



The Daily Star



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BANGLADESH UPDATE **2,523** New cases in 24hrs **42,844** Total cases **582** Deaths **9,015** Recoveries **GLOBAL UPDATE** **359,532** Deaths **5,846,653** Total cases

New jobs dry up amid shutdown

ADB study finds 87pc decline in April job postings in Bangladesh compared to last year's data; sharp fall in textile, manufacturing sector jobs

REJAU KARIM BYRON and MD FAZLUR RAHMAN

New job postings nosedived 87 percent year-on-year in April on the leading job search sites in Bangladesh, highlighting the strain the country's labour market has been going through because of the coronavirus pandemic.

The number of job postings dropped sharply from the third week of March, a week after the first cases of Covid-19 were confirmed, and after the ongoing nationwide shutdown was enforced, the Asian Development Bank (ADB) said in a brief note yesterday.

The brief reported on a rapid assessment of labour demand in Bangladesh and Sri Lanka to help understand the impact of coronavirus on the countries' job market.

Relative to December last year, the number of new job postings in Bangladesh was approximately the same in January and 10 percent to 17 percent fewer in February and the first and second weeks of March this year, according to the report.

It fell to 59 percent in the third week of March and 24 percent in the fourth week,

it said. Year-on-year, monthly job postings were 35 percent fewer in March and 87 percent fewer in April, although job postings in February were only 1 percent fewer, the brief report said.

A job posting is an advertisement created by an employer or a company seeking to hire an employee for a position.

While online job portal data are not representative of the entire labour market, they can readily capture the impact on labour demand caused by Covid-19 lockdowns, the ADB said.

There are several job search sites and these real-time data could guide social protection and labour policies for better targeting within a limited fiscal space, it said.

In addition, as economic activities are gradually resuming under the "new normal," online job portal data could be continuously monitored in the coming months to assess the progress of economic recovery, the brief said.

The data for the brief came from bdjobs.com, one of the leading online job portals in Bangladesh in terms of number of job

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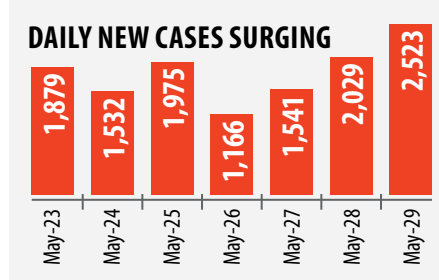


Crammed with people bound for Dhaka, a ferry reaches Shimulia Ferry Terminal in Munshiganj yesterday. With movement of public transport suspended, thousands are returning to their workplaces using different modes of transport after celebrating Eid at their village homes. Travelling like this is putting people at risk of contracting Covid-19.

PHOTO: ANISUR RAHMAN

A big leap in new cases

2,523 test positive in 24hrs as highest number of tests conducted



MAHBUBUR RAHMAN KHAN

Just two days before the ongoing nationwide shutdown is relaxed, 2,523 people tested Covid-19 positive in the country yesterday, the highest number yet in Bangladesh in a single day.

Yesterday also saw the highest number of tests conducted in a 24-hour period.

Twenty-three more people died from coronavirus infection during that period, according to Directorate General of Health Services.

The death toll now stands at 582, and

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Bus owners push for doubling fares

Say they have to carry fewer passengers to ensure health safety; road transport services to resume Monday on a limited scale

TUHIN SHUBHRA ADHIKARY

With buses set to hit the roads from Monday, transport owners have started asking for permission to double the fares, because the vehicles would carry fewer passengers to prevent coronavirus transmission.

A top leader of Bangladesh Road Transport Owners Association placed the proposal at a meeting with officials at BRTA head office in the capital yesterday, over two months after public transport was suspended.

The new fares would be decided today by a committee led by the chairman of Bangladesh Road Transport Authority (BRTA) at another meeting, according to Nazrul Islam, secretary of Road Transport and Bridges Division.

Yesterday's meeting presided over by Nazrul and attended by transport association leaders, and police and other officials, happened a day after the government announced that transport services would resume from May 31 on a limited scale in adherence to health guidelines.

The demand for raising travelling costs comes at a time when income of many people has dramatically reduced due to the shutdown of the economy on March 26 to contain the spread of Covid-19 in the country.

Meanwhile, Bangladesh Jatri Kalyan Samity yesterday urged the government to cut fuel prices instead of allowing transport companies to charge more.

It pointed out that oil prices fell in the international market, and stopping extortion in the sector would save operational costs.

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Airlines prepare to partially resume flights

To follow health guidelines, keep at least 30pc seats vacant on each flight

RASHIDUL HASAN

The national airline Biman and two local airlines -- US-Bangla Airlines and Novoair -- are preparing to resume domestic flight operation from June 1 following the health guideline prescribed by the Civil Aviation Authority of Bangladesh.

Each of Biman and Novoair is planning to operate seven flights every day while US-Bangla is preparing for 10 daily flights, sources said.

State Minister for Civil Aviation and Tourism M Mahubub Ali yesterday urged all air passengers to strictly follow the health regulations and social distancing directives while travelling.

Biman's Deputy General Manager Tahera Khandoker said, "We will operate morning and evening flights to Chattogram and Sylhet and three flights to Saidpur daily from June 1 using our Dash 8Q400 aircraft."

US-Bangla Airlines General Manager Kamrul Islam said they had a plan to

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Money whitening scope to widen

Govt looks for fund to revive economy

REJAU KARIM BYRON and MD FAZLUR RAHMAN

The government may allow uses of untaxed or black money in all sectors to boost investment and create jobs as part of its efforts to pull the economy out of Covid-19 wreckage.

According to an official of the National Board of Revenue (NBR), the government high-ups were looking for ways that could bring the huge amount of untaxed money back to the economy as investments.

Black money is largely attributed to tax evasion and its direct impact is the loss of government revenue. For the last five years, black money-holders have been able to whiten their assets by investing in residential buildings for by paying a tax of 10 per cent on the amount invested, which for regular taxpayers is between 10 and 30 per cent.

But from the current fiscal year, economic zones and hi-tech parks were added to the list. Black money-holders do not face any question about the sources of their income if they invest in the sectors.

The scheme will be open till June 2024. However, the response has not been encouraging.

Zahid Hussain, a former lead economist of the World Bank in Dhaka, said "This is an instrument that has miserably failed to achieve its objectives of raising revenue for the government while inducing investments into productive sectors. It has been there in one form or other in every budget under all governments."

"We need to have a clear understanding of why it has not worked." One reason, according to Zahid Hussain, is because it has become an opportunity for whitening undeclared income. There is no specific timeline within which the facility can be availed at concessional tax terms and beyond which severe penalties will be imposed if caught.

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Cancer patient Rana Shikder being flown to Dhaka from Singapore on May 22.

PHOTO: COLLECTED

From Singapore with love

MOHAMMAD AL-MASUM MOLLA

At 32, Rana Shikder is waiting for death, but he is content because he is at home.

When he does slip off this mortal coil, Rana will have his loved ones beside him instead of being thousands of miles away in a cold, anonymous hospital bed. And he has Cynthia Goh to thank for it.

Like millions of other migrant workers seeking their fortune, Rana left

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CHARTERED FLIGHTS Sohail Rahman, Morshed Khan, wives off to UK

MOHAMMAD AL-MASUM MOLLA

Beximco Chairman Sohail F Rahman and former BNP leader M Morshed Khan along with their wives left for the UK on chartered planes amid coronavirus travel restrictions.

Sohail F Rahman, chairman of Beximco Ltd, and his wife left for the United Kingdom around 1:30pm yesterday, said

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KILLING OF 26 BANGLADESHIS IN LIBYA

Dhaka for quick probe, punishment of killers

JAMIL MAHMUD and PORIMOL PALMA

Foreign Minister AK Abdul Momen yesterday said the government demanded the Libyan authorities quickly investigate and punish those who killed 26 Bangladeshis and four Africans in a "revenge attack."

Dhaka also demanded compensations for the families of those killed and injured, he said in a statement.

Momen said the Libyan interior ministry has already ordered an investigation and arrest of the killers.

Meanwhile, officials at the Bangladesh mission in Tripoli said the Bangladeshi migrants, who were killed at the hands of suspected human traffickers in a Libyan city on Thursday, were taken to the North African country en route to Italy via the Mediterranean Sea.

They landed in Libya early this year prior to the Covid-19 outbreak. The country was being used as a transit point to reach Italy, said officials.

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আমরা শোকাহত

শমরিতা হাসপাতাল লিমিটেড এর মাননীয় চেয়ারম্যান এবং সাবেক সংসদ সদস্য জনাব আলহাজ্ব মোঃ মকবুল হোসেন গত ২৪ মে ২০২০ ইং তারিখ রাত ৯.১০ মিনিটে ঢাকার সমিতিত সামরিক হাসপাতালে ইচ্ছাকৃত করেন (বিনািল্লাহি ওয়া ইন্না ইলাইহি রাজিউন) আমরা শমরিতা হাসপাতালের সকল কর্মকর্তা-কর্মচারীবৃন্দ মরতুমের বিদেহী আত্মার মাগফেরাত কামনা করছি। এবং তার শোকসন্তপ্ত পরিবারের জন্য শান্তি কামনা করছি।

শমরিতা হাসপাতাল লিমিটেড
৩৯/২, পাছপাথ-ঢাকা