



# The Daily Star

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Your Right to Know

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BANGLADESH  
UPDATE2,856  
New cases in 24hrs84,379  
Total cases1,139  
Deaths17,828  
RecoveriesGLOBAL  
UPDATE429,870  
Deaths7,799,870  
Total cases

## One rung up on the grim ladder

*Bangladesh surpasses China in terms of confirmed cases*

WASIM BIN HABIB and MOUJUD AHMED SUJAN

With numbers of reported new cases and deaths growing almost every day, Bangladesh has overtaken China in terms of confirmed coronavirus cases.

The authorities yesterday reported 2,856 new cases, bringing the total official count to 84,379. This makes Bangladesh the 18th worst-hit country in the pandemic.

Officially acknowledged cases in China, where the coronavirus was first reported, is 84,228, according to Johns Hopkins University, which is tracking the virus across the world.

The Directorate General of Health Services (DGHS) reported 44 more deaths from the deadly virus in the 24 hours preceding 2:30pm, bringing the recorded death toll to 1,139. The fatality rate now stands at 1.35 percent.

The country's official death toll has been relatively low, but a new projection by a team of experts put the number of daily fatalities to between 70 and 100 by the end of June.

The team of experts from the University of Dhaka, DGHS, and University of Toronto predict that the number of confirmed cases

### COUNTRIES AND CASES

2,048,986	US
828,810	BRAZIL
519,458	RUSSIA
308,916	INDIA
294,402	UNITED KINGDOM
243,209	SPAIN
236,305	ITALY
84,379	BANGLADESH
84,228	CHINA

may reach 163,000 by the end of this month. Earlier on June 3, this team projected the number to be 123,000.

"We use official data to make this projection using epidemiological models. As the number of tests slightly increased and the economy reopened, our new projection shows higher numbers," Shafiu Shimul, lead researcher of the team, also an associate professor of Dhaka University Health Economics, told The Daily Star.

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GENERAL HOLIDAYS ONLY IN 'RED ZONES' -- PAGE 3



Family members taking newborn triplets to a consultant at the neonatal intensive care unit of Dhaka Medical College Hospital. The mother has symptoms of Covid-19 and the babies were delivered prematurely. One of them is severely underweight. The doctor at Covid-19 section of the hospital yesterday referred the babies to a consultant.

PHOTO:  
AMRAN HOSSAIN

### An apology

We apologise to our readers and patrons for an error that occurred in the lead story on Friday, titled 'A budget not of its time'. The first five paragraphs of the story were almost identical to a report published in the Financial Times on March 11, which was consulted along with many others as resources for writing the report. These particular paragraphs inadvertently got included in the report, which amounts to a gross error and ethical violation by the writer and a serious lapse in subsequent quality control.

We would like to reassure our respected readers that even an isolated occurrence like this under a situation where all of our colleagues are working from home is wholly unacceptable to the newspaper and we've taken steps so that no such instances occur in future.

We have deleted these paragraphs from our online content and express again our sincerest regret for this inadvertent error.

-Editor

## Food, making rent uncertain for them

*Thousands of RMG workers in Gazipur either laid off or their factories closed*

JAMIL MAHMUD, RASHIDUL HASAN and  
ABU BAKAR SIDDIQUE

Thousands of readymade garment workers in Gazipur have been passing days in uncertainty as over four dozen factories remain closed for more than two months in the coronavirus fallout.

Left without work, many of them are struggling to buy food, pay house rent and meet other needs of their families.

Besides, several thousand workers have been sacked in the face of financial losses being incurred by the factories due to the pandemic.

According to data from the Department of Inspection for Factories and Establishments (DIFE), 862 export-oriented garment factories were in operation in Gazipur before the pandemic. About 70 percent of the workforce was women.

As of Friday, 52 of the units remained out of operation, the data shows.

Md Yousuf Ali, deputy inspector general of DIFE in Gazipur, said those 52 units

employed 40,000 to 52,000 workers before the coronavirus pandemic hit the country.

He also said some 810 factories, with an estimated 7,51,691 workers, were in operation as of Friday.

Gazipur is one of three key industrial zones for the country's export-oriented garment sector, apart from Narayanganj and Dhaka.

After the first three coronavirus positive cases were reported on March 8, the government enforced a countrywide shutdown, closing all public and private offices, except for some essential services, on March 26. The move was aimed at containing the spread of the deadly virus.

On April 26, the government allowed the RMG units to resume operation on a "limited scale", but said they must maintain health guidelines.

Although most of the factories in Gazipur have resumed operations, many did not reopen after international buyers cancelled work orders abruptly, said factory insiders.

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## Passing of an AL stalwart Mohammed Nasim (1948-2020)

RASHIDUL HASAN

Mohammed Nasim, a veteran Awami League leader and a frontline figure in almost all democratic movements in the country, died at a city hospital yesterday.

Nasim, who served in four different cabinet roles during a political career spanning nearly six decades, was 72.

The freedom fighter who had stood by his party through thick and thin breathed his last around 11:10am at Bangladesh Specialized Hospital.

Son of Shaheed Captain M Mansur Ali, one of the four national leaders and a close associate of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, and Amena Mansur, Nasim died of a cardiac arrest.

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### USE OF IVERMECTIN

## Hope held out, caution called for

MOUJUD AHMED SUJAN

Physicians at a Dhaka hospital claimed they have observed "cumulative efficacy" of ivermectin in Covid-19 patients while using the drug in combination with doxycycline.

They said although they were yet to be certain about the exact efficacy of the drug combination, they would seek permission from Bangladesh Medical and Research Council (BMRC) for a clinical trial to know further about its effectiveness.

The BMRC has recently permitted International Centre for Diarrhoeal Disease Research, Bangladesh (icddr,b) to run a clinical trial of the drug combination, according to an official.

Experts, however, cautioned the drugs should not be used based on only such "observation". The suggested conducting a dose-response study using a clinical trial.

Introduced in 1987, ivermectin is a medication used to treat many types of parasite infestations which include head lice, scabies, river blindness, strongyloidiasis, trichuriasis, ascariasis, and lymphatic filariasis.

A research article published at www.sciencedirect.com on April 3 described the effect of the FDA-approved ivermectin on SARS-CoV-2 in a laboratory setting done by a group of researchers in Monash University, Australia.

The Monash team found ivermectin in vitro [performed outside of a living organism] had an inhibitory action on the novel coronavirus, reducing the load of viral RNA by 5,000 times in 48 hours. The ivermectin dose used in this study was 5 µM.

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## No 'live' virus in mother's milk

WHO recommends  
breastfeeding

REUTERS, Zurich

Breastfeeding mothers do not seem to be passing on the new coronavirus to their infants, and based on current evidence the benefits outweigh any potential risks of transmission, the World Health Organization (WHO) said on Friday.

WHO director-general Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus said that it had carefully investigated the risks of women transmitting Covid-19 to their babies during breastfeeding.

"We know that children are at relatively low risk of Covid-19, but are at high risk of numerous other diseases and conditions that breastfeeding prevents," Tedros told a news conference.

"Based on the available evidence, WHO's advice is that the benefits of breastfeeding outweigh any potential risks of transmission of Covid-19," he said.

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A rickshaw van being used by the authorities to deliver groceries in East Rajabazar area of the capital yesterday. Online delivery services have been supplying essential goods to the area marked "red zone" after a large number of residents tested positive for coronavirus.

PHOTO:  
RASHED SHUMON

### POST COVID-19 LABOUR MARKET

## Bangladesh eyes Africa

PORIMOL PALMA

The authorities have been exploring labour markets in African countries as overseas jobs may decline in the traditional Middle Eastern and Southeast Asian countries due to coronavirus pandemic.

Foreign Minister AK Abdul Momen yesterday told The Daily Star that they were looking for new jobs in agriculture sector of the countries.

"We are not saying that the African governments will recruit our people. What we are saying is that African countries have huge land where our people to go for contract farming and recruit workers from Bangladesh," he said.

The foreign minister said that farming sector is going to be very important in the aftermath of the coronavirus pandemic.

He specifically mentioned the names of Tanzania, Sudan, Uganda and The Gambia where huge opportunities lie for investment in the agriculture sector.

The move comes as several lakh Bangladeshi migrants may return home in the coming months after losing jobs in the Middle Eastern and Southeast Asian countries.

Besides, overseas jobs in these markets may also see a sharp decline, officials said.

The World Bank has projected remittance decline by 22 percent this year compared to \$18 billion received from about one crore Bangladesh migrants last year.

"As we are now focusing on economic diplomacy, we have asked our ambassadors to look for new avenues. We have got some reports suggesting that if our businessmen can invest in those countries, over the time some 40 lakh Bangladeshis can have jobs," Momen said.

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