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News Brief

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina has directed the authorities concerned to provide food aid to the daily wage-earners by preparing a list of those suffering from food shortage being jobless due to the ongoing coronavirus crisis. Deputy Commissioners have been asked to coordinate with the prepared lists in case of food aid being provided by the affluent people and non-government organizations at the grassroots so that repetition can be avoided and no beneficiaries left out. Meanwhile, the Prime Minister is set to hold a videoconference this morning with Deputy Commissioners and other officials of 64 districts to coordinate the ongoing programmes to contain coronavirus.

One more new coronavirus positive case was detected in the country over the last 24 hours, while no death was reported after March 25. IEDCR confirming this at a press conference in Dhaka yesterday said, the total number of positive cases has stood at 49. As during the last 24 hours till yesterday, four coronavirus infected people have recovered and the number of the recovered patients stood at 19.

Health and Family Welfare Minister Zahid Maleque joining the online briefing on the coronavirus situation by the IEDCR said, his ministry has prepared 200 ICU units for COVID-19 patients, while 11 labs have been set up for testing samples of suspected coronavirus cases. He also informed that the government has already distributed three lakh PPEs at different hospitals and at present the country has 500 ventilators. Meanwhile, a Polymerase Chain Reaction (PCR) testing machine which is used for detecting coronavirus reached the Khulna Medical College Hospital yesterday. Besides, another PCR machine also reached Barishal Sher-e-Bangla Medical College and Hospital for the same purpose.

Information Minister Dr. Hasan Mahmud has said, the government and the mass media will work more closely to tackle the coronavirus pandemic. He made the remarks while attending a meeting with leaders of mass media in Dhaka yesterday. Mentioning that some online portals spread rumours during any crisis to create confusions among people, he said the mainstream media can make substantial contributions to this end. He also said the government is identifying those media that spread rumours and taking actions accordingly.

The government has so far allocated 8 crore 89 lac 72 thousand 264 taka in cash and 31,217 metric tons of rice for the low-income people across the country as they remained without any work following the restrictive measures taken to tackle the coronavirus. They are being provided with the assistance through the district and upazila administrations, said a PID handout yesterday. Summit Group donated a 3-crore taka cheque to the Prime Minister's Relief and Welfare Fund to fight the coronavirus pandemic. Prime Minister's Principal Secretary Dr. Ahmad Kaikaus on behalf of the Premier received the donation at the PMO yesterday.

Bangladesh mission in New Delhi has taken an initiative to send back the stranded Bangladeshis to their homeland following lockdown announced by Indian government to contain spread of coronavirus. Bangladesh High Commissioner to India Mohammad Imran yesterday said, a total of 162 stranded Bangladeshi have expressed their willingness so far to return to Bangladesh. The mission officials are working round-the-clock to provide all sorts of assistance to the stranded Bangladeshis, he added. Earlier, the mission opened two hotline numbers so that the Bangladeshi people remained stranded in India could contact with the mission. Meanwhile, a total of 269 US citizens left Dhaka for their country yesterday evening. A special flight of Qatar Airways carrying them took off from Hazrat Shahjalal International Airport, airport sources said yesterday.

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State Minister for ICT Division Zunaid Ahmed Palak while addressing a virtual press briefing yesterday said, his office has launched a couple of platforms to evaluate risks of coronavirus and provide service through information and communication technology.

State Minister for Youth and Sports Md. Zahid Ahsan Russel has said, all the stadiums across the country especially the indoor ones will be used for providing treatment to the coronavirus patients if needed. There are 80 stadiums in the capital and different districts and the number mini stadiums in different upazilas is 125, he added.

Chinese Ambassador to Bangladesh Li Jiming has said, the Chinese side will work hand in hand with the government of Bangladesh and all sectors of Bangladesh society to contain the situation overcoming the temporary difficulties, he said in an open letter to the people of Bangladesh yesterday. The Embassy is also organising a video conference between top Chinese medical experts and Bangladeshi doctors and nurses to provide training and instructions for managing the coronavirus infection, said Jiming.

The Islamic Foundation has said, all the mosques will have to be cleaned and disinfected and prayer carpets or clothes will have to be changed before each prayer. It also requested Imams to limit the Jamaat and Jumma prayers by praying with a small number of people as a precautionary measure to curb the spread of coronavirus in the country. They advised people not to visit mosques if have any of the eight conditions: infected with coronavirus; people with fever, cough, flu or shortness of breath; returnees from Covid-19 infected countries; people who came in contact with infected people; those infected with different diseases; the elderly, the weak, women or children; those engaged in serving the sick and people who fear being infected by visiting mosques.

The Police Headquarters has urged people to extend cooperation to police, who are working to curb the coronavirus, instead of spreading rumours and misleading information against them in the greater interest of the country and the nation. It also warned that appropriate legal action will be taken against rumour-mongers, said a press note issued by the Police Headquarters yesterday.

The Office of the Ombudsman of the European Union has recently turned down the plea from a group of the labour rights organisations for withdrawal of GSP facilities being enjoyed by Bangladesh for alleged violation of labour rights. BGMEA in a reaction said, through this decision, Bangladesh got rid of labour abuse perception.



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