



The Daily Star



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BANGLADESH UPDATE 2,548 New cases in 24hrs | 2,18,658 Total cases | 2,836 Deaths | 1,20,976 Recoveries | **GLOBAL UPDATE** 634,405 Deaths | 15,559,865 Total cases

6.53cr Bangladeshis need assistance: UN

UNDP recommends cash aid of \$25 a month for the poorest; govt yet to complete one-time cash aid scheme for 50 lakh families

WASIM BIN HABIB and REJAUH KARIM BYRON

Nearly 6.53 crore poor people in Bangladesh should receive time-bound temporary cash payments to cope with the worst impacts of Covid-19 pandemic, according to the United Nations.

A working paper of the United Nations Development Programme suggests those people should get a temporary basic income of at least \$25 or Tk 2,100 per month, as the UNDP argues the financial aid would help slow the spread of the virus by enabling impoverished beneficiaries to stay home.

The money would give them the means to buy food and pay for health and education expenses, it said.

Titled "Temporary Basic Income: Protecting Poor and Vulnerable People in Developing Countries," the UNDP paper, released on Thursday, said an estimated \$1,623.4 million would be required to help nearly 6.53 crore people living under or near the poverty line in Bangladesh.

The paper comes at a time when the

coronavirus is wreaking havoc on people's income across the world, including in Bangladesh which is now the 16th worst hit country in terms of number of Covid-19 cases. Till yesterday, the death toll in the country stood at 2,836 while the total number of infections rose to 218,658.

The government has already started providing a monthly cash aid of Tk 2,500 to each of primarily estimated 50 lakh families, whose incomes have taken a hit by the pandemic. The move, however, has been marred with mismanagement.

The UNDP, a UN body, carried out assessments in the past few months on the socio-economic effects of Covid-19 in more than 60 countries.

The paper said around three billion of the world's poorest population should get financial aid to shield them from the impact of the pandemic, which has brought havoc to the developing world where millions work in the informal sectors with little access to government welfare or other support.

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With all his belongings, Rubel Hossain, a Masters student at Tejgaon College, is on his way to Sadarghat Launch Terminal in a rickshaw yesterday morning after he left his rented room in the capital's Tejkuinpara. He was heading home in Chandpur as his income from private tuitions came to a halt amid the coronavirus fallout. Losing his only source of income, he was finding it impossible to live in this city. PHOTO: PRABIR DAS

FAKE N95 MASKS BSMMU sues a supplier

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The authorities of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujib Medical University (BSMMU) have filed a case against Aparajita International for supplying fake N95 masks to the hospital's Covid-19 isolation unit.

BSMMU Proctor Prof Syed Mozaffar Ahmed filed the case against Sharmin Jahan, proprietor of Aparajita International, with Shabbagh Police Station on Thursday night.

According to sources, Sharmin is a member of Awami League's Central Sub-Committee on Women and Children.

Previously, she was a leader of Chhatra League during her studentship at Dhaka University's Department of Islamic Studies and at Netrokona College.

She currently works as an assistant

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COST OF ONLINE CLASSES

Extra burden on parents, teachers

They call for affordable internet connection

MOHIUDDIN ALAMGIR

Though it meant an extra Tk 700 per month, Mahmuda Khatun had to get broadband connection at her house for her child, a second grader of Monipur School and College.

The school has introduced online classes during the pandemic to continue their academic activities.

Beside the monthly fee, Mahmuda had to pay Tk 3,000 for the router and the connection, which she said is relatively cheaper than mobile internet data packages.

"This is a burden added during a pandemic when we are grappling with household expenditure," she said.

Sabrina Islam Bonna, who uses mobile

internet data to attend her university classes online, echoed Mahmuda's chagrin.

The Jahangirnagar university student said she needs to use two to three gigabytes of data, costing her Tk 114, to attend online classes for two days.

An undergraduate student of United International University shared the same problem. "Usually, tuition fees are high at private universities. Now this expenses over online education has added to my financial pressure."

A teacher of Mohammadpur Government High School also had to get broadband internet connection at home and buy a whiteboard to take online classes during the pandemic.

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Recovery number surpasses that of active cases

35 die 2,548 infected in a day

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The number of people who have recovered from novel coronavirus has surpassed that of active Covid-19 cases in the country, shows DGHS data.

During yesterday's briefing, Prof Dr Nasima Sultana, additional director general (administration) at the Directorate General of Health Services, said the total confirmed Covid-19 cases stood at 2,18,658 with 2,548 ones detected in 24 hours till 8:00am.

During the period, 35 people died from coronavirus, taking the death toll to 2,836, she said.

According to DGHS, 1,20,976 Covid-19 patients have so far recovered, including 1,768 in the 24 hours.

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NEWS ANALYSIS

IMPROVING BANGLADESH-PAKISTAN TIES

Apology is a must to heal wounds

PORIMOL PALMA

Pakistan Prime Minister Imran Khan called his Bangladesh counterpart Sheikh Hasina on Wednesday. In not so common a conversation, they exchanged greetings and discussed the flood and coronavirus situations in both countries.

Imran Khan spoke about strengthening regional cooperation through Saarc and stressed on bilateral relations between the two countries. He also described Pakistan's position on the Jammu and Kashmir issue and sought a peaceful resolution.

Both prime ministers' offices issued statements, but none of those spoke about the issues Hasina raised with Imran Khan.

On July 1, Pakistan's newly-appointed High Commissioner to Bangladesh, Imran Ahmad Siddiqui, met Foreign Minister AK Abdul Momen in Dhaka. The details of the discussion were not known, but on both occasions,

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Artisans printing fabrics with wooden blocks at a shop in the capital's New Super Market yesterday. They resumed work only a week ago as the shop owners started receiving some orders from individual customers and women entrepreneurs ahead of the Eid-ul-Azha. Like many other businesses, block printing was also hit hard by the Covid-19 pandemic as the market had to be shut for about three months since late March. PHOTO: ANISUR RAHMAN



Five 'narcos' killed in 'gunfights'

UP member among them

STAR REPORT

Five alleged drug peddlers, including a Union Parishad member, were killed in "gunfights" in Dhaka, Cox's Bazar and Feni early yesterday.

In Dhaka's Diabari area, two men were killed in a "gunfight" with Rab members.

The dead -- Ibrahim Khalil, 50, and Omar Faruk, 38, of Gazipur -- were accused in at least 14 cases with different police stations, said Rab.

Kamruzzaman, assistant director of Rab-1, claimed that the two "drug peddlers" violated signal around 2:30am at a Rab checkpoint in the area that was set up on information that a group of carrying yaba consignment.

As a Rab team started following their motorbike, they opened fire, forcing them to retaliate. Later, the duo was rushed to Shaheed Suhrawardy Medical College and Hospital with bullet injuries, he said.

Doctors at the hospital declared them dead, Kamruzzaman, also an assistant superintendent of police, added.

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China orders US to shut Chengdu consulate

The move comes days after Beijing told to close its Houston consulate over spying accusations

REUTERS, Beijing

China yesterday ordered the United States to close its consulate in the city of Chengdu, responding to a US demand for China to close its Houston consulate, as relations between the world's two largest economies deteriorate.

The order to close the consulate in Chengdu, in southwestern China's Sichuan province, continued Beijing's recent practice

of like-for-like responses to US actions.

China had warned it would retaliate after it was this week given 72 hours - until yesterday - to vacate its consulate in the Texas city, and had urged the United States to reconsider.

Relations between Washington and Beijing have deteriorated sharply this year over issues ranging from trade and

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We Mourn

Sponsor Director and former Vice Chairman of NCC Bank

Mr. K. Z. Mahmud

has passed away on 23rd July, 2020 at 7:40 PM, at Bumrungrad Hospital, Bangkok, Thailand (Inna lillahi Wa inna ilaihi Rajiun).

His Namaz-e-Janaza will be held at Azad Mosque, Gulshan-2 after Asar prayers on Saturday, 25th July, 2020. He will be buried at Banani Graveyard.

We pray for the eternal peace of the departed soul and express deep sympathy to the bereaved family.

Board of Directors and Management Team

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We're Always