



The Daily Star



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BANGLADESH UPDATE 688 New cases in 24hrs | 10,143 Total cases | 182 Deaths | 1,209 Recoveries | **GLOBAL UPDATE** 250,047 Deaths | 3,603,517 Total cases

Businesses to reopen May 10

Govt allows malls, shops, other businesses to run till 4:00pm; shutdown of govt offices, edn institutions, transports extended till May 16

- Nobody will leave their location during the Eid-ul-Fitr holidays
- Cash assistance for jobless before Eid
- All types of public transport to be suspended till May 16
- Factory can be opened ensuring safety measures
- No educational inst will open during shutdown



STAR REPORT

The government has decided to reopen shopping malls, all types of shops and other businesses from May 10 on a limited scale ahead of the Eid-ul-Fitr. Those would remain open from 10:00am to 4:00pm every day, a gazette of the Cabinet Division said yesterday. It said people should stay at their present locations during the Eid holidays and that they should be barred from travelling to their homes in other districts and upazilas. The directives came hours after the Cabinet Division issued another gazette, extending the ongoing general holidays from May 7 to May 16, reports UNB.

The circular said the government has decided to allow keeping shopping malls, all types of shops and other businesses open maintaining health guidelines during the general holidays considering Ramadan and Eid-ul-Fitr. "Shops will be allowed to remain open to do business on a limited scale. But all have to maintain distancing and follow health guidelines during buying and selling. Large shopping malls will have to make arrangements for washing hands at their entrances and disinfecting vehicles entering the malls," it added. The two circulars were published hours after Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina said



This elderly man has been suffering from fever, cold and breathing problems for over a week. Yesterday, he tried to get admitted to at least three hospitals, but all of them turned him away, suspecting him to be a Covid-19 patient. At one point, he felt severely ill and sat in chair on a pavement on Old Dhaka's Johnson Road. His son was seen comforting him when a medical representative in a PPE suit, who was passing the area, fanned him.

PHOTO: RASHED SHUMON

Padma Bridge Deadline may be pushed back by at least 6 months

Current one is June 2021; cost too may increase due to the pandemic, say officials

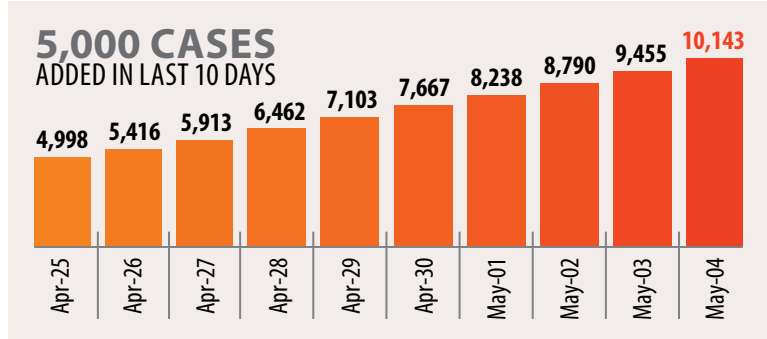
TUHIN SHUBHRA ADHIKARY

The much-hyped Padma Bridge project is likely to miss its current deadline of June 2021 which may increase its cost again, officials said. Coronavirus outbreak has slowed down the construction work. "The government has not extended the deadline yet. But it would be required. At least six more months would be needed. If the Covid-19 situation does not improve, it may take more time," Bridge Division Secretary Belayet Hossain told The Daily Star yesterday. The pace of work is not as fast as it used to be earlier, because night-shift work remained suspended, he said. Asked whether the cost of the project could go up for this reason, the secretary said, "Costs may increase little. Because the contractor(s) will claim more money if the time is extended." The current and fourth deadline of

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No clue when the outbreak may peak

Experts say it is very difficult to predict amid inadequate testing; virus cases cross 10,000



WASIM BIN HABIB and MOHAMMAD AL-MASUM MOLLA

While health officials still do not know when the coronavirus outbreak will peak and then plateau, confirmed coronavirus cases crossed the 10,000 mark with the announcement of a record 688 new cases yesterday. Fifty-six days after the first cases were reported, detected cases now stand at 10,143 and the number of people testing positive is still rising almost every day. After March 7, when the first cases were disclosed, the number grew slowly for a period. But now the country is experiencing an explosion of cases and a fluctuating number of deaths on a daily basis.

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Minimum Fitra Tk 70, maximum Tk 2,200

UNB, Dhaka

This year's minimum Fitra has been fixed at Tk 70 per person. The maximum Fitra has been set at Tk 2,200 per head, according to the National Fitra Fixing Committee. Yesterday, the Islamic Foundation fixed the amounts at a meeting chaired by Hafez Maulana Mohammad Mizanur Rahman, senior pesh imam of Baitul Mukarram national mosque and also the president of the National Fitra Fixing Committee, said a press release issued by the foundation. The amounts have been fixed considering the market prices of flour, dates and other essential items. Fitra is paid to the poor people before the Eid Jamaat.

COMMENTARY

Rule of law for Kajol indeed

A journalist in handcuffs on World Press Freedom Day

MAHFUZ ANAM

A journalist, Shafiqul Islam Kajol, disappears on March 10 following the filing of a case under Digital Security Act (DSA) by Saifuzzaman Shikhor. Video footage shows evidence of some people surrounding his motorbike as he is about to leave his office in Hatirpool in the evening. Two police stations - Chawk Bazar where he lives and New Market where his office is - refuse the family's plea to file a case of disappearance. On instructions from high-ups, Chawk Bazar Police Station finally accepts it. He stays untraced for 53 days during which police do nothing except saying that they are looking into the case. A citizen of the country, a journalist, a family man, a father, a husband, a taxpayer - nothing moved the police to investigate what became of him. Then much to our relief and elation of the family, through a sudden early morning



phone call, at 2:48am on Sunday, May 3, courtesy the Benapole Police station, Kajol told his son, Monorom Polok, that he is alive and that Polok should come to Benapole to bring him home. Kajol was "discovered" by a BGB patrol very near the India-Bangladesh border who, after initial questioning, handed him over to the police. The Benapole police identified

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Another doc dies from Covid-19

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Another physician has died of Covid-19 in the country. Hematologist Prof Col (ret) Md Moniruzzaman breathed his last at Dhaka Combined Military Hospital (CMH) on Sunday evening. He is the second coronavirus positive physician to die in the country, Nirupam Das, chief administrator of Bangladesh Doctors' Foundation, said yesterday. Kawser Ahmed, cousin of the deceased, said he was suffering from fever for the last two days, but he did not have any other visible symptoms of the novel coronavirus. "On Sunday, he felt chest pain and thought maybe it was a cardiac issue. He was then taken to CMH where he died," he added. On Sunday night, the hospital authorities confirmed that he was Covid-19 positive, Kawser told The Daily Star, adding that the other family

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'NO ONE HELPED THEM TO SAVE HIM'

Staring at her 11-month-old son lying dead on a gurney, Bristy wails at the burn unit of Dhaka Medical College Hospital as her sister tries to comfort her in vain yesterday. Siam died after showing flu-like symptoms for the previous three days. His father Selim said they took him to a hospital in Dhaka's Matuail on Sunday night after the child developed breathing problems in the evening. Turned away by doctors there, the family, which lives in Narayanganj, brought him to the DMCH burn unit, which has recently been converted into a Covid-19 treatment facility, around 1:00am yesterday. He died around 6:00am, without receiving any treatment, claimed his family. The body lied on this gurney till 2:00pm when this photographer visited the place.

PHOTO: ANISUR RAHMAN

STUNG BY COVID-19 Police struggle to enforce curbs

Halve manpower on the roads after 953 test positive, 5 die

MOHAMMAD JAMIL KHAN and MAHBUBUR RAHMAN KHAN

While the government has extended the ongoing shutdown to May 16 to ensure social distancing, many continue to crowd roads amid the growing number of Covid-19 cases in the country. Apart from shopping, thin presence of law enforcers is one of the main reasons behind it, sources said. Police have been playing a vital role in ensuring social distancing, which is crucial to contain the spread of the coronavirus, but they are having to pay a price: at least 953 of their members have already contracted the disease and five died. Against this backdrop, the force has brought changes to its plan to deploy manpower, believing it would help avoid coronavirus transmission. Only half its members are out at the field at a time for a week. The other group is deployed the next week. Lack of PPE, however, continues to remain a cause of concern. Visiting different areas of the capital, including Kalabagan, Panthapath, Jhigatola, Dhanmondi, Eskaton, Moghbazar, Malibag and Jatrabari, The Daily Star correspondents saw people crowding before groceries, stationery and roadside shops for buying different commodities in the last couple of days. "About a week ago, the road used to be empty, but now it is filled with rickshaws and vans," said Abdul Halim, a resident of Shahid Faruk Road in Jatrabari, considered a

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