

# Bangladeshi workers to be paid in full amid lockdown

## Malaysia announces

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Bangladeshi migrant workers in Malaysia will be paid by their employers even if they do not have to work amid the Covid-19 outbreak in the Southeast Asian country.

Malaysia's human resources ministry reportedly announced it is compulsory for employers to pay their workers in full for the period of movement control order (MCO), which is being enforced during March 18-31.

The same applies for employees paid on a daily basis, as stipulated in their contract, reports Free Malaysia Today (FMT).

Employers listed under essential services, however, do not have to pay those who refuse to work during the two weeks, although they are still required to pay allowances of staff working from home, the report says.

Contacted, Zahirul Islam, labour welfare counsellor at Bangladesh High Commission in Kuala Lumpur, said as Malaysian authorities did not specify workers' category, all workers including Bangladeshis will be included in the payment scheme.

Malaysian authorities have issued a circular in this regard, Zahirul told The Daily Star yesterday via phone.

Malaysia is home to about eight lakh Bangladeshis who are involved in different sectors including construction, plantation and services.

The Malaysian human resources ministry said employees of a company not listed as an essential service should lodge a police report if they are forced to work while the movement control order is in effect, according to the Free Malaysia Today report.

"Lodge a report at the nearest police station," the ministry said in a FAQ (frequently asked questions) sheet released on Thursday on the MCO announced by Malaysian Prime Minister Muhyiddin Yassin.

Employees can file a complaint with the labour department if their bosses refuse to pay them, it said.

However, an investigation into the complaint will be carried out only after the MCO is called off.

The FAQ sheet said an employer should not force its workers to go on annual leave or unpaid leave during the period.

Muhyiddin announced the movement control order on Monday to curb the spread of coronavirus in Malaysia, which claimed two lives and infected over a thousand people there as of yesterday.



PHOTO: ANISUR RAHMAN

Damaged notes may have no value, but they do contain germs after passing through many hands and wallets. Yesterday at Gulistan, workers put on gloves to sort through notes that people are exchanging for fresh ones. Such measures are key during the Covid-19 outbreak.

## Youth stabbed dead in Banani

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A 19-year-old youth was stabbed to death by unidentified miscreants in Dhaka's Banani area on Thursday night.

The incident took place when Monir Hossain was walking on the road beside Shetu Bhaban around 11:30pm, said SI Fazle Islam of Banani Police Station.

Police rescued Monir in a critical state and took him to Dhaka Medical College Hospital, where doctors declared him dead.

Monir used to live in East Nakhalpara area and worked at a private organisation in Adabor area, the police official added.

## Shut down RMG factories right away

### Demands Garment Sramik Sanghati

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Bangladesh Garment Sramik Sanghati yesterday demanded immediate shutdown of garments factories for a temporary period to protect RMG workers from the novel coronavirus.

Bangladesh Garment Sramik Sanghati's President Taslima Akhter, General Secretary Julhas Nayeem Babu and Organising Secretary Aminul Islam Shama made the demand in a joint statement.

They also urged the authorities concerned to ensure rationing and all other facilities including salaries for garment workers during the period.

In the statement, Bangladesh Garment Sramik Sanghati leaders said 30 people have been infected with coronavirus, one has died of this disease and another infected person is now under intensive care unit (ICU).

All educational institutions have been closed, instruction has been given to vacate university halls, while meetings and public gatherings including cricket tournaments have been postponed due to the spread of coronavirus.

Movement in different districts including Madaripur

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## Form joint taskforce to tackle coronavirus

### Nagorik Oikya urges govt; seeks deferral of CCC elections, by-polls

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Nagorik Oikya yesterday demanded rescheduling of by-elections to three parliamentary constituencies and elections to Chattogram City Corporation (CCC) instead of March 21 and 29 respectively, to prevent the spread of coronavirus.

Speaking at a press conference, the party convener Mahmudur Rahman Manna also placed a 20-point recommendation including formation of an immediate taskforce for a coordinated effort to tackle coronavirus outbreak in the country.

Nagorik Oikya organised the press conference on "Corona situation and way forward" at Jatiya Press Club in the capital.

Citing the government's lack of coordination, Manna said a taskforce should be formed immediately with people from all concerned sectors.

"The Election Commission is yet to defer the upcoming polls although the government has already banned all types of religious, political and social gatherings; the main problem in Bangladesh is that government's directives are not implemented properly," he said.

He said local administrations should strictly implement the High Court directives of compelling returnees to remain in home quarantine.

"Even people who have come in contact

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## 3 'Ansar al Islam' men held in Dhaka, Sylhet

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Rapid Action Battalion claimed to have arrested three suspected members of banned militant outfit Ansar Al Islam from Dhaka and Sylhet in last two days.

The arrestees are Motahar Hossain alias Jamil Hasan (34); Murshidul Alam alias Shihad alias Murshid (33), and Saifur Rahman (22). They used to maintain financing for the outfit, according to the elite force.

Among them, Motahar and Murshid were arrested from the capital's Darussalam area on Wednesday while Saifur was arrested from Jaintapur area of Sylhet on Thursday, said Mohammad Sajedul Islam Sajal, senior assistant director of Rab-4.

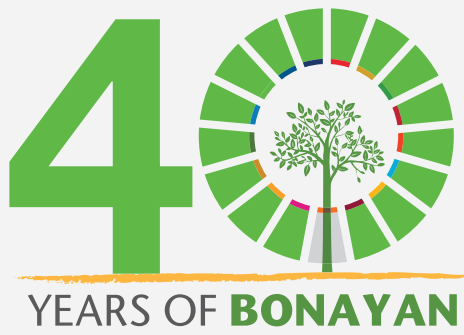
After primary interrogation, Rab said Motahar is an "ameer" level member of Ansar Al Islam's Narsingdi unit.

The elite force said he used to collect money from other members of the outfit and deposit those in banks. Afterwards, Motahar used to send the money to one Abu Jandal abroad. In the last two years, he has sent around Tk 4-5 lakh using three bank accounts, the Rab official claimed.

Motahar became acquainted with the top leaders of Ansar al Islam through an online platform and has been regularly communicating with them, the official added.

# BONAYAN

## The largest private sector-driven afforestation programme celebrating 40 years



Around two decades ago, Joyanal Abedin would never have thought of owning a property or business institution as he was struggling to earn a livelihood.

The man, hailing from Shimulia village under Mirpur upazila of Kushtia, worked his land and had a small business.

In 2003, he got the chance to participate in a workshop of Bonayan Program of British American Tobacco Bangladesh (BATB) in his locality, where the project officer made the participants aware of the advantages of tree plantation.

Furthermore, the officer assured all the participants that the Bonayan programme would extend all the necessary support, including free of cost saplings, to start tree gardens.

Being encouraged, Joyanal initially collected 6,000 Mahogany saplings from the Bonayan program. He nurtured reared these and sold them for Tk 6 lakhs after five years.

This was the beginning. As days passed, Joyanal was making large profits selling trees. Today, he owns a pond as well as a commercial nursery.

He claims that the value of his garden can currently be estimated at around Tk 20 lakh. He plans to sell trees for around Tk 1 crore after five years.

Like Joyanal, hundreds of people across the country have changed their fate with the support of Bonayan Program, the afforestation programme of BATB that began in 1980.

In around the last four decades, some 105 million free saplings have been distributed and planted across the country under this flagship program.

This relentless effort makes the

programme the largest private sector driven afforestation programme in the country. The organisation is committed to continue this programme in the wake of a global and national drive as well as to support the Government of Bangladesh's initiative to combat the adverse effects of climate change.

The initiative was taken as BATB believes that business has a key role to play in helping society achieve the necessary sustainable balance of economic growth, environmental protection and social progression, which will build value for all of our stakeholders.

BATB Bangladesh provides government-approved 22-25 species of saplings to farming communities -- the main beneficiaries -- across the country.

Those communities are the main beneficiaries of this programme. In the last 40 years, many beneficiaries have changed their livelihoods with the outcome of the afforestation programme.

The programme has helped bring an environmental balance to the community landscape. Moreover, farmers are receiving economic benefits by selling fruits or timber from their own gardens.

Only in 2019, more than 30,000 farmers received saplings from Bonayan programme.

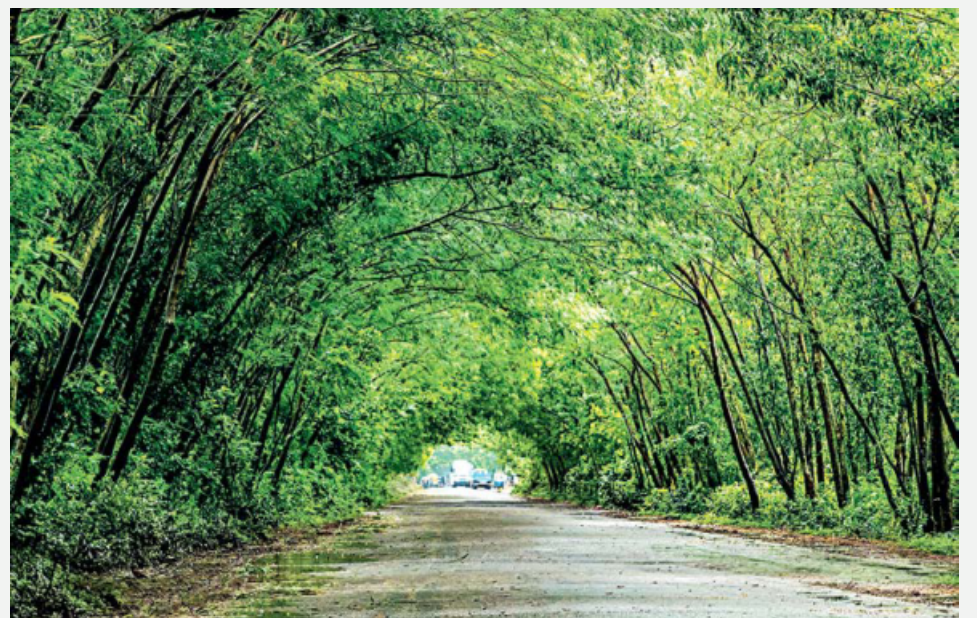
Around 77 percent of the beneficiaries are earning money by tree plantation. Of them, 26 percent earn Tk 5-10 thousand, while 22 percent earn Tk 10-20 thousand and 14 percent earn Tk 20-30 thousand.

Every year, BATB raises four to five million saplings to plant in their different zones across the country. Beneficiaries are also given fruit trees like olive, lemon, hog plum, Guava, Berry, jackfruit, wood apple and grapefruit.

The Bonayan project has had a very big impact among the beneficiaries. The impact assessment states around 33 percent of the beneficiaries invest the extra income they get through the Bonayan project, into another business.

Around 68 percent of the beneficiaries reinvest in agriculture, fish farming and also medium business like opening a restaurant and shops. Some of them also invest in small business like fruits, vegetable, tea stall.

Apart from farmers, government and non-government organisations, law enforcement agencies, Bangladesh defense authorities, private NGOs, different institutions, and



Kushtia-Jashore Highway

mass communities collect the free saplings from BATB's nurseries across the country.

BATB promotes "Strategic Afforestation" (created on the roadsides, highways, railway tracts) and "Commercial Afforestation" (mostly in hill tracts).

Over the years, BATB received a number of national and international awards and accolades for the afforestation drive across the country.

The organisation received four national awards in the last 40 years. Bonayan also participates in all the district and upazila level tree fairs and afforestation campaigns across the country and receives around 20 local awards, every year.

Some of the notable projects of BAT Bangladesh's afforestation programme were initiated at the Lalon Shah Bridge-Kushtia, Hazrat Shah Amanat International Airport - Chattogram and Lama Alikadam road strip plantation in Chattogram Hill Tracts (CHT). Recently it received Asia's top

ranked business award "Asia Responsible Entrepreneurship Award" on Green Leadership, for best CSR practices.

Bonayan project face different kind of challenges due to lack of big roads and highways to plant trees around in this area. Yet, Bonayan has built individual tree plantations in different areas.

"Because of this initiative, not only environment is conserved, but the people are benefitted economically from their orchards," said Sheikh Shahidul Alam, range officer, department of Forest under Lama upazila of Bandarban.

BAT Bangladesh will continue this journey and will fight against the climate change impact complementing the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) 2017 and will enhance the government's national drive on afforestation. Bonayan directly supports sustainable development goals 1, 2, 11, 13 and 15.

105  
million  
SAPLINGS



Shah Amanat International Airport, Chattogram.

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