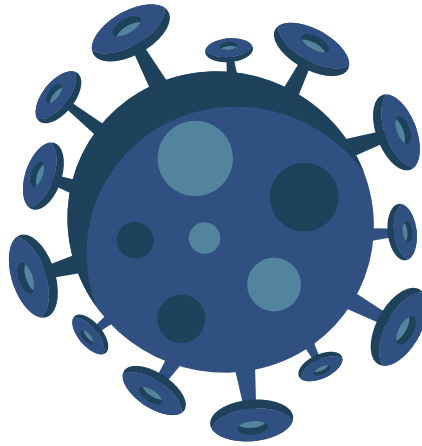


COVID-19
BANGLADESH
SITUATION REPORT

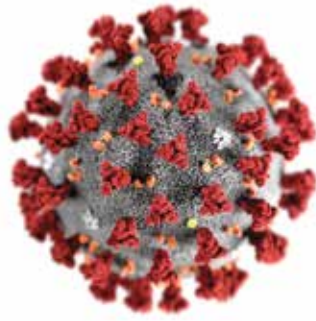
DATE: 8 APRIL, 2020



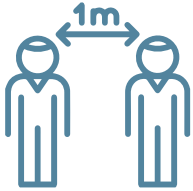
Basic Information

The first case of Covid-19 in Bangladesh was detected on 8 March 2020. So far, the country has detected 218 confirmed cases of Covid-19, of whom, 20 have died and 33 have recovered after treatment. In total, 67,448 people have been quarantined (institutional and home) till date of whom 57,132 have been released from state of quarantine. Till date, 473 people have been isolated, of whom 336 have been released.

The national response is being headed by the Honourable Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina herself in close conjunction with relevant public health agencies like the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, Directorate General Health Services (DGHS) and the IEDCR. Bangladesh is also working closely with the various international organisations in Bangladesh, including the World Health Organisation (WHO). Committees have been formed at city-corporation, municipality, district, upazila and union levels for coronavirus prevention.



GENERAL MEASURES



Social and Physical Distancing: These are being enforced through a general holiday for the entire country till 14th April. All govt and private offices remain closed. Banking is limited to two hours per day only in limited branches. Army has been deployed to help the civil administration. All shopping malls, restaurants, shops have been closed. Only groceries, pharmacies etc are open. Grocers can remain open till 2 pm, super-shops need to close by 7 pm. Only pharmacies can remain open for hours as before.

All places of worship, including mosques, have been closed for public congregations by government order. People have been asked to pray from their homes. All educational institutions have been closed, residential halls vacated, and examinations postponed. All public gatherings have been stopped, including all planned activities for the upcoming Bangla New Year on 14th April. Earlier, the Prime Minister had directed that all celebration of Mujib Year will remain suspended in the current situation.



Lockdowns and Quarantines: Areas with most cases of infected patients have been subjected to complete lockdown. For instance, so far, 52 areas within the capital have been subjected to complete lockdown. Madaripur, Narayanganj, Cox's Bazar districts and Sadullahpur Upazila of Gaibandha have also been subjected to complete lockdown. People being quarantined at home, are under strict monitoring of the local law enforcers and administrative officials.



Transportation: All domestic flights within Bangladesh are currently closed; all international flights closed too, except flights to China. All public transport, inter city buses, commuter trains, inter district trains, water launches and ferries are closed. Only goods carrying transportation are in operation. Before shutdown of transports, more than 668,000 persons were health screened at the land, sea and airports.



Action in Health Sector



Hospitals: Covid-19 patients are being treated at 11 hospitals in Dhaka and Hospitals outside Dhaka. Flu corners, as in separate outer wards and emergency, have been set in hospitals outside Dhaka. Hospitals treating covid-19 patients are getting extra ventilators and ICUs. There are currently 500 ventilators in government hospitals. Works are ongoing to install 700 more ventilators in these hospitals. Equipment for installing 350 more are being imported.

Works are also ongoing to install 100 new Intensive Care Units (ICUs) in the government hospitals across Bangladesh and the equipment for installing further 300 ICUs are in the import stage. 290 organisations have been prepared for institutional quarantine across the country. There are a total of 7,693 isolation beds in selected medical institutions in 8 divisions.



Tele and Digital Health: The Government is operating several major telephone hotlines to offer health advice to people. 2,238 volunteer doctors are connected in this service to provide free health advice to citizens. Till date, more than 1.6 million persons have received health advice and Covid-19 primary screening over these hotlines since 8 March 2020. The government is also using digital technology to help. www.corona.gov.bd is the dedicated website in this regard. The government has also started using big data and artificial intelligence through mobile phone data to identify hot zones for giving special attention.

 www.corona.gov.bd



Testing: Covid-10 testing facilities are now available in 9 laboratories in Dhaka. Outside Dhaka, testing laboratories are currently operational in Chattogram, Cox's Bazaar, Mymensingh, Rajshahi and Rangpur. Laboratories in the rest of the divisional cities are supposed to be completed and made operational by this week. Till date, 92,000 testing kits have been acquired. 21,000 such kits have been distributed to the PCR laboratories, while 71,000 more kits are currently in stock.

Training: 1,385 doctors and 353 nurses have been trained specifically on handling Covid-19 patients. Training has also been given to medical technologists of all district and sub-district government hospitals on conducting tests of covid-19. Employees of 500 institutions have been imparted training online on Covid-19 surveillance system at DHIS2.

PPEs: Personal Protection Equipments (PPEs) are being provided to healthcare workers of various levels across the country. 10-15 sets of PPEs each have already been provided to all Upazila Health Complexes. In total, 626,397 PPEs of various levels have been acquired. 461,894 PPEs have distributed to healthcare professionals across the country, while a further 164,503 remain in stock currently.



Economic and Social Justice Measures

Stimulus Package:

On 5 April, 2020, the Prime Minister announced a TK 72,500 Crore TK (approximately US\$ 8.57 billion) stimulus package for the Bangladesh economy. The package consists of four main features:

- 1) Increasing public expenditure;
- 2) Introducing fiscal packages;
- 3) Expanding social security programmes
- 4) Increasing money supply.

These four pillars would be complemented by the following strategies:

- i) Providing working capital for affected enterprises in industrial and service sectors;
- ii) Providing working capital for small and medium enterprises (including cottage industries);
- iii) Expanding the benefits under the Bangladesh Bank managed 'Export Development Fund';
- iv) Introducing the 'Pre Shipment Credit Refinance Scheme'.

Earlier, the the Hon. Prime Minister had announced an urgent hardship fund worth TK 5000 Crore (approximately US\$ 589.2 million) for paying the salaries and other benefits of workers from export oriented industries. Altogether, the value of the stimulus package announced by the Prime Minister stands at 72,750 Crore Taka (approximately US\$ 8.573 billion), which is 2.52% of the GDP.



Help for Low Income Groups: Urgent food support in cities and villages have been ordered through district administration for low income groups and day labourers. Food and cash support is being provided for low income groups for up to 6 months under 'Ghora Fera Prokolpo' whereby urban low income groups are provided for in their native districts. For immediate humanitarian assistance, the government has allocated 8,450 metric tonnes of rice and TK 2 Crore 35 Lakhs cash handouts which are being distributed to the the low income groups across the country via local administration and local government representatives.

Additionally, the government is operating the 'Rice for TK 10 per KG' programme in the cities, divisions and district levels. For instance, in Dhaka alone, this scheme would benefit 39,180 families living in 73 slums in the city. Accommodation and livelihood have been arranged for 100,000 low income persons at the custom built Bhashan Char Project. The government is operating a telephone helpline for people needing urgent food support.

Bills, Loans Etc: Utility (gas, electricity, water) bills can be paid up to June without late fees. By the same token, current micro credit loan interests can be paid up to June without late fees. Bangladesh's central bank has decided not to classify any loan as 'bad' till June. In this period, none will be declared as loan defaulter for failing to pay instalments or interests. Deadline of collecting income from export has been extended to six months from two months. Similarly, timeframe of meeting up import expenditure has also been extended to six months from four months. Limit of monetary transaction through mobile banking has been increased.

Support for Frontline Workers

The Prime Minister, in order to express her gratitude to the frontline workers, like healthcare professionals, law enforcers, army and directly engaged employees of the republic announced on 7th April the following measures: a) Rewarding the doctors, nurses and health professionals directly engaged with special honorarium. A list of recipients is being prepared in this regard; b) Making all arrangements for treatment from the government if anyone gets infected as a result of frontline duties; c) Insurance for all health professionals, law enforcers, members of the armed forces and employees of the republic engaged directly in fighting Covid-19; Depending on rank, the insurance amount will be between 5 to 10 Lakhs TK. In case of death or risk of death, the amount will be raised five fold.

International Cooperation:

Bangladesh working closely with other countries to face this global crisis. The country is donating 1.5 million USD to Saarc fund to fight coronavirus in the South Asian region.

