

ADB approves \$3m grant for Bangladesh

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Asian Development Bank (ADB) has approved additional USD 3 million in grant assistance for procuring medical supplies for emergency response to Covid-19 in Bangladesh.

The Japanese government is financing the grant assistance, sourced from ADB-administered Asia Pacific Disaster Response Fund, according to a press release.

"The assistance will help alleviate the government's urgent financial, logistical, and other constraints to meet immediate needs and deliver appropriate medical services," said ADB Country Director Manmohan Parkash. "The grant will finance the procurement of essential medicines, medical equipment and infection control supplies required for Covid-19 emergency response."

The new assistance builds on ADB's previous support of around USD 603 million in loans and grants to contain and mitigate Covid-19 in Bangladesh.

On May 7, ADB approved a USD 500 million loan to bolster Bangladesh government's efforts to manage the economic and healthcare impacts of the crisis.

On April 30, ADB approved a USD 100 million concessional emergency loan for addressing the immediate public health requirements for combating Covid-19.

ADB also released a USD 350,000 emergency grant for procurement of medical supplies and equipment, and USD 1.3 million from an existing project to provide one-time cash support to 22,619 trainees to enable them to continue their ongoing skills training programme.



Students of Stamford University yesterday formed a human chain in front of Jatiya Press Club, demanding immediate release of their fellow students Shipra Debnath and Shahedul Islam Sifat, who were sent to jail in connection with the death of Maj (ret'd) Sinha Mohammad Rashed Khan.

PHOTO: FIROZ AHMED

Court accepts charges against Sabrina, others

COURT CORRESPONDENT

A Dhaka court yesterday accepted the charge sheet against eight people, including JKG Health Care Chairman Dr Sabrina Arif Chowdhury, in a case filed over issuing fake Covid-19 certificates.

The other accused are Sabrina's husband JKG Chief Executive Officer Ariful Chowdhury, Executive Officer Shafiqul Islam, graphic designer Humayun Kabir Himu and four other employees -- Himu's wife Tanzina Patwary, Jebunnesa Rima, Sayeed Chowdhury and Biplob Das.

After scrutinising case dockets and other relevant documents, Dhaka Metropolitan Magistrate Morshed Al Mamun Bhuiyan passed the order.

The court also relieved Mamunur Rashid of the charges as the investigation officer of the case appealed to the court.

Soon after acceptance of the charge sheet, Chief Metropolitan Magistrate AM Zulfikar Hayat transferred the case to the court of Metropolitan Magistrate Md Sarafuzzaman Ansary for its trial.

The court also fixed August 13 to hold hearing on charge framing against Dr Sabrina and seven others in the case.

Md Liakot Ali, an inspector of Detective Branch (DB) of police, on Wednesday submitted the charge sheet to the Chief Metropolitan Magistrate's Court of Dhaka.

On June 23, Kamal Hossain, who was given a fake Covid-19 certificate from JKG Health Care, filed the case against Humayun, his wife Tanzina and several unknown people with Tejgaon Police Station in this regard.

Regular

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Syed Mahmud Hossain told the full court meeting that the judges, who conduct cases at the Appellate Division, have more health risks during the pandemic due to their age.

The chief justice has recently decided to resume regular court activities from August 5, strictly maintaining physical distancing and health guidelines.

The virtual court functions started on May 11 after a gap of 46 days in order to deal with the urgent cases. The regular activities of courts across the country remained closed since March 26 due to the ongoing Covid-19 outbreak.

Abdul Barik passes away

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Abdul Barik, father of journalist Golam Mortoza, passed away yesterday. He was 95.

He breathed his last around 5am at his house in Mahendrapur village of Rajbari, according to his family sources.

He left behind four sons and two daughters to mourn his death.

A namaz-e-janaza was held after Zohr prayers, and Abdul was buried at his family graveyard.



DU students

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in Cox's Bazar. They also sought that authorities introduce an emergency helpline to ensure students' security.

Addressing the human chain, former Ducus member Tanbir Hasan Shaikat said, "It's a matter of regret that DU students are being attacked for protesting unjust activities."

"Local ward member and his followers swooped on Imran when he protested against the irregularities in distributing sacrificial meat meant for underprivileged families. The administration is yet to take steps although the incident has been reported in the media," he added.

"In this pandemic... we have to stand here demanding justice for our fellows. Such incidents portray the long-standing culture of impunity in our country," said Tarek Hasan Nirjhor, a student of journalism at DU.

HM Imran, also DU correspondent of UNB, and his younger brother came under attack allegedly by Azizur Rahman, a member of ward-2 at Banshabaria Union Parishad under Maheshpur upazila in Jhenidah, and his followers when they protested uneven distribution of sacrificial meat.

Talking to The Daily Star Imran alleged that Aziz took 20kg of meat for himself from a portion, which was supposed to be distributed among the underprivileged villagers.

Azizur Rahman said he neither attacked anyone nor took meat meant for the poor.

70pc ethnic

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Grabbing ethnic minorities' land and uprooting them from their traditionally owned land, communal attacks, abductions and other forms of oppression have increased significantly, claimed Sanjeeb, adding that violence, such as rape, against ethnic minority women have increased alarmingly.

He also said the government lacks will to implement the CHT accord.

Oikya NAP President Pankaj Bhattacharya supported the forum's demands.

"The state is still denying recognition of indigenous peoples' rights... Bangladesh is home to many races, and Bengalis can be proud only after ensuring equal rights for indigenous people," he said.

Dhaka University Prof Mesbah Kamal said ethnic minority communities are facing hardship and heading toward a bleak future amid the crisis.

Many of them left their ancestral houses looking for jobs, and now they are coming back home, where opportunities of work is almost none, he added.

Ajoy M Mree, the forum's vice president, and DU Prof Robaet Ferdous also spoke at the conference.

Organisers also announced that different ethnic minority organisations have chalked up week-long programmes to celebrate International Day of the World's Indigenous Peoples.

Drive against

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needs as they have limited points to deliver their services, he said. The internet service charge, which is now around Tk 500, will also be increased when they start paying rent for underground lines, he added.

According to the Cable Television Network Operation Act, cable operators will have to take written permission from local offices of utility service providers of the government, semi-government or autonomous bodies to use their structures.

According to law, a person will have to face punishment of up to two years' imprisonment, a fine of between Tk 50,000 and Tk 1 lakh, or both if they breach the law.

Taslimuddin's 10th death anniv

CITY DESK

Yesterday marked the 10th death anniversary of Taslimuddin Ahmed, a leather technologist, according to a press release.

He was the second son of late Dr Altafuddin Ahmed, founder principal of Chittagong Medical College.

His wife Yasmeen Ahmed has requested all of her husband's well-wishers to pray for salvation of the departed soul.



As the flood engulfed roads at Narayanganj's North Narsingpur, this two-storey building collapsed early yesterday. Locals say water gushing into the structure damaged its foundation, and the pillars could not bear the load anymore. Such unfortunate incidents are being reported frequently as over a third of the country has been flooded this year.

PHOTO: ANISUR RAHMAN

Digital payment

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He also said of the government's 20 stimulus packages worth Tk 1.11 trillion to fight the Covid-19 economic fallout, at least six are prioritising poor people's social protection.

Under one such programme, the government reached about 38 lakh of 50 lakh targeted beneficiaries with cash support of Tk 2,500 each per month to survive the Covid-19 fallout, he added. Mohammad Ismail, additional secretary to the social welfare ministry, said for the 2020-2021 fiscal, they have a budget of Tk 6,494 crore for social safety net programmes and the number of beneficiaries is about 91 lakhs.

The ministry does not have concrete data about all beneficiaries, which is huge in number, said the official.

Last year, the budget was Tk 5,746 crore and the number of beneficiaries was about 80.40 lakh.

He, however, said currently they have database of about 19.5 lakh beneficiaries who are disabled. They have been provided with "Shuborno" cards and are receiving a monthly allowance of Tk 750 each.

At present, majority of cash disbursement for the ministry's social protection programmes is "handled" by banks and yet to be integrated with the G2P payment system, said Ismail.

Fahmida Khatun, executive director of Centre for Policy Dialogue, said the necessity of mobile financial service (MFS) in social safety net programmes was required so that the programmes could be implemented efficiently and with transparency. She said during the Covid-19 pandemic, a question arose whether those who are in real need have been included in the government's financial support schemes.

On the other hand, it was seen that those who were not in need had made the list, she said. So, the necessity of proper selection process and use of technology in such process is important, she added.

Ahsan H Mansur, executive director of PRI, said to reach out to people, the government needed to mining people's data as much as possible.

He said the finance ministry and cabinet division have been playing leadership roles in social protection programmes but a gradual shift for a centralised organisation was required, stressing that there are issues related to quality control and maintenance of data that requires a single authority.

"This process itself for a country of 165 or 170 million people is not an easy task..." he said. He stressed the need for taking support of the national identity card database to this end.

Khondoker Shakhawat Ali, emeritus fellow of Unnayan Shamannay, said the main aim of social safety net programmes is to improve quality of people's life. Failing to effectively launch technology in such programmes together with failure in bringing those under accountability, transparency, and governance will not help the money reach the actual beneficiaries.

As a result, at the end of the day, the money, which is taxpayer's money, will not be spent for poverty alleviation or the country's development, he added.

Debdulal Roy, executive director (programming) of Bangladesh Bank, said the central bank has been working to make sure that cash support through the electronic payment system reach the beneficiaries properly.

Abedur Rahman Sikder, deputy managing director of Dutch Bangla Bank Limited, said they are providing customers services including opening mobile financial service accounts.

Kamal Quadir, chief executive officer of bKash; Shafayet Alam, executive director of Nagad; Shahadat Khan, founder and CEO of SureCash; Solaiman Shukhon, head of market development of Nagad; Bazliul Haque Khondker, director of PRI; and MA Razaque, research director of PRI, also addressed the online discussion.

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Garo education

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Vidyamoyee Girls' School in Mymensingh.

She wanted to study medicine but could not do so due to financial crisis. She completed instead a year of training on teaching in Dhaka and joined Mymensingh's Holy Family School in 1952 as a teacher.

In 1965, she was transferred to a primary school in Madhupur. After the independence, Protibha played a leading role in establishing Madhupur Girls High School. She worked there for two decades until she retired.

The Daily Star awarded her in 2018 for her role in nation building.

Ajoy-a-Mre, president of Madhupur's Indigenous Cultural Development Forum; and Eugin Nokrek, president of Joyenshahi Adivasi Unnayan Parishad in the upazila, expressed deep shock at the death.

ERRATUM

In yesterday's page 4 of The Daily Star, a photo caption stated Mamoon Mahmood Shah as the managing director and CEO of NRB Bank.

His correct designation is managing director and CEO (current charge).

We regret the inadvertent error.

মালিকানা বিক্রয়
লাল ভবন ফ্লোরের ৩০৩ নম্বর কক্ষের, গোলক পল্লী ও জাতীয় পুস্তকালয় কর্তৃক অনুমোদিত (মেরুর প্রিয়া, বিকলিকা, হেয়ার অব কমার্শ) কোম্পানির নামে ৩০ বিঘা জমি ও গুডউইল রয়েছে। সবকিছুর ৫০% মালিকানা ওসহমানে পত্রীকৃত ২ কোটি টাকা মাত্র।
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Palli Karma-Sahayak Foundation (PKSF)
PKSF Bhaban, E-4/B, Agargaon Administrative Area, Sher-e-Bangla Nagar, Dhaka-1207
Phone: 8181658-61, 8181664-9, 8181169 Website: http://www.pksf-bd.org

Vacancy Announcement

Palli Karma-Sahayak Foundation (PKSF) an apex development organization, was established by the Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh in 1990 for sustainable poverty reduction through employment generation. Since its inception, PKSF has been implementing various poverty alleviation programmes and projects through its Partner Organizations (POs) all over the country.

PKSF has been implementing a new project for the extreme poor titled 'Pathways to Prosperity for Extremely Poor People (PPEPP)' since 2019, jointly financed by the DFID and the EU. The objectives of the project are to enable two million people to exit from extreme poverty for good, and to support the development of stronger national institutions and systems to deliver the public and private services required by extremely poor people to become resilient and prosper. This project is being implemented in the north-western char areas, south-western coastal belt, haor areas in the north-east region and some selected areas with high concentration of ethnic minority people. The duration of the first phase of the project is six years.

PKSF hereby invites applications from the suitable candidates for the following position for the PPEPP project.

S.N	Name of the Positions	No. of Post	Monthly Salary (Consolidated)
1	Programme Manager (Data and Software Management)	1	1,30,000/-

The employee will be recruited initially for one year with an opportunity for performance-based annual renewal during the project period. Interested candidates who fulfil the requirement are requested to apply online through the website www.pksf-bd.org by 27 August 2020. For detailed Terms of Reference (ToR) and instructions please visit the website of PKSF.

Only short-listed candidates will be contacted. PKSF is an equal opportunity employer. Any kind of persuasion will be treated as disqualification of the candidate. PKSF reserves the right to cancel this recruitment process without assigning any reason whatsoever.

Golam Touhid
Deputy Managing Director-3

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SMC invites Expression of Interest (EOI) from the potential service providers of enterprise IP-PABX system. The Scope of Work on the system is available on the SMC's website (<https://www.smc-bd.org/tenders>). Interested organizations having relevant work experience may submit their EOI on or before August 19 2020 by 3.00 pm to the following email address: smc.tender@smc-bd.org

Manager, Procurement, SMC
Phone: 9821074-80; Ext- 259