



PRESS INFORMATION DEPARTMENT
GOVERNMENT OF BANGLADESH
DHAKA



Most Urgent
For: Bangladoot, All Missions
MSG: 204/2019-20
Date: Wednesday, 8 April, 2020

From: PIO, PID, Dhaka
Fax: 9540553/9540026
E-mail: piddhaka@gmail.com
Web: www.pressinform.gov.bd

News Brief

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina has given directives to local MPs and Deputy Commissioners, together with law enforcement agencies and armed forces staff in the field, to form committees only to watch the distribution of relief materials. The Prime Minister came up with the directives while she was speaking at a videoconference yesterday with public representatives and officials of 15 districts of Chittagong and Sylhet divisions on the coronavirus situation in the country. The Prime Minister also urged authorities concerned to make a list of lower middle class and poor people, who have been left out of the government's social safety net programs and provide them with ration cards to ease their suffering during the coronavirus lockdown. The Prime Minister also directed the local administration to look after such sections of people who need relief but feel shy to appeal and to find out malpractice and irregularities in the distribution of relief materials. Prime Minister also announced introduction of "special health insurance" for physicians, nurses and government employees who are now directly involved in containing the novel coronavirus in the country.

The coronavirus claimed 5 more lives and infected 41 others increasing the death toll to 17 and number of infected people to 164 in the last 24 hours. IEDCR in its virtual media briefing yesterday informed among the 164 coronavirus cases, 84 were found in Dhaka City, 38 in Narayanganj, 11 in Madaripur and five in Gaibandha. DG Health Services said 67,448 people were kept at both home and institutional quarantine and the current number of quarantined people was 10,316 as rests were released after medical clearance.

Health and Family Welfare Minister Zahid Maleque yesterday urged medical professionals to work with more dedication and sincerity to protect people from the fatal disease COVID-19. He made the comment while inaugurating the programme through online marking the 'World Health Day at the Directorate General of Health Service in the city. Maleque advised the people to stay at home and follow social distancing alongside maintaining individual hygienic habits to limit the spread of the COVID-19.

Road Transport and Bridges Minister Obaidul Quader yesterday in a statement called upon leaders and workers of the party and associate bodies to stand by distressed people in the wake of the deadly coronavirus outbreak. The Minister also urged the party men to disseminate authentic information about coronavirus and encourage them to follow the health guidelines. Highlighting Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina's 31-point directives to contain the coronavirus spread, he urged the party men to follow the directives strictly. The minister said rice is being sold out at Taka 10 per kg and wheat under the food ministry's open market sale programme.

A team of police's Counter Terrorism and Transnational Crime unit arrested Majed in a predawn raid in Mirpur 11.5 area of the capital. He was later sent to Keraniganj Central Prison by the court. Meanwhile, Law, Justice and Parliamentary Affairs Minister Anisul Huq at a virtual briefing from his Gulshan residence last evening said formalities to execute death sentence of convicted killer of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, dismissed army captain Abdul Majed have already started with his arrest. Replying a question on whether the convicted killer would pose a threat of coronavirus transmission to other inmates in jail, the law minister said as Majed would be kept at solitary confinement as a convict condemned to death. Home Minister Asduzzaman Khan kamal yesterday in a video message said the arrest of Bangabandhu killer Abdul Mazed is the best gift for nation in the Mujib Year. He expressed hope to execute the court verdict and thanked those involved in the process of arrest. Foreign minister Dr AK Abdul Momen yesterday in a message sent to newsmen over social media expressed his hope to bring back the remaining five fugitive convicted killers of father of the nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman within the Mujib Year.

Commerce Minister Tipu Munshi yesterday in a statement urged factory owners to pay the salary for the month of March to their workers within April 16. He also requested not to fire any labourer even though the factories are remained closed due to COVID-19 pandemic in the country.

State minister for foreign affairs M Shahriar Alam yesterday said the government will bring back Bangladesh citizens from India who got stuck there once the current countrywide lockdown is withdrawn there. The returnees have been placed on quarantine. He was responding to queries in a Facebook live conducted by a journalist of UNB. He said Bangladesh and Singapore will soon arrange a special flight to exchange a small group of people from both countries.

Bangladesh Bank (BB) has increased the Export Development Fund (EDF) size to US\$5 billion from \$3.5 billion in line with the government's efforts to tackle the economic impacts for COVID-19. Exporters will now be able to borrow from the EDF at an interest rate of 2 percent. Dealers (Ads) will be charged by the central bank at 1 percent per annum (pa), while ADs will charge interest rate to manufacturer-exporters at 2 percent pa, for disbursements until further instructions, according to a BB circular issued yesterday. Other relevant instructions will remain unchanged. Bangladesh Bank (BB) has issued another circular on opening mobile financial service (MFS) accounts for all workers and employees of export-oriented industries and factories by April 20 to facilitate providing salaries and allowances from government's financial package.

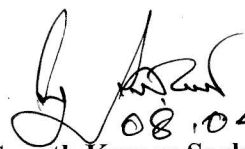
The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) is rolling out US\$ 1.5m emergency food support for 50,000 extremely urban poor families of Bangladesh to ameliorate some of their immediate hardships and counter potentially devastating socioeconomic impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic. A UNDP press release said the project has also started installation of 2,500 hand-washing facilities at the poor settlements and is working to sensitise and build capacities of health officials and volunteers in 20 cities.

The Ministry of Industries yesterday in an official press release said the country has a stock of over 10.26 lakh metric tons of edible salt till April 3 whereas the monthly demand of edible salt in the country is around 75,000 metric tons. Besides, there are sufficient salt reserves with dealers, wholesalers and retailers of different salt companies across the country.

The government has taken decision to procure 1.15 million tonnes of rice (boiled and non-boiled) and 600,000 tonnes of paddy during the current Boro season. Some 75,000 tonnes of wheat will be also procured from the local markets in the season, said an official handout of the food ministry yesterday. Some one million tonnes of boiled rice will be procured at Tk 36 per kg, 150,000 tonnes of non-boiled (atap) rice at Tk 35 per kg and 600,000 tonnes of paddy at Tk 26 per kg. Procurement of Boro paddy will start on 26 April, while that of rice on 7 May. The collection of both paddy and rice will be completed on 31 August. Wheat will be collected from 15 April to 30 June at Tk 28 per kg.

Tablighi Jamat Bangladesh yesterday in a statement urged its followers, who are now in different chillas (pattern of spending time to different mosques for preaching Islam), to return home from their respective tours. The Tablighi Jamat followers are asked to offer prayer at homes and seek the welfare of the Muslim Ummah and the whole mankind to the Almighty Allah in the ongoing coronavirus crisis.

As many as 52 areas of Dhaka City Corporation along with Naryanganj and Gazipur City Corporation have been put under lockdown in an effort to protect city dwellers from the contagious coronavirus and prevent its spread. Dhaka North City Corporation (DNCC) yesterday urged all not to visit the graveyards during the ongoing coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak.


08.04.2020
Surath Kumar Sarker
Principal Information Officer
Phone- 9546091