tuitions totally off over the last two months.

“If the coronavirus situation continues, I will not have any alternative to seeking help from others for survival,” Jesmin said. “Nobody can feel our pain.”

All educational institutions have been closed since March 17, and the

government has now extended the closure until May 30 to stem the further spread of Covid-19.

On April 27, Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina said all educational institutions may stay closed until September if the situation does not improve.

Nekbor Hossain, convener of Bangladesh Non-Government Honour’s-Master’s College Teachers’ Forum, said about 3,000 teachers at 352 colleges are facing the same crisis. “We demand salaries for the sake of our life and dignity.”

Teachers of private technical institutions are also not getting salaries for the last couple of months.

Abdul Aziz, president of Technical Education Consortium of Bangladesh, an association of technical institution owners, admitted that they could not provide salaries to the about at least 30,000 teachers of over 9,000 non-government institutions.

Less than five percent technical institutions have the ability to pay salaries of teachers from own funds, he said.

As most of the institution are housed at rented buildings, they need to pay electricity and other bills. Moreover, tuition fees at these institutions are comparatively less than others.

So, there is no scope of create reserved funds, he added.

Burden now heavier

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snacks for the family. Her evening routine involves yet more cooking, cleaning and feeding of little humans, and as she wrote, “If I get a chance, I flop down on the bed and fiddle with my phone.”

That is what she does with her only personal time of the day, when she is supposed to finish work and pursue her career.

In a funny disclaimer, Nadia added, “Entry does not include the many times the baby goes to the toilet and needs her clothes changed and potty cleaned.”

She contrasted her day with her husband’s. An engineer, her husband does no cooking, cleaning, and the only assistance he offers his wife is “waking up at night if the baby cries, and staying up long enough for the baby’s mother to wake up.”

“When I showed him this list, he told me to quit complaining and tell him the solution. I told him the solution -- equal distribution of labour -- and he listened. But it never got translated into action,” lamented Nadia.

This is the norm among males in the family, she said. “My father-in-law does not lift a finger to get a glass of water, and his son does not help with chores. They also don’t believe their son should work -- if my husband even volunteers to do something, his mother comes running to relieve him.”

Hridi (name changed) is on her maternity leave from office. While it is true that she does not have to do regular office work from home, having a baby that is learning how to roll over and fall off the bed keeps her hands full.

“I had a domestic staff come in for a few hours each day to help me clean the house but we have had to put her on leave for the lockdown. My husband

is an instructor at a university. He keeps himself locked in a room the whole day to take online classes, so all the chores fall on me,” said Hridi.

But just like Nadia, this lockdown has made her realise that her husband was raised with the belief that men should not do household chores.

“During the first days, he tried to share the chores, but then his mother scolded us both. She told him that even though I have a masters’ degree from abroad, what kind of a woman am I if I cannot take care of my family?” lamented Hridi.

And even though Hridi and her husband do not live with his mother, it seems that he had really taken her words to heart, leaving Hridi to tackle the chores alone. She was speaking to this correspondent at 1:00am in the morning, “I just finished putting the baby to sleep and cleaning the kitchen after a day of cooking,” she said.

“I’m yet to find a balance between work-from-home and chores,” said Tasnia (not her real name), a newly-married NGO worker. “When I ask for help from my husband, he ends up doing the tiny part I specifically pointed out. But men are almost never proactive in identifying what needs to be done, and completing household tasks that might be adjacent/related to each other.”

As a feminist, being a part of an unequal relationship is a mental quandary for her. “I felt disappointed in myself for a while for being here. It was sad to realise that I have to actively coach my partner every time I spot unequal labour distribution,” she said.

“Meanwhile, my male boss expects the women to be equally productive as men, even though we have so much

SSC results

FROM PAGE 1

coordination committee, said the students would not be able to receive their results from educational institutions this year.

The government earlier planned to publish the results on May 7 or May 8, but failed to execute that for closure of educational institutions.

For the first time in the last eight years, the government would not be able to publish results within 60 days from completion of the public exam.

This year, the SSC exams began on February 3, with the theoretical and practical tests ending on February 27 and on March 6 respectively.

Some 2,047,779 students took part in the SSC and its equivalent examinations held at 3,512 centres.

Monjurul Kabir, said that like the previous years, results would be also available on the education boards’ websites, and could also be received via SMS.

Examinees can get the results from the education board website [http://www.educationboardresults.gov.bd] and also from the websites of their respective education boards.

To know about SSC and equivalent results, pre-registration will continue till 24 hours before publishing the results.

PROCESS OF RECEIVING RESULTS VIA SMS

Type SSC/DAKHIL (space) first three letters of respective boards (space) roll number (space) 2020 and send it to 16222.

‘PAY TEACHERS REGULARLY’

Bangladesh Kindergarten School and College Oikya Parishad chairman Iqbal Chowdhury and Bangladesh Kindergarten Association president Abdur Rashid said that they cannot pay teachers’ salaries in the absence of tuition fees of students.

“We know teachers are passing their days in hardship. But where will we get money to pay the salaries?” asked Iqbal and said there are about eight to 10 lakh teachers at 60,000 kindergartens.

Abdur Rashid fears about 20 percent students of kindergartens will drop out and many teachers may leave the job because of economic crisis cause by the shutdowns.

Directorate of Primary Education’s Director General Md Fashiullah said 500 to 600 kindergartens were registered with the DPE.

“Most of the kindergartens do business. Why won’t they be able to pay salaries of teachers? I will urge them to pay teachers regularly,” he added.

Directorate of Secondary and Higher Education’s Director General Prof Syed Md Golam Faruk urged the authorities of all private schools and colleges to pay salaries of teachers.

“We will not accept if a school or college collects tuition fees but refused to pay salaries of teachers,” he added.

more housework to do,” complained Tasnia.

Another NGO worker Shahida laughingly told the story of how her husband yelled out in pain when a bit of hot oil spilled on his hand.

“I was working, and had asked him to fry the piyajus for iftar. This was the first time in his 35 years that he was trying to do this, and a drop of hot oil spilt on his hand. I pointed out to him the countless times this had happened to me and that it was just his first,” she said.

The struggle is acknowledged by a United Nations situation report prepared by its Regional Bureau of Asia Pacific Economist Network.


“Measures are needed to alleviate the crisis of care that has disproportionately fallen on women’s shoulders and to make policy responses gender-sensitive,” recommended the report, titled The Social and Economic Impact of Covid-19 in the Asia-Pacific Region, published last month.

Meanwhile, Manusher Jonno Foundation recently surveyed 16,203 women and children through the month of April, and found 4,249 women reporting domestic violence. Approximately half said that the abuse was mental (or verbal), and 1672 said they had never been abused before this lockdown.

While Nadia, Shahida, Tasnia and Hridi are not alleging domestic violence, their troubles are rooted in the same cause -- inequality in marriage, and patriarchal mindsets that believe women and men have different gender roles. As the lockdown stretches on, so does their dilemma.

All the women mentioned above requested anonymity for protection and privacy


13th Death Anniversary



We pray for Late A. B. M. Kamal Uddin Khan on his 13th Death Anniversary on 20th of May 2020. Late A. B. M. Kamal Uddin Khan was a Founder Life Member of the North South University (NSU) Foundation.

He was also the Chairman of the Board of Governors of the North South University Foundation. He was a successful industrialist, philanthropist and Former President of Gulshan Club Ltd.

May Allah bless his soul and give the members of his family the strength to keep on bearing the loss.



North South University

Center of Excellence in Higher Education

UK MPs criticise ‘inadequate’ govt virus testing

AFP, London

British lawmakers yesterday heaped fresh pressure on the government for its handling of the coronavirus outbreak, calling its testing regime “inadequate” in the early stages.

Prime Minister Boris Johnson has been criticised for his initial response to the global pandemic, and has faced weeks of pressure about the availability of tests for the virus.

The country has seen 34,796 deaths -- the second-highest toll in the world behind the United States -- and 246,406 cases, according to the latest figures.

But despite a recent surge in daily tests and the expansion of eligibility, MPs on a parliamentary committee said: “Testing capacity has been inadequate for most of the pandemic so far.”

Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh
Office of the Principal
Dhaka Medical College, Dhaka

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E-Tender Notice

Sl. No.	Tender ID	Description	Tender opening date	Remarks
1	460047	Supply Cleaning Items	02-June 2020 14:00	N/A
2	459942	Supply of Monihary Items	01-June-2020 14:30:00	N/A

This is an online tender, where only e-Tenders will be accepted in e-GP Portal, no offline/hard copies will be accepted. To submit e-Tender please register on e-GP System Portal (<https://www.eprocure.gov.bd>).

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