



Pandemic bites Latin America

Brazil sees record daily deaths as Peru, Mexico, Chile report steady rise in cases

AFP, Rio De Janeiro

Brazil has seen a record number of coronavirus deaths as the pandemic that has swept across the world begins to hit Latin America with its full force.

After Asia, Europe and North America, Latin America has seen coronavirus infections surge in recent days and now accounts for about 580,000 of the world's nearly five million confirmed cases.

Brazil has been hardest-hit in the region, rising to the third-highest number of cases in the world, as Peru, Mexico and Chile also see steady increases in infections.

Health officials in Brazil reported 1,179 new coronavirus deaths on Tuesday, the first time the daily toll exceeded 1,000, but far-right President Jair Bolsonaro remains bitterly opposed to lockdowns, having described them as unnecessary over a "little flu".

With the outbreak in the world's sixth-largest country expected to accelerate until early June, many Brazilians are deeply worried about the next few weeks.

"Our country is going from bad to worse," said retiree Gilberto Ferreira in Rio de Janeiro.

Bolsonaro has refused to accept experts' advice on responding to the pandemic, pressing regional governors to end stay-at-home measures.

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Writhing in labour pain, 24-year-old Jhuma resting her head on her husband Sujon on a footpath near Shaheed Minar in the capital at 5:00am yesterday. She had gone into labour prematurely two hours ago. Coming all the way from Gazipur, the couple ran around for hours from hospital to hospital, but Jhuma was denied treatment because she ran a fever, a symptom of Covid-19. As they were plumbing the depths of despair, an ambulance crossing them decided to help. Finally, a hospital back in Gazipur did not turn them away, and she gave birth to two healthy babies via C-section at 12:40pm. She may have found people willing to help, but will others be as lucky?

PHOTO: ANISUR RAHMAN

Returnees will need healthcare, food, shelter

IOM warns

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The most vulnerable of the returning Bangladeshi migrants will require immediate support to meet their needs for food, shelter, and healthcare, said IOM.

"In the medium to long-term, they will require debt mediation assistance, and diversification of livelihoods assistance to build their resilience and ensure sustainable reintegration," said Giorgi Gigaure, chief of International Organisation for Migration in Bangladesh.

In a statement yesterday, IOM said it was supporting the Bangladesh government to "plan for the return, reception, and reintegration of the migrants."

A few hundred thousand Bangladeshi migrant workers are expected to return home from various labour-receiving countries this year once the countries relax restrictions and airlines resume flights, it said.

"For many of these migrants, it isn't a happy homecoming as they have lost their source of income and due to the global recession, it is unlikely that they will be able to return to work abroad until the global labour market recovers from the impacts of the Covid-19 pandemic," said Gigaure.

To contain Covid-19 infections, different countries enforced various

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3 tests crucial for containing transmission

Experts at Gonoshasthaya Kendra seminar vouch for antibody, antigen tests

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The government should incorporate antibody and antigen tests alongside the PCR tests for Covid-19 to elevate screening capacity that is crucial to contain the virus transmission, said experts.

The government approved only PCR tests until now, but the number of tests being conducted -- around 8,000 to 10,000 a day -- is very small compared to the required testing facilities for the population of 17 crores, they said.

They also said that both the PCR and the antibody tests have some limitations, but now is the time to use both types of kits.

The recommendations came from a virtual seminar organised by Gonoshasthaya Kendra yesterday.

Prof Muzaherul Haque, former advisor to the World Health Organization, said, "We don't know the actual number of people infected by Covid-19 because the rate of test is very low here. We cannot devise an effective strategy based on this rate of tests."

Therefore, antibody and antigen tests should also be approved, apart from the PCR tests, he said, adding that antibody is developed in body a few days after infection, while antigen can be detected from the day one of infection of Covid-19.

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FIRST YEAR OF BANGLADESH BANGABANDHU'S NATION-BUILDING CHALLENGES

Student union sweeps Ducusu elections



Members of the Student League call on Bangabandhu at his official residence on 21 May, 1972.

May 21, 1972

SHAMSUDDOZA SAJEN

WORK TO ESTABLISH SOCIALISM

Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman today urges the members of Student League to continue their struggle to protect the hard-earned independence of the country and establish socialism. Shahjahan Siraj and ASM Abdur Rab, along with some elected Student League members in the Ducusu elections, call on the prime minister today at his residence to seek his blessings.

STUDENT UNION WINS DUCSU POLLS

Bangladesh Student Union wins a landslide victory in Ducusu (Dhaka University Central Students' Union) elections. The student organisation bags 17 out of 18 seats including the posts of vice president and general secretary. Bangladesh Student League wins

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RMG WORKERS' DEMO

Voices for Eid bonuses, pay, work get louder

STAR REPORT

Workers of at least 50 garment factories in Ashulia, Savar, Gazipur, Narayanganj, and Chattogram demonstrated yesterday, demanding their arrears, Eid bonuses, and salaries for the month of May, said industrial police.

They also vandalised factories and put barricade on the Dhaka-Mymensingh highway in Gazipur.

In Ashulia, around 500 workers and staffers of Reza Fashions Ltd at Gorat took to the streets, demanding reopening of the factory, full Eid bonuses, and arrears.

Workers said the authorities closed the factory for an indefinite period as workers demonstrated inside the factory.

Police said the factory has more than 1,000 workers and 200 staffers. They indulged in vandalism inside the factory on Tuesday.

The Daily Star could not reach Shawkat Reza,

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Objects hidden by Auschwitz prisoners found



AFP, Vienna

Renovation works at Auschwitz have turned up spoons, forks, cobbler's tools and other objects hidden beneath a chimney flue -- some that might have been used to plan escapes, a national fund said Tuesday.

The objects, which also include knives, hooks, scissors, pieces of leather and parts of shoes, were found last month in block 17 of the main camp, Austria's National Fund for Victims of National Socialism said.

The fund commissioned the renovation and restoration works in the block at the former concentration camp in Poland in preparation for an exhibition.

"These utensils, kept out of sight of the SS guards, were perhaps used by shoemakers, or to prepare an escape or simply to be able to eat," fund secretary general Hannah Lessing told AFP on Tuesday.

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A woman clad in PPE showing her registration text message for Covid-19 test at the entrance to BSMU Fever Clinic yesterday morning. On May 18, BSMU began an online registration system to cut down hassles people face over testing.

PHOTO: ANISUR RAHMAN



Actor Ajmeri Zaman Reshma passes away

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Eminent television actor Ajmeri Zaman Reshma passed away yesterday at 2:30pm, said her son Rahber Khan and daughter-in-law Farhana Mithu.

Known for her performances in Mukhra Romoni'r Bashikaran, Shesher Kobita and Dhupchaya, Ajmeri Zaman Reshma shared the screen with noted artists, including Dilara Zaman

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CONDOLENCE

M. Shamsul Alam (1937-2020)



Mr. M. Shamsul Alam, a former Director, Vice-Chairman and Chairman of Board Audit Committee of Bank Asia Ltd. has passed away due to old age complications on 20 May 2020 at United Hospital, Dhaka. He was the Chairman of General Produce International Ltd. and Director of Reliance Insurance Ltd. Mr. Alam was the former Chairman & Managing Director of both Sadharan Bima Corporation and Jiban Bima Corporation. In recognition for his outstanding contribution to the insurance sector of Bangladesh, he was awarded with "Bima Padak" by the Honorable Prime Minister of People's Republic of Bangladesh.

We deeply mourn his demise and pray for the salvation of his departed soul. We also express our heart-felt condolence to his bereaved family.

