

**CORONAVIRUS PANDEMIC**  
Global cases exceed 15 million as Trump admits situation to 'get worse'  
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## Govt going for DGHS shake-up

After the DG's resignation, director of hospitals unit set to be removed from the directorate beset with controversies, criticisms

WASIM BIN HABIB and MOUJUD AHMED SUJAN

Following weeks of controversies and a day after the director general of the Directorate General of Health Services (DGHS) quit, the government has decided to make some reshuffles at the top end of the directorate.

Prof Abul Kalam Azad resigned from the post of DG of DGHS on Tuesday after a blame game between the ministry and the directorate over the signing of a deal with Regent Hospital that issued fake Covid-19 test reports.

The health ministry has now decided to remove Aminul Hasan, director of hospitals and clinics unit of the DGHS. A circular would be issued soon, said sources in the ministry.

They said the director of hospitals and clinics, Aminul, was responsible for making sure that the private hospitals and clinics run following rules. His section was directly responsible for signing deals with hospitals for Covid-19 testing and treatment.

They said the removal of Aminul was just the tip of the iceberg. Officials of other sections, including administration, planning, and government hospital unit,

would also be changed soon.

Experts, however, said removing a few people would not solve the problems the health sector has long been facing and a major overhaul was imperative.

"Removing any person will not bring any result, unless the whole system is rearranged. It is urgent to assign skilled, efficient and honest people everywhere, especially in administrative posts," said Prof ABM Abdullah, noted medicine specialist.

"If we do not take effective measures, our development will be hampered. We have to take up programmes to rearrange the entire system," he told The Daily Star.

Ehteshamul Huq Choudhury, secretary general of Bangladesh Medical Association, said, "The government has started at the right place. But removing only a person will not bear any fruit. Everyone involved in irregularities and the inefficient people have to be removed."

"Besides, the people involved in anomalies must be held accountable."

If any allegation is raised against the health ministry, it should also be

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People walking nonchalantly on the rail lines even though the approaching train is quite close. This habit not only results in accidents but also is a constant annoyance for the drivers. The photo was taken in the capital's Moghbazar yesterday.

PHOTO: PRABIR DAS

BANGLADESH UPDATE

2,744 New cases in 24hrs

2,13,254 Total cases

2,751 Deaths

1,17,202 Recoveries

GLOBAL UPDATE

621,615 Deaths

15,172,678 Total cases

## Don't let private hospitals go beyond control

HC tells govt; says authorities should have restrained some of the hospital owners

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The High Court yesterday observed that the authorities concerned of the government should remain cautious so that private hospitals cannot go beyond control.

The authorities should have restrained the owners of some private hospitals from showing their powers, the HC bench of Justice M Enayetur Rahim said during virtual hearing of five writ petitions filed seeking necessary orders to ensure treatment of patients at all hospitals.

The bench made the observation in response to a discussion over the Shahabuddin Medical College Hospital's owners reportedly meeting with the home minister after the law enforcers raided the hospital for irregularities, court sources said.

The court also said duties of mobile court magistrates are to conduct the courts on specific allegations and punish the

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## A formula for disaster?

At least four labs using one kit for testing two Covid-19 samples

MOHAMMAD AL-MASUM MOLLA

Some government-approved laboratories are using a single kit for RT-PCR testing of two samples for the novel coronavirus -- a novelty practice that several experts termed not only unscientific and unethical but also something that risks producing faulty results.

They even said it may allow the highly contagious virus to spread further.

The Daily Star found at least four laboratories doing such tests and officials of those facilities said they were following this practice due to an acute shortage of testing kits.

These lab officials claimed they have got the full support of the Directorate General of Health Services (DGHS) for employing this unconventional method.

They said they were getting similar results by using this method as achieved with the use of one kit for one test -- which is standard practice here and worldwide. The national guideline on Covid-19 test also recommends one kit for one sample.

A RT-PCR kit contains reagent, the main ingredient of this or any chemical test, which is prescribed for testing one sample. The officials of these four laboratories, however, say they are using half of the reagent in the kit for testing each sample.

Additionally, the national guideline on Covid-19 does not specify the amount of reagent required in a testing kit.

The Daily Star asked several experts in the field about this method but received a mixed response as to whether the practice is scientifically accurate.

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## Imran Khan calls Hasina

The two leaders discuss Covid-19 situation, floods



DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina exchanged greetings with her Pakistani counterpart Imran Khan yesterday afternoon when the latter called her.

The two prime ministers discussed various issues, including Covid-19 and the flood situation in Bangladesh, PM's Press Secretary Ihsanul Karim said, reports UNB.

Imran phoned Hasina around 1:00pm and they talked for about 15 minutes.

After exchanging greetings, Imran wanted to know about the Covid-19 situation in Bangladesh

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## Shutdown ended, not their hardship

Low-income families still in need of help but food relief and charity now scarce

NILIMA JAHAN

With the lifting of the shutdown, food relief and cash charity have almost come to a standstill, though incomes of many poor families saw no recovery.

Those who had lost their jobs in the coronavirus-induced shutdown are not faring any better in the partially reopened economy.

Many told this correspondent that they had not received any food or monetary assistance from anyone after Eid-ul-Fitr, observed on May 25.

Rimu from Mirpur's Bhashantek slum said she had received some dry food including rice, lentils, oil, potatoes and sugar from the local commissioner, NGOs and some youth groups twice during the shutdown.

It was a big help, said the 26-year-old wife of a day labourer.

Though her husband's income has halved now, no one visits them any longer to see how they are doing, Rimu lamented.

"We need at least Tk 12,000 per month

to maintain our family of four, pay the house rent and loan instalments [against the amount] that I borrowed earlier from microcredit [organisations] and some relatives," she added.

The income of Eri's family from Mirpur's Bauniabadh slum have also reduced drastically since the pandemic.

Three members of the family once had work -- Eri did handicraft, her mother worked as a part-time maid, while her father pulled a rickshaw.

Together their income sometimes neared Tk 20,000 a month.

But now, only Eri's 55-year-old father has his earnings of about Tk 500 a day.

Eri stopped getting orders for her work from the last week of March, while all six employers of her mother refused to allow her in their houses because she lives in a slum.

"My mother is now jobless," said 15-year-old Eri.

It has become hard to maintain the rent, food and other expenses for the family with just one member's income, she said.

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## Seven killed in Cox's Bazar road crash

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Cox's Bazar

At least seven people were killed and several others injured in a head-on collision of a human haulier and lorry on Chattogram-Cox's Bazar road in Chakariya area amid heavy rains yesterday evening.

Police could confirm the identities of Badiul Alam, 50, of Harbang area in Chakariya; Al Amin, 48, of Bandarban's Lama; haulier driver Minar Uddin, 23, of Amirabad area in Lohagara, Chattogram; and Firoz Ahmed, 32, and Bablu, 40, of Konakhali, Chakariya.

They died at the scene, police said, adding that seven others injured in the crash were sent to a nearby hospital.

Both the vehicles skidded off the road and fell into a ditch after the collision around 6:00pm, they added.

Anisur Rahman, in-charge of Chiringa Highway Police Outpost, said locals, police, and

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Cattle traders bringing cows to Sagorika market by trucks in Chattogram city. Truckloads of sacrificial animals have been arriving in the port city from different districts for the last few days as the Eid approaches.

PHOTO: RAJIB RAIHAN

## 'Cattle train' plan draws a blank

Farmers still find trucks suitable, economically viable to transport sacrificial animal for Eid

AHMED HUMAYUN KABIR TOPU, Pabna

A government move to transport cattle to Dhaka and other big cities by train ahead of Eid-ul-Azha has so far failed to draw any response from farmers and traders.

As a result, Bangladesh Railways (BR) has not been able to operate a single such train till last night, just over a week before the festival on August 1.

Talking to The Daily Star, farmers and cattle traders said carrying the sacrificial animals by trucks, which they always do, is economically viable for them. It also involves less hassle, they said.

In such a situation, the special "cattle train service" is apparently left in limbo.

The railway ministry made the decision of introducing the service during a meeting in the first week of this month. The aim was to bring the cattle to the capital and other cities from southern and northern districts hassle-free, said railways officials.

The BR was supposed to run the first such train from Khulna to Kamalapur Railway Station in Dhaka 10 days before Eid, with five stoppages for loading and unloading the animals.

The plan was to extend the service to other big cities, including Chattogram, said the officials.

Nasir Uddin, divisional transportation officer of railways (Pakshey), said the authorities yesterday fixed Tk 12,000 for each cattle cart, which can carry 16 bulls/buffalos or 30 goats/lambs.

It means carrying cost for each bull/buffalo will be Tk 750, while it will be Tk 400 for each goat or lamb.

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