

COVID-19: SITUATION REPORT

14 MAY 2020



43M

programme
participants oriented
on COVID-19



100,000+

workers on the
ground covering 64
districts



876,000

items of
protective wear
distributed



1.5M

hygiene products
distributed



300,000

families received cash
support

Make empathy go viral

BRAC has provided 300,000 families with cash support, including households living in ultra-poverty, those living in remote *haor* areas (wetlands) and *char* (riverine islands) areas, host communities in Cox's Bazar district, and indigenous communities in the Chittagong Hill Tracts and northern districts in Bangladesh. **The fourth round of relief will reach 50,000 families.**

Much more is needed, though. Stand beside a family today: <https://www.brac.net/covid19/donate/>



BRAC has reached the targeted
300,000 families with cash
support.





COVID-19 timeline in Bangladesh

Cumulative confirmed cases

Cumulative deaths

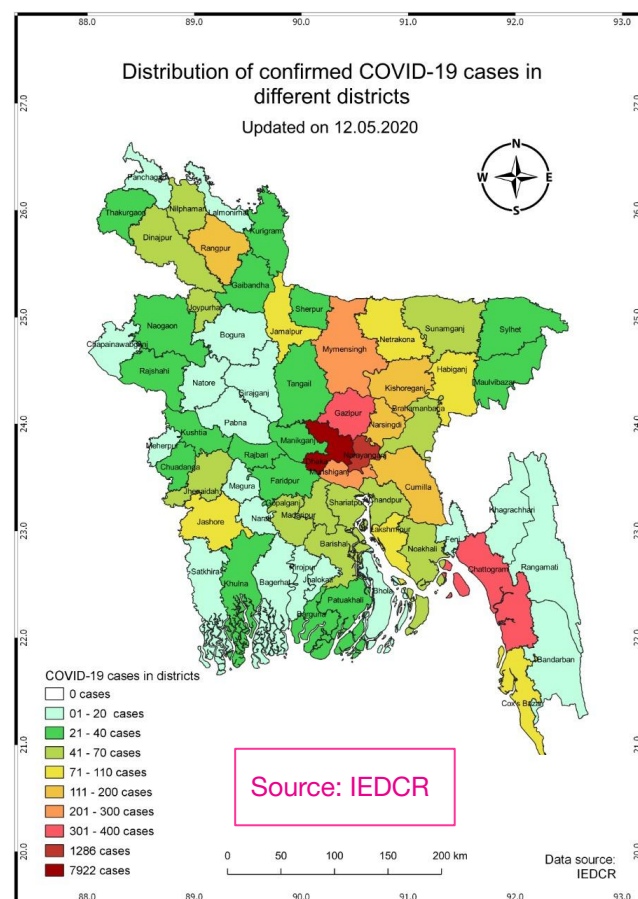


2 MAY

14 MAY

Situation overview

- **Globally, there are 4,218,212 confirmed cases of COVID-19.** 290,242 lives have been claimed across 216 countries, areas or territories (updated: 14 May 2020, 06:00 GMT+6, [World Health Organization](#)).
- **Bangladesh has 18,863 confirmed cases as of 14 May 2020.** 1,041 cases were identified in the last 24 hours. The disease has caused 283 deaths in the country, 14 of which were reported in the last 24 hours (updated: 14 May 2020).
- **Bangladesh reported the first death of a prisoner from COVID-19 in Sylhet, northeastern Bangladesh, on 10 May.** 86 inmates and 24 staff members of Sylhet Central Jail were sent to quarantine in a separate building. There are [approximately](#) 90,000 prisoners in 68 jails across the country, far exceeding their capacity of 41,244. To reduce the risk of transmission 555 prisoners were released last week, and 2,329 prisoners are to be freed this week.
- **929 people have died from symptoms similar to COVID-19 in the past two months,** according to Dhaka University's Centre for Genocide Studies based on media reports..
- **The first two positive cases of COVID-19 were identified in Cox's Bazar's Rohingya camps.** One of the patients is from Kutupalong refugee camp, and the other patient is from Camp 1E. Both of them have been assigned to isolation.
- **The government has extended the public holiday until 30 May** and placed restrictions on travelling during the seven days of *Eid-ul-Fitr* (a Muslim festival).
- **Five million households living in poverty have started to receive cash support through mobile financial services from today.** Mobile money platforms - bKash, Rocket and Surecash, will disburse BDT 375 crore, BDT 250 crore and BDT 200 crore respectively. The government has extended its Food Friendly Programme for another month. The programme [sells rice to five million people](#) for BDT 10 (USD 0.12) per kilogram.
- **The government is relaxing lockdown restrictions** to allow for opportunities for people to earn during the holy month of Ramadan. Particularly, **sales of non-essential products have resumed from 10 May, 45 days into the shutdown.** Only [10% of retail outlets](#) opened on 10 May amidst uncertainties and fear. While [large shopping malls remain closed](#), lifestyle, electronics and automobile brands have resumed sales, maintaining safety guidelines and sanitation. Unfortunately, many shoppers were found [violating these regulations](#). Two markets in Narayanganj (a high risk region) have been closed for failing to follow guidelines.
- **3,357 industries resumed operations on 6 May,** according to data from the industrial police. Among these, [1,594 were garment factories, 180 textile factories,](#) and 1,583 from other industries. The [Guardian reported](#) on sub-standard preparations within the factories in the industrial areas of Gazipur and Ashulia. [BGMEA has identified 55](#) workers who have tested positive in different factories in Dhaka and beyond.
- **The central bank has released BDT 2,000 crore to banks to disburse the salaries of ready-made garment workers for April, May and June.** Workers have [started receiving salaries](#) as banks are disbursing loans for paying wages from the government's stimulus package of BDT 5,000 crore.
- **The government has allocated BDT 41.5 crore for a COVID-19 isolation centre** at the International Convention City Bashundhara in Dhaka from its budget for FY 2019-20. From this week, three more private hospitals in the capital have received the permission to treat COVID-19 patients. A total of 13 private hospitals now have a combined capacity to serve 850 patients.



- **4,249 women experienced domestic violence in April**, including physical, sexual and mental abuse, or economic violence (stopping food and financial support). There were reports of women being raped or sexually harassed while collecting relief items. In total, 33 cases of child marriages have been reported and over 100 more attempted.
- **Earnings from exports in April dropped by five times from March as a result of the lockdown.** This is 82% less than last year. The garment industry's earnings, which alone brings 84% of the export revenue, dropped from USD 2.26 billion to USD 378.4 million between March and April. [WTO, in a recent report](#), has estimated that Bangladesh, after graduating from a 'least developed country', will face nearly a 9% increase in export tariff. Exports are estimated to decline by 14%.
- **The Bangladeshi pharmaceutical company Eskayef produced the drug [remdesivir](#)** and is waiting for National Control Laboratory of drug administration's approval. It is expected that the drug will reach hospitals by the end of this month. The drug is known to catalyse the process of recovery for COVID-19 patients. However, expert warns that the drug should only be used for treating severe cases.
- **A team of researchers from Child Health Research Foundation have successfully [mapped the genome sequence](#) of COVID-19.** This will pave the way for identifying the most prevalent strain of the virus in the country, and which vaccines might work in the future.
- **The pandemic will lead to financial damage worth [BDT 35,407 crore](#) to the country's power sector** from March to December period this year, according to predictions by the power division of the Ministry of Power, Energy and Mineral Resources.
- **With over 100% year-on-year growth in loan disbursements, agent banking can be used as one of the option to [deliver stimulus packages](#) to the remotest corners of Bangladesh.** The planning minister nudged policymakers to think about how to integrate microfinance institutions into agent banking.



BRAC's overall response to COVID-19

BRAC's immediate short-term focus was prevention, through community engagement, behaviour change and mass campaigning. This has included creating a world-standard course on COVID-19, using it to train staff and volunteers, equipping them with personal protective equipment and then sending them to millions of households armed with information and sanitation products.

In parallel, we are strengthening systems, through providing information, volunteers and resources to government and civil society organisations. This includes supporting community support teams which include a BRAC healthcare worker at the ward level to support case detection and verification, setting up sample collection booths, running a pharmacy surveillance pilot to get additional community data to identify hotspots, and developing testing kiosks for additional sample collection.

After the recent shutdown, BRAC is focusing on ensuring short-term relief to low-income earners and those living in poverty in cities and rural villages. Treating it as a humanitarian crisis, BRAC has done emergency cash transfers to 300,000 households. Public-private partnerships have also been created, as well as mobilising funding from institutional and individual funders.

As we realise that the economic impacts of the pandemic will be protracted, we are beginning to focus on livelihoods, developing a mid to long-term strategy for economic revitalisation of those living in extreme poverty. Amidst an extremely fluid situation, BRAC is focusing on remaining adaptive and agile, and keeping pace with changing needs, particularly the needs of the people in the most vulnerable situations. We are also undertaking rapid needs assessment and evidence generation for mid to long-term response.



Emerging risks and challenges

- **13 million people are expected to be pushed into poverty due to the supply and demand shocks from nationwide stay-at-home orders**, according to the Asian Development Bank. UN Women reports that women disproportionately engaged in informal jobs are often not [aware of how to access social assistance](#).
- **Workers of more than 500 industries across the country are yet to receive their salaries for the month of March**. Leaders of trade unions [fear](#) that owners of export-oriented industries may misuse the government's incentive of BDT 5,000 crore, which was announced to pay salaries to their workers, according to a study by BRAC Institute of Governance and Development. The government has instructed factory owners to pay 60% of the salary to those who are staying at home, and 100% to those who are working.
- **Health workers, police personnel, garbage management workers and volunteers burying both identified and unidentified bodies largely remain at risk**. The head of the virology department at Dhaka Medical College [advised](#) to test all dead bodies before conducting autopsies during this time. Three volunteer organisations are currently mandated for burial arrangement, but they are severely running short on protective gear.
- **A recent study done by UN Women in Bangladesh indicates that food relief is not reaching all women** living at *upazila* (sub-district) and union levels; particularly in *chars* (riverine islands), areas prone to river erosion, and *haor* (wetland) areas. The nation may benefit from a [national monitoring committee](#), comprising representatives from government agencies, NGOs, civil society, the business community and labour organisations.
- **98% of internal women migrant workers of the informal sector have lost their jobs**. A survey by BNSK (an association for women migrant workers) [revealed](#) that 67% of them were the main breadwinners of their family, while 33% contributed partially.
- **A COVID-19 outbreak in the refugee camps and neighbouring communities would disproportionately affect women and girls and other vulnerable populations**, according to Cox's Bazar's [Inter sector coordination group's Gender Hub](#). Confinement, a rise in tensions and restrictions on services and access for humanitarian workers will increase levels of gender-based violence, child abuse and neglect and sexual exploitation.
- **Fisheries and livestock farmers are suffering significant losses**. The National Assessment Working group predicts further losses due to the decreased distribution of feed and vaccination of animals. The [government announced](#) the provision of financial incentives, low interest loans, technical support and subsidy for fish and animal feed to farmers.
- **12% of children are being able to fully engage in studying at home during the lockdown**, according to a study by Save the Children Bangladesh. 91% of children said that there is no one to help them with their studies. However, the survey is not representative of the entire situation in Bangladesh.



Orientation, safety and safeguarding of staff and communities

- **43 million programme participants** were oriented on COVID-19 to ensure prevention and outbreak of the disease in communities.
- **134,183 BRAC staff and volunteers have been oriented on COVID-19** through BRAC's online orientation sessions with healthcare experts and training modules.
- **BRAC's community health workers have measured the temperatures of 6,854 farmers** (3,922 men and 2,932 women) to support the work of rice harvesting in northeastern *haor* (wetland) regions. Health workers have been trained to use contactless infrared thermometers to check temperatures while maintaining social distance, and are reporting to local health authorities if anyone is found to have a temperature above 101-degrees Fahrenheit.
- **1,996 pharmacies across 85 sub-districts were reached** by the frontline staff. Pharmacists have been oriented on the importance of maintaining social distancing while interacting with customers. They are instructed to disseminate awareness messages to customers about consulting professional doctors with symptoms and concerns. Village doctors and informal medical practitioners have also been oriented to identify symptoms and refer presumptive cases to designated testing facilities.
- **665 people received counselling through BRAC's tele-counselling platform 'Mon er Jotno Mobile-e'** (phone-based emotional support) since its launch in April. The platform has seen a 27% increase in callers seeking mental health support over the last month. Majority of callers were from Dhaka, with the age of callers ranging from 15 to 84. Anxiety and stress related to COVID-19 was the most common concern. Substance abuse, suicidal tendencies, family conflicts and domestic violence were reported. The platform's counsellors also reach out to BRAC's 4,000 frontline community health workers and follow up on their mental health.
- **761 suspected cases of COVID-19 patients have been identified** by BRAC's community health workers, which they referred to local authorities for testing.
- **446,569 women have received maternal, neonatal and child healthcare services** from 41 of BRAC's maternity centres, all which have remained open throughout the COVID-19 lockdown.



Snapshot: Agricultural market failure

The agriculture sector is taking a major hit as a result of the COVID-19-induced disruption of economic activities. News of agricultural market failures began surging in soon after the nationwide lockdown started in March. Market inefficiencies are common in the agriculture sector, in both developing and developed countries alike, and it is one of the sectors most heavily subsidised in many countries because the nature of the sector. Heavy subsidies, as well as other corrective measures, are often required to tone down market failures and alleviate food insecurity.

The agricultural market failures during COVID-19 pandemic draw particular policy attention because during (and after) any catastrophe, the food security of the nation becomes a major concern. BRAC Enterprises with support from BRAC Advocacy for Social Change undertook this study with the aim of shedding light on the nature and extent of market failures occurring in the agriculture sector, while the country battles a full-fledged pandemic, and what needs to be done in the short and medium-term for improved food security.

Methodology:

A combined quantitative and qualitative approach was used for the analysis. Representative price data from all eight divisions were analysed to capture price volatility, while key informant interviews with farmers/producers, middlemen, wholesalers, retailers and input sellers have been conducted to draw meaningful conclusions and policy recommendations.

Key findings:

Agricultural product prices and sales volume went up due to panic buying during the second half of March. Wholesalers and retailers also stockpiled, often paying premium prices to purchase anything available.

Local government institutions, NGOs and private individuals became the largest buyers in the market during the first half of April, purchasing large quantities of specific items to distribute as relief goods. As a result, the price of items such as coarse rice and imported lentils stayed high and rose, up to 30%, from April.

The demand and price for non-relief items started to falter mid-April, due to depletion of buying power and stockpiling in March.

The prices of popular Ramadan items recovered at the end of April and showed an increase in the first week of May. The continued low average purchasing power meant that wholesalers and retailers often sold other stock at a loss in April.

Starting from May, particularly the second week, wholesalers and retailers found it difficult to continue to hold their stock. Some of the associated costs, such as transportation costs, dropped - mostly due to lack of demand for transportation services and cost reductions due to reduced traffic congestion. It is expected that the prices of agricultural commodities, both wholesale and retail, will further decline throughout May.

Farm chicken - price trend



Demand has been low in poultry and fisheries since the beginning of lockdown, resulting in a very low price up until the end of April. Starting in May, prices have been changing.

Farmers stopped hatching eggs from mid-April as a result of the low demand. In parallel, vaccine and other medicine costs for chicken increased by 5%-7% because of difficulties in transportation and increased prices in the international market. Now, with restaurants starting to open slowly and the demand for both poultry and eggs starting to grow, we are facing a situation where prices are gradually increasing (26% for farmed chicken and 8% for eggs) and are likely to increase significantly throughout May.

The situation is almost the same in the case of farmed fish. The closure of restaurants and decreased demand due to declining purchasing power have both contributed to low demand. As a result, fish farmers stopped producing hatchlings to reduce supply at the wholesale and retail level. Now that demand is increasing again, prices are also expected to increase.

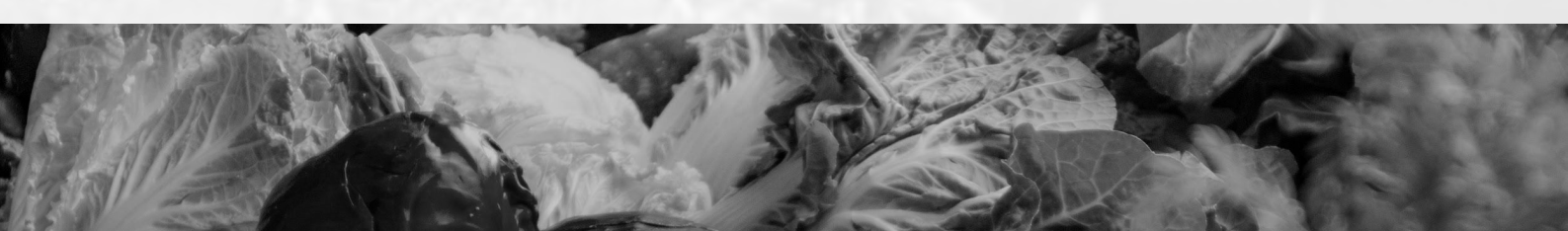
The producers seem to be the net loser. Prices in the wholesale and retail markets increased during the initial days of the lockdown, while prices at the farmers' end remained relatively unchanged. This particularly applied to rice farmers, who had already sold their stock before the lockdown and did not gain from the hikes in demand. The only notable exception is the producers of early varieties of *boro* rice, although in most cases the benefit accrued to the millers and not to the actual producer.

The perishable nature of most agricultural products, combined with reduced demand as a result of the decline in purchasing power throughout the country, forced farmers to accept any prices they could get. A brief look at the producer's price paints a sorry picture.

For poultry and fish farmers, the reduction of prices in April meant depletion of their production capacity, as they stopped hatching chicks or producing hatchlings in their hatcheries. For farmers, most have not preserved seeds for the next season, as they had to sell all of their produce to recover whatever costs possible.

As the demand for products like poultry and fish increase, these industries may not recover fully without a new injection of capital. For agricultural farmers, a wide-scale cash injection to boost people's purchasing power is needed to boost demand. They too will need additional investment to recover. Given that marginal farmers could not store seeds, any public sector initiative to make quality seed available at a minimal price will benefit a large number of farming families and prevent a price hike.

Public sector initiatives to reconnect the agricultural supply chain to the smallholder farmer are critical now. While the government has declared large incentives for the agricultural sector, accessible and transparent delivery mechanisms are critical.





Snapshot: The infodemic within the pandemic in Bangladesh

Misinformation and rumours surrounding COVID-19 has been one of the greatest challenges in fighting the pandemic. Safety guidelines were developed to inform citizens, but how effectively have they been communicated?

A rapid qualitative research looked into how people in certain target groups in Bangladesh have understood and implemented these guidelines in their daily lives. The research was conducted by BRAC Institute of Governance and Development, in partnership with researchers from the University of Sussex, and University of Liberal Arts Bangladesh.

A total of 82 respondents were included in the research, and findings were based on in-depth interviews by telephone, netnography (observing behaviour on social media) and shadow participant observation. Respondents were from rural villages, district towns, urban slums, and urban middle class in Dhaka.

The aim of the research was to determine the common misconceptions and interpretations about the messaging around the virus - are people clear about the information they received? Do they believe them to be valuable and trustworthy?

Home: A definitional crisis

The contextual translations of “stay at home” orders are confusing for people living in rural villages and urban slums.

- Respondents of the urban middle class in Dhaka understand home as their individual apartment or building.
- Rural societies are based on a culture of proximity, where the concept of home encompasses a village. Respondents from rural villages had varied interpretations of what home is - is it *ghor* (house), *bari* (house, property), and/or *para* (neighbourhood)?
- People living in district towns interpreted home as *moholla*, which means community.
- For people living in urban slums, ‘home’ extends to the alleyways between households.

Lockdowns: Claustrophobic, disrespectful, impossible

- Respondents from Dhaka’s urban middle class stated that social distancing feels claustrophobic.
- Respondents living in district towns and rural villages have said the concept of social distancing is seen as being disrespectful among their communities.
- Social distancing is impossible for people living in urban slums - where as many as 322,000 people live in each square mile. A single corridor is home to eight to 10 families.
- Many view the lockdown and social distancing measures as administrative orders by the government, as opposed to life-saving measures for themselves and the country. This results in people avoiding compliance in ways so as to not get caught.

Handwashing and the mystery of masks

- The respondents were unclear about whether to wash hands 20 times or 20 seconds, indicating a general confusion around the technique and duration of washing hands.
- A majority of the communication around handwashing has been urban based, illustrating running tap water - which only about 15% of the population has access to.
- All respondents noted the overemphasis of the use of soap in communication materials.
- The global confusion around the effectiveness of the masks has seeped into the community level.
- Many respondents believe that only N-95 masks are effective, and there is disinterest in masks that are presumed to be of lesser quality.
- People wear masks in order to fulfill government orders, and often remove them during interpersonal interactions.
- For some respondents, wearing a mask is seen as antisocial behaviour or apathy.
- Some are noting that masks are instruments to hide identity during unlawful acts, as crimes begin to rise in some neighbourhoods.

Contingency plans

- Respondents across all groups do not have a clear idea about what to do if a member of their household gets infected, and there is deep uncertainty about treatment.
- The IEDCR's hotlines are seen as the main point of contact for reporting suspected cases among the respondents.
- People living in villages, towns and urban slums are relying on local pharmacies, nearby health centres, local medical colleges, and district hospitals.
- People from the urban middle class in Dhaka plan on contacting doctors in their family or their social circles for advice.

Information in pandemic

- State-run television channel BTV, local mosques, messages played on microphones on streets and interpersonal discussions are some channels through which residents of rural villages are getting their information from.
- Respondents living in urban slums rely on cable television, social media, their employers and interpersonal discussions.
- People of the urban middle class get their information from international media (such as BBC, CNN, Al Jazeera), online discussions and social media.

The study noted an info-demic taking place as excessive amounts of confusing and ambiguous information abound.

Guidelines developed in the West may not work in the global south, and thus cannot be transferred without critically analysing them in the local geographic, economic and cultural contexts. Sensationalist news is on television, rumours are on social media, contradictory statements are being spread by some religious leaders.

The research suggests clearly defining the terms such as 'social distancing,' 'quarantine,' 'lockdown,' in localised contexts, aligned with the target populations' lifestyles. There is also a great need to promote positive news to instill hope in communities.



Strengthening of systems

- **25 kiosks for sample collection from suspected COVID-19 patients have been set up in Dhaka and Narayanganj districts.** All kiosks are fully functional with the capacity to collect 50 samples per day. 2,400 samples have been collected between 11 and 14 May. BRAC will set up a total of 100 walk-in kiosks across 19 risky districts to support the government's initiative of scaling up access to testing.
- **26 lab technicians and 50 paramedics have been trained and deployed** by BRAC, with support from the Directorate General of Health Services, to operate the walk-in sample collecting kiosks.
- **BRAC has supported the Institute of Epidemiology Disease Control and Research's hotline for COVID-19 with 20 dedicated doctors.** 49,119 people have called with symptoms and concerns until 12 May. Hotlines receive an average of 982 calls on a daily basis.
- **10 non-invasive ventilators, 10 patient monitors, 60 coveralls, 2,500 masks, 1,500 gloves and 400 sanitisers** were provided to Shaheed Suhrawardy Medical College and Hospital and National Institute of Cardiovascular Diseases to help meet the demand of required protective wear and facilities for treating COVID-19 patients.



Food security, and social and economic recovery

- **BRAC's fourth round of cash support of BDT 1,500 will reach 50,000 low-income households from diverse backgrounds.** The support will prioritise those with no income in Cox's Bazar's host community (especially women-headed households); those who are underskilled with no earning opportunities; people at high risk, needing health support including lactating mothers, pregnant women, elderly and chronically ill family members; persons with disabilities; low-income families who are struggling to send children to school; vulnerable households in urban areas; indigenous communities in northern districts; areas prone to floods and riverbank erosion; survivors of domestic and gender-based violence; and families living in ultra poverty who have not been reached in the first three rounds of BRAC's cash support or other organisations. BRAC aims to maximise on utilising mobile money to reach these families.
- **BRAC's microfinance programme is refunding savings of BDT 1 billion to its clients.** 417,738 clients, selected on their level of vulnerability, have received a refund of BDT 2,000 (USD 24) from their general savings account to cope with the economic shocks from the shutdown until 10 May. Among them, 82% have received the amount in their bKash wallet (BRAC Bank's mobile money subsidiary).
- **A total of 9,140 households living in urban poverty were provided with essential supplies.** These packages include 7kg rice, 1kg lentil, 1 litre of edible oil, 1kg salt, 2kg flour, two pieces of hand soap and 500 grams of detergent powder. BRAC aims to provide food support to **an additional 8,700 households** who currently have no earnings before the Eid festival.



Partnerships

- **Unilever has partnered with BRAC to raise awareness among 10 million people** of low-income households with low levels of literacy, to tackle information gaps and stigma surrounding COVID-19. The first phase of the partnership will address the need for context-specific message dissemination on social distancing, hygiene and environmental practices, and the actions needed once symptoms are seen. The second phase will focus on the assessment and identification of best practices for effective, long-term and mass behavioural change, personal habits and social norms.
- **Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation has partnered with BRAC to implement a cash stipend intervention for 11,000 families**, primarily in the host communities of Cox's Bazar. This four-week long partnership will also assist BRAC in delivering health services and behavioural change communication to raise awareness on prevention and protection against COVID-19.
- **The VF Fund through GlobalGiving partnered with BRAC to donate towards a cash support initiative** to support the COVID-19 affected communities in Bangladesh.
- A portion of **Global Affairs Canada's** ongoing project with BRAC will go into supporting BRAC's COVID-19 response. The funding will be used for providing cash stipends to 15,000 families, raising awareness in communities and procuring safety items (protective wear, hygiene items and medicine) for community health workers and volunteers.
- **Reckitt Benckiser (Bangladesh) Limited** has contributed to BRAC's emergency cash support initiative. BRAC will also distribute 200,000 units of Reckitt Benckiser hygiene products through this partnership.
- **Australian Government's Department for Foreign Affairs and Trade partnered with BRAC** to reduce the risks of COVID-19. Under this partnership, BRAC has been providing food and cash assistance to families in vulnerable conditions, raising awareness on protection measures, conducted an assessment of the COVID-19 situation in Bangladesh, and established a distance learning platform for students through live television broadcasts.
- **Global Affairs Canada** and **United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees** are providing support for the COVID-19 response in Cox's Bazar, for both the Rohingya and host communities, through BRAC's humanitarian crisis management programme.
- **UNICEF** is supporting BRAC, with a particular focus on sustaining children's learning and wellbeing.
- **PEPSICO in Bangladesh, along with the global food and beverage company's philanthropic arm, the PepsiCo Foundation, has partnered with BRAC to provide over 1.4 million meals** to support families with low incomes and who are living in ultra-poverty. This initiative is part of PepsiCo's #GiveMealsGiveHope global programme. BRAC will be the on-ground implementation partner, working in close collaboration with local administration and law enforcement authorities.
- **BRAC has completed multiple stages of food and cash distribution with support from local government partners**, including Dhaka's North and South City Corporations, Sylhet City Corporation, Rajshahi City Corporation, Faridpur Municipality, Savar Municipality and Satkhira Municipality. Coordination with these government bodies has aided speed and effectiveness in reaching families most in need.
- **Standard Chartered Bank has partnered with BRAC** for its emergency response to provide food support for a week to 5,000 households (22,500 people) to address the concern of food insecurity. A special focus will be given to people of lower-income groups living under lockdown restrictions.

FROM THE FRONTLINE

Nurul and Motaleb were delighted to see this year's bumper harvest, but nationwide lockdowns meant that they would have no helping hands for cutting the ripened paddy.

The two farmers are neighbours and friends. They calculated that they would both earn enough profit to cover their household expenses for the entire year, even after paying their loan instalments and landowners.

However, lockdowns across Bangladesh restricted the movement of seasonal workers - who traditionally came to work for the harvest season from across the country.

Nurul and Motaleb started to worry. The paddy had to be cut quickly when they ripen. Otherwise, they would begin to rot. They would not be able to do this work by themselves.

Two boys in their early teens, Parvez and Yousuf, noticed that their neighbours, the two farmers, were losing hope over their harvest. They called their friends. 15 of their friends showed up to Nurul and Motaleb's paddy fields, equipped with sickles. They cut all their paddy within a day.

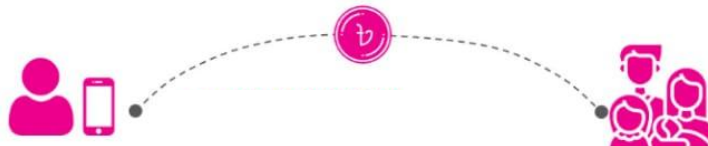
The news of the young boys helping the two farmers spread across the union and the whole community praised their efforts.

Parvez and Yousuf are members of a youth committee on preventing violence against women and children (under BRAC's community empowerment programme) in Trishal of Mymensingh, northcentral Bangladesh. They both received training and orientation as part of the programme's 'engaging men and boys' initiative and this story was received through BRAC's field staff in the area.

Snapshot: Cox's Bazar

- **The first two positive cases of COVID-19 were identified in Cox's Bazar's Rohingya camps.** One of the patients is from Kutupalong refugee camp and the other patient is from Camp 1E. Both of them have been assigned to isolation.
- **A total of 121 people have been tested positive of COVID-19 in the district of Cox's Bazar as of 13 May.**
- **A total of 71 persons are in institutional quarantine in the camps as of 12 May.** 272 people are in institutional quarantine and 475 persons are in home quarantine in the host communities as of 10 May.
- **A massive fire destroyed 312 makeshift shelters** and partially damaged 362 more, including small shops and business outlets at Camp 1E in Lambashia camp of Kutupalong on 12 May. BRAC is providing emergency shelter and WASH support.
- **UNHCR, in collaboration with BRAC, completed the construction of 144-bed SARI (severe acute respiratory infection) isolation and treatment centre in Ukhiya.**
- **BRAC's humanitarian programme in Cox's Bazar, supported by UN Women, has produced 14,517 reusable face masks.** The masks were prepared by 117 Rohingya women living in the camps - all artisans of the Ayesha Abed Foundation sub-centre in Ukhiya. BRAC has delivered 5,500 pieces to UNHCR, 2,000 pieces to Bangladesh Police and 100 pieces to UN Women. Additionally, 214 pieces have been distributed to Rohingya women in two camps.
- **Community health workers, volunteers and nutrition workers visited 21,881 families** and disseminated messages on prevention of COVID-19 to 82,882 people from 7 to 13 May. Among them, 56,155 were members of the host community and 25,727 people were from the Rohingya camps. This covered 34,729 men, 43,735 women, 2,212 boys and 2,206 girls.

Raised: BDT37M



Goal: BDT200M



BRAC's appeal is providing those in the most vulnerable situations in Bangladesh with emergency relief.

Support a family today: <https://www.brac.net/covid19/donate/>



Partners



Global Affairs
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Schweizerische Eidgenossenschaft
Confédération suisse
Confederazione Svizzera
Confederaziun svizra

Swiss Agency for Development
and Cooperation SDC



Contact us: covid19response@brac.net