



A 'MISTAKE' FOR EUROPE, US
Iran's Rouhani brushes aside concerns over 'peaceful' nuclear programme
PAGE 6

THE DAILY

SECOND EDITION
Star

ON FRIDAY



www.thedailystar.net

REGD. NO. DA 781

VOL. XXXI No. 91

BAISHAKH 3, 1428 BS

Your Right to Know

RAMADAN 3, 1442 HIJRI

16 PAGES PLUS TOGGLE PRICE : Tk12.00

35 lakh families to get cash aid

Govt plans to provide Tk 2.5k to each family before Eid via mobile banking services

REJAUUL KARIM BYRON and WASIM BIN HABIB

The government is going to provide another round of cash assistance to nearly 35 lakh poor families facing income losses and hardship amid the ongoing nationwide lockdown.

Each family will receive a one-off cash support of Tk 2,500 before the Eid-ul-Fitr through mobile financial services, say finance ministry officials.

The Finance Division on April 8 sent a proposal to Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina for approval. "Once approved, we will start disbursing money," said a top official of the division, seeking anonymity.

The official further said Tk 900 crore has been earmarked for providing the financial aid to 34.97 lakh families that got Tk 2,500 each in cash support under a Tk 1,258-crore stimulus package last year during the countrywide shutdown imposed in the wake of the first Covid wave.

At that time, the government with inputs from field-level officials prepared a list of 50 lakh families in need of financial support. The target beneficiaries included rickshaw-pullers, day labourers, construction workers, farmers, shop employees, people working at small businesses and transport workers.

The PM inaugurated the fund disbursement on May 14 last year. But the distribution of money was stopped midway following allegations of anomalies in the list of beneficiaries with names of solvent people found in it.

SEE PAGE 2 COL 1



Shafia Khatun drives a battery-run rickshaw as a trader sits on top of vegetables being carried in it on a street in the capital's Mirpur-1 yesterday. The 45-year-old woman used to work as a house help but the pandemic left her jobless. She has been driving this rickshaw on rent to make ends meet. Thousands like her have been forced into changing their profession to survive after the Covid-19 struck the country in March last year. PHOTO: AMRAN HOSSAIN

Deaths from Covid-19 cross 10,000-mark

190 die in 2 days

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The number of Covid-19 deaths in the country has passed the 10,000 mark, with the health directorate reporting 94 new deaths in the past 24 hours till 8:00am yesterday.

The highest number of deaths - 96 -- was reported just the day before.

With this, the total number of Covid-19 deaths now stands at 10,081, which is 1.43 percent of all cases detected in the country since the first three reported on March 8 last year.

After the coronavirus infection decreased to its lowest in January and February, it started rising from the second week of March and continued breaking previous records frequently.

On March 31, the total death toll crossed the 9,000 mark from the 8000 in 67 days. But it took only 15 days to reach the latest milestone figure of 10,000.

Experts said the number of deaths seems to be increasing. SEE PAGE 2 COL 5



Abdul Matin Khasru MP laid to rest

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

With love, respect and grief, people of all walks of life bade farewell to Awami League lawmaker Abdul Matin Khasru yesterday.

He was 71. Khasru, who was a freedom fighter and was elected lawmaker five times from Cumilla-5 (Brahmanpara and Burichang upazilas), breathed his last at 4:45pm on Wednesday at Combined Military Hospital (CMH) in Dhaka after being infected with Covid-19.

SEE PAGE 2 COL 3

MOVEMENT PASS

Confusion, hassles add to chaos

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Different streets and intersections in the capital witnessed increased traffic on the second day of the weeklong "strict lockdown" amid the second wave of coronavirus.

There was also confusion among people over who must apply for the passes to be outdoors and who should not.

The Police Headquarters (PHQ) says people engaged in emergency services would not need a pass. But many people in services that can be considered emergency complain that they were stopped and harassed on the streets by the police.

With several departments, banks, and factories remaining open, there were long tailbacks at police checkpoints.

There was congestion in front of Radisson hotel as early as 7:45am, because police stopped almost every vehicle at the checkpoint, asking people why they were out and about. This affected traffic flow on other sections of Airport Road.

"We have instructions to check each and every vehicle on the road," said an officer at the checkpoint.

Meanwhile, thousands of garment workers had to commute to and from their factories amid the restrictions.

In Savar around 6:30am, photographer Palash Khan of The Daily Star saw hundreds of garment workers walking on highways to their factories. Many others were travelling in packed human haulers.

Most of them said their employers had not arranged buses for them as per the government direction.

The workers in human haulers said they had to pay up to three times the usual fare.

A government circular mentioned that factories and industries would remain open during the "strict lockdown", but the management must make arrangements for picking up and dropping off workers.

The situation was similar in Hemayetpur and Ulail bus stations in Savar.

At Gabtoli bus terminal, police were checking vehicles, mostly cars, IDs of the passengers, and asking why they were travelling. Very few cars, rickshaws and motorcycles were seen in the capital.

But as the day progressed, the number of vehicles, mostly cars and motorcycles, increased. SEE PAGE 2 COL 3

Cut duties on newsprint, corporate tax

Editors urge govt

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Editors of different print and electronic media yesterday urged the government to take steps to cut duties on newsprint import and corporate tax on the industry in the upcoming national budget as it is hit hard by the pandemic.

Stressing the need for food security, they

SEE PAGE 2 COL 6

ASTRAZENECA: PENDING CONSIGNMENTS

Vaccine campaign braces for setback

MOHAMMAD AL-MASUM MOLLA

Uncertainty looms large over the smooth vaccine campaign as the government is yet to get any specific date from Serum Institute of India about receiving the pending consignment of AstraZeneca doses.

Officials said the existing stock would be exhausted in the next 15 days if administration of both first and second doses go simultaneously at the current rate.

Currently, around two lakh people are receiving the second dose of the vaccine

while less than 50,000 are taking their first dose every day.

The country has administered around 65 lakh doses from a stock of 1.02 crore jabs.

Nazmul Hassan Papon, managing director of Beximco pharmaceuticals Ltd, told The Daily Star that they were in close contact with Serum. Beximco is the local agent of Serum in Bangladesh.

"Serum informed us that they are ready to export [vaccine doses], but they need a clearance from the government.

SEE PAGE 2 COL 3



'STRICTER LOCKDOWN' IN PLACE

Traffic comes to a stop at a police checkpoint on the Airport Road near Dhaka Cantonment Railway Station around 8:00am yesterday. The law enforcers were asking the people in the vehicles why they were out amid the ongoing week-long restrictions on public movement imposed on Wednesday to curb the spread of the Covid-19. Bottom left, thin presence of traffic in the capital's Shapla Chattar area. Bottom right, locals put up a barricade with bamboo poles in Tejgaon Begunbari to prevent others from going into the neighbourhood. They had made similar barricades on other roads in the area.

PHOTO: ANISUR RAHMAN/ FIROZ AHMED



বাংলাদেশ নিরাপদ খাদ্য কর্তৃপক্ষ

Bangladesh Food Safety Authority

জীবন ও স্বাস্থ্য সুরক্ষায় নিরাপদ খাদ্য
খাদ্য মন্ত্রণালয়

খাদ্যপণ্যের বিজ্ঞাপন প্রচার সম্পর্কিত

সতর্কীকরণ বিজ্ঞপ্তি

সম্প্রতি লক্ষ্য করা যাচ্ছে কিছু অস্বাভূ খাদ্য ব্যবসায়ী প্রতিষ্ঠান খাদ্যপণ্যের বিজ্ঞাপনে অসত্য বা মিথ্যা তথ্য প্রদানের মাধ্যমে ভোক্তাদের মাঝে বিভ্রান্তির সৃষ্টি করছে। এমতাবস্থায় নিরাপদ খাদ্য আইন, ২০১৩ এর ধারা-৪১ ও ধারা-৪২ অনুযায়ী খাদ্যপণ্য উৎপাদনকারী, আমদানিকারক, সরবরাহকারী, মোড়কজাতকারী ও ব্যবসায়ীসহ সংশ্লিষ্ট সকলকে নিম্নোক্ত নির্দেশ প্রদান করা যাচ্ছে।

- ◆ খাদ্যদ্রব্য বা খাদ্যোপকরণের গুণ, প্রকৃতি, মান, ইত্যাদি সম্পর্কে অসত্য বিজ্ঞাপন মুদ্রণ, প্রদর্শন, প্রচার বা প্রকাশ করা যাবে না।
- ◆ বিজ্ঞাপনে বিভ্রান্তিকর বা অসত্য তথ্য প্রদান করা যাবে না।
- ◆ মিথ্যা নির্ভরতামূলক বক্তব্য বিজ্ঞাপনে প্রচার করা যাবে না।
- ◆ "চিকিৎসক, বিশেষজ্ঞ বা সমতুল্য কোন ব্যক্তি বা প্রতিষ্ঠান কর্তৃক সুপারিশকৃত" এই ধরনের কোন বিজ্ঞাপন প্রচার করা যাবে না।
- ◆ "কোনো মিথ্যা দাবী বা রোগ নিরাময়কারী" এই ধরনের কোন অভিব্যক্তি বিজ্ঞাপনে প্রচার করা যাবে না।
- ◆ খাদ্য সংযোজন দ্রব্য (Food Additive) আছে এইরূপ খাদ্যের বিজ্ঞাপনে বিস্কুট/খাঁটি/পিপুড়া বা অনুরূপ কোন অভিব্যক্তি প্রচার করা যাবে না।
- ◆ "মাতৃদুগ্ধ বিকল্প, শিশু খাদ্য বা বাণিজ্যিকভাবে প্রস্তুতকৃত শিশুর বাড়তি খাদ্য" এ ধরনের কোন বিজ্ঞাপন মুদ্রণ, প্রদর্শন, প্রচার বা প্রকাশ করা যাবে না।

মিথ্যা বিজ্ঞাপন প্রচার নিরাপদ খাদ্য আইন, ২০১৩ অনুযায়ী শাস্তিযোগ্য অপরাধ।
এর শাস্তি এক (১) বৎসর কারাদণ্ড বা চার (৪) লক্ষ টাকা অর্থদণ্ড বা উভয় দণ্ড।