



The Daily Star



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TK 1,21,353CR STIMULUS PACKAGES

39pc disbursed in six months

3.54cr people, 76 lakh firms, organisations, entrepreneurs received loans, assistance

REJAUL KARIM BYRON and WASIM BIN HABIB

After the government announced 21 stimulus packages involving more than Tk 1,21,000 crore to tackle the pandemic fallout, around 39.23 percent or Tk 47,615 crore was disbursed till October 31, according to a progress report of the finance ministry.

Around 3.54 crore people have received assistance from various stimulus-cash-food support packages over the period, said the report released at a programme at the capital's Osmani Memorial Hall on Thursday.

The report also said 76 lakh firms, organisations, entrepreneurs, and other beneficiaries got loan facilities under the economic bailout scheme as of October 31.

The finance ministry organised the programme to evaluate the progress of the scheme undertaken after the Covid-19 outbreak struck the country in March. The programme was joined by noted economists and members of development partners, local think-tanks and other stakeholders, among others.

The bailout packages were announced at different times after March.

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CATEGORY-2 (4 PACKAGES)

Employment creation and revitalizing rural economy

TOTAL LOANS Tk 12,458 crore

DISBURSED Tk 4,225 crore

BENEFICIARIES 37.22 lakh

CATEGORY-3 (10 PACKAGES)

Enhancing social security and ensuring food supply

TOTAL BUDGET Tk 22,125 crore

SPENDING Tk 2,237 crore

BENEFICIARIES 3.24 crore

"The marginalised people in the country did not face any shortage of food because of the cash and food assistances provided under the stimulus scheme."

SAYS FINANCE DIVISION PROGRESS REPORT

21 STIMULUS PACKAGES

TOTAL ALLOCATION

Tk 1,21,353 crore

DISBURSED SO FAR

Tk 47,615 crore

CATEGORY-1 (7 PACKAGES)

Job creation, restoration of demand and maintaining the supply chain

TOTAL LOANS Tk 86,750 crore

DISBURSED Tk 41,153 crore

BENEFICIARIES 73.28 lakh



COVID INFECTION Average daily death 27 for last 15 days

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

At least 27 people died of coronavirus each day on average in the last 15 days.

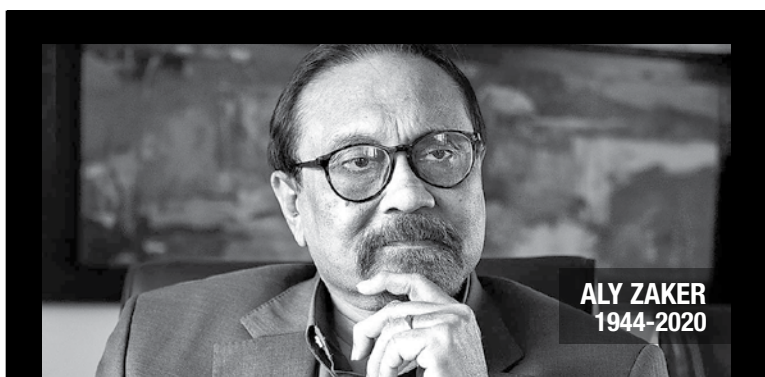
According to the Directorate General of Health Services (DGHS), about 2,100 people tested positive each day in these 15 days.

Meanwhile, the DGHS recorded 20 more deaths from the virus in the last 24 hours till 8:00am yesterday, taking the total death toll to 6,544.

In those 24 hours, another 2,273 new infections were recorded and 16,378 samples were tested, according to the DGHS.

The current positivity rate is 13.88 percent while the total positivity rate stands at 16.81 percent.

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ALY ZAKER 1944-2020

A LIFE DEVOTED TO BEAUTY AND THE ARTS

Demise of our greatest theatre personality

MAHFUZ ANAM

Aly Zaker, our most iconic theatre personality, has left us for eternity. He singlehandedly brought theatre out from an obscure corner of our cultural world to its very centre. He along with his co-actors in Nagarik, and fellow travellers in other theatre groups, made the stage the most powerful and effective vehicle of inculcating critical thinking and intellectual freedom so vitally needed for social change and progress. Through acting, direction, scriptwriting, adaptation and translation of plays he transformed the intellectual scope of our theatre from the limitations of what we inherited to the vastness of the world that our newly gained independence gave us the scope to venture into.

SEE PAGE 2 COL 1

Void never to be filled

People of all tiers express sorrow as Aly Zaker laid to rest

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Heartiest tributes and condolences poured in for eminent cultural personality Aly Zaker, who breathed his last yesterday while undergoing treatment at a city hospital.

Immediately after his demise, people from every stratum of society started expressing shock at the death of the thespian.

A *Shabdashainik* at Swadhin Bangla Betar Kendra and Ekushey Padak recipient, Aly Zaker passed away around 6:45am at United Hospital. He was 76.

President M Abdul Hamid and Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina expressed their profound shock and sorrow at the death of the Ekushey Padak-winning cultural personality, reports BSS.

In a condolence message, President Abdul Hamid said, "Thespian Aly Zaker was a shining star in the country's cultural arena... The country has lost an eminent actor and cultural figure with his death."

"His death is an irreparable loss to the cultural arena of the country," the head of state added.

He prayed for eternal peace of the departed soul and conveyed deep sympathy to the bereaved family members.

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina in

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SEE EDITORIAL; MORE STORIES ON PAGE-6



An elderly man sleeping precariously at the foot of a pillar of the Khilgaon flyover in the capital's Shahjanpur early yesterday. With the winter setting in, people, particularly children and the elderly, from low-income families find it more difficult to live under the open sky as the temperature falls at night. Many cannot afford to buy warm clothes either.

PHOTO: ANISUR RAHMAN

Papul denied bail again

Full hearing of trafficking, money laundering case in Kuwait in Jan

DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT

A Kuwait court on Thursday denied bail of Bangladeshi MP Shahid Islam Papul in a case involving human trafficking and money laundering, and set January 28 next year for the full hearing of the case, reported Kuwaiti newspaper Al Qabas.

With this, the Kuwait court has denied his bail on 12 occasions.

Four staff members of Papul's Marafie Kuwaitia Group were also denied bail. However, three Kuwaiti officials were

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Covid-19 vaccine doubt emerges

AstraZeneca vaccine to undergo new global trial after mix-up in phase-III; Germany hits million cases

AGENCIES

Questions emerged over just how much protection is offered by one of the leading vaccine candidates as Germany, once a beacon of hope in Europe's coronavirus nightmare, logged its one millionth case yesterday.

Like much of Europe, Germany is battling a resurgence of a pandemic that is filling hospitals and forcing countries to shut down for business while they wait for help from a clutch of vaccines that could start rolling out for use next month.

Some of the excitement about the new jabs dampened when Britain's pharmaceutical giant AstraZeneca admitted that further research was needed after a mixup in its third-stage trial.

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BRTC revival plan stumbles

Revenue drops to Tk 145.27cr in last six months of FY20

TUHIN SHUBHRA ADHIKARY

With 1,100 new buses and trucks in its fleet and strict monitoring enforced, Bangladesh Road Transport Corporation (BRTC) made profit in the last fiscal year, after losses for three consecutive years, officials say.

But the coronavirus pandemic has served a blow to the state-run transport agency's economic revival plan, reducing its income considerably in recent months.

BRTC earned Tk 204 crore in the first six months of the last fiscal year. But the revenue dropped to Tk 145.27

crore in the last six months, shows BRTC data.

The decrease in revenue in the last half was due to the Covid-19 pandemic, first detected in the country on March 8.

Although BRTC made Tk 24.85 crore as profit in the fiscal year 2019-20, it had to take Tk 10 crore as loan from the government to meet its expenditure and pending arrears.

Its Tk 57 crore dues -- including arrears and post-retirement benefits of its staffers -- came down to around Tk 40 crore in the last FY, officials said.

The corporation is still struggling

to push the income to the desired level as its buses are not carrying capacity passengers to comply with the government's Covid-19 advisory health protocol, they said.

Amjad Hossain, general manager (accounts) of BRTC, said although operation of public transport resumed from June, they are still carrying less passengers than normal time as the government prohibited standing passengers on public transport.

"Things may not be normal until educational institutions are opened," he added.

SEE PAGE 2 COL 3

Our Giant of an Icon,

You have been our brightest inspiration, our one true guiding light in the wonderful world that you created for us all.

For your vision and genius, it has been our privilege to have known you as the ardent patriot, iconic actor, writer, theatre activist, and the veritable, pioneering force behind the nation's advertising world that you were.

Through your life and works, you have shown us the ways of courage, of dreaming in brighter colors and the importance of bringing more love and beauty into the world.

Our beloved AZ, we thank you for building such a precious place in the world for us to thrive and grow. Thank you for the stories, the patience and the memory of a thundering laugh. The ripples you cast into this world will never cease, and your kindness will live on in us who are still here.

It has been our pride and honor in having been a part of your vision. May your incredible, gentle soul now forever rest in peace.

Your Asiatic 3Sixty Family

