

87pc of daily earners faced challenges in getting food: report

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Livelihoods of a vast majority of daily-earning class people were hampered during the shutdown enforced for containing coronavirus infections, said a Right to Food Bangladesh survey report yesterday.

About 98.3 percent of 834 people surveyed all over the country were affected by it, the rights group said in a press release.

Besides, about 87 percent of economically vulnerable people surveyed faced challenges in getting sufficient and nutritious food, the report said.

Findings of the report "Impact of Covid-19 on Poor Peoples' Food and Nutrition" was disclosed during a virtual views-exchange meeting yesterday.

The survey was conducted on economically vulnerable urban and rural people, 43 percent of them females, who mostly survive on day-to-day earnings, in 37 districts of eight divisions across the country.

The respondents included rickshaw and rickshaw-van pullers, scooter and taxi drivers, transport workers, small shop-owners and staffers, hawkers, barbers, beauty parlour staffers, cleaners, domestic helps, brick kiln workers, labourers, shipping and e-trade service workers and farm workers.

The government announced a countrywide shutdown on March 25 to contain the coronavirus outbreak. The shutdown remained enforced for over two months.

The report said 5 percent of survey respondents had one meal a day during the shutdown, in contrast to 91.6 percent who used to have three meals a day, and the rest had two meals a day.

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IN NO MOOD TO TALK... As life approaches normalcy in the capital, a few members of the nomadic Bede community have come to town looking for ways to earn some money. Exhausted and feeling overlooked, they were in no mood to talk to a journalist who was "just here for the photos". This photo was taken from Rajarbagh area yesterday.

PHOTO: FIROZ AHMED

Govt to start e-ticketing at Sadarghat: ministry

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The government will introduce e-ticketing system at the city's Sadarghat Launch Terminal, to avoid harassment of waterways passengers and recurrence of accidents.

Top officials of the shipping ministry yesterday informed this at a meeting of the parliamentary standing committee at the Jatiya Sangsad Bhaban.

Presided over by ruling Awami League lawmaker Maj (retd) Rafiqul Islam, the meeting was attended by committee members Shajahan Khan, Mazaharul Hoque Prodhan, Ranajit Kumar Roy and Aslam Hossain Sowdagar, among others.

About the initiative, Rafiqul Islam told The Daily Star that the committee told ministry officials so that e-ticketing system does not create any problems to low-income people.

Talking to this correspondent, former shipping minister and a current member of the parliamentary committee Shajahan Khan said he has asked the ministry to take measures so that no launch can anchor on the other side of Buriganga river, which is a major cause of accidents at Sadarghat area.

"Instead of anchoring launches at the other side of Buriganga, we have asked the respective authorities so that all launches anchor at a safe distance from the Sadarghat terminal," he also said.

Shajahan Khan said he has given a proposal to construct a tunnel under the Buriganga river for thousands of people who have to cross the river every day to and from Dhaka.

He said crossing the Buriganga on boat and movement of launch in the Sadarghat area often cause accidents in the area.

Essay contest open on Abul Mansur Ahmad

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The third edition of the Abul Mansur Ahmad essay contest is open for entries.

Abul Mansur Ahmad Smriti Parishad has launched the contest in honour of the renowned politician, journalist and litterateur.

Essays can be submitted on three topics: Abul Mansur Ahmad's thoughts on politics and nationalist perspective; anti-establishment ideas in Abul Mansur Ahmad's short stories; and contribution and relevance of Abul Mansur Ahmad in societal change.

The best submissions in each category will be awarded Tk 10,000. The second prize is Tk 5,000 and the third prize is a set of books by Abul Mansur Ahmad in each category.

Anyone aged within 35 can participate by sending an unpublished essay on one of the topics in Bangla of maximum 3,000 words, based on original research, within August 20. A declaration in support of the age limit and the originality of the essay should be attached.



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Courts disposed of 11.6 million cases in 2019

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Some 36,84,728 cases were pending with courts in the country till December 31, 2019, after 11,65,935 cases were disposed of between January 1 to December 31, a statement from Supreme Court said yesterday.

The number of cases pending with Appellate Division stood at 23,617 after 6,303 were disposed of.

The High Court disposed of 1,35,275 cases while 4,89,068 cases were pending till end of the year.

Lower courts had a backlog of 31,72,043 cases, after disposing of 10,24,357 cases last year.

Ramakrishna Mission distributes food to 8,000 families

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Eleven branches of Ramakrishna Mission have distributed food among 8,000 families who have been affected by the pandemic in different districts between April and June.

The food items included rice, pulses, flattened rice, salt, edible oil, mineral water, and potato, says a press release.

The Bagerhat branch distributed among 888 families; Biloiti among 300; Chandpur 700; Chattogram 750; Dhaka 1,150; Dinajpur 500; Faridpur 375; Habiganj 375; Jashore 1,372; Mymensingh 1,115; and Sylhet 500.

Besides Ramakrishna Asram and Vivekananda Shiksha o Sangskriti Parishad, both associated bodies of the mission, distributed food in their localities.

The parishad had also given financial assistance to some 30 students of Dhaka and Jagannath universities.

As a service oriented organisation, the mission has always stood beside victims of natural calamities, irrespective of their caste and creed.

Ganasamhati seeks removal of health minister, DGHS director general

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Ganasamhati Andolon yesterday demanded removal of health minister Zahid Maleque and director general of Directorate General of Health Services (DGHS) Prof Dr Abul Kalam Azad due to "failure to tackle corruption in health sector."

The left-leaning organisation also demanded an immediate arrest of the "big fish" behind corruption in the sector.

To press home their demands, leaders and activists of the party observed a two-hour long sit-in programme in front of the secretariat from 11am.

Speaking there, the party's chief coordinator Zonayed Saki alleged that both the health minister and the DG of DGHS are patrons of corrupt persons although they are blaming one another for the mismanagement.

"Despite all recent incidents of corruption in the sector, both are still carrying on their offices astonishingly; if they are not removed, then the prime minister will have to take the responsibility for this failure," he said.

Saki said that corrupt persons became so rampant that looting had endangered people's lives.

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YOUTH SKILLS SUMMIT 2020

Renowned artistes talk survival in a changing entertainment industry

SADI MOHAMMAD SHAHNEWAZ

Trying to embrace the "new normal" during the pandemic, the entertainment industry faces a peculiar challenge. Amidst the drawbacks, artistes in the entertainment industry are trying to innovate and come up with solutions to overcome challenges, speakers said at Youth Skills Summit 2020.

At the virtual event, renowned artistes in the entertainment industry shared their perspectives in the discussion titled "The Changing Entertainment Industry: Opportunities and Challenges for Artists".

The conference was held in association with SBK Tech Ventures, Shah Cement and Mountain Dew. Star Youth, 10 Minute School, Preneur Lab and Youth Opportunities were youth engagement partners of the summit.

At the session moderated by popular singer and editor of The Daily Star's Arts & Entertainment and Star Youth sections, Elita Karim, the industry insiders shared their advice to new artistes.

"When I was planning to take music as a full-time profession, My parents told me that an artiste in the entertainment industry has a very limited shelf-life," said musician-turned-actor Tahsan Khan. "That was, in fact, the best advice I could get at that time."

He asserted that throughout the years, he acquired skills to extend said shelf life, until he was able to become a successful actor as well.

"To survive as an artiste, passion will not be enough. You also need to be able to monetize yourself," said actor Iresh Zaker.

"I feel that whatever you do, you have to be honest towards your craft," said TV fiction director Ashfaque Nipun. "You cannot take your audience for granted. The audience always wants to see something different, and the industry has to adapt accordingly", he asserted.



Pragatisheel Chhatra Jote, a progressive students' organisation from DU, yesterday brought out a "coffin procession" demanding Health Minister Zahid Maleque and DGHS' Director General Abul Kalam Azad's removal from their posts. On their way from TSC to the Prime Minister's Office, the procession was halted by police, who barricaded Shahbagh to stop the protesters. PCJ activists claimed they were harassed by police, so they finally took position at Shahbagh and presented their demands, also including strict action against corruption and free treatment for Covid-19.

PHOTO: PRABIR DAS

Vacancy Announcement



Inspiring Excellence

Pro Vice-Chancellor

BRAC University is a premier private university in Bangladesh founded by BRAC, the world's largest nongovernmental organization that has positively impacted the lives of millions. The university was established to support the vision of the Founder, Sir Fazle Hasan Abed KCMG, for a world where everyone has the opportunity to realize their potential. BRAC University aims to be a global leader in pursuing higher education for humanity, enabling women and men to realize their potential and contribute to prosperity.

The Board of Trustees of BRAC University invites applications for the position of Pro Vice-Chancellor from outstanding scholars and administrators, locally and internationally. This will be a statutory appointment and prospective candidates must meet criteria outlined in the Private University Act 2010 of Bangladesh.

The Pro Vice-Chancellor will report to the Vice-Chancellor of BRAC University. She will work toward realization of the vision and mission of the university. BRAC University has seven schools, three institutes, and six centers of excellence. The university has consistently remained at the frontier of higher education in Bangladesh. The institutes and graduate schools produce high-impact research in key areas including public health and education, attracting significant grants and funding. The undergraduate programs have a strong liberal arts base and majors with coursework that reflect current trends and needs. Recent initiatives include the launch of buX, an edX-based online learning platform which is particularly important in view of the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, and the first School of Data and Sciences in the country. The university is also preparing to roll out a brand new general education program that encourages students to reflect on their role in society in facilitating positive change. In 2020, BRAC University was ranked by Times Higher Education among the global top 50 for SDG 1.

The university is seeking an academic leader possessing a solid track record of success. The individual will bring in a deep understanding of higher education. Having sound knowledge of the key factors in academic administration, the individual will be able to inspire confidence and motivate faculty to exercise the highest standards in scholarship and teaching. Additionally, the pro vice-chancellor will engage well with a wide range of stakeholders to support the university's mission.

Interested candidates are welcome to submit their application, a current CV, and the names and contact information of three professional references to pro-vc-search@bracu.ac.bd. Details are available on the university website: <https://www.bracu.ac.bd/pro-vc-search>.

Closing date: August 31, 2020.

Ensure strict lockdown at Wari: Taposh

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Dhaka South City Corporation Mayor Fazle Noor Taposh yesterday directed law enforcement agencies as well as all others involved in maintaining full lockdown at Wari, to do their job strictly.

Addressing the second review meeting of the lockdown which began on July 4, the mayor said business cannot be the main priority over life during this coronavirus pandemic.

Requesting residents of the area to follow health guidelines properly and maintain the lockdown strictly, the mayor said among around one lakh residents [of the area] only 148 residents gave their samples for coronavirus test, which is unacceptable.

Urging everyone to motivate the residents to give more samples for the coronavirus test, the mayor said the percentage of coronavirus positive patients are still the same as at the beginning of the lockdown which is "totally unexpected."

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