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ERRONEOUS LISTS OF IMAMS

People from other professions included in lists for cash assistance
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BANGLADESH UPDATE



2,828 New cases in 24hrs



60,391 Total cases



811 Deaths



12,804 Recoveries

GLOBAL UPDATE



391,848 Deaths



6,682,531 Total cases

CORONAVIRUS IMPACT

Mega projects take the brunt

Most of them running behind schedule, slow down further due to shutdown; allocation in next budget to be less than last year's outlay

REJAUUL KARIM BYRON and TUHIN SHUBHRA ADHIKARY

Most of the mega development projects were already behind schedule before the pandemic. Then came several months of shutdown, deteriorating the situation to a great extent.

Moreover, allocation for the projects will be low in the coming fiscal year with 21.76 percent of the annual development budget, down from the current year's 25 percent.

This has happened despite two new mega development projects being added to the 15 ongoing ones.

The coming fiscal year's allocation will be Tk 44,640 crore for the 17 projects, down from this year's Tk 52,758 crore for 15.

The coming year's total development budget will be Tk 205,145 crore.

Officials failed to use the funds allocated in the current year for most of the 15 mega projects. And due to complications regarding foreign funds, absolutely nothing was spent for two of those projects, planning ministry officials said.

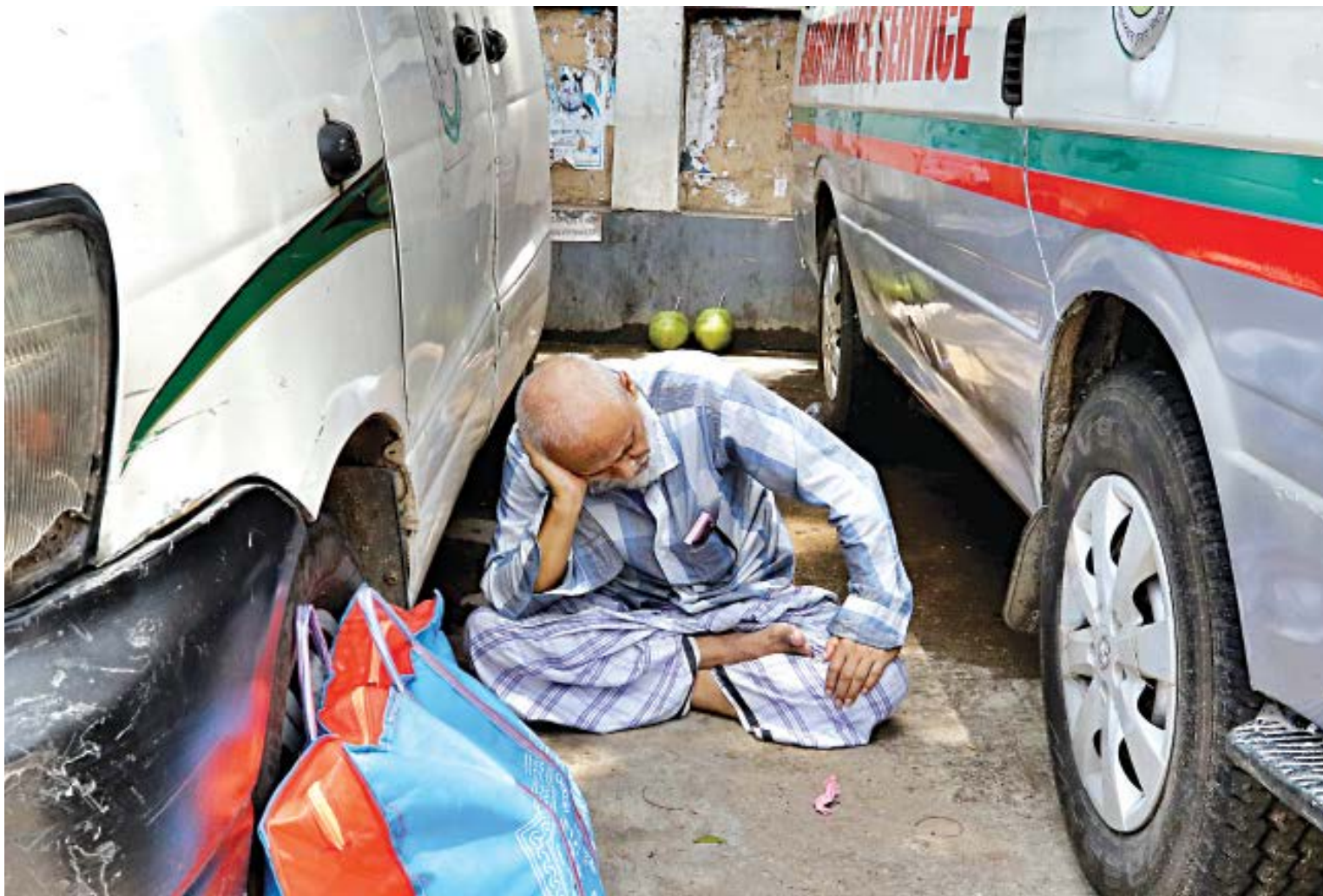
Poor planning, uncertainty over financing, and problems linked to land acquisition often result in missed deadlines, they said.

Tk 7,212 crore was allocated for Mass Rapid Transit-6 in last year's Annual Development Programme (ADP). It was the second highest amount for a single project. In the revised ADP, the project was allocated Tk 4,326 crore.

However, project officials were able to utilise only Tk 1,170 crore as of last February. In late March when the government enforced the shutdown to contain the spread of the coronavirus, physical work for the metro rail project almost completely stopped.

According to project documents, the work progressed by only 0.55 percent in the last two months and reached an overall 44.67 percent progress as of May.

Dhaka Mass Transit Company Ltd (DMTCL) is constructing the elevated metro lines from Uttara 3rd Phase to Motijheel at a cost of around Tk 22,000 crore. Once



Exhausted after waiting for hours to give samples for Covid-19 testing, Abu Sayeed, a recently retired banker, sits between two ambulances outside Mugda General Hospital in the capital yesterday morning. He left the area around noon after failing to get the test done. Several clinics have denied him treatment for fever, cold, and diabetics saying he must prove he is coronavirus negative.

PHOTO: ANISUR RAHMAN

Internal feud in ministry key reason

MOUDUDD AHMED SUJAN

A picture of infighting within the health ministry has been emerging after the government removed health service division secretary Md Asadul Islam on Thursday, amidst widespread criticism of the health sector's failure to play a robust role in tackling the coronavirus outbreak.

He was transferred to the Planning Division while Md Abdul Mannan, who was the Land Reform Board chairman, has replaced him.

Although the government has not publicly said anything about the transfer, it is understood that the move has been aimed at fleeing out friction and lack of coordination in the health ministry among Health Minister Zahid Maleque, Md Asadul Islam and organs of the ministry like the Directorate General of Health Services (DGHS) and the Institute of Epidemiology, Disease Control and Research (IEDCR).

Besides, ever since the Covid-19 pandemic hit the country in March, the health ministry has been blamed for

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Boro procurement far from target

Govt could buy less than 1pc of paddy, 6pc of rice in one month; farmers prefer to sell their produce in the market as prices there are higher this year

SOHEL PARVEZ

Around a month has passed since programmes to procure Boro paddy and rice began, but the government has been able to buy a very insignificant quantity against its target this year, raising concerns that efforts to provide food to the poor amid the Covid-19 crisis might suffer a setback without adequate stock.

Until Wednesday, the Directorate General of Food (DGF) purchased only 7,750 tonnes of Boro paddy from farmers, which is less than one percent of the target of 800,000 tonnes.

The drive, which began on April 26, would end on August 31.

Besides, the food office could procure only six percent of the target of 10 lakh tonnes of parboiled rice from millers after the drive was launched on May 7 to build a healthy public food stock and allow farmers to get fair prices for their main crop.

Food officials said farmers are interested in selling their produce in the market as prices there are higher this year compared

to the previous one. Also, they were opting not to supply the crop to public warehouses as the government does not buy paddy having over 14 percent moisture. While selling the paddy in the market, farmers do not have to remain bothered about the moisture issue, they said.

Rainfall, Cyclone Amphan and Eid holidays are also to blame, they added.

In the face of the sluggish procurement pace, the DGF, in a letter last week, directed its field offices to strengthen the purchase efforts to maintain a sound food stock at public warehouses.

It said the government this year fixed its highest ever paddy procurement target -- double of the last year's Boro paddy purchase -- apart from buying parboiled and sunburn rice, but the expected procurement speed has not been achieved yet.

"It is not desirable at all," DGF Director General Sarwar Mahmud said in the letter.

The directive came at a time when the public food stock is declining owing to

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GONOSHASTHAYA KIT Trial at BSMMU done; report by Wednesday

PORIMOL PALMA

Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujib Medical University (BSMMU) has already completed trial of the Gonoshasthaya Kendra-developed antibody test and may submit its report to the drug administration by Wednesday.

"The committee concerned is now processing data of the antibody kit's performance trial. We think we can submit the report by Wednesday," BSMMU Vice Chancellor Prof Kanak Kanti Barua told The Daily Star yesterday.

Gonoshasthaya Kendra officials say they are eagerly waiting for the report to be submitted to the Directorate General of Drug Administration (DGDA) and then for registration, which can allow mass production and distribution of the kit -- GR-Rapid Dot Blot.

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Covid-19 cases top 60,000

30 more die; 2,828 test positive in 24hrs

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

In a negative development, Bangladesh has become one of the top 20 countries in the world in terms of the number of population infected with Covid-19 as the country reported 60,391 positive cases until yesterday.

Bangladesh now ranks 20th, replacing Belgium which has so far recorded 58,907 cases. The western European country detected its first coronavirus patient in February and has been recording less than 400 cases every day since mid-May, shows data.

Prof Dr Nasima Sultana, additional director general (administration) of Directorate General of Health Services (DGHS) said that a total of 2,828 people tested positive for Covid-19 in the 24 hours before 2:30pm yesterday.

"With them, the total number of infection has reached 60,391," she said. A total of 14,088 samples were tested in 50 labs across the country during this period, Dr Nasima said.

According to DGHS, 30 people died with coronavirus between June 4 and June 5.

Meanwhile, 643 Covid-19 patients have recovered since yesterday, taking the total number of recoveries to 12,804, the DGHS official added.

Among the deceased, 23 were male and seven female, she said, adding that 11 were from Dhaka, 12 from Chattogram, three from Sylhet, two from Rajshahi, one was from Barishal and another from Rangpur division.

Of them, three were aged between 31-40, seven between 41-50, 11 within 51-60, six between 61-70, two between 71-80 and another between 81-90 years old, Dr Nasima also said.

A total of 365 people were put under isolation in the last 24 hours, she added.

Meanwhile, the National Technical Advisory Committee (NTAC) recommended that uninterrupted oxygen supply at the hospitals should be the top priority for the government.

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Nasim has successful surgery

Infected with Covid-19, he suffered stroke

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Infected with Covid-19, former Health and Family Welfare Minister and Awami League senior leader Mohammad Nasim has undergone a successful surgery after suffering a brain stroke.

The surgery was conducted on him early yesterday at the Bangladesh Specialized Hospital, said Tanvir Shakil Joy, Nasim's son and a former AL MP.

Talking to The Daily Star, Awami League office secretary barrister Biplab Barua said, "Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina talked to Tanvir Shakil Joy over phone. His family members sought prayers from people of all walks of lives for his recovery."

Biplab Barua also said that Mohammad Nasim has been transferred to the ICU of the hospital.

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Protesters gather at Cadman Plaza in Brooklyn, New York on Thursday to condemn the killing of George Floyd. Floyd, a 46-year-old black man suspected of passing a counterfeit \$20 bill, died in Minneapolis on May 25 after Derek Chauvin, a white police officer, pressed his knee to Floyd's neck for almost nine minutes.

PHOTO: AFP

'Keep fighting'

US civil rights leader tells George Floyd memorial as protesters return to streets for 10th day; Trump sued over use of force against protesters

AGENCIES

Hundreds of mourners joined an emotional memorial service in Minneapolis Thursday for George Floyd, the black man killed by police last week, as civil rights leader Al Sharpton vowed mass protests will continue until "we change the whole system of justice."

Largely peaceful demonstrations took place later in cities from coast to coast. In New York, thousands marched over Brooklyn Bridge, while in Washington and Los Angeles curfews were lifted and crowds reduced.

In Minneapolis, Floyd's attorney told mourners he would find justice for the 46-year-old, who died during a May 25 arrest when a white police officer knelt on his neck for nearly nine minutes.

"It was not the coronavirus pandemic that killed George Floyd," said Benjamin Crump, who is representing Floyd's family. "It was that other pandemic. The pandemic of racism and discrimination."

The crowd stood in silence for eight minutes and 46 seconds -- the same length of time that officer Derek Chauvin spent with his knee on Floyd's neck, a scene captured on video.

Floyd's death has reignited long-felt anger over police killings of African-Americans and unleashed a nationwide wave of civil unrest unlike any seen in the US since Martin Luther King Jr's 1968 assassination.

With marches for racial justice stretching beyond the US and around the world, Sharpton said Floyd's death would not be in vain.

"It's time for us to stand up in George's name and say get your knee off our necks," said the 65-year-old Baptist minister.

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